

Service Clyde & Alexandra April 24th 2022

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are the children of God,  
called to see before us the risen life of Christ  
and to share in sacred meals with our Saviour.

We have reached out and touched this life,  
in gifts of faith and hope  
to which we can bear glad witness  
in the church and the world.

Our future will never be the same again,  
because we believe that we are loved and forgiven  
and that death will never defeat  
the courage and commitment of divine life.

Here, in this place, the Christ is among us,  
present in the Holy Spirit  
and reassuring us that abundance awaits us,  
if we will follow in faithfulness and grace.

Let us worship the living God!

HYMN WOV 367 [All praise to our redeeming Lord](#)

PRAYER OF APPROACH

HYMN WOV 320 [Breath on me breathe of God](#)

BIBLE READINGS: [John 20: 19 – 31](#)

REFLECTION *Blessed are they*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Assurance of Pardon

Christ comes into every shadowed corner of our lives  
with the light of Easter.

Christ comes into the locker rooms of our faults,  
and gifts us with grace and hope.

Christ comes, to fill us with peace,  
that we may proclaim the good news of mercy  
and forgiveness.

Thanks be to God.

Christ has come to us. Amen.

HYMN AA 64 How is Jesus present?

TALK

If you examine a piece of fine silver you will find on it somewhere  
some marks placed there by the jeweller or manufacturer.

You will find initials or some other sign engraved on the bottom of  
the item (as in the case of a cup) or on the backside of a display

object, on the underside of the handle of a fork or spoon or, as is the case with rings, on the inside of a band.

These markings are called Hallmarks and they have that name because originally, many years ago, all items made of silver - whether pots, dishes, trays, utensils or jewellery were produced by a member of a guild or union, and at one time those guild members both met and worked in large rooms called Halls.

Hallmarks are etched or engraved into every item for two reasons,:

The first reason is to show that the item is actually what it appears to be - that it is in fact an item made of pure silver, an item that is not mixed with other, cheaper materials.

A Hallmark is a guarantee of quality and purity.

The second thing a Hallmark does is tell you where the product comes from.

In other words what Hall it comes from, and in some cases, what individual made it.

In England, Hallmarks are not only composed of letters or initials, often, and especially in the case of larger items, there is normally a crest incorporated into the markings.

If there is a leopard's head - that piece comes from London.

If there is a castle - the silver comes from Edinburgh.

The Hallmark of the guild in Sheffield is a crown, and that of Birmingham is an anchor.

All this business about Hallmarks started in the year 1300 when King Edward of England passed a law saying that no precious metal could be sold without a guarantee of its purity being marked on it.

From 1300 to this very day the practice of Hallmarking has continued in one form or another.

The reason I have gone into all this detail about Hallmarks is because Hallmarks can help us to understand today's scripture readings and the issues that they speak to.

To begin with, I want you to imagine that you are not here sitting in a well-lit Church, but in a dark room with the window shutters closed tight even though it is probably a lovely Sunny day. You are one of those disciples we heard about in the Bible reading this morning. How would you feel knowing what happened to Jesus on Good Friday when they hammered nails into His hands and feet? After this happening to our teacher Jesus - what would the Jews do to us,

his followers, if they got their hands on us, his disciples. They may arrest us and do what they did to Him.

As if that wasn't enough, it appears someone has stolen Jesus' body. Then Mary comes back babbling on about seeing Him alive and thinking He was the gardener, while Peter and John were just very quiet and saying nothing after they had visited the tomb.

Can you imagine the fear! Then suddenly Jesus appears out of nowhere. I expect your first thoughts would be that it was a mirage – not real – your mind playing jokes on you. Then He speaks those words He had often spoken “Peace be with you”.

Is that enough to convince you He is real? No. You are still not completely convinced until He shows you his hands, feet and side. Would you then believe it was really Him?

No wonder Thomas had so much trouble believing what they were telling him when he finally came on the scene. If the other disciples had trouble believing when they had seen Jesus, how on earth could Thomas be expected to believe completely when he had not seen Him. After all, they hadn't believed at first either and having more people telling him didn't make it any easier for Thomas to believe. What he also needed was proof.

He said “I want to see the nail marks in Jesus hands and put my finger where the nails had been and to put my hand in His side, otherwise I will not believe it”.

I am sure you have had situations where you have said that unless you see the evidence, you cannot believe it. You may even think at the time that it is impossible.

It wasn't until a week later that Jesus re-appeared to the disciples, where the first person He spoke to after saying “Peace be with you” was Thomas. He says to him, “Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe”. At this Thomas immediately believes and says to Him, “My Lord and my God”. He saw the Hallmark of Jesus.

How much harder it is for us to believe when we do not see the Hallmarks of a pure person – Jesus.

It is believed that later in life, Thomas became the apostle to the nations east of Israel.

Because he saw the risen Lord with his own eyes, Thomas believed.

Because he believed he went forth to do what all the other disciples did. He went forth and spread the good news about Jesus. - That Jesus died so that we would know the love of God, and that He rose

from the dead so that we might know that God's love is forever and that all who follow Him will receive eternal life.

Thomas died a martyr's death in India.

So many times we Christians feel comfortable in Church but are fearful to let people out in the community know we are followers of Jesus because we may be ridiculed. Like the disciples, we close the doors and shutters tight so that no one will discover us. Jesus knows our fear just as He knew the disciples' fear, therefore He says to us "Peace be with you. Do not fear the world outside for I am with you".

A few years ago a woman by the name of Anne Herbert - a writer who lived in California accidentally started a movement called 'practising random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty.'

She came up with the phrase while doodling on a restaurant placemat in Sausalito one day. A man sitting nearby thought it was wonderful and copied it on his own placemat.

And suddenly people all over were copying the phrase down and doing what it suggests.

The objective of those who subscribe to this movement is quite simply to do kind things for other people for absolutely no reason at all, other than the fact that they want to make the world a better place.

Those who commit random acts of kindness do things like

- pay the toll for their own car at a toll gate - and the toll for the next six cars behind them.
- or take a beautiful plant into the police station to brighten the environment
- or let the person in the grocery line behind you go before you.
- or smile at a harried clerk in an office,
- or complement a stranger on a bus on how good they look.

According to Anne Herbert some of the things that have been done by those who have caught the spirit of practicing random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty include:

- shovelling the snow from a neighbours walk when no one is looking
- leaving a generous tip for a waiter who has provided poor service
- planting daffodils along a highway

- writing to an old school teacher to let them know what a difference they made to her students

- going out and scrubbing graffiti off park benches.

"Here's the idea", Herbert says, "Anything you think there should be more of, do it randomly. Kindness can build on itself as much as violence can."

In a sense that is what our Christian faith is about –

it's about doing acts of kindness, and committing acts of beauty, and doing so without regard to the merits of those for whom we do those deeds. Without regard to questioning whether or not anyone has deserve or earned our affection, time, or our care.

The first Christian Community was so dynamic - so loving - so sharing – so united - because it lived wholeheartedly for the Risen Christ.

The first believers knew with every fibre of their being that God's love conquered all - even death itself - and they were eager to share that love with others - that they might know the blessedness of life as God meant it to be.

Christians today can take comfort from Thomas – it is alright for us to hesitate and wonder. We come to belief in different ways. Belief is more than intellectual agreement. A person who believes gives one's whole self to something. Thomas did just that, and you can do the same today.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

ANZAC DAY Remembrance

HYMN HIOS 61 [Honour the dead](#)

BENEDICTION

THREEFOLD AMEN

Linda, Ruth and Sheryll, the L/C Team