

Welcome and Notices

In preparation for next Sunday's worship, we are asking everyone who is able to – take a close-up photograph of your feet wearing your favourite pair of shoes and email them through to me!

Birthdays

Happy birthday to Mary Day for tomorrow – Monday 20th, and for those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week – congratulations!

Gathering Prayer:

We are the people of God.
Risen Lord, as we gather today,
May we see and hear you
May we feel you and touch you
May we know your presence with us now.

Praise: Great is thy faithfulness

<https://youtu.be/dTKlqmdfHSk>

Great is Thy faithfulness
O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not
Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been
Thou forever will be
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
And all I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me
Pardon for sin
And a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer
And to guide
Strength for today
and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord every morning new mercies I see
And all I have needed Thy hands hath
provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me

Bible Story / Prayer

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE CHALLENGE

We should always be grateful to our medical staff, but at the moment, we are very aware of their amazing work and the risks they are taking to help others.

Some of you have already made a 'Thank you NHS' poster for your windows to recognize all their hard work? Also "Clap for carers"

All doctors and nurses have to learn anatomy – the study of our bodies and how they are put together and work. We have 206 bones in our body.

If I say the name of a bone, can you point to where you think it is on your body?

- Scapula – shoulder blade
- Phalanges – finger bones
- Femur – thigh bone
- Patella – knee cap
- Tibia – shin bone

DID YOU KNOW?

All of the temporary hospitals that have been built in London, Bristol, Birmingham etc. are called Nightingale hospitals for a very good reason.

Florence Nightingale was a nurse who worked really hard to improve conditions for patients during the Crimean War.

At a time when most people believed that infections were caused by horrible smells, Florence Nightingale implemented frequent handwashing to reduce the spread of infection. It is still one of the best ways today to stop the spread of infection.

"LIVE LIFE WHEN YOU HAVE IT. LIFE IS A SPLENDID GIFT – THERE IS NOTHING SMALL ABOUT IT." Florence Nightingale

Reading: John 20:19 – 31

The return of Jesus from the dead was all the disciples could talk about. Every one of them was so excited about it. Well, not exactly every one of them. Thomas wasn't excited, because Thomas had missed it. 'Unless I see the marks the nails made in his hands, I won't believe he's alive,' Thomas said.

A week earlier, Jesus had appeared to 10 of the disciples. They were gathered together, hiding because they were afraid they would be killed next. Although they were in a locked room, Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you.' As the disciples rejoiced, Jesus said, 'As God the Father sent me, now I send you.' Then he breathed on them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. When you forgive people their sins, they are forgiven. When you find people guilty, they are guilty.'

Thomas was with the others in the house now. 'I'll only believe if I put my finger in the marks and my hand in his side,' he said. The doors were closed, just as they had been before, but again, Jesus appeared. He said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he spoke to Thomas: 'Look at my hands and put your finger in the holes. Put your hand in the wound on my side. Do not doubt, but believe.' Thomas was suddenly as excited as the rest of the disciples. 'My Lord and my God!' he cried.

Jesus asked Thomas, 'Have you only believed because you have seen me? God blesses all those who believe even though they haven't seen me.' This is why the story of Jesus was written down; so that people may believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. All who believe in Jesus will have life through him.

Sermon: Peace I bring

What do you think of when you hear the word “peace” being mentioned? Calmness, serenity, complete silence? If we are going to experience anything close to what our Lord was trying to get at when he met with his disciples in his risen form, I guess we are living through it right now.

However, the peace to which Jesus was referring is not the quiet peace of the status quo, of life as normal. This is the disruptive yet reassuring peace that comes because he is risen from the dead. It is the beginning of something new. The beginning of something like no-one had ever experienced before.

We read in our lesson from the Gospel: "When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you . . . '"

Peace be with you. How do we find peace of mind? How do we empty our minds of all the worry, fear, resentment, and pain that living in this world brings? How do we find the peace that Christ promises us? Someone once said that they had been told that one way to achieve inner peace was to finish the things they had started. They explained, "Today I finished two bags of crisps and a chocolate cake. I feel better already." We have a name for it, don't we? Comfort food. Be honest about it, chocolate. Guaranteed to reduce your stress level.

Sadly, peace is not found in a snack food. Or a chemical. For many of us, peace will come only when we come to grips with our **past**. Many of us are haunted by guilt, resentments, past failures, and lingering hurts. Deep within the cells of our bodies reside the memories of our regrets, every past hurt, every past resentment we have ever experienced.

Once in a while these past sins, past hurts, and past resentments rise up into our consciousness and trouble us and frighten us and throw us off balance. We may not even consciously know they are there, but still they eat at us and rob us of our joy. In order to have true peace of mind, some of us will have to come to grips with our past. How do we let go of the past? Christ has taken away our past with his death upon the cross. It's gone. Forever. Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace be with you." Notice what he does next. He showed them his hands and his side."

In the ancient Greek language, two words were commonly used for cancelling a contract. One of these words [Chiazein] meant "to cross out." That's what happened when you drew a big X over a contract and declared it null and void.

The other word used for this act [exaleiphein], meant "to wipe out." In this manner, the words of the contract were washed off the page--much like clearing an Etch-a-Sketch pad; it would be as if they had never been written.

"Wiped out as if they had never been." Jesus didn't just cover over our sins; he blotted them out as if they had never happened.

Many of us, in order to experience God's peace, will need to come to grips with our past.

Others of us will need to come to grips with our **future**. Some of us are living troubled lives because we are terrified of what tomorrow may bring. And who can blame us? This is a cruel world even before Covid-19 struck. We watch loved ones suffer. We hear of friends who are declining in health and spirit. And we know our day is coming. We are all living on borrowed time, and that is a terrifying thought to one preoccupied with the present world and its challenges.

Meanwhile competition in the workplace grows more difficult, housing costs are exorbitant, drugs are all too common in the school playground. Our young people are confronted with violence on the home front and far across the seas. Who can help but be concerned about the future? In the face of all these challenges it can be ever so easy to forget God's promises.

Robert Strand, in his book, *Especially for the Hurting Heart*, has a wonderful discussion of Hebrews 13:5 in which we read these encouraging words: "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you!'"

He asks, "What ever does "never" mean?" And he notes that in the original language "never" is really a compounding of five negatives. Not that each negative is added to another. Rather, each negative is multiplied by the other. According to Strand, it should actually read, "I will never, no, not ever, no never leave you or forsake you!" Apparently in strict grammatical vocab it is called a synergistic compounding negative. It's a forever never which has no exceptions!

Then he asks, "What does 'leave' mean?" He says that in the original Greek it means "to leave behind, to abandon, to give up on, to send back." Well then, so far our verse will read: "I will never, no not ever, no never leave you behind, abandon you, give up on you, or send you back!"

Finally he asks, "What does 'forsake' mean?" In the Greek it means, "to leave one in a helpless state, to disregard."

It also can be further expanded to include "not relaxing my watchfulness over you." To this point, then, says Strand, our verse, in the full, amplified version reads: "**I will never, no not ever, no never give up on you, abandon you, leave you behind, cause you not to survive, leave you helpless, nor shall I ever relax concerning keeping my presence with you!**" In other words, we can relax. God will always be there for us.

A party of botanists were exploring inaccessible regions of the Alps in search of new flowers. One day, through a pair of binoculars, they spotted a flower of rare beauty. It lay in a place where it could only be reached by someone being lowered down into a deep ravine.

A young lad from the town close by, who was watching the activity, was approached and offered a sum of money if he would allow himself to be lowered to pick the flower

and then be pulled up again. He took one look at the dizzy depths and said, "Wait, I'll be back." Soon he returned with an older man. He approached the botanist and said, "I'll go over the cliff now and get the flower if you let this man hold onto the rope: He's my Dad!" It really makes a difference who holds the rope, doesn't it? Our Heavenly Father has promised "I will never leave you, or forsake you."

How do we find peace of mind? By coming to grips with our past. Let go of the past. The past is gone. Don't let it rob you of your joy. As for the future-- that is what resurrection is all about. The same God who raised Christ from the dead watches over you and will not leave you or forsake you. "Peace be with you," said the Master. Let us all embrace that peace today.

Praise: Beauty for brokenness

<https://youtu.be/uKAXTinhhq4>

Beauty for brokenness

Hope for despair

Lord, in your suffering

This is our prayer

Bread for the children

Justice, joy, peace

Sunrise to sunset

Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives

Cures for their ills

Work for the craftsman

Trade for their skills

Land for the dispossessed

Rights for the weak

Voices to plead the cause

Of those who can't speak

Friend of the weak

Give us compassion we pray

Melt our cold hearts

Let tears fall like rain

Come, change our love

From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars

Havens from fear

Cities for sanctuary

Freedoms to share

Peace to the killing-fields

Scorched earth to green

Christ for the bitterness

His cross for the pain

Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need

Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice
Burns brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of your ways
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Offering: Lord, although we cannot physically make our offerings this morning, we ask you to bless our varied ways of giving at this time: the envelopes, cheques and direct debits all ensure that your church continues to express your love and presence in our world. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the places in the world that need your peace: places where wars continue to threaten the stability of the nations; and the lack of peace has caused so much destruction; places where people have to flee their homes, their families destroyed, lives lost.
Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

Give wisdom to world leaders:

to presidents, prime ministers, politicians of all governments,
that they may strive for lasting peace and true justice,
not putting personal ambitions before the needs of their people.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

We pray for those who need peace of mind:

those weighed down by the stresses and strains of everyday life,
or who suffer with anxiety, or are oppressed by worry and fear;
for those who find it hard to let go of things and simply trust.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

Benediction

Go peaceful
In gentleness
Through the violence of these days
Give freely
Show tenderness
In all your ways

Through darkness
In troubled times
Let holiness be your aim
Seek wisdom
Let faithfulness
Burn like a flame

God speed you
God lead you
And keep you wrapped around his heart
May you be known by love

Be righteous
Speak truthfully
In a world of greed and lies
Show kindness
See everyone
Through heaven's eyes

God hold you
Enfold you
And keep you wrapped around his heart
May you be known by love
God speed you
God lead you
And keep you wrapped around his heart
May you be known by love
May you be known by love