

EASTER MESSAGE

Dear Cyncoed Methodist Family,

I bring you Easter greeting from Ghana, specifically Agona Kwanyako, where I grew up and had most of my Christian nurture. I trust that the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ brings all of us hope that all is under God's control and that all will be well. Indeed, **FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST TAKES AWAY OUR FEAR.**

Matthew's account of the resurrection of Jesus features fear prominently (Matthew 28:1-10): An angel of God came down to roll out the stone covering the tomb, resulting in an earthquake. When the guards saw the angel, they were afraid and become like dead men. When the women got to the tomb, the angel told them 'do not be afraid'. After being told that Christ is risen, they hurried away from the tomb with fear and joy. When the women finally met Jesus, he told them: 'do not be afraid'. We don't get the feel of the effect of the fear on the women, but in the case of the guards, they became like dead men. This is exactly what fear does to us. Fear takes life away from us. Fear incapacitates us. Fear deprives us of the vitality that could move to do something about our situation.

The truth is we all have fears of one degree or another. COVID-19 has brought with it another level of fear – fear of getting the virus, fear of being stigmatised, fear of isolation and fear of death. The fear is so gripping that we have lost focus on the good news of those recovering from COVID-19 and those responding to treatment. FEAR is False Evidence Appearing Real and this is what COVID-19 has done to the world.

The good news is that the resurrection of Christ gives to us victory over fear. The angel told the women: 'do not be afraid' and Jesus said to the women: 'Do not be afraid'. In this challenging time, I invite you to replace your FEAR with FAITH in the risen Christ who is looking you in the face and saying: 'do not be afraid.'

I pray for you that your faith in the risen Christ will raise you above the fear and panic of COVID-19. May the peace of the risen Christ be upon you to drive away your fears and give you this hope – because Christ lives, we can face COVID-19 and be victorious. **HAPPY EASTER.**