

## From the Pastor



Happy Resurrection Day!

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

It's my joy and privilege to welcome you to worship this Easter Sunday morning. Today we celebrate the event that is the very foundation of our Christian faith. The tomb is empty, death has lost its sting, Sin is defeated, the women were the first to witness and it's a truth that echoes through the ages: Jesus is Alive! Hallelujah! The Apostle Paul put it like this: 'If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile,' (1 Corinthians 15:17) therefore we give thanks for this 'day of all days.'

And yet, resurrection is more than an event for us who follow Christ. It is an everyday reality. During Lent we spent time focusing on the cross and what it means for us to carry our own, to suffer with Christ, to die to ourselves every day, and today we know the fruit of that process - resurrected, abundant, and eternal life (which begins now)! It is my prayer that you know the fullness of resurrection in every area of your life!

This morning we will be celebrating Communion as part of our worship. Please be sure to have your own elements prepared so that you can participate with us. We

can make the mistake of thinking that Communion points us only to Christ's death on the cross but the truth is that is only part of its significance. Communion also reminds us of Christ's living presence with us now as well as pointing us forward to that heavenly banquet we've spent much time reflecting on in recent weeks. Both of these are only made possible by his resurrection - we'll celebrate these truths today!

We had a wonderful day on Wednesday for our Holy Week day of Prayer. Over the course of 6 hours, around 50 people passed through the sanctuary and enjoyed the various prayer stations and activities that had been prepared. I know that many more joined with us from home, also. I've been praying that it's the first fruits of resurrection for our in-person gatherings. The leadership of the church will continue to review the situation and provide other opportunities for us to be together safely.

We're grateful too to have had the opportunity to join with other churches of the Nazarene on Good Friday. Jack and Leah represented us well. It's good to be reminded of the wider Nazarene family that we are a part of and worship together with others across the country.

Following this morning's service I am off on annual leave until 12th April. I'm excited to announce that Dr. Samuel Hildebrandt, lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Studies at Nazarene Theological College, will be preaching for us next week. I've also asked Huw to write this 'greeting' part of the Update. If you need to contact us with a pastoral con-

### Inside this issue:

From Mick	1
Reading guide	2
Prayer guide	2
Sermon notes	3
Church details	4



## Daily Reading and Prayer Guide

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 5th April	Luke chapter 6 verse 37 to chapter 7 verse 10	Nathaniel Herbert and family
Tuesday 6th April	Luke chapter 7 verses 11–35	Peter and Babs Hewitt
Wednesday 7th April	Luke chapter 7 verse 36 to chapter 8 verse 8	Anna Holme and family
Thursday 8th April	Luke chapter 8 verses 9–39	Dave and Chris Hoolihan and family
Friday 9th April	Luke chapter 8 verse 40 to chapter 9 verse 6	Ruth Hogan
Saturday 10th April	Catch up	Claire, Terry, Liam and Chloe
Sunday 11th April	Luke chapter 9 verses 7–36	Sebastian, Claudia and Nathan

## Prayer Requests

- ◇ For those we know who grieve, that that truth of the resurrection would be their hope and comfort.
- ◇ For those we know who are sick, that the life of Christ may be known to them.
- ◇ For those we know who are lonely, poor, and hungry, may the resurrected Christ be made known to them as we reach out in support to connect, provide and feed.
- ◇ For those who are persecuted, that they might be comforted in knowing that to share in the suffering of Christ is also to be promised to share in his glory.
- ◇ For those who are far from God, that they might encounter the risen Christ and know him as Saviour, Messiah, and Friend!

# Easter - Resurrection Sunday

## Communion

As part of our Easter Sunday worship this morning we will be participating in Communion together. Now, sometimes we can make the mistake of thinking that communion is all about the cross, and isn't this Easter Sunday, today we celebrate resurrection, so why would we be thinking about the cross? Isn't that what Good Friday is for? Well, sort of. You see the thing about Communion is that it does point us back to the cross but it also points us forward towards resurrection and that heavenly banquet that we have spent a lot of time reflecting on together as a church in recent weeks as part of our preaching series. Communion also reminds us of the presence of Christ here and now which is also an important part of Easter Sunday – Jesus is Alive! Christ is with us in the breaking of bread.

And so what I want to do this morning is spend some time reflecting on a table that Jesus sat around as part of the passion narrative. The table of the last supper. Jesus, before his death and resurrection gathered around a table with his followers and said to them, “whatever happens now, I want you to keep doing this.” And what I would like us to do is think about some of the individuals who sat around that table with Jesus, think about who they were and what the truth of the resurrection of Christ meant for them, and also what that might mean for us here today:

**John** – John is known traditionally as the disciple Jesus loves. That's how he is described in the Gospel of John. What a way to be known! Throughout the Gospel, this disciple seems to have a close relationship with Jesus. He's part of a group of three disciples who seem to have a particularly close relationship with Christ. There's a scene when they are eating together and after the meal he is the disciple who is sat

closest to Jesus to illustrate that close and personal relationship that they had. The disciple that Jesus loves.

Now, the truth is, in John's Gospel the disciple that Jesus loves is never actually named. Some believe it's an act of humility by the author who doesn't want to reveal that this individual who is loved by Jesus is actually he, himself. Perhaps this is true. But I wonder if there is a wider truth at play here. I wonder if John refers to himself as the disciple that Jesus loves because he knew this to be true not only about himself, but also about all who are followers of Jesus. I believe all the disciples were disciples who Jesus loved. And I also believe this, that I too am a disciple that Jesus loves. And you are too.

And this disciple that Jesus loved had a seat around the table which reminds us that today, that because of who Jesus is and what he has done, because of his death and his resurrection, that if you are a follower of Jesus, you too are loved, and you have seat at the table.

**Matthew** – we read about Matthew in Mark 2:13-17, Matthew 9:9-13. Luke 5:27-32. He goes by another name in some parts of the Bible, Levi. And in all those accounts in the Bible we read one very important fact about Matthew – Matthew was a tax collector. Now we learnt a little about the significance of being a tax collector in Biblical times a few weeks ago when we dealt with Zacchaeus, didn't we? To be a tax collector in the days of Jesus meant that you worked for the Romans who were the power over the Israelites at that time and tax collectors made their living by extorting their own people on behalf of their oppressors. Mat-

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At Brooklands, we are big enough to be part of a world-wide denomination, yet small enough to invite you to make our church your home. Please visit our website and contact us if you would like to get in touch or need more information on any of our events.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are holding weekly services on our YouTube channel, starting at 10:30 am each Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you to our fellowship!

Manchester Brooklands Church of the Nazarene, Registered Charity No: 1159881

threw was a tax collector and tax collectors were cheats and traitors. But, when Jesus calls Matthew we are told that Matthew leaves that life behind and goes. And because of that decision, Matthew has a seat at the table.

I wonder if anyone has a past that they are not particularly proud of. Matthew reminds us that because of Jesus, his death and resurrection new life can be found and even those who have a past can have a seat at the table. That's what resurrection looks like!

**Peter** – Has anyone ever made a mistake? Then let's look at Peter. Peter is perhaps one of the most famous disciples. He is mentioned more than any of the others throughout the Gospels. Now you might think that's a good thing. But unfortunately, Peter's appearances often occur as a result of him saying or doing the wrong thing. He tries to play down Jesus' prediction that he will die on the cross – Jesus calls him Satan! He walks on water before needing to be rescued – Jesus declares he has little faith. He tries to defend Jesus by striking a soldier on the ear – Jesus disarms him. And perhaps most famously, he denies Jesus three times. Peter knows what it's like to follow Jesus and make mistakes along the way. But Peter has a seat at the table. Again because of Jesus' death and resurrection there is mercy for Peter's mistakes and there's a place at the table for him. Have you ever made a mistake? Mercy is available and there's space at this table for you.

**Judas** – This is a tough one. Judas betrayed Jesus. He handed him over to die. In an act of premeditated deception Judas profits from Jesus' arrest. What do we do with Judas? Well let's look to Jesus. Do you know what Jesus did to Judas? Jesus served Judas. He washed his feet. And he sat with him around the table. Jesus did all of this knowing what Judas had planned and what that would mean for him. And yet, there was a seat at the table for Judas. What do we do with that?

Well I think we can say this. For those who are far from God today, there is a seat at the table for you. Because of who Jesus is, because of what he has done, because of his death and resurrection here is what we can proclaim this Easter Sunday morning – it doesn't matter what you have done; it doesn't matter how far you are from God you find yourself; because of Jesus; be-