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**WEEKLY LETTER – 17 APRIL 2022**



**Why do we sing with enthusiasm, “Alleluia”,  
in a world overcast with the dark  
clouds of death?**

You can probably tell, that in various ways I have struggled to understand the resurrection. I found the first Matrix film helped me a great deal, i.e. where ‘Neo’ is resurrected. (It’s possibly a strange film to some, but it is based on John’s gospel!).

I’ve always wanted to understand the resurrection in part by asking a whole host of questions, for example, why do some people recognise him and others don’t, or how does he appear and disappear, and what does this mean?

What is clear is that Jesus of Nazareth died, (and this opens the way to the resurrection) was buried, and that these two facts mean that Jesus experienced, physical death in its totality. That is, he was laid in the grave of death. Then he descended to the world of the dead, to hell. These facts are clear.

Reading all the narratives about Jesus’ resurrection clearly state this is NOT a miracle of a reanimated corpse, nor has he “returned” from the dead like his friend Lazarus. Rather we are repeatedly told, “he appeared”, which also means “Jesus made himself seen”. So sometimes he is recognised and sometimes he is not. You could say because we have entered the World of God, so Jesus is only seen by people who are given the gift to see, or who look with their hearts. We therefore have no choice but to say Jesus is NOT a reanimated corpse, and therefore cannot be physically or chemically measurable. This is not some absurd miracle, rather what we are learning to see or experience is the power of God, who is not tied to the law of death. Or put it another way, we are once again witnessing the creative power of God’s love, who shows us, death is not the end, death is not a barrier to life or being with Him. God is not confined by the reality of matter, and so shows once again that his power, and love is greater than the power of matter and physical death. This is why we have every right to sing and smile as we say, “Alleluia”, in a world that at times seems completely overcast with the dark clouds of death.

Happy Easter – today is rightly the greatest celebration.

**Stephen**

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom, at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Neil Riches and will include the Dedication of Charlotte Emily, the baby daughter of Megan and Adam.**

Bible Reading: John 20.1-18

**Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Temple, Gowerton.**

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Thank you so much for your gift to the DEC Ukraine Crisis Appeal of £1,072.50 on behalf of Manselton Christ Well URC.

Your donation will enable Christian Aid's partner organisations in the ACT Alliance to offer assistance to Ukraine refugees fleeing deadly violence. These partners are delivering food and supplies and other lifesaving essentials to people on the Ukrainian borders.

So, once again, thank you for your generous gift. Your compassion will help protect families escaping the violence in Ukraine.

Michael Mosselmans. Head of Humanitarian. Christian Aid.

**Praying for Ukraine**

Heavenly Father hear our prayers for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

Lord God, we ask for You to be with all – especially children who are suffering as the crisis in Ukraine deteriorates. Lord for those who are anxious and fearful. For those who are bereaved, injured or who have lost their lives. And for those who have lost loved ones. Lord hear our prayers.

Lord, we ask that decision makers hear Your voice. Parents protecting their families – deciding whether to stay or leave. Church leaders as they support and comfort people. And Lord we ask for wise actions from global leaders – who have the power not only to start wars, but to stop them too.

And Father God we cry out for an end to this crisis. For mercy, peace, and truth – because You are light, hope, power and love. Amen.

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**Plant Easter into our souls** (Lectionary Readings: Acts 10.34-43: Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24: 1 Cor. 15.19-26: John 20.1-18)

Easter God,

We are awash in the exuberance of words today, the reckless outrageousness of stories, the extravagance of promises.

Resurrection lifts us and heals us.

It reaches into the deepest corners of our doubt and disappointment with the saving power of hope.

It targets the cynic in us and dares us to believe in love stronger than hate, forgiveness stronger than sin, life stronger than death.

We too are raised, and we sing our joy to you. When the singing is over and the beautiful words have faded away, plant Easter in our souls.

Help us to live it through acts of justice and compassion, perseverance and faith, until all creation joins the song of Easter joy.

(Roberta Rominger – URC Prayer Handbook 2022)

