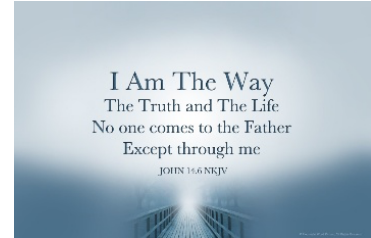


Prepared by Ann Seaton

Fifth Sunday in Easter

This short piece of worship is primarily intended for people to use at home if unable to get to church, but (like God's love) it's for anyone and everyone. We hope for better times to come, times of promise, hope and purpose, times of compassion, generosity and peace, times of blessing, healing and grace. While we wait and hope we hear Jesus's words 'Don't let this rattle you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me'



Prayer for peace: Almighty God , from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed; kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all men, a true love of peace; and guide, with Your truth and love and wisdom, those who take counsel for the nations of the world that in tranquillity Your Kingdom may go forward until the earth is filled with the knowledge of Your love. Amen

Call to worship: Psalm 65 v 4: Happy and blessed are the chosen! Happy and blessed are the guests at home in Your place! We can expect our fill of good things in Your house, Your heavenly mansion.

Hymn: We hold to the name that soothes, feeds, supports and comforts us StF 322

1 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away our fear.

2 It makes the wounded spirit whole and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul, and to the weary, rest.

3 Dear name, the rock on which I build, my shield and hiding place
My never-failing treasury filled with boundless stores of Grace.

4 Jesus my shepherd brother friend; my Prophet, Priest, and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End, accept the praise I bring.

5 Weak is the effort of my heart, and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see you as thou art, I'll praise thee as I ought.

6 Till then I would thy love proclaim with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of thy name refresh my soul in death.

Prayers: We come with grateful hearts, seeking peace and assurance amidst the trials and worries of this world. We come with love with adoration and with thanks that a creator God as powerful as You has time to think about us. We praise You for Your promises of new life, the signs we see here

on earth in springtime and promise to be with You in Your Kingdom, led there by our Lord and Saviour Jesus. We adore You for You alone are worthy of our praise, our acclaim, our worship. We thank You that You have always been there for us, are always here with us and always will be. We ask Your forgiveness for times when we've been in doubt, when we've been scared to follow Your footsteps, when we've let go of Your guiding hand. Give us strength to trust more fully in You and in Your care for us. Amen

Reading: John 14 1 to 14 Hear the Gospel of Christ; **Glory to Christ our Saviour** "You must not let yourselves be distressed—you must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's House. If there were not, should I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? It is true that I am going away to prepare a place for you, but it is just as true that I am coming again to welcome you into my own home, so that you may be where I am. You know where I am going and you know the road I am going to take." "Lord," Thomas remonstrated, "we do not know where you're going, and how can we know what road you're going to take?" "I myself am the road," replied Jesus, "and the truth and the life. No one approaches the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, you would have known my Father. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him." Jesus explains his relationship with the Father. Then Philip said to him, "Show us the Father, Lord, and we shall be satisfied." "Have I been such a long time with you," returned Jesus, "without your really knowing me, Philip? The man who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The very words I say to you are not my own. It is the Father who lives in me who carries out his work through me. Do you believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? But if you cannot, then believe me because of what you see me do. I assure you that the man who believes in me will do the same things that I have done, yes, and he will do even greater things than these, for I am going away to the Father. Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will do—that the Son may bring glory to the Father. And if you ask me anything in my name, I will grant it." This is the Gospel of Christ; **Praise to Christ our Lord**

Reflection: This passage is about the promise of eternal life; it emphasises the unique role held by Jesus as God's son and tells us that our faith in Him will take us on the road to that Divine Kingdom even if (like Thomas) we don't have map or directions or a Satnav. What a perfect image; a place for each of us in God's kingdom and not only that, but this promise from Jesus himself that He is going ahead of us to make sure that all is in readiness. If Jesus is getting it ready then we can be guaranteed that it will be perfect; This is reassuring, it's comforting, it's a constant, unending, consistent, reliable, permanent reminder that God is in control, not us and we can cling to the first of Jesus's words in this passage: The Message Translation puts it "Don't let this rattle you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me." And we can remind ourselves of His later statement 'I am the way, the truth and the life'. We aren't in charge of anything. You all know that I find no place for politics in my services, but I will say this ... political world leaders aren't in charge either. "Don't let this rattle you; trust me. I

am the way, the truth and the life.” We’re living in a world full of angst and anger and war, a world full of discord and distrust, a world full of bigotry and hatred but this isn’t the world God created. He gave us a paradise and put us in charge... then we took free will as our choice and what a mess we’ve made of things! But we’ve been there before, through floods, famines and droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, through war after war after war but we can take heart in the words Jesus gives us “Don’t let this rattle you; trust me. I am the way, the truth and the life.” This faith, this trust has got us through bad times in the past, and it exactly what we need to hear when we are living in these difficult days. Some of these times (when we’ve felt like it’s all falling apart) are personal, some are inflicted on us in our close communities, even within families and close friendships and some are blows dealt to the world more widely by people whose desire is for power and domination. The disciples must have felt that too, often ostracised because they followed Jesus, criticised by the religious authorities and the ruling Romans yet Jesus is telling them “Don’t let this rattle you; trust me. I am the way, the truth and the life.” And now we can know that there is a place for us in the Father’s house, a shelter from all the storms life wants to throw at us; we can know that we belong, that we matter, that we are included in God’s care; we can know that there is a way forward even when we do not know the way. Is there something making us feel like we’ve lost our way, lost direction, lost the map? Jesus has taken that journey in order to get our place ready for us. “Don’t let this rattle you; trust me. I am the way, the truth and the life.”

Prayers for the world



Loving God we pray for all your people, for our District and Circuit, for the congregation at St Martins, for people of other faiths and creeds and for people who have no faith; who have no belief in anything outside this secular world.



We pray for the world You created and for all life. We have failed to look after the world and its resources and selfish human nature has caused the mistreatment of other people. Be with those in authority that they may think firstly of the needs of the whole of Your world and all its people so that Your Kingdom of love and peace may come to all.



We pray for people who are suffering in unjust regimes, the sick and less able, the lonely and those unable to live a full life. Be with prisoners and the staff who care for them, be with health and care workers, with our emergency services and security forces, and be with HM The King. We pray for those recently bereaved and those approaching the end of this earthly life.

We ask these prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who taught us to come to You in prayer with the words: **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. **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name; your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us 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 for ever. Amen**

Hymn We are still in the Easter season so I use this hymn to bring together our thoughts - He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in. StF 284

There is a green hill far away, outside a city wall, where the dear Lord was crucified, who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell, what pains He had to bear; but we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good, that we might go at last to heaven, saved by His precious blood.

There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin, He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

Oh, dearly, dearly has He loved, and we must love Him too, and trust in His redeeming blood, and try His works to do.

Prayer: As we end our time of sharing worship we ask that we may come to understand more fully what it means to rest fully in God, that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit may guard us and guide us, shelter us and lead us. **May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.**

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