

An act of worship for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter and the start of Christian Aid Week

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear friends, this week we are using the order of service prepared by Christian Aid for the annual Christian Aid Week of fundraising. I pray that this worship will enable us to feel part of the global community of God's people even during this time of physical isolation. With love and prayers, Rev James.

Gathering prayer

**God of all the Earth, be present with us now, in each of our homes, as we connect together. Build us into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you through Jesus Christ, our risen redeemer and healer. Amen.**

Hymn

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| <p>1 Let us build a house where love can dwell<br/>and all can safely live,<br/>a place where saints and children tell<br/>how hearts learn to forgive;<br/>built of hopes and dreams and visions,<br/>rock of faith and vault of grace;<br/>here the love of Christ shall end divisions:<br/><i>All are welcome, all are welcome,<br/>all are welcome in this place.</i></p> <p>2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,<br/>and words are strong and true,<br/>where all God's children dare to seek<br/>to dream God's reign anew.<br/>Here the cross shall stand as witness<br/>and as symbol of God's grace;<br/>here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:</p> <p>3 Let us build a house where love is found<br/>in water, wine and wheat:<br/>a banquet hall on holy ground,<br/>where peace and justice meet.<br/>Here the love of God, through Jesus,<br/>is revealed in time and space,<br/>as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:</p> | <p>4 Let us build a house where hands will reach<br/>beyond the wood and stone<br/>to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,<br/>and live the Word they've known.<br/>Here the outcast and the stranger<br/>bear the image of God's face;<br/>let us bring an end to fear and danger:</p> <p>5 Let us build a house where all are named,<br/>their songs and visions heard<br/>and loved and treasured,<br/>taught and claimed<br/>as words within the Word.<br/>Built of tears and cries and laughter,<br/>prayers of faith and songs of grace,<br/>let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:</p> |
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Prayer

**As we turn on the tap we turn our hearts towards you, O God.  
As we wet our hands renew our thoughts, so we might be transformed.  
As we lather soap between fingers and over all our hands, purge from us all that brings us harm  
and might harm others.  
Remove the invisible guilt and shame that so often keeps us from you.  
As we rinse our hands, we trust in your overflowing grace, making all things new. Amen.**

Psalm 31:1-5;15-16

**In you, O LORD, I seek refuge;  
do not let me ever be put to shame;  
in your righteousness deliver me.**  
**Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me speedily.**  
**Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to save me.**  
**You are indeed my rock and my fortress;  
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,  
take me out of the net that is hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.**  
**Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.**  
**My times are in your hand;  
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.**  
**Let your face shine upon your servant;  
save me in your steadfast love.**

John 14:1-14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

## Hymn

- 1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here ;  
come bow before him now  
with reverence and fear :  
in him no sin is found —  
we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here.
- 2 Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around ;  
he burns with holy fire,  
with splendour he is crowned :  
how awesome is the sight —  
our radiant King of light !  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.
- 3 Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place ;  
he comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister his grace :  
no work too hard for him —  
in faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.

## Reflection

The words of Jesus in today's Gospel reading are often used at funerals or at times of bereavement – times like now for many in our community, the country and the world. But, Jesus offers us the promise of eternal life and encourages us to believe and trust in him, even in times of distress (Jesus said these words while preparing the disciples for his own death).

The questions of Thomas and Philip remind us that it's ok for us to get or fully understand the words of comfort and hope Jesus gives us. It's ok for us to ask questions and to bring those to Jesus too in our prayer, Bible reading and conversations with others. It is perhaps through this honest wrestling that we grow deeper in our faith and discipleship and allows our hearts not to be troubled or afraid as we continue to: pray for others; support others by giving to organisations like Christian Aid (you can give, if you are able to, at [www.caweek.org.uk](http://www.caweek.org.uk)); show love and care to others in our community.

## Prayer

God our refuge, we come to you with open hands, some of us with hearts full of questions, some of us bruised by bereavement, some of us fearful of what the future holds, all of us stunned by the events of this year.

Draw close to us now in each of our homes as we place our honest questions and hopes into your open, resurrected, yet scarred hands.

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With the honesty of the psalmist, the wrestling questions of Job, and the lament of the prophets, we bring to you our questions or our silence. *(Hold your index finger and, in silence, ask the question that most burdens your heart or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)*

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear the cry of our hearts, Lord, silent and aloud, for bereaved neighbours, near and far.

Comfort those pained by being absent, and hold close those who are hurting alone. *(Hold your ring finger and pray for comfort for those you know who are bereaved or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)*

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In this season of Easter, renew us with resurrection hope that while weeping lingers in this night, joy will come with the morning. *(Hold your middle finger and in the silence tell God what you are most looking forward to in the future or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)*  
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

On this Christian Aid Week Sunday, we pray for and with communities across the world who are most vulnerable to coronavirus.

We pray for people living in refugee camps and city slums, with limited sanitation facilities, who are unable to wash their hands regularly, and have little opportunity to isolate from others.

We pray for Christian Aid partners working to provide soap and buckets, communicating clear, accurate information, raising the voices of the most vulnerable and ensuring they are kept as safe as possible. *(Hold your thumb as you pray for the most vulnerable, those closest to God's heart, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)*

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those of us who are self-isolating, which can sometimes feel like we aren't doing anything, remind us that we are all doing our part, and saving lives by staying at home. *(Hold your little finger and ask God for what you need, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)*

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for much wisdom and resources for those in local and national authority for all frontline and key workers here in Britain, Ireland and across the world. *(Put your hands together and pray for the many frontline workers and volunteers and for Christian Aid partners working to help others across the world, or simply sit in silence before God. Hold the silence together.)*

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we have clapped to honour them, we clap our hands now in praise of your glorious creation, and with the hope that the first shoots of another possible world are coming into view. *(Clap your hands in praise of God's glorious creation and with the hope of new possibilities for the world.)*

God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Our Father...*

## Hymn

- 1 Be thou my vision,  
O Lord of my heart,  
be all else but naught to me,  
save that thou art ;  
be thou my best thought  
in the day and the night,  
both waking and sleeping,  
thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom,  
be thou my true word,  
be thou ever with me,  
and I with thee, Lord ;  
be thou my great Father,  
thy child let me be ;  
be thou in me dwelling,  
and I one with thee.
- 3 Be thou my breastplate,  
my sword for the fight ;  
be thou my whole armour,  
be thou my true might ;  
be thou my soul's shelter,  
be thou my strong tower :  
O raise thou me heavenward,  
great Power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not,  
nor earth's empty praise :  
be thou mine inheritance  
now and always ;  
be thou and thou only  
the first in my heart :  
O Sovereign of heaven,  
my treasure thou art.
- 5 High King of heaven,  
thou heaven's bright Sun,  
O grant me its joys  
after victory is won ;  
Great Heart of my own heart,  
whatever befall,  
still be thou my vision,  
O Ruler of all.

## Blessing

**May the presence of the Creator refresh you,  
may the comfort of the Son renew you,  
may the inspiration of the Spirit restore you to be love in action,  
even from a distance,  
in our neighbourhoods, near and far,  
this day and for evermore. Amen.**