

## Morning Worship Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020

**I am come that you may have life and have it more abundantly**

### **Hymn STF 134 Christ, whose glory fills the skies**

Christ, whose glory fills the skies  
Christ, the true, the only Light,  
Sun of Righteousness, arise  
Triumph o'er the shades of night;  
Day-spring from on high, be near;  
Day-spring, in my heart appear

Dark and cheerless, is the morn  
Unaccompanied by thee  
Joyless is the day's return  
Till thy mercy beams I see  
Till they inward light impart,  
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine;  
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;  
Fill me, radiancy divine  
Scatter all my unbelief;  
More and more thyself display  
Shining to the perfect day.

*Charles Wesley*

### **Let Us Pray**

In the chaos before anything was, Lord you spoke bringing life in abundance  
*We praise and adore you, God of Life*

In the darkness of an early morning garden, and the dark coldness of death and the tomb, Lord you spoke bringing resurrection, defeating death, and calling us to abundant life  
*We praise and adore you, God of Life*

In the dark place of our lives, Lord, you speak and bring recreation, transformation and calling us to life in abundance  
*We praise and adore you, God of Life*

God of abundant life, You have called us to be your people and walk in your way but there are times when we wander away, when we close our ears to your call and our eyes to your life. We remember those times before you.

Take all that we have been and done and all that we have left undone, and transform it through your love and grace.

Open our ears to your words of forgiveness and our eyes to your glory  
May we hear the words "Your sins are forgiven" and know their truth **Amen**

### **Old Testament Reading Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want  
He makes me lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters: He restores my soul.  
He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, For you are with me,  
Your rod and staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me, in the presence of my enemies,  
You anoint my head with oil, my cup runneth over  
Surely Goodness and love will follow all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

### **Hymn STF 481 The Lord's my shepherd**

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;  
he makes me lie in pastures green,  
he leads me by the still, still waters,  
his goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in you alone,  
and I will trust in you alone,  
for your endless mercy follows me,  
your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
and he anoints my head with oil;  
and my cup — it overflows with joy,  
I feast on his pure delights.

*And I will trust in you alone,*

And though I walk the darkest path —  
I will not fear the evil one,  
for you are with me, and your rod and staff  
are the comfort I need to know.

*And I will trust in you alone,*

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

### **Gospel Reading John 10 verses 1 – 10**

I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought them out, all on his own, he goes ahead of them and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger, in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize the stranger's voice.

Jesus used this figure of speech but they did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore, Jesus said again, "I tell you again I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate, whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. "

### **Life to the Full**

The shepherd appearing on Country File had several thousand sheep. Like the shepherd in Jesus' parable, he was owner of the sheep as well as shepherd. He was businessman, entrepreneur, employer. Sheep had to be fed, watered, sheared, lambled, separated into groups for market, for breeding, for selling on. There were forms to be filled, wages to be paid, vaccinations, safeguarding, PAYE, VAT and business taxes to be dealt with; To say nothing of protecting the sheep from sheep rustlers, and worse still from the vandals who just harm the sheep and leave them to die. Not perhaps, quite, how we imagine the life of a shepherd

For Jesus' listeners, the shepherds were the kings, the politicians, the leaders, the wealth creators, Think David, Moses, Jacob,

For them shepherds were not just stuck out in the countryside wandering the hills and valleys. They were the politicians living and working with their people, involved in the everyday life of the nation; concerned for the well being of everyone. For them the ultimate Good Shepherd would be the Messiah, establishing God's kingdom where all could live in peace and enjoy life to the full.

For us the Good Shepherd is the one who goes before us in every part of our daily lives calling us to live life to the full even in the present situation with the isolation; the threat and fear of illness, the worry of loss of employment, and of financial uncertainty, and for some the grief of losing a loved one. The Good Shepherd goes before us, calling us to follow his lead and sustaining us with his love, visible in the caring response of so many to our needs the needs of others

## **Contented Cows! Happy Chickens! Satisfied Sheep!,**

A prerequisite to **richer milk, tastier eggs,** and **mouth watering succulent meat** or so the adverts would have us believe

What about **Joyful Christians** -- Enjoying life to the full. A prerequisite for **attractive Churches?**

The psalmist promised overflowing cups-- Not just enough, but plenty and to spare  
That is what the disciples discovered as they bathed in the New Life of the Resurrection. The more they and we bathe in this new life, the more we discover, that the overflowing cups, the abundant life, had been there all the time. Just waiting for us to reach out and grab them

The Good Shepherd calls us not just to follow, but to become shepherds ourselves “ Feed my sheep, tend my lambs” Jesus said to Peter on the beach. Like the shepherd on Country File or the shepherds of the Old Testament this means being concerned with every part of 21<sup>st</sup> century life, .from food banks, to the plight of refugees, from zero hours contracts to tax evasion., from maintenance of the NHS to climate change .... And we could go on..... As 21<sup>st</sup> century shepherds we are called to do whatever lies within our power to improve the lives of others and to lead others to follow Jesus to an abundant life

The early Church was a joyful assembly

The Acts reading set for today, (Acts2:42-47) tells us the early Christians had glad and sincere hearts and they met every day to learn from those who had known Jesus and to praise God .” They shared their meals with unaffected Joy” It also tells us of their concern for the well being of others, Their selling of property to provide for the needs of their neighbours

There will be difficult times ahead, not just on the health front, Many people will be confronted with problems caused by the changing economic situation. By unemployment, by debt, by homelessness, some not knowing where the next meal will come from.

What then of life to the full and overflowing cups ??

All we can do is look to the early church and to saints down the ages and see that even in the darkest time, they were still filled joy. Some of us will know for ourselves that when life is at its darkest, then God seems most real.

We see God, today, in the response of people to Coronavirus and all its consequences, and in all the love that the response shows

We rejoice that life for most people is getting better. Most people now have a bathroom and an indoor toilet, a luxury for many people even 50 years ago. I remember the scourge of diphtheria and scarlet fever outbreaks when I was a child, the fear of walking passed the isolation hospital, the knowledge that some of your friends would die. Sixty years ago it was estimated that 1in 3 people didn't have enough to eat, today the number is more like 1 in 8. Life is improving. We see God in the work of those who have achieved these and countless other improvements

And then what of the internet, of email, online shopping, zooming, streaming, All of which I find absolutely mind blowing We could go on , an overflowing cup, an abundant life

**God is with us All will be well**

## **Hymn STF 297 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing**

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.

The cross stands empty to the sky.

Let streets and homes with praises ring.

Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now,  
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,  
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
and find the way, the life, the truth,  
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Brian Wren (b. 1936)

### **Prayers of Intercession**

We pray for all those who are afraid at this time  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

We pray for those who are ill, and for those who care for them during this crisis, often putting their own lives at risk to do so. We pray for those who are grieving and for those who know a loved one is near death  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

We pray for those who are homeless and for those who struggle to feed themselves and their families and for those who have lost their homes or whose businesses are at risk  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

We pray for our Government, and for the Governments of other countries, for business leaders and all who hold positions of power. We pray too for those who feel voiceless and powerless as they see their whole way of life undergoing change  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

We pray for those situations that no longer make te headlines, for those suffering from conflicts, war and oppression, for those seeking refuge ,and those who have no place of safety.  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

We pray at this special time of Ramadan for our brothers and sisters of the Muslim faith. May their time of fasting bring them comfort and strength at this time of fear and uncertainty  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

We pray for ourselves that we may know the joy of your presence at this difficult time. Grant us wisdom and compassion as we seek to follow in your way and to show your love to all .  
*Come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life*

### **We join in the Lord's Prayer**

#### **Traditional**

**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,**

#### **Contemporary**

**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 us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,**

**the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

When asked, he was Bishop, how he dealt with all the demands on his time St David replied:  
Be Joyful, Keep the Faith, Do the Little Things

**Hymn STF 465 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,**

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty;  
hold me with thy powerful hand:  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,  
feed me now and evermore;  
feed me now and evermore.

Open thou the crystal fountain  
whence the healing stream shall flow;  
let the fiery, cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through:  
strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield;  
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee;  
I will ever give to thee.  
William Williams (1717–1791)  
*translated by Peter Williams (1727–1796)*

**Blessing**

From where we are  
To where you need us  
*Jesus now lead on*

From the security of what we know  
To the adventure of what you will reveal  
*Jesus now lead on*

To refashion the fabric of the world  
Until it resembles the shape of your kingdom  
*Jesus now lead on*

Because good things have been prepared  
For those who love God  
*Jesus now lead on*

*We share the words of Grace:*

May the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always. Amen

Please be assured that we are still here if you need anything at all during this time.

The circuit staff can be contacted by calling 01933 312778, 01933 622137  
All words from the hymns reproduced from Singing the Faith Words Edition. CCLI reproduced under licence  
no. 1905000.