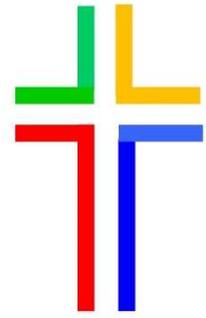


# Week St Mary Methodist Church – Sunday 26 April



**As the lockdown, and the glorious spring weather, continue, let us remember all those who are less fortunate than ourselves; those not surrounded by lovely countryside, those working hard to control this virus, and those fearful people who are particularly vulnerable.**

## PRAYER

Lord, as we gather in spirit, be with us all in our various homes. Help us to be mindful that you are walking alongside us through these difficult times and that we

can turn to you, in faith, for comfort and guidance whenever we want. Keep that thought in the forefront of our minds through the days and weeks ahead. Amen

## READING FOR TODAY Luke 24:13-35 (NIVUK) On the road to Emmaus

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising him. He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?'

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' 'What things?' he asked.

'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.'

He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.

## REFLECTION

I am sorry it is a long Bible reading today, but it has been called one of the loveliest short stories ever – with that dramatic moment when the disciples realise they have been talking to Jesus. It does make for a good story, doesn't it – a person appearing but not being recognised and then being in a conversation about himself. I am sure the idea has been turned into a novel or a film somewhere. But we have to remember that this isn't just a story – it's one of ten appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, occurring over 40 days.

Jesus had died on the cross leaving behind a group of disciples, a group of followers who he had been teaching, a group who were distraught at losing their mentor. But now dramatically Jesus had risen from the dead and was seen by disciples and others. The disciples had been learning, but Jesus now needed them to be more than that – they needed to be apostles who would take the good news of Jesus to the wider world. The two disciples and their meeting with Jesus on the road to Emmaus is part of that important transition from disciple to apostle.

We also have to remember that the disciples felt in fear of the Jewish authorities and anticipated persecution – think of the locked upper room in last week’s service sheet. They were worried, keeping themselves to themselves, almost self isolating. Sound familiar? The two disciples on the road to Emmaus probably felt this fear, and then, there was Jesus walking with them, and they were overjoyed. They no longer felt alone, they still had Jesus to share their burdens. And so do we – as we walk through these difficult times we know that we have Jesus walking with us and sharing our burdens, as the hymn below reminds us.

### **PRAYER FOR OTHERS**

Lord, we bring before you, in these troubled times, the many people who are finding life almost unbearable.

We pray for those who have lost loved ones, often in isolation without the comfort of family and friends. Be with them in their grief.

We pray for those who are treating and caring for the sick and seriously ill in hospitals, care homes or in the community. Be with them in their stress and weariness.

We pray for those who have to make decisions about the way forward and who have to balance many conflicting considerations. Be with them as they struggle with imperfect knowledge and stretched resources.

Finally, we pray for our own families and friends, many of whom are in different degrees of isolation. Be with them in their loneliness. **Amen**

### **HYMN**

*(H&P 687)*

When we walk with the Lord  
in the light of his word,  
what a glory he sheds on our way!

While we do his good will,  
he abides with us still,  
and with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Not a burden we bear,  
not a sorrow we share,  
but our toil he doth richly repay;  
not a grief or a loss,  
not a frown or a cross,  
but is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove  
the delights of his love  
until all on the altar we lay;  
for the favour he shows,  
for the joy he bestows,  
are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet  
we will sit at his feet,  
or we'll walk by his side in the way;  
what he says we will do,  
where he sends we will go;  
never fear, only trust and obey.

### **BLESSING**

The disciples hurried back from Emmaus full of joy because they had met Jesus. Give us the joy of having met the risen Lord. And the Blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

*“Many of us at times have walked the Emmaus road, wondering where God is ..... when all along he walks beside us”.*  
*Randy Alcorn*