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# WELCOME TO ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

## Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

### Sunday Morning Praise

#### *Introduction*

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

We have come together in the name of Christ  
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,  
to hear and receive God's holy word,  
to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

#### *Prayer of Penitence*

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

#### *Together we pray:*

**Lord God, we have sinned against you.  
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### *Hymn: [Be still, for the presence of the Lord](#)*

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.  
Come, bow before him now, with reverence and fear.

In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.  
He burns with holy fire; with splendour he is crowned.  
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.  
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.  
No work too hard for him, in faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

David J Evans CCL Licence 680151

## The Word of God

*Reading [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#) - The Valley of Dry Bones*

"Despite the exiles' fear of being cut off from God, God is as near to them as their own breath. Ezekiel's vision does nothing to alleviate them of their present difficult circumstances, though it does promise them a future in their own land." We journey through Lent looking for the way of Jesus but too often following our own way once again. We are Ezekiel's dry bones, waiting for a fresh breath of the spirit to give us new sinew and flesh and skin so that we might become whole again. We may feel 'cut off' and exiled from our family, friends and indeed our church at the time but we can be reassured that God is near to us and is with us if we put our faith in him.

*Reading [John 11:1-45](#) - The Death of Lazarus*

[Click here to watch a video](#)

We all know that we will all physically die but here Jesus immortalised the truth of the gospel: WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE. DO YOU BELIEVE THIS? John 11:26.

This is one of the seven "I am" teachings in the Gospel of John. In John's gospel, there are seven signs and there are seven "I am" teachings. On the way, strong, assertive, "take charge" Martha came out to meet Jesus and gave him an earful. "Jesus, if you would have been here, my brother

would not have died.” Jesus said: “He will rise again.” And Martha testily responded: “I know he will rise again at the resurrection of the dead, but what good does that do us now?”

Then Jesus gave a word that has become one of his most treasured teachings: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die!” Will never die! It is one of the great lines of the Bible.

Then Jesus asked one of the most important questions found in the Bible, “Do you believe this, Martha?” What a question. Do you believe this? Do YOU believe this? Do you believe that whoever lives and believes in me will never die?”

Martha answered, “I believe. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God and that whoever lives and believes in you will never die.” That is an incredible conversation, and we could stop here but the story continues.

The word, "believe," is a dominant word in the Gospel of John. That word occurs more than sixty times within this gospel. The purpose of the gospel is to tell the Jesus story so that we may believe and that in believing, we find power, abundant life and eternal life. We could take time this week to read the Gospel of John, use your own bible or find a version you are comfortable with on [bible gateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or even try the [audio version](#)

In these difficult times of separation, uncertainty and illness we can believe that only Jesus is the Way, the truth and the life. May we make time to nurture our belief in Jesus each day of our lives.

*Prayers of intercession.* – prepared by David Marshall

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

Lord, the world, your world is in the grip of a virus which has swept through all countries and placed strain on the medical services. We ask your blessing on all who are engaged in the ministry of healing. We pray for doctors, surgeons, nurses, health visitors, for those who nurse the sick at home and all who work in hospitals. Give them skill and patience, and may they know that in ministering to the sick they are furthering your purposes of love. Let us not forget that during the present crisis there are many more workers trying to keep essential services operating. So we pray for postal workers, for

the police, for farmers, for lorry drivers who transport our food, and for food retailers and many others who have to work in difficult circumstances.

Lord, we thank you that, the world over, people have come together to combat a common enemy, a silent enemy; that people have come to appreciate their fellow workers, not celebrities, not reality TV stars, but ordinary people doing vital work. At this time, more than any other we pray that all realise you are the way, the truth and the life and your teachings alone can guide us through this crisis.

**Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer**

Lord, let us not forget, even if the media have temporarily, that there are many parts of the world, that are still suffering from famine, civil war and natural disasters. We pray especially for countries in East Africa where swarms of locusts have destroyed crops, and for Yemen where war still rages. We also pray for refugees, who are still trying to travel to safety, and for the homeless, both abroad and in this country. Lord, let them know your love and that they are not forgotten. Let them know that we will not rest content until all have found safety, home and livelihood.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Lord, we know that our world is both wonderful and flawed at every point. May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred. We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others. May we all realise that the human race may be the dominant species, but it is one of the smallest organisms in the world that has brought it to its knees.

We pray for all world leaders, all administrative bodies and political institutions: may they be always aware of the real needs of the people they serve and be effective in providing for them, especially now as Coronavirus sweeps the continents.

Lord, when we wander from the Way, we pray that you will call us back. When we stray from the Truth, redirect us. When we do not live life to the full, we pray you will inspire and refresh us.

May we and your whole church follow Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We pray for all who have wandered away from the faith, and for all who have lost touch with you and your love.

**Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer**

We pray for our church family, as we enter into an interregnum, and especially as we have had to close the church doors during the present difficulties. We think of our PCC and others charged with trying to find new ways of bringing services to the congregation and trying to maintain contact with all. We pray especially for our neighbours and friends and all those who live in Rastrick, as they come to terms with isolation and solitude. May they be aware of your presence and know that you will be by their side throughout, ready to guide, and be their friend.

**Lord, in your mercy - Hear our prayer.**

We thank you Father for your many miracles of healing, and we pray for all who administer to the sick and infirm. We bring before you in a moment of quietness those we know or love who are ill or in need at this time, including those on our prayer list, and we name them in our hearts.

We pray that your blessing be upon them and those who love and care for them and we pray that they may find encouragement and peace, that their sorrows and concerns be transformed into comfort, and their loneliness into fellowship with you.

Almighty Father, be with all those who are grieving today over the loss of a loved one. May their sorrow be lit with the brightness of the Resurrection. May they be assured that they will meet again those whom they have loved and lost for a while.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died and recall the light of Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope.

**Lord, in your mercy - Hear our prayer.**

And so we offer you these prayers Lord, and rejoicing in the fellowship of St John and all your Saints we commend ourselves and all people to your unfailing love.

**Merciful Father, “Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen”.**

*Our Prayer for Growth*

**God of Mission**

**Who along brings growth to your church,  
Send your Holy Spirit to give  
Vision to our planning  
Wisdom to our actions  
And power to our witness.  
Help our church to grow in numbers,  
In spiritual commitment to you,  
And in service to our local community,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*The Collect for today*

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world:

grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory.

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Hymn: [I am the Bread of Life \(New 'PC' version!\)](#)**

I am the Bread of life,  
You who come to Me shall not hunger,  
And who believe in Me shall not thirst.  
No one can come to Me  
Unless the Father beckons

And I will raise you up,  
And I will raise you up,  
And I will raise you up on the last day.

The bread that I will give  
Is My flesh for the life of the world,  
And if you eat of this bread,  
You shall live for ever,  
You shall live for ever.

I am the Resurrection,  
I am the Life,  
If you believe in Me  
Even though you die,  
You shall live for ever.

Yes, Lord, we believe  
That You are the Christ,  
The Son of God  
Who has come  
Into the world.

Based on John 6 & 11. Original version Suzanne Toolan CCL Licence 680151

### *Final Prayer*

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us  
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters  
we do also for you:  
give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all,  
and gave up your life and died for us,  
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen

### *Our service ends with the Grace,*

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**