



The Sunday Supplement

Issue 10: 23rd May 2020

Call to Worship

Lord of life,
We do not know the face of the future,
any more than your disciples did.
Like them, we have many questions:
how to live
how to bear witness.
Like them, we thirst for the spring waters of the Spirit
to inspire us in our living
to give us a heart language in our testimony.

You have been raised in glory
that we might rise with dignity
You live in power that we might live in peace
You are present everywhere
that we might be fully present in our own lives
This we believe
This we step out on.



Reading
Acts 1:9-14



Thy Kingdom Come Is about change: the great change that occurs in a person's life when they accept Jesus as Lord and welcome him as Saviour, Master and Friend. Scripture assures us that at that moment they become part of the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. So, we

pray each year between Ascension Day and Pentecost Sunday that families, friends, communities and countries would come to know the saving love of God in Jesus Christ.

As Thy Kingdom Come takes place this year our world faces the challenge of Covid-19 alongside issues including climate change, poverty and injustice. All those things bring into sharp focus the world's need of Jesus and the call of God on us to pray for transformation and, as Christ calls us into his Kingdom, to become agents of that transformation in the world he loves.

The focus for our prayers this year is Prayer and Care. We are reminded that we must not only pray for those in need but should also be actively caring for them.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake. Amen.
God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in
isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the
cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are not people of fear: we are people
of courage.
We are not people who protect our own
safety:
we are people who protect our
neighbours' safety.
We are not people of greed: we are
people of generosity.
We are your people God, giving and
loving,
wherever we are, whatever it costs
For as long as it takes and wherever you
call us. Amen

Thought for the week



Ascension Day this year fell on Thursday 21st May. Forty days after Jesus had been raised from the dead, eleven of his closest friends watched as once again he was again taken from them. On the slopes of the Mount of Olives they had received first comfort and then a commission. The task of continuing Jesus' mission and work now fell to the eleven men who were with him as he disappeared, hidden by a cloud.

These eleven apostles returned to the upper room in Jerusalem where they had been staying. Together with the other believers they united in prayer. In time, Matthias was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. The eleven became twelve as they had been before. Leaders began to emerge. Simon Peter took on a central role. Something new was beginning to take shape. Slowly and cautiously the faithful few who had remained in Jerusalem began to look to the future.

Right now, in England, there is much debate and discussion about the future. Slowly and cautiously our political leaders are encouraging a return to work in some sectors. In the world of education, leaders are meeting to consider how to begin a limited reopening of schools. The country is beginning to look to the future. Something new is beginning to take shape.

But change is challenging. Rebuilding confidence after tragedy and loss is not easy. Those who had known Jesus well had suffered a dramatic loss. The time they had spent together since the resurrection had brought comfort. Praying together daily had strengthened them as a group. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus had prepared the apostles for the task ahead. The first step was to encourage the wider group to begin moving forward, but for the time being they continued to meet and to pray behind locked doors.

Everything changed at Pentecost. Soon, the Holy Spirit would move dramatically and decisively to empower the whole group. Others would join the new movement. Something new would soon begin. The waiting would finally be over. In the meantime, the believers, guided by their emerging leaders, stayed together and prayed together.

In 2020, Christians in Britain and in many other places are waiting for things to change. Our churches remain closed. We do not know when we might meet again. We experience anxiety and frustration. We have lost so much in the past months. We find comfort in prayer and in our connections with each other. For the time being we continue to meet and pray behind our own front doors. But something new is beginning. This week, like the early believers, we continue to wait and to trust that at the right time God will move us forward.

Blessing

May God,
who comes to us in the things of this world,
bless your eyes and be in your seeing.

May Christ,
who looks upon you with deepest love,
bless your eyes and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit,
who perceives what is and what may yet be,
bless your eyes and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three
bless your eyes and cause you to see.
~ from *In the Sanctuary of Women*, copyright © Jan L. Richardson.

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided

Lord, for the years your love has kept and
guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our
way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and
provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks
today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which
fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls
ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires
us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's
praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and
care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and
nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our
prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and
doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in
pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without
him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may
reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake
us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the
throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

