

Lectionary readings: Jeremiah 31: 1-6; Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3: 1-4; John 20: 1-18 (Easter Day)

For reflection and prayer

Jesus is alive and present with us!

- **Jeremiah 31:** *'They found grace out in the desert Israel, out looking for a place to rest, met God out looking for them.'* (v2 The Message) May we find grace whatever we are going through this week; and may we encounter God out looking for us. *'God told them, 'I've never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love and more love.'* (v3 The Message) This is the God we worship - a God who loves, loves and goes on loving. May we encounter this loving God every day this week. This is a time for rejoicing and dancing. May we join in the dance of life this week as we celebrate the risen Christ's presence with us.
- **Psalm 118:** *'This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.'* (v24) *'The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone.'* (v22) God has come in Jesus and revealed Himself to us and, even though rejected, He is the foundation of the church. Today is God's gift to us; let's live it to the full, giving thanks for all God has done for us in Jesus. *'Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His faithful love endures for ever.'* (v1) Let's celebrate Jesus' love.
- **Colossians 3:** The life that we Christians are living is a new life, a different life, because Christ is alive within us. We don't have to wait till after death to experience life with God; we're invited to share in that life here and now. *'Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you.'* (v2 The

Message) Let's be alert to God's presence with us and within us this week, so that we're not 'shuffling along' through life, but dancing with joy and thanksgiving, open to God surprising us.

- **John 20:** Mary didn't recognise Jesus, perhaps because she was weeping and in distress, perhaps because she was not expecting to see Him alive. It was only when He spoke her name that she knew who He was - her beloved Lord. When we are in distress, turmoil, afraid, anxious, despairing, often we can't sense Jesus' presence with us; but all the time He is calling our name lovingly, longing to give Himself to us in love and share our pain. Let's be encouraged and filled with hope this week as we find Him alongside us, within us. God is calling us to go out and find Him in the people we meet, hear His voice in the voices of friends and strangers, reach out with love to all so that they too will know the presence of the risen Christ in their midst.

A prayer

*Thanks be to You, loving God,
for the utter joy of Easter,
death and darkness overcome by life and light;
the pain of the cross swallowed up
in the dawn hope of resurrection.*

*Thanks be to You, loving God,
for the power and passion of the Gospel:
to transform,
and complete,
and make new, in Jesus' name.*

(Donald Hilton)