

## QUARANTINE REFLECTION 12 - 12/04/2020 - EASTER SUNDAY

ALLELUIA CHRIST IS RISEN  
HE IS RISEN INDEED  
ALLELUIA.

For many of my friends and family I guess today is mainly about chocolate eggs, fluffy chicks and bunnies but all of them respect that, for me and my church friends and family, Easter is much more than that.

I expect however if you were to ask most of my non-church friends which Christian festival means the most, the majority would probably say Christmas. And who could blame them? We have weeks of media coverage telling us how to prepare for the perfect Christmas from cards and gifts to the food we will put on the table, there are hundreds of programmes across all the channels telling us how we can have the ideal celebration. But we don't seem to have the same public preparedness for Easter beyond the best place to buy your eggs and your leg of lamb from. For the most important time in our Christian year the media focuses on the nice bit of the season, and that is okay but we have had quite a journey (Lent) to get to today, Easter morning - the most wonderful day in our calendar.

I've seen lots across social media about how people have debated about closed churches and should they really have their doors shut at this important festival. We in UK seem to be handling the bit about the buildings being closed but the church being very much alive really quite well. Today I was meant to be preaching at Gravesend and I was looking forward to meeting with them all again and celebrating in the Risen Jesus. But I will celebrate with them, I will pray and praise with them but just in a different way and I won't be the one that delivers the Easter message. That honour goes to one of our circuit superintendents Bonni-Belle. She will deliver our act of worship from somewhere in her home in front of her phone/ tablet/ computer and will preach to our circuit from across North Kent and possibly beyond. People join us from different areas of the UK and I think there were some from other countries (*ed. Australia and Nigeria for sure*).

Church is very much alive during this time of isolation, but more importantly Christ is alive and working through people in our communities. We have for now, put down the 'perfection' we strive for in church. We aren't organising the flowers, checking if the heating is on, making sure everyone has a hymn book or putting on our Sunday best and fixing smiles on our face. We are being the church or the people that Christ called us to be because we are communicating and we are loving each other and we are lifting them up.

All of us will wobble and some of us are going to struggle with this lockdown more than others but we, each of us, whether we are people of faith or none have had our lives thrown into complete turmoil.

This past week I have shared my musings about Holy Week, the week we have just travelled for me has been or has seemed much darker than ones I have previously journeyed and I am sure it has been no different for each of you reading today. The indiscriminate virus that has as each day moves into another claims more lives; some of which will be known to us. Each cough or sneeze creates some fear and uncertainty - is it hay fever? or is it something more sinister?

Yet out of the darkness of fear and uncertainty there is so much light. That light shines bright in the people who are getting shopping for their neighbours. The light beams strongly in the shopkeeper who goes above and beyond to get just what the customer is searching for.

The radiant joy that beams from the faces of loved ones when you make the video call.

The prayer meetings that have connected people who may never have come together to pray or share concerns before. The church what's app groups that have connected church families in ways that just could not have happened before isolation.

The tiny pleasure from being able to go to church and worship with people you may never have met before in your pyjamas and fluffy dressing gown, with a nice mug of tea and cuddling the dog or the cat.

This morning reminds me of the words from the prophet Isaiah - "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned"  
- Isaiah 9:2

We have walked in darkness and we will probably find ourselves there every now and again but there is so much more light out there than I ever remember there being before.

CHRIST IS ALIVE

Happy Easter Everyone.

"We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him." - ROMANS 6:9

