



17th May 2020 Easter 6

Here are another series of elements to make an act of worship for us to engage with as we grow as disciples on this fifth Sunday celebrating

Jesus' resurrection from the dead!

It's another smorgasbord pick and mix: you do with it as you wish, but don't try to do it all in one sitting!

It could last all week. You might do one reading and set of songs a day.....

For songs, where possible, I've suggested:

- A traditional hymn,
- a more contemporary song,
- and an adventurous alternative:

you choose which you use!

Just click on the underlined links, turn your device sound up loud, and singalong!!

If you don't find these help your worship, you can also find your own choice in the internet!

Worship isn't a spectator sport, it's a full-engagement activity between us and God, who we encounter in relationship as Father, Son, and Spirit.

In Old Testament times, they needed a human priest to mediate, then a stone temple to worship in, but after the resurrection we Christians are all priests (see the 1 Peter reading last week), and we Christians all have God living in our lives (see the John reading this week). Christians need no mediator and we are the temple!

Have fun!!

Opening scripture:

Jesus said, "My Father and I will come to them and live with them."

(Gospel of John 14.23)

The Lord is Risen!

HE IS RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA!

Repeat as much as you like!

Sing it if you like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuuZMg6NveA>

Pray, thanking the Father for Jesus' risen presence with you, asking for His Spirit so you can worship the Father in Spirit and truth (John 4.23).

Risen Lord Jesus Christ

**As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
may the light of your risen presence
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymnody

At the Name of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HH0Yn5Unwh8>

More Modern

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI2rKRCWmOU>

At the Name of Jesus, Amber Trent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu6yqBmuVT4>

Collect (Special prayer)

Risen Christ,
by the lakeside
you renewed your call to your disciples:
help your Church to obey your command
and draw the nations to the fire of your love,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen

The Word of God

St Paul says; 'The kingdom of God is not a matter of
talk but of power.'

(Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth 4.20)

**Through our lives and by our prayers
may your kingdom come.**

Ps 66.7-end A Song of Praise and Thanksgiving

- 1 Praise God with shouts of joy, all people!
- 2 Sing to the glory of his name;
offer him glorious praise!
- 3 Say to God, "How wonderful are the things you
do! Your power is so great
that your enemies bow down in fear before you.
- 4 Everyone on earth worships you;
they sing praises to you,
they sing praises to your name."
- 5 **Come and see what God has done,**
his wonderful acts among people.
- 6 He changed the sea into dry land;
our ancestors crossed the river on foot.
There we rejoiced because of what he did.
- 7 He rules forever by his might
and keeps his eyes on the nations.

- Let no rebels rise against him.
- 8 Praise our God, all nations;
let your praise be heard.
 - 9 He has kept us alive
and has not allowed us to fall.
 - 10 **You have put us to the test, God;**
as silver is purified by fire,
so you have tested us.
 - 11 You let us fall into a trap
and placed heavy burdens on our backs.
 - 12 You let our enemies trample us;
we went through fire and flood,
but now you have brought us to a place of safety.
 - 13 I will bring burnt offerings to your house;
I will offer you what I promised.
 - 14 I will give you what I said I would
when I was in trouble.
 - 15 I will offer sheep to be burned on the altar;
I will sacrifice bulls and goats,
and the smoke will go up to the sky.
 - 16 Come and listen, all who honour God,
and I will tell you what he has done for me.
 - 17 I cried to him for help;
I praised him with songs.
 - 18 If I had ignored my sins,
the Lord would not have listened to me.
 - 19 But God has indeed heard me;
he has listened to my prayer.
 - 20 I praise God,
because he did not reject my prayer
or keep back his constant love from me.



For you, God, tested
us; you refined us like
silver...we went
through the fire and
water, but you
brought us to a place
of abundance.

Psalm 66:10-12

Psalm 66 (Anglican Chant)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv_t8FDYOSU

Great is Thy Faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKlqmdfHSk>

Great is Thy Faithfulness (Austin Stone)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eQ1oal44wU>

Genesis 8.20-9.17 Noah Offers a Sacrifice

8.20 Noah built an altar to the Lord; he took one of each kind of ritually clean animal and bird, and burned them whole as a sacrifice on the altar.

21 The sweet smell of the roasting meat pleased the Lord, and he said to himself, "Never again will I put the earth under a curse because of what people do; I know that from the time they are young their thoughts are evil. Never again will I destroy all living beings, as I have done this time. 22 As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

God's Covenant with Noah

9.1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth. 2 All the animals, birds, and fish will live in fear of you. **They are all placed under your power.** 3 Now you can eat them, as well as green plants; I give them

all to you for food. 4 The one thing you must not eat is meat with blood still in it; I forbid this because the life is in the blood. 5 If anyone takes human life, he will be punished. I will punish with death any animal that takes a human life. 6 Human beings were made like God, so whoever murders one of them will be killed by someone else.

7 "You must have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth."

8 God said to Noah and his sons, 9 "I am now making my covenant with you and with your descendants, 10 and with all living beings—all birds and all animals—everything that came out of the boat with you. 11 With these words I make my covenant with you: I promise that never again will all living beings be destroyed by a flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth.

The Rainbow

12 As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living beings, 13 I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. 14 Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, 15 I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings. 16 When the rainbow appears in **the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth.** 17 That is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings."



*Animals, birds, and fish have had every reason to be fearful of human beings, especially during the last centuries where we've persecuted them, in sadly many cases to extinction, when we were supposed to look after them. Having something under your power implies responsibility. Humans have also taken the instruction to live all over the earth to wild extremes as our rapidly growing population outstrips the earth's resources. A flood of humanity is threatening to destroy the earth. But God's promise remains. We must pray that we can find ways to live in harmony with each other and with creation as God intended. The rainbow is a sign of God's Covenant with **all** living creatures on earth, not just people.*

Hymnody

We Praise The O God (Te Deum, Stanford)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbaz9T-RW-M>



Raphael, St Paul Preaching in Athens 1511

Lord of Beauty, Thine the Splendour

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_LL3yfu3eg

All Creatures of Our God and King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtT3SRnnG0I>

All Creatures of Our God and King (Prayers of Saints)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUZD0hgtSgE>

(For Children) Who Put the Colours in the Rainbow?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9CsKFlaRo0>

Acts 17.22-31 Paul in Athens

Athens was the ancient capital of the once mighty Greek empire established ca. 300BC by Alexander the Great. Their philosophers remain influential today. Epicurians pursued sober, reasoning pleasure, moderate, detached and intellectual rather than excessive and sensual, and chiefly by eliminating pain and suffering, and the dread of the supernatural which they regarded as outside, separate. They avoided politics, but pursued friendship. They believed the soul was immaterial, but not immortal.

Intellectual fashion saw Stoicism take over as the dominant philosophy of the age, and it has wide influence in Christian thought. The Stoic teacher Seneca

may have corresponded with St Paul! They believed in a divine but impersonal reason or 'force' which created, orders, and sustains the universe (logos). Happiness comes with aligning one's will with the logos and therefore with nature and true justice: this is virtue.

If you can, read Tom Wright's commentary on this discourse in **Acts for Everyone Part 2** pp79-94. Brilliant! You can watch a short version (The number '20' refers to the video, NT Wright on Acts: no.20, not chapter!): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPeHhlgBZtU&list=PL455179C7B06EBCB8&index=22>

16 While Paul was waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy, he was greatly upset when he noticed how full of idols the city was. 17 So he held discussions in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentiles who worshiped God, and also in the public square every day with the people who happened to come by.

18 Certain Epicurean and Stoic teachers also debated with him. Some of them asked, "What is this ignorant show-off trying to say?"

Others answered, "He seems to be talking about foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching about Jesus and resurrection.¹

19 So they took Paul, brought him before the city council, the Areopagus, and said, "We would like to know what this new teaching is that you are talking about. 20 Some of the things we hear you say sound strange to us, and we would like to know what they mean." (21 For all the citizens of Athens and the foreigners who lived there liked to spend all their time telling and hearing the latest new thing.)

22 Paul stood up in front of the city council and said, "I see that in every way you Athenians are very religious. 23 For as I walked through your city and looked at the places where you worship, I found an altar on which is written, 'To an Unknown God.'

That which you worship, then, even though you do not know it, is what I now proclaim to you. 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth and **does not live in temples made by human hands.**

25 Nor does he need anything that we can supply by working for him, since it is he himself who gives

life and breath and everything else to everyone. 26 From one human being he created all races of people and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. 27 He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt around for him.

Yet God is actually not far from any one of us; 28 as someone has said,

'In him we live and move and exist.'
It is as some of your poets have said,
'We too are his children.'²

29 Since we are God's children, we should not suppose that his nature is anything like an image of gold or silver or stone, shaped by human art and skill.

30 God has overlooked the times when people did not know him, but now he commands all of them everywhere to turn away from their evil ways. 31 For he has fixed a day in which he will judge the whole world with justice by means of a man he has chosen. **He has given proof of this to everyone by raising that man from death!"**



The Acropolis of Athens by Leo von Klenze (1846)

¹ *Hiesous* and *Anastasis* (resurrection) sound like the names of Greek gods.

² quoted from Stoic philosopher Aratus, *Phaenomena*.

32 When they heard Paul speak about a **raising from death**, some of them made fun of him, but others said, "We want to hear you speak about this again." 33 And so Paul left the meeting. 34 Some men joined him and believed, among whom was Dionysius, a member of the council; there was also a woman named Damaris, and some other people.

Hymnody

The Day of Resurrection

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luF5G_3x7L4

Come People of the Risen King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZzMmUexltE>

This is How We Know (Redman)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K67jH43tpjo>



Before we read the gospel, you might listen to:
If Ye Love Me, Thomas Tallis (click 'full screen'!)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6RgaPT04hE>

John 14.15-21 The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Jesus said to his disciples: 15 **"If you love me, you will obey my commandments.**
16 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. 17 **He is the Spirit**, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and will be in you.

18 "When I go, you will not be left all alone; I will come back to you. 19 In a little while the world will see me no more, but you will see me; and because I live, you also will live. 20 When that day comes, you will know that I am in my Father and that you are in me, just as I am in you.

21 **"Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me.** My Father will love those who love me; I too will love them and reveal myself to them."

22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "Lord, how can it be that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered him, **"Those who love me will obey my teaching.** My Father will love them, and **my Father and I will come to them and live with them.**

24 **Those who do not love me do not obey my teaching.** And the teaching you have heard is not mine, but comes from the Father, who sent me.

25 "I have told you this while I am still with you.

26 **The Helper, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

Thought for the Week

Jesus said to his disciples:

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments."

He also said, in the concluding teaching missed in the lectionary reading:

"If you don't, you won't."

Last week someone I know finished off the grouting on some new kitchen tiles for his wife. It's his least favourite job, but he did it because he loves her: she didn't even ask, he just found himself doing it!

'Obey' here translates '*tayraysete*' = 'you will keep, preserve, guard.'

The 'will' can mean follow an order, or finding that this 'keeping' is happening.

'Commandments' here translates '*entolas*.' This is a feminine noun, derived from '*en*' = 'in' which intensifies '*telos*' = 'the end, the consummation.' It's looking at the end result rather than the causation. It's Jesus' way of living, Jesus' vision for life, which is heavenly lifestyle. If we love Jesus, we *will* find ourselves *living Jesus' Way, according to His Vision*, which is the way things operate in God's kingdom, what we call 'heaven.' If we love Jesus, we will find ourselves living in his vision of life, and (v.23b) we will find the Father and Son living with us.

This reflection is ascribed to St Columba, who loved Jesus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Optrm7lF16s>

We don't find ourselves living in the way of Jesus because we think that by doing so, we'll get into heaven, because we'll never be able to do it completely enough.

We don't do what he says because we fear God's wrath: that was spent on the cross.

We do what Jesus envisions because we **love** him, and as we allow this love *for him* to envelop our lives, as we allow his loving Spirit to in-fill our lives so we should find His Way of life becoming manifest in our lives. D'you see the difference?

The word used here is 'agape' which is self-giving love, the sort of love Jesus showed when he gave up all the security, glory, safety, of heaven and lived among us humans on earth, eventually giving his life, taking our sin into his own sinless body.

We respond, when we realise how much Jesus has done, has given for me. Living in His vision is a love-response, the same way we do things because we love our spouse or children.

Can I say I love Jesus? Do I realise what he's done, what he's given, what he continues to give for me? How do I respond?

You might like to play this song. It's very modern, but it's gentle, and the lyrics encapsulate this idea perfectly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DeJOerpLPM>

What were Jesus commandments to / vision for his disciples?

(This is some of Matthew's collection, but before you look, remember, following Jesus is NOT about following rules. These are all things that we should experience arising in our lives as we allow the life of the Spirit of Jesus to live in and through us, as we love him in return for his love for us).

Turning my life around to face God	(Mtt 4.17)
Going with Jesus	(Mtt 4.19)
Rejoicing	(Mtt 5.12)
Not taking revenge	(Mtt 5.39)
Loving my enemies	(Mtt 44)
Giving and fasting in private	(Mtt 5.64; 6.18)
Praying in my room, not using lots of words	(Mtt 6.6)
Storing riches in heaven, not on earth	(Mtt 6.19-20)
Not worrying	(Mtt 6.25)
Not judging others	(Mtt 7.1)
Asking, seeking, knocking	(Mtt 7.7)
Doing for others as I want them to do for me	(Mtt 7.12)
Heading through the narrow gate	(Mtt 7.13)
Being on guard against false teachers	(Mtt 7.15, 24.4)
Proclaiming the kingdom	(Mtt 10.7)
Healing the sick	(Mtt 10.8)
Casting out demons	(Mtt 10.8)
Bringing the dead back to life	(Mtt 10.8)
Not being afraid of people	(Mtt 10.26)

Coming to Jesus if I'm tired	(Mtt 11.28)
Giving the hungry something to eat	(Mtt 14.16)
Changing and becoming like a child	(Mtt 18.3)
Not despising the little ones	(Mtt 18.10)
If someone sins, first showing them their fault <i>privately</i> ...	(Mtt 18.15)
Forgiving from my heart	(Mtt 18.35)
Letting the children come to Jesus	(Mtt 19.14)
If I want to be great, serving others	(Mtt 20.26)
<i>All summed up in:</i>	
Loving God with all my heart, soul, mind,	
Loving my neighbour as myself.	(Mtt 22.37-9)
Not being called Teacher, Father or Leader	(Mtt 23.8-10)
Always being ready for Jesus' return	(Mtt 24.44; 25.13)
<i>Finally!</i>	
Making disciples, baptising them, and teaching them to do everything Jesus commanded me	(Mtt 28.19)

Try praying through the list slowly: what does it say to you?

Is it a burden or a joy to do these things? Do they flow out of a love for Jesus, or do you resentfully reluctantly follow orders.



Now, of course, I can't do all he's asked of me in my own strength. I need the promised empowering presence of his Spirit. The Spirit fills us with love for Jesus, and makes us want to do these things, and gives us the power to do these things; and if we allow his input, brings these things to growth in our lives.

Response

Oh Jesus I have Promised

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trs17OEHe7E>

The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me, John Michael Talbot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJU40RbPK6M>

Holy Spirit, Living Breath, Keith and Kristyn Getty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nbMfLQd2P4>

Another response is to review our giving. Rowan Williams talks about one route: Christian Aid.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/christian-aid-week/virtual-fundraisers>

Prayers of Penitence

Jesus says, 'Turn away from your sins, for the kingdom of God is close at hand.'
(Mark 1.15)

So let us turn away from our sin, our rebellion against God, and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Spend a moment in reflection, calling to mind those times or attitudes when you've done things your way rather than God's way, or those long-standing opinions that need addressing in the light of God's Word.

**Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins,
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

*Over to you: what do you want to pray for?
Thanksgiving? Needs of the world? Needs of the village?
Needs of individuals or families? Needs of your own?...*

If you're struggling to find the words, try these...

The Prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqFCbtRz1Z0>

Holy Overshadowing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjWetk7zbGE>

Asking God's Ongoing Blessing

**Jesus Christ Son of God, perfect in us
the image of Your glory
and gladden our hearts**

**with the good news of Your Victory over death
and the coming of Your kingdom;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.**

The Blessing UK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U>

Final Hymn

Thine Be the Glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaoV5w2Qfag>

Thine Be the Glory, Virtual Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTXUsKFec/s>

We All Bow Down

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9BNzoC938M>

For exploration afterwards

Found in preparation:

Beautiful Beyond Description, Jeff Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfFbr10U2o>

What a Beautiful Name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQWFzMvCfLE>

The Name of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30uy-dmphFM>

Come and See What God Has Done (Esther Liana)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMz1wZvLnEc>

Great is Thy Faithfulness, Chris Rice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k1WhFtVp0o>

'Be Thou My Vision' is traditionally ascribed originally to St Columba of Iona, d. AD598. Columba brought faith in Jesus to the Scots (who were originally his own people, Northern Irish), Picts, Strathclyde British; then Northumbrian British and Angles, and through them, Cumbrian British; then down through Anglo-Saxon 'England' to continental Europe. He lived the Vision of Christ.

Bu Thusa Mo Shuile, Mairi Brennan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ0aINUzMSU>

Be Thou My Vision on Piano and Cello

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt2X6gcExTE>

Name of Jesus, Chris Tomlin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZii7zjj3m4>

You Are Great, Robbie Seay

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q-BtwAMcmk>

