

**Sunday 24th May 2020**

**Easter 7**

This short act of worship has been prepared to use while we are unable to gather to worship. If you are well enough, we invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are also sharing this act of worship with you.

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*As we come to worship, you may like to have a time of silence and light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.*

### **Opening Prayer**

Glorious God, as we gather in our various homes,  
we come seeking your wisdom, seeking your love, your forgiveness,  
and the strength to live our lives in a way that always shines with your glory.

**Amen**

### **Hymn: StF 59 The Light of your love is shining**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen: <https://youtu.be/rce9UHYZwl4>

Lord, the light of your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us  
*Shine on me, shine on me...*

*Shine, Jesus, shine,  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,  
Set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow,  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy,  
Send forth your word  
Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence  
From the shadows into your radiance  
By your blood I may enter your  
brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my  
darkness

*Shine on me, shine on me...*

As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
So, our faces display your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here may our lives tell your  
story

*Shine on me, shine on me...*

### **Let us come together in prayer.**

Loving God, as we come into your presence, we praise your name,  
we declare your greatness and rejoice in your goodness.

We have come together with our thanks,  
for everything you have given us through Jesus Christ.  
We thank you for all the talents and skills you have bestowed on us,

for the support and guidance that you have given us,  
and for the strength which we have received,  
so we have been able to carry on.

Most of all we thank you for your love, a love which constantly surrounds us.

But we come knowing that we have failed you,  
that we have failed to hear you calling us  
and we have failed to recognize you in our lives.  
We have turned away from your love,  
we have doubted and worshipped and relied on other things.

Forgive us.....

Lord, we ask that, through your love for us, you will restore our focus on you.  
Teach us to listen and hear your voice and feel your love all around us. **Amen**

**Today's Reading:** 1 Peter 4: 12-14 and 5: 6-11

**Additional Readings:** Psalm 68: 1-10 and 32-35, Acts 1: 6-14, John 17: 1-11

**Time to Reflect:**

*"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you."*

These words of St Peter in his letter to the new Christian communities which had grown up around the Roman Empire, were intended to be a warning to them that their lives will not be easy. He is not the only person to have observed that one of the greatest and simplest of all truths is that *"life is never easy"*. At the moment, I am sure that we would all agree with that!

I am also sure that we have all had times when our lives have been extremely hard. We have feared for the future, and perhaps felt that there is not a way forward. I remember when I was 9 years old being diagnosed with a kidney complaint and being told that I would have to spend at least 6 months in hospital. I was devastated, it seemed to me that would be in hospital for life! I would never be able to get back to being able to do the one thing I wanted to do..... play cricket.

But, at the same time as he issued that warning, St Peter also reminded them that Jesus was still with them. He told them to "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you".

**Are you doing that? At this time when we do not know what the future will bring, are you able to trust God?**

Each year in October, Jews celebrate a festival called Sukkot. For seven days people leave their homes and live in a Sukkah, which is a shack open to the skies with only a covering of leaves for a roof.

It is a re-enactment of the time when the Israelites wandered through the wilderness without any protection.



All they had was their faith in *“the sheltering wings of the divine presence”*. After one such festival, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explained that *“sitting in a fragile hut exposed to the wind and cold, you learn what it is to thank God for being alive, you learn to cherish today and have faith in tomorrow”*.

I am not going to suggest anyone lives outside in an open shed for a week, but I do pray that each of us will remember the words of Jesus. *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”*.

### **A time of prayer**

Loving God, as your people in Bognor, Felpham and Westergate, we ask you to send your love, and the strength of the Holy Spirit to all who cry out in need.

We pray for all who are in need wherever and whoever they are.  
We pray for people wherever they are throughout the world,  
for people in this country, and in our local communities.

We pray for our families, our friends, our neighbours  
and for the members of our Churches. *(you might like to name names here)*,  
especially thinking of those who are ill, or feeling fearful or isolated.

And, finally Lord, in this time of difficulty, we pray that you will come,

and breathe within us, renew our thoughts, our will, and our hearts.  
May your light shine in our lives today and always.  
Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer:** *Our Father .....*

**Hymn: StF 526 Lord of all hopefulness. Lord of all joy**

*Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen:* <https://youtu.be/b8mti7VL3gg>

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
Whose trust, ever child-like, no cares  
can destroy,  
Be there at our waking, and give us,  
we pray,  
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the  
break of the day.

Lord of all kindliness, Lord of all grace,  
Your hands swift to welcome, your  
arms to embrace,  
Be there at our homing, and give us,  
we pray,  
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the  
eve of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
Whose strong hands were skilled at  
the plane and the lathe,  
Be there at our labours, and give us,  
we pray,  
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at  
the noon of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
Whose voice is contentment, whose  
presence is balm,  
Be there at our sleeping, and give us,  
we pray,  
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the  
end of the day.

### **A prayer of blessing**

May God bless and guide us.  
May God give us strength  
and the assurance of his love.  
May God fill us with his presence  
Today and always. Amen.



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