

Worship for Sunday 18th April (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

Welcome: to worship for 18th April 2021. We are grateful to Gail Bullivant who is preaching today, Kate Pearson and Malcolm Aldridge who are reading. I am Anne Howe and I am leading this ac of worship. Thanks also to Catherine Evans-Routley in the Circuit office.

THE PREPARATION

Welcome and call to Worship

Welcome to worship with South Warwickshire Methodist Churches. It's the second Sunday after Easter and we continue to celebrate the wonder of the resurrection.

Psalm 145:1, 2

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN: Stf 152 This is the day

**This is the day x2
that the Lord has made. x2
We will rejoice x2
and be glad in it. x2
For this is the day that the Lord has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day x2
That the Lord has made**

**This is the day x2
When he rose again x2
We will rejoice x2
And be glad in x2.
This is the day when he rose again;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

**This is the day x2
When he rose again**

**This the day x2
When the Spirit came x2
We will rejoice x2
And be glad in it x2
This is the day the Spirit came
We will rejoice and be glad in it
This is the day x2
When the Spirit came.**

Fijan Folk Melody arr. Paul Ledington Wright (b 1951)

Prayers

Adoration

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty Father,
we come together to worship you, to praise you
for your glory.
We celebrate the empty tomb
and adore you for the love which drew the plan
for our salvation,
for bringing us the hope of new life from our
darkest time.

Confession

If we have fallen into despair,
Lord, forgive us.

If we have failed to hope in you,
Lord, forgive us.

If we have been fearful for our own future,
for our loved ones,
and for the nation,
Lord, forgive us.

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ,
Lord, forgive us.

When we have failed you in thought, word or deed,
Lord, forgive us.

Assurance

Lord Jesus,
Thank you that you suffered and died on the cross to bear our sin
and you rose again to bring us and all people forgiveness and new life.

The Lord's Prayer (modern form)

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**

Let's continue to celebrate,

HYMN: StF 310 Sing a song, sing a joyful song

- 1. Sing a song, sing a joyful song,
sing a joyful song to celebrate!
Sing a song, sing a joyful song,
sing a joyful song to celebrate**

*Jesus is alive you know,
he's risen form the dead!
He was crucified but now
he's risen like he said. (Hallelujah)*

- 2. Clap your hands, clap your hands like this,
clap your hands like this to celebrate!
Clap your hands, clap your hands like this,
clap your hands like this to celebrate!**

*Jesus is alive you know,
he's risen form the dead!
He was crucified but now
he's risen like he said. (Hallelujah)*

- 3. Jump up and down, up and down and
around,
up and down and around to celebrate!
Jump up and down, up and down and
around,
up and down and around to celebrate!**

*Jesus is alive you know,
he's risen form the dead!
He was crucified but now
he's risen like he said. (Hallelujah)*

- 4. Dance to the beat, to the beat of the drum,
to the beat of the drum to celebrate!
Dance to the beat, to the beat of the drum,
to the beat of the drum to celebrate!**

*Jesus is alive you know,
he's risen form the dead!
He was crucified but now
he's risen like he said. (Hallelujah)*

- 5. Wave your hands, wave your hands in the
air,
wave your hands in the air to celebrate!
Wave your hands, wave your hands in the
air,
wave your hands in the air to celebrate!**

*Jesus is alive you know,
he's risen form the dead!
He was crucified but now
he's risen like he said. (Hallelujah)*

- 6. Sing a song, sing a joyful song,
sing a joyful song to celebrate!
Sing a song, sing a joyful song,
sing a joyful song to celebrate**

*Jesus is alive you know,
he's risen form the dead!
He was crucified but now
he's risen like he said. (Hallelujah)*

Mark Johnson and Helen Johnson

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

1st Reading Acts 3:12-19 (NRSV)

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, 'You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

'And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

Psalm 4 (NRSV)

Confident Plea for Deliverance from Enemies

*To the leader: with stringed instruments.
A Psalm of David.*

Answer me when I call, O God of my right!
You gave me room when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

How long, you people, shall my honour suffer shame?

How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?

Selah

But know that the LORD has set apart the faithful

for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.

When you are disturbed, do not sin;
ponder it on your beds, and be silent.

Selah

Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.

There are many who say, 'O that we might see some good!

Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!
You have put gladness in my heart
more than when their grain and wine abound.

I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.

Gospel Luke 24:36b-48 (NRSV)

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer

and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

HYMN StF 319 Christ triumphant

- 1. Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing:**

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*
- 2. Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
Power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:**

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*
- 3. Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
victim crucified!
Death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified:**

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*
- 4. Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above!
Sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love:**

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*
- 5. So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:**

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*

Michael Saward (b 1932)

Sermon

Today we come to the end of the gospel of Luke, a journey that takes us now to one of Jesus' eleven appearances after his resurrection.

Jesus had already appeared to various women including Mary Magdalene and to Peter and the two on the road to Emmaus but this appearance which he heard today is before Jesus appeared to the 500 and to his half-brother James.

I would like to speak today about something that happened to the two on the road to Emmaus and the disciples in the upper room.

Firstly we have two beautiful images of our Lord joining the two disciples who were walking on the road to Emmaus. They were downcast walking and talking about the things that had happened to Jesus. Then Jesus quietly started to walk with them but they did not recognise him.

They did not recognise Jesus until after they had talked with him about what had happened to him without knowing they were talking about the man that was walking with them. Jesus went home with them to share hospitality with the two. It is at the point when Jesus broke bread and gave it to them their eyes were opened and they recognised him. Jesus disappeared from them then but their response was this

“Were not our hearts burning within us, while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us”.

Their response then was that they got up, returned to Jerusalem, found the eleven and others with them and told them that the Scriptures were true, they were right! “It is true” they said “The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon”. They told about what had happened to them and explained that it was only when Jesus broke bread with them that they had recognised him. They had been kept from recognising him by divine intervention and were

then able to recognise Jesus by divine intervention.

Then in our reading today we hear that Jesus appeared again while the two were talking to the disciples and just stood among them. On the road to Emmaus he walked with them and now Jesus simply stood among them - what an absolutely beautiful picture. Not only did Jesus stand he then said "Peace be with you".

We read then that they were startled, frightened, troubled, afraid that they were seeing a ghost. Jesus offered that they could touch him, he showed them his hands and his feet and then as a final act of evidence that he was risen, asked for some food and ate it to show them that he was the risen Lord not a ghost.

Next is the part that I would like to focus on. Jesus said to them "This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled, that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

And just like the two on the road to Emmaus when their eyes were opened by divine intervention then the disciples had their minds opened by Jesus so that they would understand the Scriptures. He told them again what the Scriptures said "The Christ will suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem".

In 1 Corinthians 15 when Paul talked about the resurrection of Christ he said "Now I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you which you received and on which you have taken your stand". Paul goes on to say that by the Word of God they were saved and that they were to hold firmly to the Word of God otherwise everything that they believed would be in vain. Christ died for our sins, Paul said, according to the Scriptures, he was buried and

raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

In John 2:22 it reads "After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words Jesus had spoken".

What we have here is an unveiling of understanding. Eyes are opened, minds are opened and tongues are loosed to speak and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The disciples would have been very used to fixing their eyes on the passages of scripture that talked about victory over Israel's enemies, the restoration of Israel's land and independence. The passages that talked about the coming Messiah would have been difficult for them particularly as they talked about suffering the death. They had believed what the Prophets had spoken but not ALL that the prophets had spoken. Jesus had spelled this out to the two on the road to Emmaus when he said "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken.

Jesus then spent time with the two explaining all that the Scriptures said about him.

2 Timothy 3:16 Paul's words to Timothy reminding Timothy that from his infancy Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures which would make him wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is God breathed and is for teaching us what is true. It makes us realise what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.

I have heard many of my friends testify that during the time spent at home they have spent more time with God's Word. I can certainly testify to that.

I used to have a friend in my previous circuit who would get up every morning at five to read his bible. His day, everyday started with the word of God. I was always amazed by his dedication and commitment but as I spent time with him I would often hear him relating scripture to what was happening around him and in the world - and to things that people talked to him about.

During the last year I found a church near my home in Warwick that remained open and during the summer streamed the services. The preaching worked its way through the life of Solomon in the book of Kings and since then through the Gospel of Luke. Each week then we gathered in a meeting online to talk about the message, draw out its meaning and to try and understand what the God breathed words meant to us to our communities and to the world.

I found this so rewarding for all week I knew that we would meet and discuss the passage from the previous Sunday and the reflection. This meant for all of us that we would spend time meditating on the word more getting ready for our fellowship and then after our fellowship we would still spend time thinking about what we had talked about. I believe this is why the line in our reading today jumped out at me so much

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scripture”.

In our reading from Acts which we heard this morning, here we have the new church, the early Christians and in this case the apostle Peter speaking just as Jesus had commissioned him to do, telling of Jesus, the Jesus of the Scriptures who through the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. God’s son who was filled with his Father’s Word the God breathed words that came to pass.

One the way to Emmaus their eyes were opened, and they saw Jesus and recognised him and Jesus talked to them about his Father’s words. The

disciples when talking to Jesus and listening to him had their minds opened so that they could understand Scripture.

The Prophet Ezekiel was sent to the Israelites and a rebellious nation that had rebelled against God. God told Ezekiel that they would know that a Prophet was among them but they were also throw at Ezekiel words that would be like briars and thorns and scorpions but God commanded Ezekiel “You must speak my words to them”. God even gave Ezekiel a scroll covered with the Word of God to eat before he went out to speak. When Ezekiel ate the scroll it tasted as sweet as honey in Ezekiel’s mouth. Ezekiel went onto experience that the words of God were sweet even when their contents were bitter. Psalm 119:103 “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. I gain understanding from your precepts, therefore I hate every wrong path.

Friends my prayer for all of us is that our minds be even more opened to God’s word, whether that be for the first time or following many years of discipleship. That like the disciples on the road to Emmaus we can say “Were not our hearts burning within us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”.

The hymn that follows this message is called “Your Word” and this is the chorus:

*Your Word.....
A lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path
Your word will not be shaken.
Your word will never fail me.
Like a fire in my bones, like a whisper to my soul
Your word is revelation.
Your Word reveals the light of Jesus.*

Amen

SONG - Your Word

**Before the earth knew its foundation
You spoke the dust into creation
Until the end when all is withered
Then still Your Word endures forever**

**The lamp unto my feet
The light unto my path**

**Your Word will not be shaken
Your Word will never fail me
Like a fire in my bones
Like a whisper to my soul
Your Word is revelation**

**Deep calls to deep within Your Presence
When I hear You speak my soul awakens
Your Spirit leads my heart to worship
As Your Word reveals the light of Jesus**

**The lamp unto my feet
The light unto my path**

**Your Word will not be shaken
Your Word will never fail me
Like a fire in my bones
Like a whisper to my soul
Your Word is revelation**

Jesus

**Your Word will not be shaken
Your Word will never fail me
Like a fire in my bones
Like a whisper to my soul
Your Word is revelation**

**Your Word will not be shaken
Your Word will never fail me
Like a fire in my bones
Like a whisper to my soul
Your Word is revelation**

**Your Word will never fail me
Like a fire in my bones
Like a whisper to my soul
Your Word is revelation**

Christopher Michael Davenport
Hillsong Worship

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Lord, take as your right, and receive as my gift,
All my freedom, my memory,
My understanding and my will.
Whatever I am and whatever I possess,
You have given to me;
I restore it all to you again,
And be at your disposal,
According to your will.
Give me only a love for you,
And the gift of your grace,
Then I am rich enough,
And ask for nothing more.

Amen

St Ignatius Loyola 1491-1556

Offering

In whatever creative way we are bringing our life
and talent, time and money we dedicate our
offering to you.

Amen.

Prayers

Thanksgiving

As part of our thanksgiving prayers, I want to
read to you from Hannah Steele, 'Living His
Story':

"The story of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the
most remarkable we will ever hear. It is a story of
redemption, sacrifice and love with the power to
transform lives... As we continue to celebrate
Easter we remember a cosmic turning point in
human history when death is defeated and new
life is made possible in Christ."

Loving Lord,

Thank you that you appeared to the disciples and
revealed yourself to them.

Will you open our eyes, too and reveal to us
scripture and the wonder of the truth of Christ
suffering and dying for us and rising from the
dead to bring forgiveness and new life.

For other people

I'm taking some of these prayers from JPIT Stay and Pray

We pray for escalating nuclear tensions. Just days after the UK announced an increase on the cap on nuclear warheads stockpiled, North Korea has tested two short-range ballistic missiles last week.

God, we pray for the reconciliation which you bring between nations and people, and that your peace might be shown in global relations.

We pray for refugees in camps across the globe. Last week, hundreds of people went missing and at least fifteen confirmed dead after a fire tore through a camp for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

God, we pray for your comfort for those who are grieving or injured, and for welcoming and adequate accommodation for those fleeing violence and persecution.

We give thanks for measures tackling coronavirus. Around half of people in the UK now have antibodies against coronavirus, in part due to vaccination efforts.

God, we give thanks for healing, and we pray that the UK would now be instrumental in sharing this success with poorer countries.

We give thanks for democratic processes. This May, a number of different elections will be taking place around the UK, including local elections, and are a key way of making change happen.

God, we pray that all Christians might #ThinkPrayVote this May and be part of local democracy and change.

We pray for the climate. This year, in the run-up to COP26, young Methodists from the UK, Fiji, Zambia, Italy and Uruguay are coming together to speak up for the climate.

God, we pray for your creation, and that Christian voices might be instrumental in calling for the protection of your world.

We pray too for inspirational and creative ways for our churches to respond to the encouragement to be Eco Churches and to be good stewards of the world you created.

We pray for people who are weighed down by debt. An estimated six million people in the UK have fallen behind on one or more household bill as a result of Covid-19, with the biggest increases in debt amongst the poorest households.

God, we pray for your blessing and freedom for those who are trapped in a cycle of debt in the pandemic.

We pray for asylum seekers and refugees. This year, amid the pandemic, safe passage out of conflict zones and towards safe places have become even harder to access.

God, we pray that your compassion and love for all people might be shown towards asylum seekers by all countries where they might seek safety.

We bring you our prayers in the name of the God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

THE DISMISSAL

HYMN StF 313 Thine be the glory

**1. Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes
Where thy body lay.**

***Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;***

*Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won!*

2. Lo, Jesus meets us,
Risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness
Hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth,
Death hath lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won!*

3. No more we doubt thee,
Glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without thee:
Aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors
Through thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan
To thy home above:

*Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won!*

Edmond Budry (1854 – 1932)

translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875 – 1939)

Benediction

**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love
of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be
with us all. Amen.**

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StF 319 Christ triumphant Michael Saward (b 1932)

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NRSV & NRSVA

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*If you would like to take part, then please get in touch with the Circuit Office on
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