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LENT 5A

22nd March 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Come and meet me here, O Lord,
Help me to notice your presence in this space, no matter how ordinary,
In this holy time and place, and in every moment of my life.
Come, Lord Jesus, by your Spirit I pray.

[Pause]

God of love and forgiveness,

I come before you today bringing all of who I am, and have been and all of who I will be. I bring my joys, my fears, my pains and my heartbreaks. I also bring all that I have done that I perhaps wish I had not done.

In prayer, I bring all this to you, Lord, for I know your healing love washes me clean and refreshes me whole. In you, I am – and have always been – enough.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: John 11:1-45 – [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the reading

This story begins not with triumph, but with heartbreak. Mary and Martha send word to Jesus: "Lord, the one you love is ill." And then... silence. Delay. Grief.

By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has died. The mourning is real. The air is thick with disappointment. "If you had been here," both sisters say, "my brother would not have died."

This is not just a story about resurrection. It's a story about waiting, about anger, about being honest with God in the face of deep pain.

And Jesus does not scold them. He weeps.

The one who holds the power of life and death does not rush past the sorrow. He stands in it, with them. He mourns. And then, he moves.

Standing before the tomb, Jesus cries out, "Lazarus, come out!"

And a man wrapped in burial cloths stumbles into the light, not because he believed hard enough or did all the right things, but because Jesus called him.

This is discipleship, too.

It's not just following Jesus when life is easy or answers are clear. It's listening for the voice that calls us out: out of grief, fear, shame, despair, out of whatever has kept us wrapped up and buried.

This story reminds us that God's love doesn't always protect us from hard things, but it never abandons us in them. That faith doesn't mean pretending we're fine. It means trusting that new life is possible, even when we cannot imagine it.

It also invites us to ask: What tombs are we still living in? What grave clothes are still clinging to us? What parts of our world, our community, or our own lives are longing for resurrection?

And maybe just as importantly: Who are we being called to unbind?

Because Jesus raises Lazarus, but he tells the community, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Liberation is a shared act. Resurrection is personal, yes, but it’s also political, communal, and practical.

So today, consider:

- What is Jesus calling you out of?
- Where do you need to speak honestly, like Mary and Martha did, about disappointment or grief?
- And who around you might need help being unbound?
- It is often said that death is the great taboo of our society. Does it help to reflect on the interwovenness of death and life? What does the death of Jesus say about the place of death as part of life?
- Death cafés have become a feature of life recently; do you have any experience of this movement? (find out more at <https://deathcafe.com>)

Resurrection is not a theory. It’s a movement. A call. A moment when the impossible begins to stir.

May we have the courage to come out, and the compassion to help others do the same.

Hymn:

421 STF – Empty, broken, here I stand, Kyrie eleison – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Until that moment,
Until we cast our crowns before God,
Lost in wonder, love and praise,
Until then, there is much work for us to do, in service of the Kingdom of grace,
Go from this moment of worship, and may you live a life of worship,

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 23rd March

- A cup of tea:
- When you have a drink of tea/coffee (or your favourite hot beverage) pay attention to the hospitality you have received over a cuppa over the years. Give thanks for conversations held, comforting words and companionable silences. Ask God how you in turn can offer hospitality to others.

Tuesday 24th March

- Living, loving God, today I pray for all who are going through a challenging time at the moment, in their own lives.
- In the stillness, I call the names of those known to me who need to sense the light of your love today... *[You might like to pray aloud for those known to you who need prayer today. If you find it helpful, you could write the names down. If its appropriate, you might like to let someone know that you prayed for them today.]*
Amen.

Wednesday 25th March

- Thanksgiving throughout the day:
- Try to be attentive to the time during your day. On every hour and half hour pause, whether you're at home, work or simply out and about, and take notice of what you're doing. It may be doing the ironing. It may be watching the telly. It may be sending an email. It may be snoozing under a blanket.
- Whatever it is - give thanks to God for the technology that enables it, the blessings it brings, the people you encounter through it. Do this throughout your day and count your blessings.

Thursday 26th March

- Rest a while and settle yourself into a comfortable position. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe as slowly as you're able and try to find a rhythm. As you breathe in accept the love and goodness of God as yours. As you breathe out press your fears and worries into Gods hands.
- Try to do this in a thought through way until it becomes almost natural. It will find its own end.

Friday 27th March

- Take a look out of your nearest window. What do you see? The natural earth, the spaces we live in, the vehicles we move around in the paths we walk on, are made from the source that is God.
- Share with your creator God all the things you marvel at and are bothered by. Ask how you best enable others to do the same.

Saturday 28th March

- Tomorrow is Palm Sunday, which perhaps raises two important questions:
 - o Who or what are you worshipping / praising at the moment?
 - o Where do your loyalties lie?
- As you sing Hallelujah with the fickle crowd of Palm Sunday, may you come to know a deeper, more resilient faith in Christ our Saviour.