

**Worship for 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (complete text. A video version is also online)**  
**Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.**

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*Hello and welcome to worship. We are once again grateful to all those contributing to worship this week both in front of and behind the camera. We will continue to offer this weekly worship for as long as is needed and look forward to the time when we can all gather again. If any of you would like to take part, then please get in touch with me on [revpeter.mwc@gmail.com](mailto:revpeter.mwc@gmail.com)*

THE PREPARATION

*Call to worship*

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

StF 679 – Come build the Church – not heaps of stone

- 1. Come, build the Church – not heaps of stone  
in safe, immobile, measured walls,  
but friends of Jesus, Spirit-blown,  
and fit to travel where he calls.**
- 2. Come, occupy with glad dissent  
where death and evil fence the ground,  
and pitch a Resurrection-Tent  
where peace is lived, and love is found.**
- 3. Exposed upon the open ground  
to screams of war in East and West,  
our ears will catch a deeper sound:  
the weeping of the world's oppressed.**
- 4. In wearied face, or frightened child,  
in all they know, and need to say,  
the living Christ shall stand revealed.  
Come, let us follow and obey!**

*Prayer of approach*

Loving God, we have come to worship you.

**Help us to remember that you are here with us.  
May we pray to you in faith,**

**sing your praise with gratitude,  
and listen to your word with eagerness;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Prayer of adoration*

Praise be to you, O God,  
the maker of the universe,  
**by whose wisdom we are created and  
sustained.**

Praise be to you, O God,  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
**by whose love we are redeemed and forgiven.**

Praise be to you, O God,  
the source of all holiness,  
**by whose Spirit we are made whole  
and brought to perfection.**

**Praise be to you, O God,  
Source of all being,  
Eternal Word and Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now  
and shall be for ever. 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.**

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

This is his gracious word:

'Your sins are forgiven.'

**Amen. Thanks be to God**

StF 624 – Calm me Lord as you calmed the storm

**Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm;  
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.  
Let all the tumult within me cease;  
enfold me, Lord, in your peace.**

**Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm;  
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.  
Let all the tumult within me cease;  
enfold me, Lord, in your peace.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

*Psalm Psalm 31:1-5,15-16*

<sup>1</sup> In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in your righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> Turn your ear to me,  
come quickly to my rescue;  
be my rock of refuge,  
a strong fortress to save me.

<sup>3</sup> Since you are my rock and my fortress,  
for the sake of your name lead and guide  
me.

<sup>4</sup> Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,  
for you are my refuge.

<sup>5</sup> Into your hands I commit my spirit;  
deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.

<sup>15</sup> My times are in your hands;  
deliver me from the hands of my  
enemies,  
from those who pursue me.

<sup>16</sup> Let your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your unfailing love.

*Gospel Jn 14:1-14*

*Jesus Comforts His Disciples*

<sup>1</sup> "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.<sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going."

*Jesus the Way to the Father*

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"  
<sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

## Sermon

Today's gospel reading offers us hope in difficult times. It takes place, in the Upper Room after the Passover. Jesus knows the disciples are getting anxious and confused. His presence and leadership are needed now more than ever, but he knows he must fulfil his destiny by going to the cross, so he seeks to reassure them. Put your trust in the father, and in me, for I am the way, the truth and the life. Today our thoughts will centre around the first part of that, I am the Way.

When our children were younger we would be on a family car journey. We would come to a junction and the sat nav mounted on the windscreen would say turn right, but I would go straight on, knowing that would be a perfectly acceptable alternative. This would cause consternation in the ranks. Why was I knowingly and deliberately going the wrong way? Couldn't I read the screen? Didn't I know the sat nav always knew what it was doing? The sat nav had attained an almost mythological status. Disobeying the satnav would surely bring condemnation and bolts of lightning! It knew the way.

There is something innate in us about needing to know the way. We feel more comfortable when the route is clear, the way ahead known. To lack direction is to risk becoming lost, being disorientated. In the car this could result in upset, and argument, even in the front. In life in general, as well as leading to frustration it can result in anxiety, stress and more.

So, we all need to grasp on to something to show us the way in life. And not just Christians. If it's not faith in a God of love, it will be something else, material things, family, football, work. You will have your own list. All these other ways have attractive benefits of course, but they all ultimately fail. We see this at the moment when so much of normal life has been suspended. For

those who live for football the cancellation of all live games means life has come to a halt. We all love our families – well, most of the time, but we're not able to give them a hug right now. So family may not be able to provide us with sufficient support, or we them. And when it comes to work many people feel their work is their life, which may explain why some struggle at retirement. And now many jobs are at risk, companies face collapse, and we may soon be faced with a torrent of desperate stories of families struggling to keep their heads above water. Our prayers need to follow.

I'm not criticising any of these aspects of our lives. Indeed they are all inherently good, all contribute to our identity, but they are all ultimately fallible, and this is what Jesus was getting at in John 14. There is only one Way that cannot be silenced by the virus or any other catastrophe. And that is Jesus. There is only one Way strong enough to withstand the worst storm life can throw at us. And that is Jesus. There is only one Way that can satisfy our need. And that is Jesus. And although we may repeat that message Sunday by Sunday, there is no time like the present predicament to bring it starkly into focus. So many things are good but ultimately flawed. Only Jesus can be guaranteed to carry us through the dark times as well as the good. The psalmist alluded to that too. Psalm 31, part of which Candy read earlier hails the Lord as my rock, my refuge, one who will lead and guide me. Or in the words of Jesus, be The Way.

Back to John 14 where we find this conversation taking place in the Upper Room after the Last Supper, when Jesus starts to unsettle the disciples with strange actions and pronouncements. He washes the disciples' feet, predicts Judas' betrayal and tells the loyal bumbling Peter he will shortly disown him.

Not for the first time there are puzzled looks on their faces, or so we can imagine. This has been

a big journey for them, coming all the way to Jerusalem. They may have sensed that this was building up to a climax – the triumphant entry into the city, the cheering crowds, the disturbance caused by Jesus in the temple, the Passover meal. And now this, Jesus saying he’s leaving, apparently just at the wrong time, just as it seems he should be here, to claim the throne, whatever throne that might be.

Thomas can’t take any more. He needs clarification. His inquisitive mind will soon lead him to a memorable exchange with Jesus after the resurrection, as we saw a couple of weeks ago. Here, that same personality will not be fobbed off by Jesus, as he sees it, and maybe we can detect an element of frustration in his voice as he appeals to Jesus to give a straight answer to a straight question ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’.

Jesus of course cannot answer Thomas in the way Thomas wants because what is about to happen is beyond Thomas’ comprehension. He turns to Thomas. Thomas, I am the Way, the truth and the life. If you want to know how to reach God look no further than me. If you want to know what God is like, see Him in me. You have been with me all this time – you know how I relate to the Father, so do the same - you’ve seen how I respond to people’s needs, so do the same – you’ve watched me draw upon the strength of the spirit, so do the same. Everything else, which may well be good, appear more attractive, seem to be easier, all other ways will fail you just when you need them most. I am the Way. The Only Way.

Our tendency today is also to seek and rely on other Ways. It’s almost perverse how we, as individuals and as a society, will go to almost any length to find Ways which do not involve God. Independence from God and others is the goal. Self reliance is everything. If we can only

eliminate the need for others, all will be fine. In the good times this almost seems to work. Almost. Cars get better year after year. Improvements in medicine and health care lead us to have ever greater faith in their ability to fix us. Technology makes lives easier.

But however much better they get they are still finite, limited, bounded. And when the finite meets the infinite it pales into insignificance. Only when a catastrophe occurs, such as Covid-19, are we forced to confront the fact that all these other wonderful alternative ways will all ultimately let us down. There is only one. And he went from the Upper room to the cross via Gethsemane, and died so that we might live. This is the extraordinary hope that cannot be extinguished. Not by the virus, not by greed, not by selfishness, not by anything. For we have been shown the true Way.

Waymaker                      Michael W Smith

**1. You are here, moving in our midst  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, working in this place  
I worship You, I worship You**

**[Chorus] (You are)  
Way maker, miracle worker  
Promise keeper, light in the darkness  
My God, that is who You are  
Way maker, miracle worker  
Promise keeper, light in the darkness  
My God, that is who You are**

**2. You are here, touching every heart  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, turning lives around  
I worship You, I worship You**

**[Chorus]  
Way maker, miracle worker  
Promise keeper, light in the darkness  
My God, that is who You are  
Way maker, miracle worker  
Promise keeper, light in the darkness**

**My God, that is who You are  
That is who you are  
(That is who you are)  
That is who you are  
That is who you are  
That is who you are**

**[Bridge]**

**Even when I can't see that you're working  
even when I don't feel that you're working  
You never stop, never stop working  
You never stop, you never stop working**

**Even when I can't see that you're working  
even when I don't feel that you're working  
You never stop, you never stop working  
You never stop, you never stop working**

**Even when I can't see that you're working  
even when I don't feel that you're working  
You never stop, you never stop working  
You never stop, you never stop.**

**Way maker, miracle worker  
Promise keeper, light in the darkness  
My God, that is who You are  
Way maker, miracle worker  
Promise keeper, light in the darkness  
My God, that is who You are  
That is who You are**

THE RESPONSE

A reflective way into prayer

*I invite you to find a stone to hold...  
for a few moments, to think about Jesus as our  
rock.*

*For who is God besides the Lord?  
And who is the Rock except our God?  
It is God who arms me with strength  
and keeps my way secure.  
Psalm 18:31,32*

Feel the rock on the palm of your hand; it is solid and strong  
– God gives us strength; his love is solid and steadfast.

Press the rock between your hands  
– following Jesus is not always comfortable.

Move the stone from palm to palm  
– wherever we are, whatever we do, God is with us; his love never fails.

StF 502 – I know that my Redeemer lives

- 1. I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and ever prays for me;  
a token of his love he gives,  
a pledge of liberty.**
- 2. I find him lifting up my head,  
he brings salvation near,  
his presence makes me free indeed,  
and he will soon appear.**
- 3. He will that I should holy be;  
what can withstand his will?  
The counsel of his grace in me  
he surely shall fulfil.**
- 4. Jesus, I hang upon your word;  
I steadfastly believe  
you will return and claim me, Lord,  
and to yourself receive.**
- 5. Your love I soon expect to find  
in all its depth and height,  
to comprehend the eternal mind,  
and grasp the Infinite.**
- 6. When God is mine, and I am his,  
of paradise possessed,  
I taste the unutterable bliss  
and everlasting rest.**

*Prayers of intercession*

**Prayers of intercession (Taken from Roots on the Web)**

In a world where harvests have failed;  
where there have been droughts and floods;

many do not have money to pay for food and power;  
many are reaching the end of their tether.  
That they may know your strength and peace,  
loving God:

**be for them a rock and a stronghold.**

In a world where many people are alone;  
many do not know where to look for comfort  
and encouragement;  
many see no purpose or future;  
some cannot see the point of anything.  
That they may know your strength and peace,  
loving God:

**be for them a rock and a stronghold.**

In our lives when we struggle and doubt;  
when we don't know what to say or do;  
when life overwhelms us and we turn to you.  
That we may know your strength and peace,  
loving God:

**be for us a rock and a stronghold.**

In the name of the living Lord Jesus,  
our Saviour and companion.  
**Amen.**

#### **Prayers for VE day (Prayers from the Church of England Website for VE day services)**

**For those who served and died in World War II**  
O God of truth and justice, we hold before you  
those men and women who have died in active  
service, particularly in the Second World War,  
whose sacrifice brought Victory in Europe. As we  
honour their courage and cherish their memory,  
may we put our faith in your future; for you are  
the source of life and hope, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

#### **For those who serve today**

O Lord God of Hosts, stretch forth, we pray, your  
almighty arm to strengthen and protect our  
service men and women. Support them in times  
of conflict, and in their rest and training keep  
them safe from all evil; endue them with courage

and loyalty; and grant that in all things they may  
serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ our  
Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **For the peace of the world**

O God, who would fold both heaven and earth  
in a single peace; that the design of your great  
love lighten upon the waste of our wraths and  
sorrows and give peace to your church, peace  
among nations, peace in our dwellings and  
peace in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our  
Lord.

**Amen.**

#### *The Lord's Prayer*

We say 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.  
Forgive our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
are yours, now and forever  
Amen**

#### *The Offering & prayer*

Holy God, we hold up our smallness to your  
greatness, our fear to your love, our tiny act of  
giving to your great generosity. And also, we  
hold up ourselves to you. In the name of Jesus  
Christ, your precious Son and our Saviour.

**Amen**

THE DISMISSAL

StF 94 – To God be the Glory great things he has done

**To God be the glory, great things he has done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,  
and opened the life-gate that all may go in:**

***Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory – great things he has done!***

**O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every receiver the promise of God!  
And every offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:**

***Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory – great things he has done!***

**Great things he has taught us, great things he  
has done,  
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
but purer, and higher, and greater will be  
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:**

***Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory – great things he has done!***

*Prayer & blessing*

God, give us grace to endure and hope for a brighter tomorrow.

**The love of the Father enfold us,  
the wisdom of the Son enlighten us,  
the fire of the Spirit enflame us;  
and the blessing of God, the Three in One,  
be upon us and abide with us now and for ever.  
Amen.**

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**