

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 11th May 2025
Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Hello friends, I hope all is well. Let us worship God together:

A gathering prayer

God, our shepherd,
 you gather us into your kingdom,
 and into your loving arms.
 You seek us out when we are lost.
 You rescue us when we are in trouble.
 You welcome us when we return home.
 Make us – your church, your people –
 into a sanctuary for all who are fearful,
 a place of healing for those who are broken,
 and a welcoming home for all who seek it. **Amen.**

A prayer of approach

Jesus, loving shepherd, be near to us.
 Jesus, good shepherd, watch over us.
 Jesus, caring shepherd, be gentle with us.
 Jesus, consoling shepherd, walk with us.
 Jesus, commissioning shepherd, send us out:
 to be near others;
 to watch over others;
 to be gentle with others –
 and to walk with them in your name. **Amen.**

BPW 251 I know that my Redeemer lives!

1 I know that my Redeemer lives!
 What joy the blest assurance gives!
 He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
 He lives, my everlasting Head!

2 He lives, to bless me with his love;
 He lives, to plead for me above;
 He lives, my hungry soul to feed;
 He lives, to help in time of need.

3 He lives, and grants me daily breath;
 He lives, and I shall conquer death;
 He lives, my mansion to prepare;
 He lives, to lead me safely there.

4 He lives, all glory to his name;
 He lives, my Saviour, still the same;
 What joy the blest assurance gives!
 I know that my Redeemer lives!
 Samuel Medley (1738-99)

A prayer of adoration

Awesome God, full of glory,
 you fill our hearts with your love.
 Awesome God, full of blessings,
 you fill our lives with your wisdom.
 Awesome God, full of riches,
 you enrich us with power and strength
 for all the ups and downs of life.
 Awesome God, full of grace,
 we worship you and glorify your mighty name. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Forgive us, Lord, when we turn away from those
 whose tears we are afraid of;
 whose grief we have not wanted to share;
 whose pain we have not wanted to see.
 Forgive us, and grant us courage
 to be silent where there are no words;
 to be supportive when there is no easy way ahead;
 and to carry always the hope of Christ in our hearts –
 wherever our journey takes us. **Amen.**

An assurance of forgiveness

The Lord is our shepherd, who restores our soul.
He washes us clean and anoints us with the oil of forgiveness.
Thank you, Lord. **Amen.**

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

We praise you, Lord Jesus,
for calling us to be your people.
As we gather today, may we
listen to your word and reflect;
listen to one another and respond;
listen to the cries of the world and react –
that no one may cry alone, and all may rejoice in your love. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.
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.

Family Time

R&S 679 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;

Psalm 23

1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
ev'n for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4 My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me;
and in God's house forever more
my dwelling-place shall be.

Psalm 23
Metrical version by William Whittingham
(1524-79) altd.

Our children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing

Old Testament Reading**Psalms 23****(OT page 463)**

A Psalm of David.

¹The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

New Testament Reading**Acts 9:36-43****(NT page 119)***Peter in Lydda and Joppa*

³⁶Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' ³⁹So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. ⁴²This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Gospel Reading**John 10:22-30****(NT page 96)***Jesus Is Rejected by the Jews*

²²At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' ²⁵Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; ²⁶but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one.'

R&S 243 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain

1 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

2 In the grave they laid him, Love whom we had slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

3 Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

4 When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
 then your touch can call us back to life again,
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
 Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

J. M. C. Crum (1872-1958) altd.*

© Oxford University Press from the *Oxford Book of Carols*.

Reflection

A moment for reflection as Stephen plays

R&S 636 The Church of Christ, in every age

1 The Church of Christ, in every age
 beset by change but Spirit-led,
 must claim and test its heritage
 and keep on rising from the dead.

2 Across the world, across the street,
 the victims of injustice cry
 for shelter and for bread to eat,
 and never live until they die.

3 Then let the Servant Church arise,
 a caring Church, that longs to be
 a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
 and clothed in Christ's humanity.

4 For he alone, whose blood was shed,
 can cure the fever in our blood,
 and teach us how to share our bread
 and feed the starving multitude.

5 We have no mission but to serve,
 in full obedience to our Lord;
 to care for all, without reserve,
 and spread his liberating Word.

F. Pratt Green (1903-2000)

© Oxford University Press from *Planting Seeds and Growing Trees*

Our prayers of intercession

Almighty God, you have called us and blessed us and in faith and with trust in you, we bring ourselves and our prayers for others.

In a world where values seem to shift almost daily we pray for the marginalised and excluded, and the nameless, homeless, stateless people who seem endlessly to slip through the net of care and respect.

Almighty God, may someone show them love and offer them good news,

that they may know they are cared for in life and in death.

We pray for the Church worldwide that it may hold fast to the gospel message to love one another as God has loved us. May the Church seek and strive and yearn to speak of the love of God, proclaiming only God and not our own self-importance. We pray God's blessing upon Roman Catholic Churches and we pray for the new Pope, Pope Leo XIV, that he may be a visionary and faithful leader.

Almighty God, may someone show them love and offer them good news,

that they may know they are cared for in life and in death.

After a week in which we marked 80 years since VE day, we pray for those affected by current day conflicts. We pray for the war-torn, war-weary nations of the world, where ordinary everyday people just seek peace and comfort, food, drink and shelter to sustain and enrich them. We remember especially the ordinary everyday folk of Ukraine, of Russia, of Sudan, of Gaza, of Israel, of Yemen.....

Almighty God, may someone show them love and offer them good news,

that they may know they are cared for in life and in death.

We pray for countries of the world who teeter on the edge of poverty, hunger and thirst due to climate change. May all who have a choice and a hand in how they live choose to live carefully and tread lightly on the world's precious resources. May we and they choose sharing and caring over waste and excess.

Almighty God, may someone show them love and offer them good news,

that they may know they are cared for in life and in death.

We pray for the ill and the dying, the grieving and the bereaved, the lonely and the lost, the frightened and fearful.

Almighty God, may someone show them love and offer them good news,
that they may know they are cared for in life and in death.

Almighty God, in your steadfast, eternal presence, we trust and we entrust ourselves and these prayers to you now that, together with you, we may reach out to those in need and love and care for others as you do for us.

Amen

R&S 740 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
 Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
 tender to me the promise of his word;
 in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
 Make known His might, the deeds his arm has done;
 his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
 his holy name—the Lord, the mighty One.

3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
 Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
 proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
 the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
 Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
 to children's children and forever more!

Timothy Dudley-Smith. (1926-) based on Luke 1:46-55
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A sending out prayer

God of the miraculous and the mundane,
 open our eyes to see the goodness in others and ourselves.
 Give us the willingness to be available
 to the community in which we live,
 that quietly and confidently we might live as those
 who know they are part of the Easter story
 that does not end in Jerusalem,
 but goes out into all the world.
 We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
 Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
 be upon us and those we love, this day and always. **Amen.**

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Resources taken and adapted from *ROOTS for Churches Limited*, *URC Worship Notes* and *BUGB Gathering for Worship*.
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