

Worship for 3rd Sunday after Easter (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

*Welcome: to worship for 3rd Sunday of Easter.
We are grateful to Sam, Tim, and Peter who are
all taking part this week. If any of you would like
to take part, then please get in touch with me on
revpeter.mwc@gmail.com*

THE PREPARATION

Call to Worship

When they asked, he gave them bread of heaven
in plenty. Ps 105:40

We gather to worship God, Source of All,
Word of Truth, Breath of Life,
One God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn Stf 409 Let us Build a House Where Love
Can Dwell**

**Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:**

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

**Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:**

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

**Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.***

**Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.***

**Let us build a house where all are named,
the songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.***

Prayer of Invocation and Adoration

Living God, long ago, faithful women proclaimed
the good news of Jesus' resurrection, and the
world was changed forever. Teach us to keep
faith with them, that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep, and our faith as true. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, in whom we know the power of redemption, you stand among us in the shadows of our time. As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life, be our strength and comfort. Uphold us with knowledge of the final morning when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son, we will share in his resurrection.

God of freedom:

Redeem us...

God of life:

Restore us.

God of hope:

Liberate us.

Silence

Absolution

Creator of the universe, you restore all things in glory through the victory of Jesus Christ. May your new creation in Jesus Christ appear in us as justice, love, and peace, to the glory of your name. **Amen.**

Collect for third Sunday of Easter

God of life and love, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open our eyes that we may see him in his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn: Cannons (Phil Wickham)

**It's falling from the Clouds
A strange and lovely sound
I hear it in the thunder and the rain
It's ringing in the skies like cannons in the night
The music of the Universe plays**

**We're singing you are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars**

**Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are**

**Beautiful and free
The song of galaxies
Reaching far beyond the milky way
Let's join in with sound
Come on let's sing it out
As the music of the universe plays**

**We're singing you are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are**

**All Glory honour power is yours Amen
All Glory honour power is yours Amen
All Glory honour power is yours Amen
All Glory honour power is yours forever Amen**

**You are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are**

**And you are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are**

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 6:1-28

Daniel in the Den of Lions

It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom,² with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss.³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.⁵ Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

⁶ So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever!⁷ The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den.⁸ Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

⁹ So King Darius put the decree in writing.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.¹¹ Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.¹² So they went to the king and

spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

¹³ Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."¹⁴ When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

¹⁵ Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, "Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."

¹⁶ So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

¹⁹ At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

²¹ Daniel answered, "May the king live forever!²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths

of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.”

²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴ At the king’s command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: “May you prosper greatly!

²⁶ “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

“For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-4,12-19

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.

² Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

³ The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.

⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
‘Lord, save me!’

¹² What shall I return to the Lord
for all his goodness to me?

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord.

¹⁴ I will fulfil my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful servants.

¹⁶ Truly I am your servant, Lord;
I serve you just as my mother did;
you have freed me from my chains.

¹⁷ I will sacrifice a thank-offering to you
and call on the name of the Lord.

¹⁸ I will fulfil my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord –
in your midst, Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord.

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

The Walk to Emmaus

¹³ That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who

hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. ²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶ Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?"

²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, ²⁹ but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. ³⁰ As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

³² They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" ³³ And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples

and the others who had gathered with them, ³⁴ who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter." ³⁵ Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.

Sermon

Good morning church. The two readings we heard today were taken from two very different parts of the bible and two very different people, but they were both involving situations that were unperceived and were unexpected. Both of the situations left people feeling alone and isolated. That might well be a familiar feeling for some of you today as we approach week four now of our lock-down.

Let's take Daniel first. So Daniel was put in isolation because he followed the commands of God. But when he was praying and seeking God in his room, he was not expecting what happened to him, he was not expecting to be arrested. He had no knowledge of the fact that God pre-told him that this was going to happen. And the government had decreed something which left him feeling very isolated. But Daniel was placed in almost extreme peril for something that he was just following the commands of what God had told him to do. And when he was in this extreme peril, instead of focussing on the lions and on the situation he was in, he put his faith and his thoughts on God to get him through. This is only possible because he trusted completely that God had his best interests at heart. The Bible says that God has plans to give us a hope in the future in Jeremiah it says that all things work to good for those who love God. But it's only when you start to put your faith in these things that they start to make sense to you.

The other thing that Daniel had done is he spent years preparing himself by seeking God and praying almost in solitude at times, to get himself to a position that when he reached for his faith in Jesus and his faith in God that he knew it was there and he knew that he wouldn't let him down. And whilst at the moment we are in very uncertain times, we can rest assured that when we put our faith in God he is there, and he will not let us down.

When you contrast this with the two people on the road to Emmaus – they'd actually been told about what was going to happen in advance through years of scripture, they were relatively well-learned Jews, they had good knowledge of what was in the bible but they'd missed what had been taught. They'd missed that this was the moment that God's plan for humanity was being realised. Can you imagine being in a situation whereby you've actually witnessed God's redeeming plan for humanity coming to pass and yet hadn't realised that had happened. I know in certain situations in my life I have missed what was happening when it was happening right in front of me, and later on could wish I could go back and realise that at the time if I could live in the moment; but they hadn't and they'd missed it.

But the important thing to learn from this is that they were focussed on the situation, they were focussed on the fact that the person that they expected to rid the Jews of Roman occupation, the person that they expected to be the King of the Jews in a military sense, was gone; and they didn't know what to do with that piece of information. And because of that; because the fact that they were so focussed on the situation around them, when Jesus turned up and walked with them, they didn't recognise it was him. And because they were so focussed on the situation and the world around them and how things

seemed to be so bleak, they nearly missed the miracle that Jesus was trying to show them.

And Jesus had walked them through the scriptures himself about what he had come to do on a walk to Emmaus, and he had worked through with them how this was God's plan; but they were still focussed on the situation and how they felt about it and they didn't see that this was part of what God's plan was.

We live in times that are hugely uncertain. Times that we don't fully understand, and we have no idea what comes next. But we can choose to focus on the situation and we can choose to be completely absorbed by what's going on around us - like the two on the road to Emmaus; or we can choose to be like Daniel, who took what was going on in the world around us in his stride, because he wasn't looking at that, he was looking at Jesus. When Peter walked on water he only started to sink and only started to be affected by what he was in, when he took his eyes off Jesus and he looked around at the sea and the waves. And the second he took his eyes off Jesus and his focus became on the situation and not on the Saviour, he started to sink.

My encouragement to you today, is to be like Daniel, to keep your eyes on the Saviour and not on the situation, and to spend the additional time you might have building up your faith muscles; cos I believe that faith is like a muscle. God has given us all the gifts we need to believe in him; but we have to exercise and build up in strength our faith in believing the he can do what he is able to do. And that way, when we are tested, we can be like Daniel, and we can focus on Jesus and not on what is happening around us.

We do live in times where things change day by day, but Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, he is the same yesterday, he will be the same

tomorrow. He knows the plans he has for you, and all you have to do is keep your eyes on him and follow where he leads. Bless God.

Affirmation of faith

Let us declare our faith
in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: **Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe.
Amen.**

Hymn StF 15: The Splendour of the King

**The splendour of the King,
clothed in majesty;
let all the earth rejoice,
let all the earth rejoice.
He wraps himself in light
and darkness tries to hide,
and trembles at his voice,
and trembles at his voice.**

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

**And age to age he stands,
and time is in his hands;
beginning and the end,
beginning and the end.
The Godhead, Three in One,
Father, Spirit, Son,
the Lion and the Lamb,
the Lion and the Lamb.**

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

**Name above all names,
worthy of all praise;
my heart will sing:
how great is our God.
Name above all names,
worthy of all praise;
my heart will sing:
how great is our God.**

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

THE RESPONSE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the message of Easter – for the assurance it brings of your triumph over death, the proof it offers that love will always have the last words.

Yet alongside that message there is another that perhaps we do not hear so often – a call to action as well as to celebration.

You have given us good news,

Teach us to share it.

Lord Jesus Christ, you appeared to your followers, demonstrating you had risen, and then you sent them out to proclaim your resurrection to all.

You met with them, and then called them to lead others to you.

You gave them joy, and then told them to share it.

Easter was not for the few but for all, not just for them but the whole world!

You have given us good news,

Teach us to share it.

Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us that we so often forget that having experienced your risen presence we then keep it to ourselves. Having met with you, we fail to introduce others to you in turn. Having received so much, we have shared so little.

You have given us good news,
Teach us to share it.

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for those who have fulfilled your call – those who made the Gospel known to us, those who proclaim it to others, those who sow, nurture, and bring to fruition the seeds of faith.

We pray for all you have specially gifted to proclaim the Good News – preachers and evangelists, ministers and missionaries, teachers and writers.

May many meet with you through their labours and come to know you as their living Lord and Saviour.

You have given us good news,
Teach us to share it.

Lord Jesus Christ, you call each one of us to be your witnesses – to tell others what we have experienced of your love, to make known what you have done for us, to testify to the way you have changed our lives.

Help us to do that faithfully, to play our part in your kingdom and purpose. And so through us may others come to meet you and know you for themselves.

You have given us good news,
Teach us to share it, to your glory. Amen.

Hymn: Table Of The Lord (Soul Survivor)

**From the cross, You made a table
Making room for all of us
Though the feast is never-ending
We will never know the cost**

**From Your hands, You made a table
With the nails that held You down
By Your scars, You built redemption
We will never know the cost**

**We give thanks around the table
The table of the Lord
Where Your mercy's pouring freely
And Your perfect love restores**

**Where Your grace is overflowing
It spills out on the floor
There is always more
At the table of the Lord**

**From the grave, You rose in power
Now forever You will reign
Highest King and humble servant
Come and take Your rightful place
Come and take Your rightful place**

***We give thanks around the table
The table of the Lord
Where Your mercy's pouring freely
And Your perfect love restores
Where Your grace is overflowing
It spills out on the floor
There is always more
At the table of the Lord***

**We're in awe of who You are
We're in awe of what You've done
We have to worship
We have to worship
We're in awe and we belong
We're in awe of it all
We have to worship
We have to worship**

**We're in awe of who You are
We're in awe of what You've done
We have to worship
We have to worship
We're in awe and we belong
We're in awe of it all
We have to worship
We have to worship**

**We give thanks around the table
The table of the Lord
Where Your mercy's pouring freely
And Your perfect love restores
Where Your grace is overflowing
It spills out on the floor
There is always more**

**At the table of the Lord
At the table of the Lord**

Prayers for others

Lord, to people everywhere at this troubled time give a spirit of responsibility, compassion and community; of concern for the greater good and a willingness to put themselves out for the sake of others.

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

To those who fear or know they are carrying the virus, give the common sense to isolate themselves, for however long is required, no matter how inconvenient or frustrating that may seem.

To those at risk, conscious of the symptoms taking hold of them, and spiralling out of control, give reassurance, support, and the best possible care, that they may return safe and well to their loved ones.

To those in intensive care, on ventilators, in evident distress, not responding to their treatment, give strength and succour, and, should it come to it, a peaceful end.

To those mourning loved ones, life cruelly plucked away, give comfort in their shock, their numbness, their despair, and sustain them through the darkness.

To our suffering world, Lord, in so much turmoil, bring hope, help and health.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, in heaven,
hallowed be your name
your kingdom come
your will be done
on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen**

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Hymn StF 309 See What a Morning

**See, what a morning, gloriously bright,
with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;
folded the graveclothes, tomb filled with light,
as the angels announce Christ is risen!
See God's salvation plan,
wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,
fulfilled in Christ, the Man,
for he lives: Christ is risen from the dead!**

**See Mary weeping, 'Where is he laid?'
as in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb;
hears a voice speaking, calling her name;
it's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!
The voice that spans the years,
speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to
us,
will sound till he appears,
for he lives: Christ is risen from the dead!**

**One with the Father, Ancient of Days,
through the Spirit who clothes faith with
certainty;
honour and blessing, glory and praise
to the King crowned with power and authority!
And we are raised with him,
death is dead, love has wone, Christ has
conquered;
and we shall reign with him,
for he live: Christ is risen from the dead!**

Blessing

To the mercy and protection of God we commit you.

And may the blessing of the God, the Source, Word and Breath of Life, be yours now and in the days to come. **Amen.**