



The Sunday Supplement

A Call to Worship

Holy God, Creator of Life,
you call us out of our dark places,
offering us the grace of new life.

When we see nothing but hopelessness,
you surprise us with the breath of your spirit.

Call us out of our complacency and routines,
set us free from our self-imposed bonds,
and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace,
In the name of Jesus, your anointed one, we pray.

I heard the voice of Jesus Say

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.*

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.*

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk,
Till trav'ling days are done.*



Prayers for our Church Family

Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.
Philippians 4:6

COVID-19 is affecting everyone in Britain at this time. Those who are part of our church community are no exception. The challenges of daily life are different for us all but no-one is unaffected. As Christians we have the privilege of coming to God with our prayers and concerns for each other.

As part of the Body of Christ in this world our members are involved in all aspects of community life. The suggestions below may help as you pray for our work and witness in the current situation.

Healthcare

Pray for all medical staff and mental health working in the NHS

Give thanks for the care they provide in these difficult times

Remember support staff, many of whom are now working from home

Care homes

Pray for staff and residents in local care homes

Give thanks for the care and support offered to our elderly relatives and friends

Remember families with elderly relatives that they are unable to visit at this time

Community care and support

Pray for all affected by the closure of day care centres

Give thanks for all who work with people with special needs

Remember Christian ministers as they conduct funerals and support grieving families

Education

Pray for pupils and staff following the closure of local schools

Give thanks for the childcare now provided by schools to the children of keyworkers

Remember parents as they care for their children at home

Self-Isolation

Pray for those self-isolating due to health concerns or older age or possible

Give thanks for the neighbours and friends who offer support to those living alone

Remember everyone currently at home due to possible contact with COVID-19

Employment

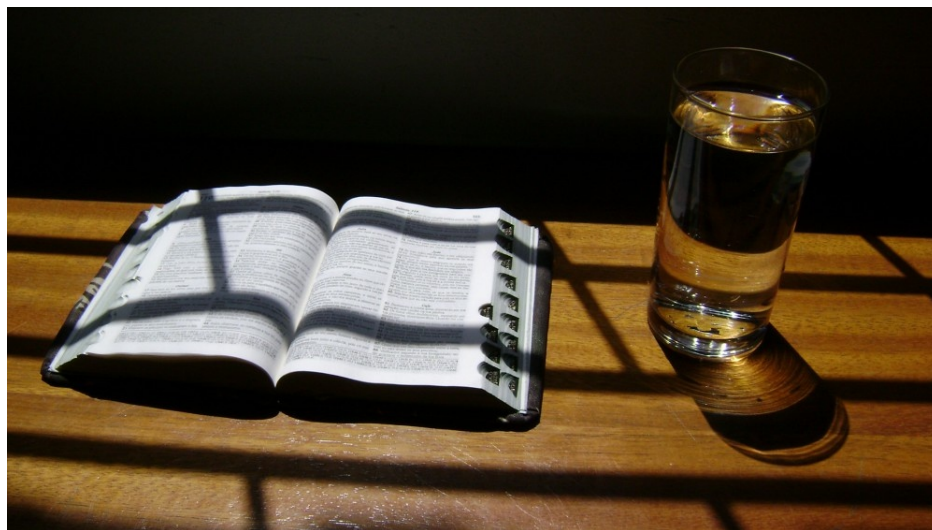
Pray for those facing financial hardship while they are unable to work

Give thanks for those still working to provide essential services

Remember those under pressure to keep eservices running with fewer staff



Reading



John 11:1-45

A Call to Respond

Jesus calls us from the tombs of our existence
into the brightness of a new day.

Jesus calls, unbinding us from the chains of our past
and enticing us into a world filled with grace and possibility.

We move in a world that needs our life, our breath, our spirit.
A world that needs the Spirit of God, carried on our lips and in our loving arms.

We move into the world to live as God's resurrected people.
We are sent, and we go on the breath of God's holy wind.



Something ventured

Health and Hope

At 8pm yesterday the people of Britain united in thanking the caregivers of the NHS and beyond. COVID-19 has made us all acutely aware of our vulnerability to disease. None of us knows when we might need help from those who work in our hospitals or local surgeries. Following current advice to restrict our daily activities is essential to ensure that those services are available when we most need them.



Around 2000 years ago Mary and Martha stayed home caring for their brother Lazarus. The help they hoped for didn't arrive in time. Jesus was delayed in getting to Bethany. By the time he arrived Lazarus was in the tomb. Jesus was dismayed and he wept for the loss of his friend. He prayed before calling Lazarus to come out of the tomb. God answered the prayer and Lazarus was restored to his sisters.

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus experienced a miracle that day. The account in John's gospel of this unique event presents it as a sign pointing to the resurrection of Jesus. Tradition has it that Lazarus was either assassinated by the religious authorities soon after his miraculous return to life or, alternatively, that he lived on for another 30 years and became a bishop. Either way, he eventually died as all human beings must.

Centuries later the Christian church recognises the raising of Lazarus as sign of God's power over life and death. Sickness and death are closer to us at present than we would wish. Like Mary and Martha we live in hope that help will arrive in our moment of need. And, as Jesus did in his distress, we pray:

*God of all consolation and compassion,
your Son comforted the grieving sisters, Martha and Mary;
your breath alone brings life
to dry bones and weary souls.
Pour out your Spirit upon us,
that we may face despair and death
with the hope of resurrection
and faith in the One
who called Lazarus forth from the grave. Amen.*