Sunday 26th April, 3rd Week of Easter, Service prepared by student deacon Janet Amey

Gracious God, we meet in your name, though we are apart we are drawn together.

United in your love, called by your light.

Open our hearts and minds, may we be aware of your presence, as we worship.

**In your glorious name, Amen**

**Hymn: STF 313 Thine be the Glory – by Edmund Bundry**

1. 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.*

1. Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb. Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;

let His church with gladness hymns of triumph sing, for the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son; endless is the victory Thou o’er death hast won.*

1. 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, risen, conquering Son; endless is the victory Thou o’er death hast won*

**Prayers of Adoration and confession**

Faithful God,

We praise you… For your love, for your grace, for creation, for enduring promise and faithfulness.

We praise you… You are mighty, greater than any challenge, above and beyond everything.

We praise you… you are Holy, beautiful and full of love.

We confess our sins,

Forgive us for the times we have not followed your path, for the times we have not lived in faith and love.

(Time for private confession)

Bring us back to you, forgive us.

**Amen**

**Reading: Luke 24:13-35 (NIV)**

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 recognizing 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 farther. 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 recognized 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 recognized by them when he broke the bread.

**Reflection**

This reading tells us of an encounter with Jesus after the resurrection, we hear of how two individuals are made to think again and review their understanding of who Jesus is, then think of who they are.

As we find ourselves adjusting to different ways of being, Easter is now over, or is it?

**‘What things?’**

On the road to Emmaus, from Jerusalem, Jesus comes alongside and asks the two friends ‘what things?’

They talk, they open up to Jesus, their fears, their anxieties and invite Jesus to stay.

As they spend time with Jesus, listen to Him, things change, and as Jesus breaks bread they realise who He is, and come to understand a bit more; they see Him as the Messiah. With renewed vigour, faith, a deeper understanding and importantly - a deepening relationship with the living God, they say…

**‘Were not our hearts burning?’**

Their eyes are opened, now they understand who Jesus is and they talk excitedly about how their hearts were warmed. Wesley used a similar phrase, in Aldersgate Street, when he felt God strongly, ‘My heart was strangely warmed.’ After this, the two friends continue their lives with newness and faith.

We meet Jesus in everyday things, there walking alongside us, and as we chat to Him, tell him ‘what things’ from our point of view, we journey with Him and He with us. We ask him to stay, be part of our lives, we hold on to him. As our faith deepens, then we see who He is. This realisation of Jesus being the Messiah, this warming of hearts, as we become aware of God, the Holy Spirit, we look and we listen, we develop a deepening relationship, empowering, living, newness.

As we meet the **Living God** in our lives, as we reflect on what Easter means to us, may we think about this encounter on the road to Emmaus and ask ourselves…

**Who is God to me and who am I to God?**

**Prayers for others**

Living God, we pray…

For those who are suffering… for those who are in pain… for those who are lonely… for those who are lost.

On the path, where there is fear, hate, anxiety, may there be your love, peace and presence.

We pray for… (Time for private prayer)

We offer our prayers to you,

Through Jesus Christ our Saviour,

**Amen**

**HP STF 341 All for Jesus – all for Jesus by W. J. Sparrow-Simpson**

1. All for Jesus – all for Jesus, this our song shall ever be:

For we have no hope, nor Saviour, if we have not hope in Thee

1. All for Jesus – thou wilt give us strength to serve thee hour by hour

None can move us from thy presence, while we trust thy love and power.

1. All for Jesus – thou hast loved us; all for Jesus - thou hast died;

All for Jesus – thou art with us; All for Jesus crucified.

1. All for Jesus – all for Jesus – this church’s song must be;

Till, at last, we all are gathered, one in love and one in thee.

**Blessing**

May the Blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Be among us and remain with us always, **Amen.**