



Worship and Pastoral
Resources for "Staying
Connected – week 7"
Week Beginning Sunday 3rd
May 2020

Opening words

O Lord open our lips
And we shall praise your name.
Alleluia Christ is Risen!
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!
Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts
The whole earth is full of his glory!

Opening prayer

Creator God we ask you will be with each one of us as we draw close to you now in worship. In this time of uncertainty remind us that you will never change, and you will always be with us. We thank you that as you have created the world around us, so you have created us. Help us to know your presence now as we worship. Amen

Call to worship: Psalm 95

Come, let us sing to the Lord
and rejoice in the Rock of our Saviour.
Let us come and give thanks in his presence,
and greet Him with songs of praise.

**The Lord is a great God,
a king supreme over all.
In his hands are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain heights are his;
the sea is his – he made it –
and the dry land was formed by his
hands.**

Come, let us kneel and adore,
let us worship the Lord our maker.

**He is our God and we are his people,
the flock he leads with his hand.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:

**as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

STF 102 For the beauty of the earth

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:

***Gracious God to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.***

For the beauty of each hour,
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of night:
***Gracious God to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.***

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight:
***Gracious God to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.***

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above,
Pleasures pure and undefiled:
***Gracious God to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.***

For each perfect gift of thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven:
***Gracious God to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise***

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God:
For the love of our Father, the Maker of all,
The giver of all good things:
**Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God**
For the world's beauty and the changing seasons
And for the life we have been given:
**Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God**
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Who lived and worked among us:
**Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God**
For his suffering and death on the cross
And his resurrection to new life:
**Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God**
For his rule over all things
And his presence in the world:
**Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God**
For the Holy Spirit the giver of life,
Who teaches and guides us:
**Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God**

For the grace of the Spirit
In the work of the church
And the life of the world:
Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer of confession

Let us confess our sins:

Loving God,

We have sinned against you

In what we have thought, said and done.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves

We are truly sorry

And turn away from what is wrong.

Forgive us for the sake of your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Silence

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

This is his gracious word:

'Your sins are forgiven'

Amen. Thanks be to God.

STF 102 I will sing the wondrous story

I will sing the wondrous story

Of the Christ who died for me

How he left his home in glory

For the cross on Calvary

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story

Of the Christ who died for me

Sing it with the saints in glory

Gathered by the crystal sea

I was lost but Jesus found me

Found the sheep that went astray

Raised me up and gently led me

Back into the narrow way

Days of darkness still come o'er me

Sorrows path I often tread

But the Saviour still is with me

By his hand I'm safely led

He will keep me till the river

Rolls its waters at my feet

Then he'll bear me safely over

Where the loved ones I shall meet

Lectionary Readings for Easter 4:

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside still waters,

he restores my soul.

He guides me along the right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk

through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow

me

all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD

forever.

John 10: 1-10

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore, Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. **This is the word of the Lord: Thanks be to God.**

Thoughts from God's Word

On our daily walk in such wonderful countryside, Graham and I have had the joy of seeing so much of God's amazing creation springing into life in these days. We've found new paths and ways we've never walked before, we've been excited by blue tits nesting in a new birdbox in the garden, the first two swallows seen last week, bluebells, blossom and many sheep with their lambs – new life is all around us.

Yesterday, as we walked towards the field that leads down to Chatsworth bridge, we heard the bleating cry of the lambs before we arrived there and then the louder cry of sheep calling their lambs. Interestingly for us, the lambs and the sheep were all numbered by their shepherd, and we could see which mother was with her own lambs and where the lost ones were. The shepherd wants each lamb to have the best care and the shepherd's care was obvious in the markings. We watched a while as one by one the mothers and the lambs became united again, the lambs fed and then skipped off following their mothers.

This familiar Psalm of David, Psalm 23, was in my mind as we watched. David describes the Lord as a shepherd. Sheep are completely dependent on their shepherd for provision, guidance and protection. The gospel writer, John, calls Jesus the Good Shepherd and as he is our Shepherd, we are his sheep, the flock under his care. Because of that we're not fearful because he calls us to follow him into all the right places and along all the right paths. We don't have need of numbers because the one we are called to follow knows each of our names and he calls us to follow him and stay close to him, and in that way, we show that we belong to Christ.

The psalmist, David, speaks of green pastures, still waters and paths to walk along and we've certainly enjoyed having time and space to be able to enjoy the wonderful footpaths and countryside in this beautiful part of God's world. He has provided so much for us. As we walk on life's journey, even in these most difficult of days, we can know that our Shepherd will guide us and lead us. We can know, like the psalmist, "He restores my soul". For me that means a sense of God's touch on the deepest part of my life, my innermost being connecting with God and knowing that He is there and that he understands me more than I know myself. Through all that comes the peace that passes all understanding that St Paul talks about.

In these difficult days, He is caring for us and we are being given time and space to walk with him. As our Shepherd he protects us, we are given space to wait patiently with him and perhaps discover his great love afresh. These are life changing days in which we can

be nurtured, as we seek God in His word and in prayer. The new life that is all around us in creation is a reminder of the true reason for **our** existence and is spelt out by Jesus in John 10:10 "I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full." The life that Jesus brings is abundantly rich and full. It is eternal yet it begins immediately. Life in Christ is lived on a higher plane because of his overflowing forgiveness love and guidance. Every one of us can take hold of this life, even if in these days we feel lost, the Shepherd is waiting to guide us home.

As we journey out of these days into new times, we will need to ask him the way. Perhaps, as well as discovering new physical paths, God will show us a new spiritual path, a change of direction for you and me, and also for our churches. Now is the time to ready ourselves, through prayerful reflection, so that as the Body of Christ we are prepared to seize the great opportunities and challenges that are before us.

He wants us to remember that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and that even in this storm of life we can know his peace. He promises to guide and protect us through life to bring us into his house forever. Nothing will ever be quite the same again, apart from our faithful and unchanging God. Our next hymn reminds us that God has given us his Spirit so that we can continue his work.

STF 338 There is a Redeemer

There is a Redeemer

Jesus, God's own Son

Precious Lamb of God, Messiah

Holy One

Thank you, oh my Father

For giving us Your Son

And leaving Your Spirit

'Til the work on earth is done

Jesus my Redeemer

Name above all names

Precious Lamb of God, Messiah

Oh, for sinners slain

Thank you, oh my Father

For giving us Your Son

And leaving Your Spirit

'Til the work on earth is done

When I stand in Glory

I will see His face

And there I'll serve my King forever

In that Holy Place

Thank you, oh my Father

For giving us Your Son

And leaving Your Spirit

'Til the work on earth is done

Intercessions – Imagination Prayer Walk

In this time of prayer, we are going to go for a walk in our imagination. The words will move us on in our walk, but they will be inviting you to pray for the familiar people and places that you experience in your life, so the praying is up to you. Just use your imagination

Let's set off (better take your coat). Imagine that you are just stepping out of your home and looking around you at the familiar sights..... houses, shops, fields, the river, parks, places where your friends and neighbours live.... and where they have their dreams and their fears..... ordinary people, sad people, excited people, anxious people now in Lockdown... pray for them – your neighbours.

Now, in your imagination continue walking down the road, passing the houses where you have friends and new acquaintances.....pray for them as you pass.....remember their needs, their hope....walk on until you get to the shops, and watch - only a few people now, scurrying in and quickly out..... so serious..... remember the old man who always looked slightly bewildered, wonder how he is coping....and many others in your community.....pray for them.

Carry on walking, and in your imagination come to the place where people usually work, an unlit office, a closed dentist, a silent factory, and walk more slowly here.... pray for those who cannot go to work at present.... and remember also the thousands of people who desperately want to get back to work...and anyone you know who has been made redundant or who is at home, furloughed.... pray for them.

Walk on past the school, use your imagination, remember the energy of the children and how their excited voices used to ring around the playground, full of life and hope.... give thanks for the children.... pray for the parents and children at home together...pray for the teachers, those still at work..... hold all of them in the warmth of God's love.

Walk on, further, past the hospital entrance, or the local care home and the surgery....and pray for those who are caring for the sick – our doctors, our nurses our carers, hospital porters and cleaners.....and pray now for all who have been bereaved.....ask for the touch of Christ on each and every person.

And then look up and see the church building, doors firmly shut for now...on it a cross, symbol of a God who loves the world so much that he gave his only Son... loves the world, all of it.... loves the people, all of them.....and gives us hope for a brighter future.

We are reminded that **we are** the church....so the church isn't closed. Let us pray for the Church family.

Let us ask God for how we can share his love in these days...and where he wants us to walk when these unusual times are through.

Heavenly Father we place all these prayers into your hands and once again offer to be your hands and feet in your world. In the name of Christ our Lord. Amen

STF 519 Father I place into your hands

Father, I place into your hands
The things I cannot do,
Father, I place into your hands
The things that I've been through.
Father, I place into your hands
The way that I should go,
For I know I always can trust you.

Father, I place into your hands
My friends and family.
Father, I place into your hands
The things that trouble me.
Father, I place into your hands
The person I would be,
For I know I always can trust you.

Father, we love to see your face,
We love to hear your voice.
Father, we love to sing your praise
And in your name rejoice.
Father, we love to walk with you
And in your presence rest,
For we know we always can trust you.

Father, I want to be with you
And do the things you do.
Father, I want to speak the words
That you are speaking too.
Father, I want to love the ones
That you will draw to you,
For I know that I am one with you

Blessing: Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

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