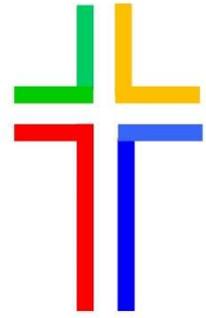


# Week St Mary Methodist Church – Sunday 10 May



This week we have celebrated 75 years since VE day and it has acted as a reminder of working together as a community for a common purpose. There are echoes of this in our present difficulties and let's hope that the community spirit remains with us when this is all over.

## PRAYER

As we gather together in spirit only, help us, Lord, to hang on to the fellowship that we have in our congregation. And wider still, help us to be conscious of Christians across the world. We know that we should be more hopeful and trusting of you in these present circumstances, and that you are with us. And

yet somehow we act as though we are alone. Forgive us, Lord, if we become too inward looking in this time of isolation. Forgive us if we let our own troubles dominate our thoughts. Forgive us when we forget to bring all our thoughts and worries to you in prayer.  
**Amen**

## READING FOR TODAY John 14:1-14 (NIV)

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going.'

<sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

<sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you really know me, you will know<sup>[b]</sup> my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'

<sup>8</sup>Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'

<sup>9</sup>Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? <sup>10</sup>Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup>Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup>Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>And I will do what ever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

## REFLECTION

The Gospel reading takes us back to the period before Easter; to the night when Jesus was betrayed and to his final meal with his disciples. Jesus is preparing his disciples for what is about to happen. The disciples are troubled and are trying to understand what Jesus is telling them; Jesus says 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'.

Then Jesus goes on to add that anyone who believes in him will also do the works that he has done. Not only that, they will go on to do even greater works. Wow! That sounds a bit far fetched – to do even greater works than the amazing healing, preaching and miracles of Jesus. But Jesus is preparing his followers for the greater task of taking the good news to the whole world. And they did. There are well over 2 billion Christians in the world today and the number is still growing. And

we, as Christians, are still required to do these greater works. But in the midst of a Covid-19 lockdown we might be wondering how.

Let's be clear – God did not send Covid-19. It arose out of the God given freedom of the natural world. It is not a punishment – how can a God of love send something that focuses death on the vulnerable and on those that are trying to help.

So, where is God in all this? Well, it is my belief he is there supporting us in all we do in this crisis. He is there in helping hands given to vulnerable neighbours, in the support given to NHS and care work staff, in the donations to charities that are providing food parcels, in the contacting of self-isolating older people. And, to come back to our reading from John, he is in the greater works that even now are reaching out to people. There is increased demand for religion. Did you know that far more people are looking up prayer on the internet? A quarter of all adults have listened or watched a church service since lockdown began and a fifth of them have never been to church. Churches everywhere are finding new ways of communicating God's message, through online services, through youtube sermons, through distributed service sheets. And many of these are reaching non-Christians as well – so there is a lesson to be learned for the future there.

That's where God is in all this, teaching us new ways of helping others, new ways of bringing people to Jesus, new ways of communicating.

### **PRAYER FOR OTHERS**

We thank you for all the doctors and nurses, across the world, caring for those who are suffering from Covid 19. And for all the other essential workers who are not so widely recognised and yet are serving the rest of us, often in difficult circumstances. We ask that you give them the strength and optimism to keep going and be with them as they go about their work.

As this pandemic spreads across the world and affects every country we know that it has the greatest impact on poor and vulnerable people. We bring before you all those that it is only just reaching, in war zones, in refugee camps, and in slum townships. Be with them, we pray, as the disease adds to their already disastrous problems and help us all, when it begins to fade away, to redress the power struggles and economic imbalances that makes them so vulnerable in the first place.

We bring these prayers before you in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **HYMN StF 94, H&P 463 (also on the hymn CD)**

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,

So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,

Who yielded His life in atonement for sin,

And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Refrain: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!*

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!*

*Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,*

*And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.*

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,

To every believer the promise of God;

And every offender who truly believes,

That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,

And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;

But purer, and higher, and greater will be

Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.

### **THE GRACE**

**The Grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us now and for evermore. Amen.

*"He knows the way because he is the way"*  
*Jeffrey Holland.*