

Worship at Home

Lent 5 – 22nd March 2026

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Call to Worship (from Psalm 130)

*I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word, I put my hope.*

*I wait for the Lord,
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

Lent Cross: If you have Lent Cross readings, please include week 5 here. In South Devon we focus our thoughts on **Matthew 27 vs 35-37, 45-47 and 50-54.**

In this reading we hear of the soldiers who witnessed the death of Christ, and their conclusion that he really was 'The Son of God'.

STF 99: All creatures of our God and King (selected verses 1, 2, 5, 7)

**All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing
alleluia, alleluia!**

**O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam:**

*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

**O rushing wind that is so strong,
and clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, alleluia!**

**O rising morn, in praise rejoice,
and lights of evening, find a voice:**

O praise him...

**And all who are of tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
sing, 'Praise him, alleluia!'
All who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God and on him cast your care:**

O praise him...

**Let all things their creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, alleluia!**

**Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:**

O praise him...

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Translated by William Henry Draper (1855-1933).

Let us pray

Lord, we thank you that once again we can come into your presence to worship you; to praise you in all the places where we are scattered today and celebrate your amazing love and care for us all.

We thank you for your invitation to us all to come to you and be refreshed; to be filled anew with your living water which you promise will never run dry.

Draw us close to you and close to one another as we bring you our worship today, that we may know we come with all our brothers and sisters here on earth and with all the saints of light in heaven, to praise and worship you. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Prayer of confession

Lord God, even as we come to you with thankfulness and praise in our hearts, we also come knowing that we have not always honoured you in our thoughts and words, action and inaction.

We are sorry for the times when we have not been open to receive your love and your blessings, allowing fear to take root within us, instead of love.

We are sorry for the times when we have trusted in our own abilities and so have not allowed your light and power to be seen in us and through us.

Lord, you know everything that we have ever thought, said or done. And so, knowing this, we come before you in faith asking that you will forgive us, help us, heal us and renew us today in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Saviour. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Read: John 11 verses 1-16

(Background: Jesus has taken refuge in the villages beyond the Jordan after the Jews tried to stone him. But some who had known John the Baptist came to him, saying they recognised in Jesus 'The One' John had spoken of. They chose to believe in Jesus).

Now a message arrives that Jesus' friend Lazarus is ill, and Jesus knows he is near death. After an intentional delay of a few days, Jesus decides to go to Bethany where Lazarus and his family live. He knows Lazarus is already dead, but Jesus is intent on waking him up. The disciples see danger for Jesus in this. but go with him. "Let us also go, so we may die with him."

Reflection 1

Today I have split our gospel reading so that we can pause and think about this first part of the reading. As I read these verses I am reminded of the way Jesus knows what is going on in each of our lives, just as he knew what was happening with Lazarus. Nothing was or is 'hidden' from him.

Like the disciples we see the danger and recognise the jeopardy for Jesus and for the disciples - which makes me ask, "Would I have gone with him?" And yet I also ask, "Could I have not gone with him?"

Here we see how Jesus' love and his acceptance of the path before him compels him to do what is necessary – not just for the sake of Lazarus, not for his own comfort either, but so the glory of God the Father could be seen in His Son Jesus.

For the disciples though, everything did not seem to be going the way they hoped. I wonder what we do when things are not going the way we hope either?

The disciples find they must place their trust in Jesus, even though they knew going back to Judea would be difficult and dangerous. Yet if that was his choice, they knew they must follow – especially if it would allow God's glory to be seen.

Thomas voices the willingness of them all, "Let us also go, so that we can die with him." What did they have without Jesus, the one true Son of God?

STF 441: As water to the thirsty

**As water to the thirsty, as beauty to the eyes,
as strength that follows weakness,
as truth instead of lies, as song-time
and springtime and summertime to be,
so is my Lord, my living Lord, so is my Lord to me.**

**Like calm in place of clamour, like peace
that follows pain, like meeting after parting,
like sunshine after rain, like moonlight
and starlight and sunlight on the sea,
so is my Lord, my living Lord, so is my Lord to me.**

**As sleep that follows fever, as gold instead of grey,
as freedom after bondage, as sunrise to the day,
as home to the traveller and all we long to see,
so is my Lord, my living Lord, so is my Lord to me.**

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Read: John 11 verses 17-45

Jesus returns to Bethany and comforts Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary. They are angry with him for not coming in time, but Jesus is adamant, "Your brother will rise and live again." Martha believes in 'the life to come' and so responds she knows this, but Jesus wants her to know more. So, he says:

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will have life, even if they die. And everyone who believes in me will never die.

Mary comes to Jesus weeping, and he is overtaken with emotion. Jesus is taken to the tomb and there he too weeps. Then he asks for the stone to be rolled away. Before He commands Lazarus to come out, he prays, "thank you Father that you have heard me." Then to everyone's amazement Lazarus, who has been dead for four days, does indeed come out.

John then says many people saw this and believed.

Reflection 2

Jesus comes and meets with Martha and Mary (and the crowd) at their time of need. He comes to comfort them, yes, but he also brings both hope and transformation. How they must have rejoiced to have Lazarus back with them again.

While this is a good story, John does more here than just tell us about one last miracle Jesus performs before he goes to Jerusalem. He unfolds inside it one of the deep truths about Jesus, that....

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

No matter how hard a road we travel, even where we feel there is nothing left for us, JESUS can transform our lives from feeling we have nothing left to knowing we have everything to live for.

A story is told of a young man who joined the US Marines and got himself into big trouble. Guilt was eating him up, and he saw his life was ruined. He felt dead, but no-one knew about it, except God.

Then he read this story and realised everything in it was pointing to him. He realised that he could know resurrection right here, right now. He saw that in receiving forgiveness through the blood of Jesus, and having his soul washed clean, he could come alive again. Jesus released him from the tomb he was in, just as much as he released Lazarus.

As we approach Easter maybe it's time for us to consider what resurrection means to us.

Thomas spoke of going with Jesus and dying with him, but Jesus' true purpose for us is that "*all that is within us, but not subject to his kingdom*" may die, so that we may rise with him and live – not only in the future, but also in the here and now.

Let us pray...

God of resurrection and life,
we thank you that you know us inside and out and still you love us. We thank you too for your desire for all people, that we may all know resurrection life in all its fullness. Remind us again of what this means for us in the here and now.

As we come to you in prayer today, we remember some of the people who need our prayers today.

We pray for the renewal of your church and for all who proclaim your life-giving powers and believe in Jesus, through whom we know of your great love.

We pray for those who must flee from danger and those who live with danger day by day. We pray for refugees and displaced people who have chosen to

seek a new life, away from the darkness they have left behind – that they may find peace and safety and offer the same to others.

We pray for those who have given up on life, whether because of illness, personal brokenness or inability to cope with the world they inhabit. Come close to them, comfort them, and let them see the possibilities and hope you offer in Jesus.

We pray for those we see as friends or family, remembering especially any who are grieving, and those who are worn out from the cares of daily living. We lift up the people on our prayer lists and those who live daily with illness or pain. Bless and comfort them; pour out your healing power, so that they too may know again your resurrection power.

We thank you that we can bring these and all the prayers of our hearts to you, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

STF 356: Jesus shall take the highest honour

**Jesus shall take the highest honour,
Jesus shall take the highest praise;
let all earth join heaven in exalting
the Name which is above all other names.
Let's bow the knee in humble adoration,
for at His name every knee must bow.
Let every tongue confess He is Christ, God's only
Son. Sovereign Lord, we give You glory now.**

***For all honour and blessing and power
belongs to You, belongs to You.
All honour and blessing and power
belongs to You, belongs to You
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God.***

Christopher Alan Bowater © Sovereign Lifestyle Music

Blessing

(STF 774) Guatemalan Text, tr Christine Carson, © WGRG

The peace of the earth be with you, the peace of the heavens too; the peace of the rivers be with you, the peace of the oceans too. Deep peace falling over you. God's peace, God's peace growing in you. **Amen.**

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