

29th March 2020, 5th Sunday of Lent Service by Pip Lawrence

As we are currently church in a different way, we begin by recalling verses from 1Peter:2 4-5. "As you come to him, the living stone - rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious to him -you also, like living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".

Today we are living stones in the body of Christ physically based in our homes but spiritually we are one in heart and mind as we remember this is the day when we would normally gather to worship together. Today we remind ourselves, as we join in this act of worship, that The Lord is with us all.

So we pause for a moment and hold silence.

In that silence we welcome The Lord and make our confession and prepare our hearts to worship, praise and receive blessings from the Lord.

We pray together, Heavenly Father, as we join in this time of worship in unusual circumstances we ask that you would guide our thoughts, that you would lift our hearts, and fill our mind with joy, praise and thanks. For we ask in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

Hymn(no. 52from Mission Praise )  
God sent his Son, they called Him Jesus;  
He came to love, heal, and forgive;  
He lived and died to buy my pardon,  
An empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives.

Because He lives I can face tomorrow;Because  
He lives all fear is gone;  
Because I know He holds the future,  
And life is worth the livingJust because He lives.

How sweet to hold a new-born baby,  
And feel the pride and joy he gives;

But greater still the calm assurance,  
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.

And then one day I'll cross the river;  
I'll fight life's final war with pain;  
And then as death gives way to victory,  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.

### Prayers

Loving Heavenly Father, as we do church in a different way this morning we want to thank you that we have the ability to communicate in all kinds of ways. We thank you for the internet, for printers and the ability to post this newsletter either physically or on line. Amen

Thank you for all the blessings that you have poured into our lives in this week of change and uncertainty, for unexpected communication, for acts of care and kindness, for all who have had to continue to work to make sure we can buy supplies and receive care. We take a moment to give our own thanks...For all these blessings we thank you Lord. Amen

Father we pray for all those who face other challenges in their life, for the sick, the sorrowful, for the bereaved, and for those who live in want and war. Especially we pray for health workers and those who are ill with the corona virus. Amen

Father we ask for wisdom and guidance for all in authority. Grant to them strength, health and a true concern for the common good. Amen

Finally we pray for ourselves. Father in the face of uncertainty and change we ask that you will give us your peace that passes all understanding. That you will guard our hearts and minds and keep us in your care. We bring all our prayers in the precious name of Jesus. Amen

We conclude our prayers with The Lord's Prayer. Bible reading:  
John 11: 1-45

Many years ago when I was being interviewed by the selection committee to train as a Reader I was asked this question. "What scripture would you choose to preach on and why"? I chose John 11 without a moment's thought. I have always loved this chapter, not for the obvious reason. While the "I am the resurrection and the life" is formative in our faith what really speaks to me in this chapter is the fact that Jesus enters into so many situations. Into all the situations Jesus brings his peace, love, comfort and direction.

Firstly we learn that Lazarus is sick, he needs Jesus. The disciples are questioning, they need Jesus. Mary and Martha are grieving, they need Jesus. Lazarus dies, he needs Jesus.

Jesus answers questions, he quells fear, he overlooks faithlessness, and the outcome is completely and utterly astonishing. All of us today have our own situations to deal with.

There will be questions, loss, illness, faithlessness and a myriad of other issues. Jesus will enter into all of our situations if we ask him. He will help us, hold us and carry us. In this time of change and facing the unknown we can trust him. I know it is a long chapter, but we have time at the moment. So maybe read the chapter again and be blessed.

May God's blessing surround us each day, as we trust him and walk in his way. May his presence within guard and keep us from sin. Go in peace, go in joy, go in love. Amen.

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For our prayers this week:

The recently bereaved families of Lucy Humphries, Robin Reed, Ron Cobb and Theresa Stafford

If you need prayer, a chat or any help, support at this time, please ring Veronica.

CONTACTS: Rev Veronica Wilson Tel 01485 570697 or email [heacham.vicar@gmail.com](mailto:heacham.vicar@gmail.com) Church Office: Penny is working from home email [heacham.church@gmail.com](mailto:heacham.church@gmail.com)