

Good Morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this second Sunday of May.

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look forward to hearing God's message through his preaching.

Starting tomorrow it is Christian Aid week and to assist you in your giving to this most worthy cause you will have found an envelope on your seat. This can be left in the offering tray today or next Sunday.

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00am with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

On Wednesday evening at 7.30, again on Zoom, there will be a discussion evening, details of which will be sent through via email. Please join us if you are free.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday when we will be reviewing the past year. Please collect a copy of the annual report from the back of the church when you leave or contact me by email for an electronic copy. We will also be holding the election for the office of Church Secretary. Julian has received one joint nomination and that is of Denise Lewis and Bruce Lloyd. There will be an online vote on the evening, but if you wish to have a postal ballot please could you contact me.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister.

Thank you.

Welcome

Welcome once again to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church – welcome if you're here in church this morning or joining us 'on line', as we move into the latter stages of Eastertide and anticipate the Ascension and Pentecost.

But not so fast that we skip over or ignore the ever-deepening joy of the Easter season, which marks all our worship and living-by-faith, so that it is 'shot through' with the glories of the risen Christ. One of the great challenges of life is to live 'in the moment' – not being distracted either by dwelling in the past or dreaming about the future, but making the most of every moment we are alive.

Religious traditions give rise to disciplines of meditation, mindfulness and attentiveness, which can help with the practicalities of such living, but really, for the Christian, the risen Christ is a present reality that brings every moment into focus; we are not merely celebrating a past event or just hoping for a brighter future, but living *now* – the risen Christ is present *now* and *now* and....*now*..

That's what worship is all about; you are welcome as we step aside from all the distractions and pre-occupations and, of course, the increasing number of anxieties of the present age – not into a fantasy that ignores them, or pretends they aren't real, but into a reality that transforms them all by the presence of the living Christ.

'Jesus, draw me ever nearer'

Margaret Becker & Keith Getty
Sung by Rachel, Eileen, Tina & Nick

Call to Worship

So we are drawn here, in the hope and expectation that we will become nearer, ever nearer, to the Jesus whose living Spirit touches all we are and transforms all we would be. But we are also called, by the One whose power raised Jesus from the dead and overcomes all things – and by that power we worship

BPW 248 ['Come Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain'](#)

Cross and Crown, The Quarantine Sessions (2020) All Saints Church, Vernon BC Canada

Opening Prayer

Lord we're glad to be here, and glad to acclaim that you're here with us, even though the world finds it hard to see you and many do not believe, or else have their beliefs undermined, but we worship you – for you are present everywhere in every way, to make & re-make & renew & save the world and our lives – and all this we see lived out for us in and through Jesus Christ – Lord we confess before you how easily we lose sight of your love in our lives and in the world, and how quickly we are distracted from your purposes, and how readily we turn away – forgive us, we ask, in Jesus' name -

we wait on your word to us:

'there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' – thanks be to God.

So we worship you for Christ most of all, and as we sing and pray and think together we ask you to lift our eyes to see beyond here, even beyond your presence here where it's easy, to see you at work in the world, and to look there for every sign of your Kingdom.

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

'My God'

Written and sung by Stuart Townend

Readings

Psalm 98

CG24 'Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life'

George Herbert/Vaughn Williams: The Orchard Enterprises

John 16:16-33

Sermon

Lord, we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard & understood be touched by your spirit & may what is decided lead us all on towards your Kingdom..Amen

'I'm not confused; I'm confused.com' You've seen the advert; I'm not sure I understand it, but that's the point; while I'm trying to work out what it means I'm thinking about the product, which is, presumably, what the advertisers are aiming for; while I'm thinking about *their* product, I'm not thinking about any of the others, involving Meerkats & Opera Singers etc..

The disciples were confused. "What does he mean, 'In a little while you will see me no more & then after a little while you will see me,' & 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'?" We don't understand what he is saying."

We don't understand what he's saying....John often uses their confusion as a way of introducing a fuller explanation. 'What does he mean?' followed by Jesus saying lots more about what he means – though frankly I'm not sure the further explanation as John writes it always makes things any clearer - full of metaphors and figures of speech and such like

Not just John; Matthew, Mark & Luke also describe the confusion, the lack of understanding – sometimes of the disciples, sometimes of the Pharisees, sometimes of the whole people.

And you get this impression, of this earth-bound, hide-bound, rules-driven, population, living under the yoke of oppression, making their way through a suffering world; racked by disease, ringed by threats and danger, running after any new voice.

And Jesus appears, talking about birds of the air and seeds and sheep and light and good and God and 'little while' and...*they don't understand what he's saying*

Understanding – how often we have found ourselves trying to explain how the world appears to us, only to give up, exasperated: 'you don't understand what I'm saying'

It's universal isn't it? A great conundrum at the heart of life; we are engaged in a constant battle of understanding – often failing to understand; often failing to grasp; having to learn over and over to listen, to try and understand –

Or, sometimes, not bothering to make anyone understand – just getting on with living the way we want, doing what we want to do – taking pride in the fact that no one understands how it is for us but we're going to do it anyway.

How much of our world is devoted to promoting understanding. Thank God for teachers and lecturers who patiently explain, who, in W B Yeats' idea, aren't interested in 'filling buckets' but in 'lighting fires'.

Thank God for institutions – the UN, WHO, aid organisations & agencies – Christian Aid and the like; programmes such as Erasmus for students – that bring people together, cross boundaries – increase understanding..

Thank God for lecturers who teach, journalists who write; reporters who make documentaries, campaigners who tell stories of silenced minorities – so that more and more of us will understand..

Thank God, also, for the scientists and artists whose work we don't understand, not without effort, who discover things, make things, paint things, write things & play things that take us beyond what we understand, to *new* understanding.

Thank God for Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, who show us - when Jesus spoke and ministered and died and rose again they *did not understand*; the religious establishment did not understand; the people did not understand; his own followers did not understand..

“In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

“What does he mean?”...“We don’t understand what he is saying.”

As the joyful season of Eastertide reaches its end, as Ascension hoves into view, as, soon after, we celebrate Pentecost (maybe altogether that’s what Jesus was driving at – remember the two-level structure of John – Jesus saying farewell before the cross, Jesus preparing his disciples after he was risen. Maybe altogether – the risen Christ, the Ascension, Pentecost – ‘in a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’ – maybe that’s what he means, what he *meant*

Jesus the Galilean;; the risen Christ..gone from the earth..come as a Spirit of wind, fire, gentle and strong—
transforming *everything* – in a little while...then after a little while....

Now we understand! “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

As the joyful season of Eastertide reaches its end, as Ascension hoves into view, as, soon after, we celebrate Pentecost,

there’s a danger that we present to the world, to ourselves, a plain-speaking Jesus, full of moral certainty and politically left-of-centre and ecologically sound and kind to animals and minorities and all the other items in today’s ‘woke agenda’

Whereas the gospel – the good news - is about a mysterious Jesus, an all-powerful Jesus; a strange, inscrutable Jesus; who dies on a cross, who rises from death (how can anyone understand *that?*), who is nowhere to be seen, whose Spirit blows where it wills,

Who brings peace where there is no peace; who overcomes even death, who forgives even when we don’t know what we’re doing – who’s there for everyone, anyone –

you....me...in our need; in our fear and confusion; as we, earth-bound, hide-bound, rules-driven, living under the yoke of distraction, making our way through a suffering world, racked by disease, ringed by threats and danger, running after any new voice,

he’s there for *us* - bringing life, love, and laughter (in the words of the song)–

Don’t try to understand him – don’t look to him just to fill your bucket – your political bucket or your moral bucket or your social bucket; don’t be satisfied with what you *understand*

I come more and more to this after years of preaching – of trying to say things so that folk will understand. It all, I think, comes down to *this*..

Only let him light your fire; by reading of his teachings and healings. *Only follow him with your life;* by serving the neighbour who is always close at hand.

Only look at him as he is lifted up from the earth; by following the whole Christian story. *Only glory in his Spirit at work in your life, the church, the world* ..by looking for every sign of peace and forgiveness and welcome and justice and new understanding – in art, science, politics – you name it...

Only hope in his promise to return; by absorbing the hope that shines from the pages of Scripture. *Only trust him for healing, forgiveness,* by taking part in the life of God’s people and of the world.

And...*Only follow him, Only serve him; Only go where he leads and Only love who and what he loves – and Only worship God in his name.*

and then? The risen Christ of the ‘little while and then again after a little while’, says,

“I have told you these things,” (*don’t worry if you don’t understand them, but rejoice that while you’re trying to work them out you won’t be thinking about any of the other distractions in the world*),

“I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Offering prayer & the grace

Lord, we come to you and once again we look to the Lord Jesus, the risen Christ. We crave every prompting of His Spirit as, once again, we commit to following him, to seek his forgiveness and to serve him with our lives. So we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts with thankful hearts and ask only that you would set our hearts on fire with your love.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

[‘We will meet’](#)

John Bell
sung by Alison Adam

Prayers

We pray for a confused and bewildered world – for folk whose lives and livelihoods, once so sure, are now mired in uncertainty. For folk who don't know where to turn for medical help or financial support or social care. For folk whose mental health is poor; where anxiety and depression run rife in isolated homes and communities everywhere.

Lord, we pray that your Spirit might bring security, practical help, medication and human contact; through those, at the start of Christian Aid week, who care and work for others especially.

We remain in silence

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the confusions and divisions in our world – for those who cause confusion through propagating fake news; for politicians who stoke divisions in order to gain power; for those who are taken in by falsehoods and whose lives are lived according to false beliefs and untruths.

Lord, we pray that your Spirit will work to undermine falsehoods wherever they occur and bring people together – through those who will open themselves to one another. We especially pray, at the start of Christian Aid week, that all around the world its healing and reconciling work will spread abroad.

We remain in silence

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for truth and new understanding in the world – for scientists and artists who discover new ways or confront us with fresh visions; for people of faith who are prepared to open their minds; for educators who seek to light fires; for children and young people who will come to see the world in new ways.

Lord, at the start of Christian Aid week we thank you for your Spirit's work in changing minds and opening hearts and brooding over us all, so that we may be inspired to create new worlds near and far.

We remain in silence

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

BPW 62 ['How great thou art'](#)

Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church

Benediction

So may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, Amen.

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting – and reading – and singing! - today. Rachel sorting music and playing; Tyndale's singers & Eileen singing; the Stewarding Team preparing, watching over us, and cleaning up after – thanks everyone for taking part.

As the joyful season of Eastertide reaches its climax, and we once again have our eyes and hearts lifted, we look to living with new hope as we continue to support & pray for one another, 'til we meet again'..

["Come, My Way"](#)

Blackfriar Music: