

Taste and See that the Lord is Good¹

An Easter celebration for those worshipping online this Easter

Introduction

This lengthy introduction is to share the background to this part of our worship and why I have chosen to do it. I don't know how it will 'work' or feel but I pray it will be a special experience for us all.

In these very different and difficult times of Coronavirus nationally there has been much conversation about the shape of the worship that takes place for Easter Sunday. Many Christians would love to be able to share in an online celebration of Holy Communion where congregation members are able to receive bread and wine in their own home. Whilst many believe this would be an appropriate way to share Holy Communion² at the moment The Methodist Church does not permit such services to take place and as a Minister under the discipline of The Methodist Conference I am not able, or willing, to do so.

Whilst I could celebrate a service of Holy Communion on behalf of the church as part of our live streamed service I am not comfortable doing so. For me the sharing of the elements with all of God's people is as important a part of a service of Holy Communion as the taking, blessing and breaking and therefore to celebrate and not be able to share the elements is something I am not comfortable doing. In fact, at the moment I have decided that I will not celebrate Holy Communion again until I am able to share bread and wine with a church congregation.

As someone for whom celebrating the sacraments is at the heart of my calling this is not an easy decision. I have come to the decision because it is an equally important part of my calling to be alongside people. Therefore, for me, it is right that I share in the challenge and difficulty of not being able to receive Holy Communion rather than celebrating, receiving for myself and sharing with my family when others cannot.

It was in reflection and praying about Holy Communion in this time that I came to the question, *well what can we do on Easter Sunday?* What can we do that will be a physical act of remembrance, of participation, that would show that we are part of the body of Christ and enable us to celebrate the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection which brings new life to the world. This led me to think about other symbols for Easter and I kept coming back to eggs. Eggs have for many years represented the stone which was rolled away from Jesus' tomb. Eggs have been rolled, eaten, turned into chocolate and of course hidden by bunnies!

This Easter Sunday I invite each individual or group connecting to the live stream or using this service at home to bring an egg to worship, chocolate or hard boiled! If you don't have an egg to hand you an orange or satsuma would work just as well or you could draw an egg on a piece of paper.

We will share these prayers and our eggs as a different way to '*Taste and See that the Lord is Good*', to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection.

Rev. David Goodall
Easter 2020

Prayers - Please join in the words in bold type.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give you thanks and praise.

*You are invited to hold your egg,
representing God's world in your hand.*

Gracious God.

We thank you that

you are the creator of the world,

¹ Title taken from Psalm 34:8 'Taste and See that the Lord is Good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.'

² This is not the place for that discussion or the purpose of this celebration.

you brought the world into existence,
you created each of us to be part of your world,
you created each of us in your image to be your people.

We praise you that
although your people did not follow your way,
you were always faithful,
always at work amongst us through your steadfast love.

We praise you that
you sent your son Jesus Christ,
as a gift to the whole world,
that all who believe in him,
may be children of God.

**Blessing and honour, glory and power,
are rightly yours, all gracious God.**

*You are invited to unwrap or peel your egg,
representing our acceptance of God's gift of Jesus to the world.*

Lord Jesus,
we thank you and praise you that
you were born as one of us
the gift of a baby born in Bethlehem
who changed the world.
You showed us the way to live our lives
and revealed God's Kingdom to us.

Lord Jesus,
We are sorry that we don't always
follow your way,
listen to your voice,
share your love,
declare you as Lord.

**Forgive us and renew us
for the times we haven't followed you.**

Hear the good news,
your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Lord Jesus,
We thank you,
that you entered Jerusalem
as a King, where you were:
tried and condemned,
sentenced to death,
made to carry your own cross,
crucified and died for us.

We praise you that by your death on the cross,
you died our death,
defeated the power of death,
offering your forgiveness to all the world.

We praise you that death was not the end that
after three days you were raised from the dead,
the stone was rolled away from the tomb.

By your resurrection you brought
new life, eternal life, life in all its fullness,
to all the world.

**Blessing and honour, glory and power,
are rightly yours, all gracious God.**

*You are invited to roll your egg breaking it into pieces,
representing the stone rolled away from the tomb.*

Lord Jesus,
during your life and after your resurrection,
you called people to
follow you,
be your disciples,
live by your commandments,
invite others to follow you.

You made those who follow you the Body of Christ,
millions of people, throughout the ages,
sharing in your way, your truth, your life.

**We are the Body of Christ,
though we are in many places,
we all share in the new life
of Jesus' death and resurrection,
made possible by the cross and the empty tomb.**

*You are invited to eat a piece of your egg,
a symbolic act showing that you are part of the Body of Christ.*

As the body of Christ,
we are called by God to
serve together,
love together,
pray for one another.

**In these difficult and challenging days,
as we celebrate Easter,
we commit afresh to serve, love and pray together.**

We come today to hold before God
those who need his love, care and healing.
We lift to you Lord all those who are
suffering in anyway, especially those with Coronavirus,
those unwell in body, mind and spirit,
the bereaved,
those caring for others,
Key Workers serving and seeking to overcome the Coronavirus pandemic,
Those seeking to share God's love.

We pray for all who we know in need of God's care
naming each of them as we eat pieces of egg,
remembering that those we pray for
are also part of God's family.

You are invited to eat a piece of your egg for each person you name before God.

We offer all our prayers to God,
those spoken,

those who we have named
and those unspoken prayers which are deep in our hearts
as we say the Lord's Prayer together:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Later as you eat the rest of your egg remember all that it represents, the death and resurrection of Jesus which brings life to the world and all who are part of the Body of Christ. As you eat the pieces pray for and name before God all those you love or who are on your mind. As you eat, remember and pray, rejoice that we have tasted and seen the goodness of God.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!