

Worship at home for the Fifth Sunday of Lent 29th March 2020

You might like to light a candle and make your self comfortable and quiet.

You could say or sing the hymns as you wish, or skip them!

If you are not alone, decide before you start who is to be “leader”, and who will do the readings.

Everything you need is here. If you are able, read this through at 9.30am on Sunday so that you know this is worship with the people of Greater Whitbourne; or you may of course decide to read this at your usual service time.

1st Hymn – The King of Love

1 The King of Love my Shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine for ever.

2 Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul He leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.

3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed;
but yet in love He sought me,
and on His shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me.

4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
with Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy Cross before to guide me.

5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from Thy pure chalice floweth.

6 And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
within Thy house for ever.

The Greeting

[The Lord be with you, **and also with you.**]

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

We hear these commandments which God has given to his people,
and examine our hearts.

1. I am the Lord your God:
you shall have no other gods but me.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
and with all your strength.
Amen. Lord, have mercy.

2. You shall not make for yourself any idol.
God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship
in spirit and in truth.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

3. You shall not dishonour the name of the Lord your God. You shall worship
him with awe and reverence.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
Christ is risen from the dead:
set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on the earth.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

5. Honour your father and mother.
Live as servants of God; let us work for the good of all, especially members of
the household of faith.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

6. You shall not commit murder.
Live peaceably with all; overcome evil with good.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

7. You shall not commit adultery.
Know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.
Amen. Lord, have mercy.

8. You shall not steal.
Be honest in all that you do, and care for those in need.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

9. You shall not be a false witness.
Let everyone speak the truth.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

10. You shall not covet anything which belongs to your neighbour.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus:
'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Love your neighbour as yourself,
for love is the fulfilling of the law.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
We come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence
and faith.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins.
For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

**Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

The Liturgy of the Word

FIRST READING Ezekiel 37:1-14

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD." So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones

came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

PSALM Psalm 130

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice;
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss,
O Lord, who could stand?
For there is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared.
I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.
My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the night-watch for the morning,
more than the night-watch for the morning.
O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy;
with him there is plenteous redemption,
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

SECOND READING Romans 8:6-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

2nd Hymn – Lead us, heavenly Father

1 Lead us, Heav'nly Father, lead us,
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us feed us,
For we have no help but thee;
Yet possessing ev'ry blessing
If our God our father be.

2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us,
All our weakness thou dost know.
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe.
Lone and dreary, faint and weary,
Thro' the desert thou didst go.

3 Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heav'nly joy,
Love with ev'ry passion blending
Pleasure that can never cloy.
Thus provided, pardon'd, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.

Gospel Reading

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Lord is a great God,

O that today we would listen to his voice.

Harden not our hearts.

Praise to you, O Christ,

King of eternal glory.

GOSPEL John 11:1-45

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Glory to you, O Lord.

A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When

Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reflection

Bethany is a small place - just a village really - I've lived here all my life - so did my parents and theirs before them. Bethany born and bred, that's me.

Mind you, small it might be, but it's not the back of beyond - a few yards to the brow of the hill and you're on the top of the Mount of Olives, looking across to Jerusalem - what a view that is - the holy city, with the temple standing out as its crowning glory.

Here in Bethany, most of the time, we all just get on with our lives in a quiet way - oh, there are the usual ups and downs of village life - you know the kind of thing - weddings, funerals, the occasional falling out with a neighbour, usually over something daft - but generally Bethany folk are easy-going and sociable, looking out for each other, always ready to stop for a chat but not in each other's pockets.

I did say 'most of the time' - not so long ago, there were some truly amazing things happening here, things you would hardly believe. I'm not sure I would have believed them if I hadn't been here and seen for myself Well, I'll tell you the story and you can decide for yourselves.....

It all started when Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, made friends with a man called Jesus. Jesus came from up the country, in the Galilee regions, four or five days walk from here, but he came to Jerusalem for the festivals each year and I guess that's where he met Lazarus. Anyway he spent quite a bit of time with Lazarus and the girls, and sometimes he stayed with them.

I'd seen him around, but I hadn't actually met him, although Mary and Martha are good friends of mine; we grew up together. I'd heard the stories about Jesus though - strange stories of miraculous healings, and other hard-to-explain events, like calming a storm on the Sea of Galilee, even walking on it - can you believe it? I mean, how weird is that?

He also had a reputation for being a very fine teacher, and he had quite a following, with people travelling many miles to hear him, and to see what he would do next. His teaching was about Yahweh, God, who he called his

Father, and some of the things he said were considered pretty radical - things like 'love your enemies' and 'do good to those who hate you'. Did he include the Romans, I wonder?

He also had some rather unusual ideas about the place of women (not that I would complain about that!) - he once allowed Mary to sit at his feet while he was teaching Lazarus and the other men - that was absolutely something that had never been heard of before. I don't think Martha was best pleased!

Anyway, not long ago, Lazarus fell really sick, and the two girls were beside themselves with worry - none of the doctors were able to do anything to help him, and he just got worse and worse. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus, telling him that his friend was desperately ill - they were sure he would come straight away and they were devastated when he didn't!

A couple of days later, there was still no sign of him and to everyone's horror, Lazarus died. All the village turned out to mourn him - such a fine young man - what a waste.....

So Lazarus was laid to rest and the whole village, and many friends from Jerusalem, rallied round Mary and Martha. We were trying our best to comfort them, and at the same time trying to come to terms with our own grief at the loss of our friend and neighbour. Oh, it was such a sad time.

But then, four days later, I was surprised to see Martha hurrying up the road. "Jesus is coming," she called out as she rushed past. A few minutes later she was back, on her way to call Mary - Jesus was asking for her, she said.

By this time, practically the whole village was out, keen to see and hear what would happen next. I can tell you this, no-one had any idea what we were about to witness!

Mary reached Jesus' side and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." She was crying, as indeed many of us were, and Jesus was obviously very moved himself. He asked Mary, 'Where is he?'

They took him to see the cave with the stone across the front and as they reached the entrance, Jesus began to weep.

There was a bit of a mixed reaction at that among the crowd - some said how much Jesus must have loved Lazarus and some said couldn't he have stopped Lazarus from dying in the first place? If he could make blind people see

But no-one was prepared for what happened next - Jesus told them to take away the stone! Everyone was horrified - and good old Martha, the practical one, said out loud what we were all thinking - "Lord, he's been dead for four days - there's going to be a very bad smell in there!"

Jesus spoke very gently to her, but we all heard his words; "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

I'm not sure I understood what he meant, but it was obviously enough to convince Mary and Martha, because they signalled to the men to roll the stone away - and guess what? No bad smell!

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed aloud to Yahweh, and then he cried out, "Lazarus, come out!"

You could have heard a pin drop!

And sure enough, to our complete and utter amazement, out came Lazarus. He still had the burial cloths wrapped round him, but he really did walk out of that tomb. We could not believe our eyes!

Jesus said, "Unbind him and let him go."

And at those words, the strangest thought came into my head - if only the things that bind me could be untied.

Wherever had that come from?

As I watched Mary and Martha gently and rather hesitantly unwind the strips of cloth from their beloved brother, I stood with tears pouring down my face

and found myself considering the things about me that I'm a bit ashamed of, to tell you the truth, things like the mean thoughts, the bad temper, the temptation to gossip, the little white lie ...

Then I look across at Jesus, and he was looking across the crowd straight at me, with a little smile on his lips and the kindest expression in his eyes.

And in that instant, I knew deep inside that, yes, I could be released from all those things. I could be set free from the past and be given a new start, to lead a better, fuller and more joyful life than anything I had known before. Jesus was offering release and new life to everyone, not just Lazarus!

Jesus' smile grew broader, and he nodded, and turned away - and I went gladly to join in with the celebrations that kept the people of Bethany partying for days! After all, it's not every day you get offered new life, is it?

[JW]

The Creed

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercession ["Living Stones Year A", by Susan Sayers]

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, through whom we can come into the presence of God forever. As living stones, let us pray for the building up of God's Church, and for the world God loves.

Living God, our life is in your hands, and we offer you all that we are, all that our past has made us, and all that we may become.

Build us up by the power of your Spirit into a spiritual temple where you are glorified day after day, in all our praise and worship, and in our love for one another.

You are my strong rock: **my strong rock and my shelter.**

Living God, our planet, with its frenzied life on its fragile skin, is unnervingly small and vulnerable to evil. Sharpen our consciences to sense your direction

and protect us from all that draws us away from you. Guide our leaders in the way of truth and realign us all to the values which are built on you.

You are my strong rock: **my strong rock and my shelter.**

Living God, may the Way which Jesus shows us be the Way we live out our daily lives around the table, in the daylight and the dark, in the misunderstandings, the tensions and the rush, in the eye contact, the conversations and the growing.

You are my strong rock: **my strong rock and my shelter.**

Living God, you can use and transform all our experiences. We lay before you now those who are travelling through a time of pain or anguish, tragedy or conflict which is hard to bear. We stand alongside them in their suffering, and offer it to your transforming, healing love.

You are my strong rock: **my strong rock and my shelter.**

Living God, we remember those who have died and pray for them now. Lead them out of their pain into the light of eternity, and keep us all in the way that leads us to share that everlasting life with you.

You are my strong rock: **my strong rock and my shelter.**

Living God, we thank you for showing us the Way, in human terms that we find easier to understand.

Covid-19 Intercessions from the Church of England

(Extracted from <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>)

A prayer about the Coronavirus outbreak:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.

Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;

that we may rejoice in your comfort

knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

For those in isolation:

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For hospital staff and medical researchers:

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Merciful father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Peace

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace.

[The peace of the Lord be always with you **and also with you.**]

3rd Hymn – Father, hear the prayer we offer

1 Father, hear the prayer we offer:

Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for strength, that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.

2 Not for ever in green pastures

Do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway
May we tread rejoicingly.

3 Not for ever by still waters

Would we idly rest and stay;
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way.

4 Be our strength in hours of weakness,

In our wanderings be our Guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

5 Let our path be bright or dreary,

storm or sunshine be our share;
may our souls in hope unwearied,
make Thy work our ceaseless prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Closing prayers

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. **Amen.**

You have opened to us the Scriptures, O Christ.
Abide with us, we pray,
that, blessed by your royal presence,
we may walk with you
all the days of our life,
and at its end behold you
in the glory of the eternal Trinity,
one God for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Dismissal

**Christ give us grace to grow in holiness,
to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. Amen.**

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

4th Hymn - Great is Thy faithfulness

1 Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.
*Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness;
morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
Great is Thy faithfulness...

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
*Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness;
morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*If you have any comments or suggestions to make about this service, and its
delivery to you, please let Dawn know by the usual channels
or email webmaster@whitbourne.org.uk*

We intend producing a fresh one EVERY WEEK as long as needed.

Parish of Greater Whitbourne. Devised by John Bland. March 2020

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