**11th April 2021** **10.30pm** **Sylvia Percival**

**A moment of silence** as we remember we are in the presence of our loving holy God.

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9)

“The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.” (v7) Alleluia!

**Hymn No 30 MP Alleluia, Alleluia,**

*Alleluia, Alleluia,*

*Give thanks to the risen Lord;*

*Alleluia, Alleluia,*

*Give praise to his name.*

Jesus is Lord of all the earth,

He is the King of creation.

*Alleluia, Alleluia…*

Spread the good news o’er all the earth,

Jesus has died and has risen.

*Alleluia, Alleluia…*

We have been crucified with Christ;

Now we shall live for ever.

*Alleluia, Alleluia…*

God has proclaimed the just reward,

Life for all men, alleluia.

*Alleluia, Alleluia…*

Come let us praise the living God,

Joyfully sing to our Saviour:

*Alleluia, Alleluia…*

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**Opening Prayer**

Lord, you are the giver of life,

in the midst of suffering we

celebrate the promise of your peace;

in the midst of oppression, we

celebrate the promise of freedom

in the midst of doubt and despair,

we celebrate the promise of faith and hope;

in the midst of fear, we celebrate the promise of joy;

in the midst of sin and decay,

we celebrate the promise of salvation and renewal;

in the midst of death we celebrate

the promise of eternal life. Amen.

(World Council of Churches)

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Dedication of Offering**

We offer to God our money, our talents, our time, ourselves. “All things come from you, O God, and of your own do we give you.”

**Hymn No 795 MP You laid aside your majesty**

You laid aside Your majesty,

gave up everything for me,

Suffered at the hands of those You had created;

You took all my guilt and shame,

when You died and rose again;

Now today You reign in heaven and earth exalted.

I really want to worship You, my Lord,

You have won my heart and I am Yours,

for ever and ever I will love You.

You are the only one who died for me,

Gave Your life to set me free,

So I lift my voice to You in adoration.

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**Readings** Acts 4:32-35

John 20:19-22

**Hymn No 689 Thine be the glory**

Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,

Endless is the victory thou o’er death hast won;

Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,

Kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,*

*Endless is the victory thou o’er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;

Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;

Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,

For her Lord now liveth; death has lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory…*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;

Life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;

Make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:

Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

*Thine be the glory…*

Edmund Budry (1854-1932) tr R Birch Hoyle (1875-1939) CCLI 150801

**Sermon**

Christ who appeared to your disciples when the doors were shut; appear unto all of those in the world today who live their lives behind closed doors. Amen.

Locked doors! We know all about that! Locked doors of restaurants, locked doors of businesses. I went down to the bank in Bradford on the Thursday before Easter and the door was locked – restricted opening hours. Locked doors of barbers, locked doors of charity shops, locked doors of churches. Christians in Iran know the locked doors of prisons.

Jesus has been crucified. He’s dead and in his grave. The men and women who love him are frightened that they may be next. They are walled up together and the doors are locked in fear.

But what are locked doors to the Lord of life? The power of the risen Jesus can smash through walls. He can go where he wills and nothing can stop him. The love that took him to the cross, the love that took our sins and guilt upon himself, the love of Jesus who died for you and me takes him to frightened people who are in desperate need of him. Whatever the fears are that are locking you up at this time the risen Lord Jesus Christ can deal with them.

He doesn’t unlock the door. He comes and stands among us and says, “Peace be with you!” and in case we haven’t heard or can’t take it in, he says it a second time, “Peace be with you!” This is his peace – deep within.

Jesus also said that in this world we will have troubles but he has overcome the world. He shows us his hands and his side – ‘the scars that speak of sacrifice.’ His peace is not as the world gives. “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” He says, “Peace be with you.”

We need that peace because he cannot send us as he wants to do, “as the Father has sent me, I am sending you,” if our hearts are locked up in fear. We need his peace and, as the Lord knows so well, we need power, his power, the power of the Holy Spirit. “Receive the Holy Spirit,” he says and breathes on them. As the old hymn puts it, “Breathe on me breath of God. Fill me with life anew.”

And what a difference the Holy Spirit, at work, makes in our lives and the life of the church! Read again our first reading from Acts chapter 4. “All the believers were one in heart and mind…they shared everything they had.” We are together in his love so that we can encourage one another and share everything we have with one another.

But if the Lord doesn’t want us to be frightened, he certainly doesn’t want us to be a holy huddle either. From the reading again, “With great power they continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” I am sending you,” says Jesus. Where is he sending us? Where is he sending me? Where is he sending you? Everywhere! Wherever you go! Wherever you can talk to people, person to person, on the phone, emailing, texting. Wherever you can help people. Wherever you can pray for people. Wherever you can smile and give a cheery wave. Wherever you can listen to people who want to share their troubles. Wherever you can encourage people. Wherever you can say, “God bless you.” Wherever you’re known as a Christian. Jesus is sending you.

We have his presence with us at all times. We have his love. We have his peace. We have the Holy Spirit, his power within us. We have God’s grace so powerfully at work among us. What more do we need?

**Mission Prayer** God of mission…

**Prayers of intercession** (Rev Susan Durber)

As we remember the stories of Easter we pray for our world:

We remember the women who came while it was still dark to honour your body, and we pray for all those who now tend to the dying and dead, that they may know the worth of what they do…

We think of the women whose stories and testimony of resurrection were not believed and we pray for those who have very little power in this world. May their voices be heard at last and their truth made plain…

We remember the disciples on the Emmaus road who discovered that you were with them as they broke the bread, and we pray for all who do not yet see or know your loving presence with them…

We think of Thomas who doubted and who needed the evidence of his eyes, and we pray for all who are seeking or questioning faith. May they find those who will truly listen to them and hear their cry…

We remember Peter, consumed by guilt and shame after betraying you, and we pray for new beginnings for all who struggle to know that they are forgiven and free…

May we all find those who will lead us back to life...

We think of the disciples who caught a miraculous catch, so huge that the nets burst – and we pray for the mission of the Church.  May our faith be so renewed that it is visible, credible and attractive to those who meet us…

We remember Saul of Tarsus, who met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and who was transformed. We pray for a world that needs your light to transform every place where suffering is deep and oppression strong.

 We think of the hundreds of people who were added to their number in the earliest days of the Church, and we pray for the crowds of people in our world who are crying in pain or suffering and who long for peace.

We remember the amazing story of Easter, the good news of life, and the hope of redemption. May we treasure it, live it and proclaim it; with our words and our lives, today and every day, Amen.

**Hymn No 162 From heaven you came**

From heaven you came, helpless babe,

Entered our world your glory veiled,

Not to be served but to serve,

And give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,*

*He calls us now to follow him,*

*To bring our lives as a daily offering*

*Of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,

My heavy load he chose to bear;

His heart with sorrow was torn,

‘Yet not my will but yours,’ he said.

*This is our God, the Servant King…*

Come see his hands and his feet,

The scars that speak of sacrifice,

Hands that flung stars into space

To cruel nails surrendered.

*This is our God, the Servant King…*

So let us learn how to serve

And in our lives enthrone him,

Each other’s needs to prefer

For it is Christ we’re serving.

*This is our God, the Servant King…*

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**Blessing**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. Amen.