

Dear all,

I attach below an Easter reflection written for us all by one of our readers Alec Parker. (*Our benefice is blessed to have two "readers", Alec and Karen Hatch, lay people who are trained to preach and lead worship*)

We are delighted to have our churches open for Holy week and Easter day services and look forward to welcoming you back into our buildings. **Sadly the 10.30am. Easter Day Service at Flecknoe has been cancelled due to building work over running.** If, however you are not yet able to join us in person then please do be assured of our prayers and good wishes for a joyous and blessed Easter.

Please do keep in touch with our services and information on our benefice website;
www.leanvalleychurches.co.uk

Please do contact me if I can help you in any way or prayers are needed for you or any of your family or friends.

We celebrate the wonderful news of the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Day and hopefully the gradual easing of lockdown – my love, blessings and prayers go out to you all.

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Easter Reflection.

On Easter Sunday, Jesus offers us the gift of presence and the gift of peace.

We are to know him in the breaking of the bread. Jesus does not wish to be insubstantial; he does not want to be a ghost. Instead he comes to us and invites us to touch him. He offers himself to us in ways that are intended to nourish and nurture us. He promises companionship.

So where are we to touch him in today's world? Where are we to walk with him? Where are we to find his hands and his feet? Where are we to find a piece of broiled fish and drink in his presence? Christianity is an embodied religion. It does not live between the pages of a book, rather it invites us to engage with our world. So we are to recognise the presence of Jesus whenever there are wounded hands and feet that turn to us for healing and wherever there is a road that we can walk down in his company.

The gift lies in recognising him even when he presents himself to us in hidden and unexpected ways .We need to believe that we can

Touch him in our everyday lives. We need to understand that we can walk with him. Our task is to seek out people who are needy and to turn our faces towards them rather than away from them this is not difficult to do for there are many wounded hands and feet that clamour for our attention. There are many hungry people who would love a bowl of fish, let alone a loaf of bread.

If Jesus is risen from the dead then we need proof; we need evidence. How can we secure this in today's world? The gospels suggest that the way forward is to open our hearts in love. No one is to be excluded, no situation is beyond the reach of grace. By believing this and putting it into practice we can become witnesses and carry the echo of his saving mission forwards into our world. Christian faith is not a personal possession. It is always for sharing. So everything comes full circle. We can be his witnesses. We can provide the evidence that he is risen.

With love and every Easter wish,

Alec.