

WEDNESDAY SUPPLEMENT

15th April 2020

Christ is Risen!
He is Risen Indeed!

Welcome to this week's Wednesday Supplement. For today's devotional suggestion from the Iona Community, see page 4 and the background reading on page 3.

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REFLECTION

*Chris Smith reflects on today's lectionary reading: the road to Emmaus, from **Luke 24:13-35**. If you would like to contribute to the Supplement, whether by writing a reflection or just sharing a short thought, observation or question, please get in touch!*

I remember being totally taken in by the Fifa World Cup finals in 2018. I'm not really into football but, like everyone else, I dared to believe that this was the year that "Football was coming home." I was so excited and watched every match, hopeful that we would keep winning. One stand-out moment had to be one afternoon when I had rushed home to watch the Sweden-England match. I had settled down to watch it when the doorbell went and a congregation member asked me to come to her house as she had a bat in her utility room that needed removing...

So I was totally eager to watch match after match and see England keep winning. However as most of you will remember, this didn't happen. England got beaten by Croatia and crashed out of the semi-finals. I can remember feeling so disappointed and down. How could this be when the newspapers had said this was the year we would win? There had been so much hope ... and now only despair.

In the lectionary reading today, the disciples in the story on the road to Emmaus would have also felt a mix of emotions (probably more significant than my football emotions I hasten to add!). Disappointment and confusion, dismay and sorrow.

They had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem Israel. They had hoped that Jesus was to be a mighty political and military leader and overthrow Roman rule. And yet Jesus was now dead. The disciples exclaimed previously

that they had left everything to follow Jesus. They had left families and careers, homes and comfort. So I imagine they might be feeling totally lost and expecting also to be ridiculed when they arrived home.

So this is the mixture of emotions at play here when this "stranger" Jesus appears to these men and walks alongside them. Notice that Jesus listens to these men in their despair. He gives them a chance to explain why they feel the way they do before explaining to them why they have misunderstood things.

We have the advantage today of having the entirety of the Bible to digest and the Holy Spirit to open our eyes. We know that Jesus rose from the dead in the end so we don't need be as confused as these disciples. But do we appreciate the enormity of the story of Jesus?

I was challenged last year by a simple question: "What is the Gospel?" I wonder how you would answer this question?

The Gospel story includes more than the life of Jesus depicted in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and this is what Jesus is explaining to these disciples in verse 27. The life of Jesus is more cosmic in proportion if we frame this within the whole of the previous scriptures. The Gospel includes the story of the human race and the plan God has for our lives. It includes the story of Israel in the Old Testament and God's promise to send a Messiah.

Therefore it is truly good news that Jesus walked the earth as he was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Further evidence that God has been working continually throughout history to try and bring humans back to acknowledging him. So the death and resurrection of Jesus should be an encouragement. Humans throughout history have never changed. The humans in Jesus' time thought they were in control as they shunned God and crucified Jesus. But Jesus rose to prove again that God is really in control. He always has been and always will be.

So in this time of lockdown when we feel out of control I pray that this won't be a time of despair. But as we look to God and learn more about his nature in the Old and New Testaments let our hearts burn within us like these disciples as the scriptures are opened.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Remember that if you need help during the lockdown, a small army of volunteers is waiting to assist you.

This week I was called to a routine prescription delivery: normally the client would have been totally self-sufficient thanks to a family member with a car, but due to lack of use during the lockdown, the battery was flat and the car would not start. Fortunately, car maintenance is one of the occasional offices which the vicar is pleased to provide, and I attended with jump leads as well as a prescription.

Even with a modern car, a period of non-use as short as a few weeks can cause deterioration. If your car is currently lying unused, you may wish to try the following simple maintenance:

- An old battery may lose charge. A battery in good condition may still be run down by components that draw current when the ignition is off, or by accessories plugged into a socket which is not ignition-controlled. *Remove unnecessary accessories that could remain powered. Use a trickle charger, or run the engine for 15 minutes every week.*
- Condensation may form in empty fuel tanks. *It's a sensible precaution to store a vehicle with a full tank. It is also then ready if you need it suddenly.*
- A small amount of corrosion naturally forms on brake discs when they are not used (especially if the vehicle was parked while wet, or in an unventilated space). Brake performance may be slightly reduced. When you next drive the vehicle, check your brakes as you might after coming out of a ford: gentle continuous pressure will remove any corrosion and restore them to full efficiency for when needed.
- Parking brakes may seize and tyres may slightly deform. *When you start your engine once a week to charge the battery, release the parking brake and move the vehicle slightly. Ideally, leave it parked a quarter-turn of the road wheels from where it was the previous week.*

Keep an eye on coolant and tyre pressures too. Then, when you next need the vehicle, it will be ready to serve you at full efficiency!

If you need help which you cannot obtain elsewhere, community support is available. In Kirkby, you can phone Stephen Tudway (01229) 715259 or Linda Dean (01229) 889630. In Broughton and the valleys you can phone Stephen Tudway (01229) 715259 or Selwyn Wright (01229) 716797. We will be pleased to point one of our volunteers in your direction.

FOODBANK

A couple of pictures this week, showing some of the bulk goods we have been able to purchase for the foodbank using your donations:



PRAYER

Last week, I suggested as an alternative to *Common Worship Daily Prayer*, the resources of the Northumbria Community. This week I turn from the North East to the North West, to the Iona Community.

The Iona Community

Like the Northumbria Community, the Iona Community is a dispersed, ecumenical monastic community. Associates and Members of the Community follow a Rule of Life. The Rule involves among other things a commitment to “daily prayer, worship with others and regular engagement with the Bible” as well as “working for justice and peace, wholeness and reconciliation in our localities, society and the whole creation”.

The Iona Community has residential retreat centres in Glasgow, Mull and, most importantly, on the small island of Iona off the South-West tip of Mull, in the Inner Hebrides. Iona Abbey is one of the earliest Christian centres in Europe, founded by St Columba in the Sixth Century. It was from here that Celtic missionaries reintroduced Christianity to Northern Britain in the Seventh Century, following its displacement (after the departure of Rome) by Anglo-Saxon paganism. St Aidan spent his early years on Iona, before serving as missionary and then Bishop to the Kingdom of Northumbria. There, he chose as his base Lindisfarne, perhaps because he valued the seclusion of an island retreat, and because it was close to pious King Oswald’s centre of power at Bamburgh Castle.



Celtic spirituality

Consequently, the Iona Community preserves a strong vein of Celtic spirituality. What do we mean by this? Historically, Celtic Christianity refers to the survival of ancient Roman Christianity on the fringes of a Europe which had been overrun by pagan barbarians. There is a good Wikipedia page which describes some of its particular customs and practices.

Modern-day Celtic spirituality seeks to revive some of those ancient customs for the modern age, in particular that of monasticism, reworked for modern times through the dispersal of the community and the practice of retreat.

You can find out more at <https://iona.org.uk/>

Wild Goose Publications

The Iona Community has a publishing arm, Wild Goose Publications, which produces a prodigious amount of liturgy. Have a look, for example, at the “e-Liturgies and Prayers” tab of the ionabooks.com website. In addition to the core Iona worship materials, there is a special publication for just about every life event, church season and important issue: from Bullying to Baptism, Father’s Day to Forgiveness, Refugees to Racism.

Like the Northumbria Community, the Iona Community is generous in allowing the non-commercial reproduction of its liturgies without permission.



CELTIC EVENING LITURGY

This liturgy can be used in a group or alone, silently or aloud. Have a candle, a Bible and a cross to hand. Where indicated, listen to a favourite hymn or worship song.

Opening Responses

Leader: Come to us this night, O God,

All: Come to us with light.

(Here a candle may be lit and placed centrally)

Leader: Speak to us this night, O God,

All: Speak to us your truth.

(Here a Bible may be placed centrally)

Leader: Dwell with us this night, O God,

All: Dwell with us in love.

(Here a cross may be placed centrally)

Song/Music

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Thanks be to you O Christ,

All: For the many gifts you have bestowed on us,
Each day and night, each sea and land,
Each weather fair, each calm, each wild.

Leader: Each night may we remember your mercy
given so gently and generously.

All: Each thing we have received,
From you it came;
Each thing for which we hope,
From your love it will come;
Each thing we enjoy,
It is of your bounty;
Each thing we ask,
Comes of your disposing.

Leader: O God, from whom
each thing that is, freely flows,

All: Grant that no tie over strict, no tie over dear,
May be between ourselves and this world.
Amen.

The Word of God

Leader: O God, as these words are read,

All: In our hearts may we feel your presence.

A portion of scripture is read. You may like to use this cycle of six psalms, one each day: 30, 42, 46, 63, 130, 142.

Song/Music

Affirmation of Faith

All: We believe, O God of all gods,

That you are the eternal God of life,
We believe, O God of all gods,
That you are the eternal God of love.

We believe, O God and Maker of all creation,
that you are the creator of the high heavens,
that you are the creator of the deep seas,
that you are the creator of the stable earth.

We believe, O God of all the peoples,
that you created our souls and set their warp,
that you created our bodies and gave them breath,
that you made us in your own image.

We give you our worship
With our whole lives,
We give you our assent
With our whole power,
We give you our existence
With our whole mind,
We give you our kneeling
With our whole desire.

Prayers of Concern

Leader: O Christ, kindle in our hearts within
a flame of love to our neighbour,
to our foes, to our friends,
to our kindred all.

All: O Christ of the poor and the yearning,
From the humblest thing that lives
To the name that is highest of all,
Kindle in our hearts within a flame of love.

(Offer intercessions, freely spoken or unspoken. At the end of this time the following prayer is said.)

Leader: We are placing our souls and our bodies
under your guarding this night, O Christ.

All: O son of the tears, of the wounds,
of the piercings,
May your cross this night be shielding all.

Song/Music

Blessing

Leader: Be the great God between your shoulders
to protect you in your going and your coming;
be the Son of Mary near your heart;
and be the perfect Spirit upon you pouring.

All: Amen.

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