

Sheffield URC Team Sunday Worship

Sunday 29th March 2020

(5th Sunday of Lent)

Call to Worship: Psalm 130:5&6

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

HYMN Spirit of Holiness (Tune: 'Blow the wind southerly')

*Spirit of holiness, wisdom and faithfulness,
Wind of the Lord, blowing strongly and free;
strength of our serving and joy of our worshipping,
Spirit of God, bring your fullness to me!*

1. You came to interpret and teach us effectively
all that the saviour has spoken and done;
to glorify Jesus is all your activity,
promise and gift of the Father and Son:
2. You came with your gifts to supply all our poverty,
pouring your love on the church in her need;
you came with your fruit for our growth to maturity,
richly refreshing the souls that you feed:

Prayer of Approach

There is, to our world this weekend, a quietness we did not seek and do not want. Even so, let us embrace the quietness of this time, and furnish it with faith.

Breathe in the Goodness of God which gives its fragrance to this present moment and say, 'For your Goodness, we give you thanks and praise'.

Breathe out a sense of trust in God who is with us in our need:
'Father, take from us all that makes us fearful.'

Breathe in the Fullness of this day, touched as it is by the presence of Jesus, and say, 'For Jesus, The Resurrection and the Life, we give you thanks and praise today.'

Breathe out all the regrets and disappointments:
'For our lack of faith, we make our confession.'

Breathe in the Depth of life, a free-flowing gift of the Spirit to us, gracious and generous and say, 'For the gift of your eternal Spirit, we give you thanks and praise today'

Breathe out a sigh of gratitude
'Hold us in your gracious love.'

Amen

*If you have access to the sheffield.org.uk website you will **find audio recordings of all the readings.***

Reading Ezekiel 37:1-14

There is a reflection for this in a separate sheet which, if you have not received a hard copy, you will find at sheffield.org.uk

Reading John 11:1-46

As our Gospel reading is a really long one, why not try reading or listening to it in four shorter parts, and spend a minute or two reflecting on the following questions.

John 11:1-16. Jesus sees a greater purpose in what appears to be a personal tragedy. This is delicate territory, because we surely would not want to see suffering and death as something that God wills or wants. What questions has our own current crisis raised for us?

John 11:17-27. Martha hears Jesus' self-affirmation, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'. Her response suggest that, though she has faith, her faith is not yet complete, because she only goes as far as saying, 'Yes, Lord! I believe that you are the messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world'. This is a big affirmation, but not quite 'You are the Resurrection and the Life'. How strong is our affirmation of Jesus today?

John 11:28- 37. Jesus weeps. Nowhere in the Gospels is Jesus shown to be more human, and more at one with us in our human experience. What does it mean to us today to hear the words, 'Jesus weeps'?

John 11:38-45. 'Untie him, and let him go' are words that seem to be heavy with meaning. What do they mean to us today?

Prayers for Others

The challenges we face are so great, and the burden of prayer may seem overwhelming. But we are the family of God, and as we pray, we pray together. So today, just think of the names of three individuals who you know will be struggling with the current situation, three professions or trades who are on the front line at the moment, and three areas of the world which, like us, are facing the challenge of coronavirus – and perhaps more severely. Together, we will cover a very wide circle of prayer.

I pray for 3 individuals
Silence

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

I pray for 3 professions or trades
Silence

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

I pray for 3 areas of the world
Silence

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Amen

As we say the **Lord's Prayer**, be mindful of Christians around the world who will say this same prayer this day. Jesus is with us as we pray.

HYMN

O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.

O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then, in your tenderness, remake us,
revive, restore, for this we plead.

O breath of love,, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part.

Elizabeth Ann Head

Blessing

May God, who is the ground of hope,
fill you with all joy and peace
as you lead the life of faith
until, by the power of the holy spirit,
you overflow with hope.