

Moderator's message this Easter

A message from Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland:

I recall, as a student, attending morning worship on the first Sunday in Advent. There was an expectation of Christmas; but in announcing the first hymn, *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*, the minister proclaimed that every Sunday is Easter Sunday!

How true. For we are Easter people. Resurrection and renewal are all around us, if we care to look – springtime and harvest, in regeneration, in healing, in forgiveness.

The events of the first Easter Day transformed history and our world, but it was infinitely more than an event in history. As the first disciples soon realised, the Risen Jesus is not confined by time or place. As Easter people, we know his risen presence with us today.

And what assurance and hope that brings; not least in a world where there is so much darkness. We know that this Easter, brothers and sisters, not only in Ukraine, but in many other places of strife across the world, will be experiencing grief, anxiety, and suffering. For many, the consequences of pandemic and economic shock are keenly felt. Climate crisis has not gone away. For some, there will be the individual pain of the loss of a loved one, or anxiety about illness or other personal grief.

John's Gospel tells us that the light which shines in the

darkness has never been extinguished and the Easter message affirms that. For the Risen Jesus' first words to the disciples were 'Peace be with you' and 'Do not be afraid.'

Our prayer, this Easter, must be that those who are suffering or are afraid will know that they are remembered by God and experience that reassurance of peace and hope.

Such comfort won't necessarily cancel the physical pain or anxiety, but it does remind us that through his suffering and passion on the Cross, Jesus has suffered the worst that violent humanity can do. He hears our cries and understands our pain. But through his resurrection, love has conquered hate, hope has prevailed over despair and life has triumphed over death.

What a message that is for a violent and anxious world! What a challenge to us, as Jesus' followers, to take that message to all peoples everywhere and to serve our Risen Lord through our service to others in a suffering world, a world crying out for justice and peace.

May you all know God's love and blessing this Easter Day and may your lives be illuminated by the light of the first Easter morning throughout all the days ahead. For Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!