

# 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – Morning Service

Jill Martin

## Call to Worship

The doors may be closed, but love is not kept out. Peace is spoken here, not as a command but as a gift. Wounds are not hidden, and neither are we. Come as you are – afraid, unsure, hopeful, weary. Christ is present. The Spirit is breathing. Let us worship.

## StF 136 – Morning has broken

- 1) Morning has broken like the first morning;  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!
- 2) Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass.
- 3) Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's re-creation of the new day!

*Eleanor Farjeon © Gervaise Farjeon*

## Prayer of Adoration

God of steadfast mercy, you do not abandon fearful hearts, you do not wait for us to be ready. In Christ you come close, speaking peace into tense rooms, offering presence without condition. You are not embarrassed by our questions, you are not threatened by our doubt, you hold us with patience and keep returning with love. Holy Spirit, Breath of God, you loosen what fear has tightened, you strengthen what is fragile, you give courage for truth and tenderness for one another. We adore you, God of peace, Christ of living presence, Spirit of holy breath. **Amen.**

## Prayer of Confession

God of compassion, we confess that fear shapes us. We lock the door of our heart. We hide, harden and protect ourselves. We confess the ways we demand certainty from others and from ourselves and the ways we treat honest questions as disloyalty rather than longing. We confess that we sometimes call it peace when it is really avoidance and call it 'unity' when it is really silence. Forgive us, speak peace that tells the truth, breathe your Spirit into us and make us brave in love. **Amen.**

## StF 138 – There is a Redeemer

- 1) There is a Redeemer,  
Jesus, God's own Son,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
Holy One.
- 2) Jesus my Redeemer,  
name above all names,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
O for sinners slain.
- Ch) *Thank You, O my Father,  
for giving us your Son,  
and leaving Your Spirit  
till the work on earth is done.*
- 3) When I stand in glory  
I will see his face,  
and there I'll serve my King for ever  
in that holy place.

*Melody Green © 1982 Ears To Hear Music*

## Reading: John 20: 19-31 (NIV)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## **Reflection**

Today is Low Sunday and when I first started my journey as a Local Preacher the tradition was that Ministers were not to planned to preach after the business of Lent and Easter, so the pulpits were filled with Local Preachers who went out of their familiar Circuit and exchanged with others from close Circuits. It was a terrific but quite scary experience, finding your way to new destinations unprepared for a new and different congregation. Low Sunday closes the octave of Easter – the eight day period from Easter Sunday until today. It is also called St Thomas Sunday and this Sunday the reading is always John 20: 19 to end and recounts the story of Christ appearing to his disciples, this time with Thomas present.

We have all heard of Thomas, also called Doubting Thomas, not a very generous title. Thomas is also referred to as Didymus, which means twin and although the name Thomas is actually an ancient name (not as English as it sounds) we are not absolutely sure what his name was at all. He appears by name in Matthew, Mark and Luke when listed with the other disciples and appears three times in John's Gospel.

We meet him first in John 11 verse 16 "Let us also go that we may die with him" He was referring to Jesus' journey to Bethany to visit Mary, Martha and Lazarus all good friends of Jesus. Jesus had received news that Lazarus was very ill, but the disciples did not want to go because it was too close to Jerusalem and it would put them in danger. Thomas speaks up and shows he is ready to go with his teacher and friend and share his fate, even if that means death. Loyal Thomas, he would rather face death with his Lord than live without him.

Next, we meet Thomas in John 14 verse 5 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Thomas is asking the question the other disciples do not. Jesus is telling them that they shouldn't be troubled, Jesus already knows what he is to face, rather to have faith. Believe in God because in His house there are many dwelling places and if He were to leave, they will know how to follow. Imagine the other disciples sitting and listening to Jesus words, they have no greater understanding but remain mute,

maybe even nodding sagely. Thomas is the one who asks for clarity ‘hold on how can we know the way? You haven’t told us!

Thomas, confused, assumed Jesus was talking about a geographical place and Jesus answer leads to the truth of his mission on earth “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him”

Doubting Thomas? Or a man who is honestly asking questions because he wants to understand and is not afraid nor ashamed to speak out.

We meet Thomas for the third time in today’s reading, which is where he gets his new forever name Doubting Thomas. Thomas would not believe what the disciples told him, he had not seen for himself. Last Sunday we heard the story of the empty tomb, how many disciples believed Jesus had risen? It was Mary who spoke with Jesus and recognised him only when He spoke her name. The disciples had witnessed Jesus entering a locked room speaking Peace to them, they were hiding fearful of the Jewish authorities, maybe even Jesus, they had abandoned Him and denied Him but.. He came in love and gentleness He came again for Thomas that he too might believe the miracle of resurrection. Thomas when given the opportunity to touch Jesus’ wounds didn’t need to physically touch to believe he knew and declared ‘My Lord and my God’

No more doubt just belief. Let the Spirit bless us in the same way.

### StF 353 – Jesus is Lord!

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,<br>For by his power each tree and flower<br>was planned and made.<br>Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;<br>Sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord! | 2) Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal<br>In flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.<br>Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding -<br>Yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free:    |
| Ch) <i>Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!<br/>Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!</i>  | 3) Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,<br>From death he rose; and all his foes<br>shall own his name.<br>Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit<br>To show by works of power that Jesus is Lord: |

David John Mansell © 1980 Springtide

### Reading: 1 Peter 1: 3-9 (NIV)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

### Reflection

Peter was a fisherman and was called to follow Jesus. Peter was impetuous often speaking out before thinking. It was Peter who first acknowledged Jesus as Messiah when Jesus calmed the storm. It was Peter who wanted to build the booths for Jesus, Moses and Elijah when they appeared at Jesus Transfiguration. It was Peter who used his sword at Jesus arrest and it was Peter who declared his loyalty when Jesus spoke of

what was to happen to him, he would not let anything happen to his Lord. Yet Peter denied him three times. It was Peter who Jesus named the rock upon which his church would be built and it was Peter who Jesus asked 'do you love me?' and when Peter replied 'you know I do' he knew he had been forgiven and knew he was called to share the greatest news Jesus is the Son of God and became human to save everyone who believes in Him.

Can we begin to imagine the roller coaster life of Peter's mistakes and faux pas? Yet he became the leader of the Church, no unpleasant names for him he is held in high regard the first Pope. In the first verses of his letter we have heard today can you hear the joy and excitement in his story. The absolute promise that we can all be transformed, made in the image of Christ, chosen to be led into a new life, leashed and loved. No explanation needed!!

### StF 362 – Meekness and majesty

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity,<br>In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.<br>Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity,<br>Kneels in humility and washes our feet. | 2) Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,<br>Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.<br>Suffering to give us life,<br>Conquering through sacrifice,<br>And as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive'. |
| <i>Ch) O what a mystery,<br/>Meekness and majesty.<br/>Bow down and worship<br/>For this is your God, this is your God.</i>  | 3) Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,<br>Love indestructible in frailty appears.<br>Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,<br>Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.                         |

Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music

### Prayers of Thanksgiving

Generous God, we give thanks for the peace which is not pretend, for love which returns even when we are afraid. We give thanks for wounds which tell the truth, for healing which does not erase history, for the steady courage of beginning again. We give thanks for communities that hold one another, for those who listen without rushing, for those who speak up when harm is hidden, for those who keep making room. We give thanks for the Spirit's breath, quiet and real strengthening what is weary, opening what has been closed. Receive our gratitude and shape us into Easter people. **Amen.**

*Priming the Lectionary, Gary Hopkins*

### Prayers of Intercession

God of peace hold us close. Living God, you enter the rooms we keep shut. So we bring you our world with honesty. For all whose minds and bodies are tense with fear, for those living with trauma, grief or exhaustion, let peace arrive as gentleness and real support. For people trapped behind locked doors that are not chosen, in unsafe homes, in detention, in systems which control or punish, bring protection, justice and pathways to freedom. For communities living under war, occupation and displacement and for all who work for peace with integrity, strengthen courage, restrain violence and guard the vulnerable. For workplaces, schools and public life, where truth is twisted and scapegoats are made, let honesty rise and let cruelty lose its grip. For your church, make us a people who do not shame doubt, who practise peace with accountability and who widen belonging in your name Receive our prayers and breathe your Spirit through what feels locked tight. **Amen.**

*Priming the Lectionary, Gary Hopkins*

## 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. And 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.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

## StF 345 – And can it be

- 1) And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died he for me, who caused his pain?  
For me, who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
- 2) 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!  
Who can explore his strange design?  
In vain the first-born seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine.  
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,  
Let angel minds enquire no more.
- 3) He left his Father's throne above  
So free, so infinite his grace  
Emptied himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For, O my God, it found out me!

*Charles Wesley*

- 4) Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray -  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
- 5) No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!  
Alive in him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

## Blessing

May God speak peace into your anxieties. May Christ meet you with truth and tenderness. May the Spirit breathe courage into what feels impossible. And may you go held in love, steady enough to be honest and brave enough to bless. **Amen.**

*Priming the Lectionary, Gary Hopkins*