

Mark 16.8:

So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

A footnote at the end of the last chapter in Mark's gospel in the Jerusalem Bible states, 'Many manuscripts omit verses 9 to 20 and the ending to this gospel may not have been written by Mark, though it is old enough.' When I began preaching over 60 years ago, I swore by the commentary on Mark's gospel by Denis Nineham. These days I swear by Morna Hooker's, but in that respect, they are in agreement. Mark's gospel in its original form did not have a Walt Disney ending, as someone once put it, in which everything has a neat happy ending, tying up the loose ends. It is more like the kind of cliffhanger I remember from Saturday Matinee at the Sheerness Argosy, designed to bring us back the following week. But it was the very nature of the gospel to end in this way, as Morna suggests: 'It is part of the scandal of the gospel that the only evidence for the Resurrection is a message entrusted to a group of women.'

Mark was written within living memory of the events he describes. Not so either of the two added endings to Mark's account, which may date from the mid second century. By then someone decided that there needed to be more than Mark had left us with. And there it is: a summary, a compendium, of eye-witness evidence, apparently drawn from the accounts of Matthew, Luke, John, and perhaps Paul. Still worth reading, of course. Still scripture.

But in a strange way, Mark's gospel reads better without it. As has been pointed out by some, verse 8 leaves us with a note of fear which ought perhaps to be there. It has even been said that if we are not afraid, we haven't understood. A faithful person isn't necessarily a fearless person. To find the risen Christ we have to go looking, and he will find us. But that is no easy undertaking. If the early church lived in a time of great danger, we live in a time of no less danger. Ask a Christian living in Iran or Gaza or Pakistan or Israel, for that matter. They know what it means to carry a cross. Spend time with the churches which offer sanctuary to people of all faiths and none against oppression or attack, at great cost to themselves, as I saw in Bosnia and Kosovo. Speak to the Revd Dr Louisa Pitman, who has just returned from the Red Sea, whose ministry as a Royal Navy chaplain has been to be alongside the crew of HMS Richmond, under daily attack.

It is in such places that the risen Christ is to be found. As an American scholar-preacher, Brian Blount, spells it out: 'The...risen Lord awaits us not in the empty tomb or in some future or remote place. The risen Lord awaits us...on our city streets, in the halls of our schools, in the wards of our hospitals and behind the bars of our prisons.' In the words of Rowan Williams: 'There is nowhere, in heaven or on earth, where Jesus cannot be, there is no creature incapable of coming into relationship with him.'

The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed. Always and everywhere and in surprising places. Alleluia!

Peter

Resources/Good News**Methodist Homelessness and Housing Gathering**

In Birmingham on 8 May, Methodists from across the UK will explore the why, the what and the how to tackle the national homelessness and housing crisis. Find out more about the event here [Methodist Homelessness and Housing Gathering - Methodist Church](#)

With a similar focus, this video showcases what a church in Kettering is doing to tackle loneliness and isolation, helping to bring people together.

[How this Church is tackling loneliness and isolation with a Warm Welcome space \(youtube.com\)](#)

UPCOMING CIRCUIT EVENTS:

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
20 April	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
20 April	4.00pm to 6.00pm	Neighbourhood Party	Trinity, Woking
20 April	7.00pm	Songs of Praise	West Horsley
25 April	10.30 to 12 noon	Coffee and Cake	St. Mary's Guildford
27 April	10am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill

Neighbourhood Party

Saturday 20th April 2024

4:00 – 6:00pm

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, BREWERY ROAD, WOKING

You are warmly invited to our
Neighbourhood Tea Party.

Transport can be arranged.

**There will be a high tea,
entertainment, and a fun quiz.**



Please join us for a jolly good time, meeting friends old and new.

Contact us via phone, post or email
to be added to our official invite list.

Please invite anyone who would
enjoy a sociable afternoon out.



PHONE

07749 094064 (Marian)
07729 301713 (Pauline)



POST

Trinity Methodist Church,
Brewery Road, Woking, GU214LH



E-MAIL

trinitywoking@btinternet.com



The Methodist Church



Songs of Praise



Saturday April 20th
Horsley
Methodist Church

(next to W.H. Village Hall)

7.00p.m. Come and sing a selection of favourite hymns. Phone 01483 282474 for more details or to make requests.