

***He is Risen!***

April 2025

One of the What's App groups at Frodsham Methodist Church is full of flowers. The joy of walking through woods and past streams and gardens brings out the best of Kodak in many. The photos are beautiful with ever earlier blooming flowers singing God's praise in an array of colour.

In a Buddhist Temple, flowers are brought in and left to die. You see there withering until, eventually, they are moved as new ones are brought in. This is to symbolise the 'Circle of Life' as The Lion King would put it.

Life: Decay: Death: 'Reincarnation'.

In a Christian Church, there is a cross, sometimes with Jesus in agony reminding us of his suffering for us, and sometimes empty symbolising that not even death could thwart the purposes of God. The cross; the tomb are empty because Jesus died and rose again defeating sin allowing us to have a glimpse at how powerful the Creator of the universe *really* is; that we mortals cannot be but awestruck and fearful of the power of God. The power of God not given to bully or oppress, but the power of God who becomes weak that we may become strong, who comes to serve not be served; who inverts the notion of kingdom as one of power and high status to one of care, love, consideration and giving.

In a Christian Church we often find flowers. People are encouraged to use their gifts and creative talents and I have seen some amazing floral displays in churches. Flowers do provide such rich metaphors for life; the pruned rose will grow back ever more beautiful from generation to generation; and you can see why Buddhists use this metaphor too.

"How do you explain the Resurrection to an 8-year-old Gordon," I was once challenged with. Realising this is not culturally up to date, a film clip from a movie made before even the teachers in a school were born, I still reflect on ET, who has his Lazarus moment. He is resuscitated by the hearing of the call of his father and mother and this gentle whisper across the realms of space bring him back to life. It is a heart-warming moment. As Eliot leaves ET's 'tomb' he notices the flowers jerk back to life. This is the Easter 'bit' the Jesus 'bit', if you like; a metaphor of life after death. The flowers were dead and now come back to life. These dead flowers are resurrected. ET remains prone, coming back to life, resuscitation, the flowers, however, rise up; Being raised up is the literal interpretation of resurrection. 'Christ is alive, let Christians sing, the cross stands empty to the sky', the flowers and all of creation are redeemed and set free to praise the living Creator.

Their blooming colours shine out into the world; a resurrection witnessed by children who have the power to believe that new life is possible; 'Accept the kingdom of God' like a small child expresses Jesus. The children become the witnesses and recipients of miracles; the bikes raised up to sail over the moon into safety calms their storms.

The flowers are almost unnoticed, but Stephen Spielberg, a practicing Jew, living and working in a country full of Christian symbols and Churches, has them at the forefront of the miracle of resurrection and new life. He is willing to suspend 'reality' to bring hope and joy; not afraid to

show that new life is possible and we, too can rise up and bloom as bright and beautiful as any flower.

Happy endings always bring a tear of joy to my eyes. Yes, at the moment, there is plenty to weep about in this world God loves, yet the Resurrection of Christ can bring that hope, that joy the world needs as we seek to turn swords into ploughs and that the peace of God can reign amidst the world's angst because Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

*Gordon*

### **News:**

*It is with a heavy heart to tell of the passing of Brian Moore from the Hurst in Kingsley. A Local Preacher and stalwart of the Chapel in Kingsley, Brian leaves a big hole to be filled. His Service of Thanksgiving takes place at the Hurst on Tuesday April 29<sup>th</sup> at 12.30 PM.*

Many of us are blessed by the ministry of Mark Smyth from Saltney. Mark had a nasty fall whilst on holiday in Scotland (he is on the road to recovery now, praise God), and he has been reflecting on the blessing of this accident. He has been able to better understand the needs of the man at the pool of Bethesda who needed assistance to get into the water, and the faithfulness of the people who lowered the disabled man through the roof to meet Jesus. To know he is cared for, beloved and that Jesus walks with him, especially in this time of stationary adversity, has helped Mark gain a greater insight into how much God loves him, and the world. I thank Mark that I can use these words of reflection to share with us all as we journey on with the risen Lord.

**Norley Methodist Church** is hosting the Circuit's Easter Offering Service on Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup> at 4.00 PM. The theme is 'EDUCATION FOR ALL.'. As a supporter of the Soko Fund, a charity that focusses on funding women to go to University in Malawi, this is very close to my heart.

*The Easter Offering Service, organised by Methodist Women in Britain, is a wonderful example of how the Methodist Church stands alongside the poor, the marginalised and those of real need, especially women across this beautiful world. Please do fill in your envelopes in your Church and please come along to sing God's praise; to pray into Education for All and to hear the uplifting stories this Service brings to life.*

Oakmere Chapel has its farewell Service on Sunday June 8<sup>th</sup> – Pentecost Sunday – at 4.00 PM. The Preacher is John Bell. We will also be giving Long Service Certificates for some Local Preachers at this Service. The logistics of this Service will be published in May's Circuit Message. We continue to meet for prayer on a Monday morning at 11.00 am listening for God's voice. Please put this in your diary and please do continue to pray for Almighty God's guidance in discerning ways forward in Oakmere and in all our Churches and Chapels.

*Please, please, please, do be in touch with me if there any stories you wish to share. I hear whispers of good news; it would be lovely to get a fuller picture and to share some of these.*

May the risen Lord Jesus Christ bless each of us with that peace beyond all understanding Jesus gives to his disciples. Gordon