

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May, Seventh Sunday of Easter, Sunday in Ascensiontide**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

### **Opening Prayer**

May we know the presence of God as we worship.  
May we experience unity in Jesus as we worship.  
As we worship, may we be blessed. Amen.

### **Hymn: “[I know that my Redeemer lives](#)” StF 303**

I know that my Redeemer lives --  
what joy the blest assurance gives!  
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;  
he lives, my everlasting Head!

He lives, to bless me with his love;  
he lives, to plead for me above;  
he lives, my hungry soul to feed;  
he lives, to help in time of need.

He lives, and grants me daily breath;  
he lives, and I shall conquer death;  
he lives, my mansion to prepare;  
he lives, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name;  
he lives, my Saviour, still the same;  
what joy the blest assurance gives,  
I know that my Redeemer lives!

*Samuel Medley (1738-1799)*

### **Let us pray together:**

Wonderful, marvellous, mysterious God,  
known to us in the wonder of life and of creation:  
praise and glory be given to you.  
Love and life be given to you.

In Jesus Christ your Son, you have held out to us fullness of life on earth and the promise of life in heaven.

In Him you have shown that you are Lord of Life; that you are Power over Death; that you are Source of Love beyond our imagining.  
Sovereign God, hear our prayer.

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament:** [Psalm 1](#)

**Today's Gospel Reading:** [John 17:6-19](#)

### **Time to Reflect**

Someone who had undergone a major surgical procedure spoke, part-way through their lengthy time of recovery and healing, of having felt “held in a cradle of love”. That feeling had arisen out of the knowledge that people were very much holding her in their prayers.

In the Gospel passage Jesus prays for his disciples. Presumably one or more disciples heard Jesus praying and was/were able to recall his words, his feelings, and to later set them down in writing. All that we have in the Gospels is, of course, that which is set down from such memory. The memory here is of Jesus praying for them.

The people who prayed for the woman who felt cradled in love” did not, as far as I can tell, pray for her to be healed and be spared the surgery. If they had done so, then their prayers were not precisely answered or else she wouldn’t have had the operation. The prayers were for her well-being and her recovery.

When Jesus prays for his disciples, and asks for them to be protected, the obvious protection they need is against rejection, persecution, hatred, even death. Yet, that doesn’t sit easily with what Jesus has been saying to them not so long before. He has told them that they will experience these things. What kind of protection, then, is he praying for? Specifically, Jesus says that he’s not asking that they be taken out of the world, but that they should be protected from the evil one.

They are to remain in the world, they are to experience challenge and danger because of their faith. Jesus’ prayer is they shall be protected in that they shall not lose their faith. As he is sanctified, set aside to serve, so they might also continue to be sanctified. That they be set aside, to be different in character from those who follow the ways of the world.

Through Biblical accounts, as well as those transmitted through the centuries, we see that Jesus’ prayer is answered as women and men have endured all manner of treatment, but have remained faithful. This extends even to the present age. Consider this - that for everyone whose conduct and character is so noted and remembered, there are countless more whose faithfulness has been constant or continues to be constant in 2021.

It is not too much to believe that just as Jesus prayed for his disciples long ago, his prayers and hopes are that present-day disciples shall also be so protected. That we shall not give up, but that we shall continue in faith and faithful living. That we shall not lose our faith, but that we shall continue to work out our faith in this world. Might it be that as we do so, we feel as if we are “held in a cradle of love”. May it be so!

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

Listening, loving, all-knowing God,  
we place before you the challenge we face as we seek to live a life that is truly informed by our faith. Around us we see selfishness, corruption, and a lack of compassion towards, or concern for, others. Power and control appear to be the aim of many.  
Bless us, we pray, forgive our failings, be sovereign over our lives that faith is full within us, that boldness to work to change the world is within us, that love of neighbour, of enemy, of all people, is our goal.

Give peace and healing, we pray, to those who struggle to maintain their lives, and those of their families, in the current of disadvantage that flows from shortsighted decision-making, provision-giving.

Give wisdom and insight, we pray, to those who work in search of medicines and treatments, that fullness of life may be the possession of those who are ill.

Give wisdom of judgment and of decision, we pray, to those who govern locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. May we see a world of peace, of fair-trade and shared resources.

Give wisdom and strength, vision and purpose, expertise and renewed spirit to the people of your church that the future may be faced with confidence and with that hope which is to be found only in you. Bless the compassionate and the just, all those who walk alongside those in need.

Giving God, may we give to you all that we are and all that we might ever be. In the name of Jesus.  
Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father .....*

### **Hymn: Listen to Singing the Faith 351**

**"In Christ alone my hope is found, - "**

In Christ alone my hope is found,  
he is my light, my strength, my song;  
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My Comforter, my All in All,  
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! -- who took on flesh,  
fullness of God in helpless babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
scorned by the ones he came to save:  
till on that cross as Jesus died,  
the wrath of God was satisfied  
for every sin on him was laid;  
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay,  
light of the world by darkness slain;  
then bursting forth in glorious Day  
up from the grave he rose again!  
And as he stands in victory,  
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
for I am his and he is mine --  
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
this is the power of Christ in me;  
from life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
can ever pluck me from his hand;  
till he returns or calls me home,  
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

*Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)*

### **A prayer of blessing**

The blessing of God who is of day and of night,  
of last year, this year and the years to come, be upon us;  
that always we may know comfort and healing, hope and strength.  
Through Jesus Christ, risen and ascended Lord. Amen.

Original Materials by Trevor Pratt

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Local Churches please insert CCLi 564246.

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team. We aim to continue to provide these resources until the end of August 2021.