

**The Fourth Sunday of Easter – 25th April 2021**

Welcome to Praying Together but Separately

welcome and introduction

hymn Restore, O Lord, the honour of Your name, *St Martin’s Voices*
 in works of sovereign power
 come shake the earth again;
 that all may see and come with reverent fear
 to the living God,
 whose kingdom shall outlast the years.

Restore, O Lord, in all the earth Your fame,
 and in our time revive

the church that bears Your name.
 And in Your anger, Lord, remember mercy,
 O living God,
 whose mercy shall outlast the years.

Bend us, O Lord, where we are hard and cold,
 in Your refiner's fire
 come purify the gold.
 Though suffering comes and evil crouches near,
 still our living God
 is reigning, He is reigning here.

Restore, O Lord, the honour of Your name,
 in works of sovereign power
 come shake the earth again;
 that all may see and come with reverent fear
 to the living God,
 whose kingdom shall outlast the years.
 *Graham Kendrick (born 1950) & Chris Rolinson © 1981 Thankyou Music/Adm. by worshiptogether.com songs excl. UK & Europe, adm. by kingswaysongs.com. www.kingswaysongs.com. Used by permission.*

gathering before god

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! **He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!**

Jesus stand among us in your risen power,

Let this time of worship be a hallowed hour. **Amen.**

prayer of the day

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father’s sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

confession

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

Like Mary at the empty tomb,

we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.

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

Like the disciples behind locked doors,

we are afraid to be seen as your followers.

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

Like Thomas in the upper room,

we are slow to believe.

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

the absolution

May the God of love and power, forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,

and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **All**   **Amen.**

gloria in excelsis

*All*   **Glory to God in the highest,**

**and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,**

**almighty God and Father,**

**we worship you, we give you thanks,**

**we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,**

**Lord God, Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us;**

**you are seated at the right hand of the Father:**

**receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,**

**you alone are the Lord,**

**you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,**

**with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

bible readings:

acts 4: 5-12

The rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest’s family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is. “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’

Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

hymn **In Christ alone my hope is found** *sung by St Martin’s Voices*

In Christ alone my hope is found,
 he is my light, my strength, my song;
 this cornerstone, this solid ground,
 firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
 What heights of love, what depths of peace,
 when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
 My comforter, my all in all,
 here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
 fullness of God in helpless babe!
 This gift of love and righteousness,
 scorned by the ones he came to save:
 till on that cross as Jesus died,
 the wrath of God was satisfied -
 for every sin on him was laid;
 here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay,
 light of the world by darkness slain:
 Then bursting forth in glorious day
 up from the grave he rose again!
 And as he stands in victory,
 sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
 for I am his and he is mine -
 bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
 this is the power of Christ in me;
 from life's first cry to final breath,
 Jesus commands my destiny.
 No power of hell, no scheme of man,
 can ever pluck me from his hand;
 till he returns or calls me home,
 here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

*Stuart Townend (born 1963) and Keith Getty (born 1974)
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psalm 23

*Refrain: I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦
therefore can I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦
and leads me beside still waters. ***R***

3 He shall refresh my soul ♦

and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; ♦
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ***R***

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦ you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.

6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, ♦ and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

*Refrain: I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

1 John 3: 16-24

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

the gospel John 10:11-18

Alleluia, Alleluia. I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Alleluia.

Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

sermon

hymn

**The King of love my shepherd is.** *sung by St Martin’s Voices*

The King of love my shepherd is,
 whose goodness faileth never;
 I nothing lack if I am his
 and he is mine for ever.

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

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
 but yet in love he sought me,
 and on his shoulder gently laid,
 and home rejoicing brought me

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.

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

And so through all the length of days
 thy goodness faileth never:
 good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
 within thy house for ever. *Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)*

affirmation of faith

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**All   I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**All   I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**All   I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation.

To you be praise and glory for ever.

You have delivered us from the darkness of death

through your beloved Son.

In him, light has conquered darkness;

life has triumphed over death.

He has breathed into us your life-giving Spirit.

Blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

our God for ever and ever.

Lord, we give you thanks for the light of the Gospel

and that it shines in our hearts.

We rejoice in the resurrection and in your saving power.

We remember all who are struggling with their faith,

those who doubt,

any who sit in darkness or who live in fear.

We bring to mind all who have fallen away from the faith,

especially any known to us.

*Silence*

Lord God, you are light: **in you is no darkness at all.**

We remember peoples and nations who feel drained

and lack energy.

We ask your blessing upon all who suffer

from poverty or oppression.

We pray for any who are separated from their loved ones

and their homes;

we remember all who are in prison.

*Silence*

Lord God, you are light: **in you is no darkness at all.**

We give thanks that you appeared in an ordinary home, O Christ.

We ask that your presence and your peace may be known in our homes and among our loved ones.

We bring before you homes where faith is mocked

or persecuted, and pray for all who are struggling to remain faithful.

*Silence*

Lord God, you are light: **in you is no darkness at all.**

We think of all who are struggling with life:

homes where there is tension or lack of peace;

people who are ill and afraid of the future;

all who are lonely and facing a time of crisis.

May all know your presence and your peace.

*Silence*

Lord God, you are light: **in you is no darkness at all.**

Father, we give you thanks

for the new life that you offer to us in your Son,

for you offer us eternal life.

We come to you with confidence

and pray for friends and loved ones departed

May they know the fullness of joy in your presence and in eternal life.

*Silence*

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

the peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said,

‘Peace be with you.’

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

Alleluia. The peace of the risen Christ be always with you

***All***   **and also with you. Alleluia. Christ is risen.**

hymn

**I give to you a new commandment – Peter Nardone***sung by St Martin’s Voices*

I give to you a new commandment,

that you love one another, as I have loved you.

Ubi caritas est vera, Deus ibi est.

Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.

Exsultemus et in ipso iucundemur.

Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.

I give to you a new commandment,

that you love one another, as I have loved you.

Et ex corde diligamus nos sincerro. **Amen.**

*John 13. 34-35 & Liber Usualis*

an act of spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there

and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. **Amen.**

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

***All***   **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

The Conclusion

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom

in the words our Saviour taught us

**Our Father in heaven,**

**Hallowed by 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, and the glory are yours**

**Now and forever. Amen.**

the final hymn

**Great is thy faithfulness.** *sung by St Martin’s Voices*

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 for ever 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!*

Summer and winter, and spring-time and harvest,
 sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
 join with all nature in manifold witness
 to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
 *Chorus*

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!
 *Chorus*

*Thomas O Chisholm (1866-1960)
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blessing.

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and those you love, for evermore. **Amen**