Sunday 10th May 5th of Easter Peter Jenner

“You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name’s sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge”. Psalm 31 (verses 3-4)

**Hymn StF 363**

My Jesus, my Saviour. Shout to the Lord all the earth, let us sing

Lord there is none like you. Power and majesty, praise to the King.

All of my days I want to praise Mountains bow down

the wonders of your mighty love. And the seas will roar

My comfort, my shelter. at the sound of your name.

tower of refuge and strength, I sing for joy at the work of your hands.

let every breath, all that I am, Forever I’ll love you, forever I’ll stand.

never cease to worship you.. Nothing compares to the

promise I have in you. Darlene Zschech

**Prayer of Praise and Confession**

God of the known and the unknown we praise you on this Sabbath day. A day of focusing on reading your word, joining together in prayer and praise and relaxing in your creation. Even though we are not in your house of worship we are still connected by your love and grace. We praise you for the week that has passed as we come even more to terms with “lockdown”, the new normal of life which we could never have imagined at the start of 2020.

We confess, Lord, that we might have not felt like offering praise to you as we miss those we would normally meet, our family and friends, those in our activity and social groups, forgive us we pray. Help us to keep calm, that our Faith will be the tonic and that the light of your presence will shine brightly and through your love we are comforted. We ask our prayer and all our prayers in the name of the Risen Lord Amen.

We say together “Our Father, who art in heaven… Amen

**Reading John 14: 1-14 (NRSV**)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going “Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him”. Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever 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 words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

**Jesus the Way to the Father**.

We don’t need to be reminded that we are living in a totally different way at the moment. Gone for the time being are the things that we often take for granted, such as have a coffee with friends in a coffee shop, being able to have a chat when we see someone in the aisle at a supermarket, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, supporting charity, worshiping together and being part of Church life. Our way has been blocked, with only a bit of wiggle room. Jesus tells us at the very beginning of today’s reading from John “Do not let your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe in me.”

Are we troubled today? Covid19 is the trouble, it has caused death, separation, turned the world upside down, disruption on a scale that has never been seen since the war years. All this plays on our hearts and minds. We are worried about loved ones, about jobs, how will the economy get started again, when will lockdown restrictions be lifted? Despite all this we are told to “believe in God” and “believe in me”. To believe brings comfort, reassurance, stability and gives purpose to life. I know that at the root of my belief is that without faith in God, Jesus and the advocate, the Holy Spirit, that my spirituality would either be non-existent and life would be so humdrum and void of direction. We are given a glance at what eternity may look like (vs 2). “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places” This is very comforting to hear as Jesus is making it known, loud and clear, that plans are in hand, we will not be abandoned, that is his promise to believers even though we do not know what eternity is, Jesus will be with us. Jesus is the link, he has experienced life and how it is lived, he is both God and man. Difficult for some people to get their head around?

In our reading however there is still doubt, questions that need answers, which are asked by Thomas and Philip. They wanted to know “the way”, they wanted to “see the Father” in order to have proof and certainty. Has this meant that throughout Jesus ministry that his message has not been clear enough, they still though the divine actions and way of life of Jesus have missed the point? Have they learned nothing about what faith is? Jesus asks them, “Do you not believe that I am the Father and the Father is in me?” (vs 10).

Jesus is visible to Thomas and Philip. Do we see God in Jesus today? Truth and reality are so important today. Christ is the truth and the way.

Jesus raised from the dead is mind blowing so where does that leave the disciples? They have purpose and the message of Good News of God’s Kingdom through guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate. Do we? May we all as we live through these uncharted times know our way to the Father through Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**Prayers for Others**

Heavenly Father we pray that through you, your way and ways will be made know to all in these difficult times. That kindness, patience, understanding, self-esteem and love will abound.

Heavenly Father we pray that the truth be told so that people are not mislead, let down, and lose hope as we live through this pandemic.

Heavenly Father through you we have life in its fullness as you travel with all people, that you are aware of their pains and concerns, their doubts and imperfections and that you know them more than they know themselves.

We take moment or two to think about those who we know personal and bring them to the Lord and ask his blessing upon them…

And we pray for ourselves Heavenly Father, that we will feel your presence as we have never felt it before, set our hearts alive with the flame of your love and give us a fresh understanding which enriches are faith in and through you. Amen.

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**Hymn StF 303 / HP 196**

1. I know that my Redeemer lives- 3. He lives, and grants me daily breath

What joy the blest assurance gives! he lives, and I shall conquer death;

He lives, he lives, who once was dead; he lives, my mansion to prepare;

He lives, my everlasting Head! he lives, to lead me safely there.

2. He lives, to bless me with his love: 4. He lives, all glory to his name;

he lives, to plead for me above; he lives, my Saviour ,still the same;

he lives, my hungry soul to feed; what joy the blest assurance gives,

he lives, to help in time of need. I know that my Redeemer lives!

Samuel Medley

**Closing Prayer**

Have no fear. He is Lord and he is with you and will walk with you, talk with you and be in you

and you in him, always. Amen