

Home Worship

w/c Sun 29th March

with thanks to Rev Lydia Cartwright (Clifton)

Opening Worship and Prayer

Be still:

Light a candle and spend a moment in silence.

We may be distant from our loved ones right now,
but God draws close to us and will never leave us.

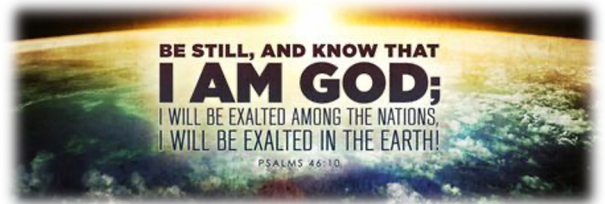


Psalm 46:



*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult...*

*"... Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth."
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge."*



A prayer:

Father God, thank you that you are always with us.

Draw close to us now as we share in worship with those we can no longer meet with.

Calm our fears, and pour your peace into our lives and the lives of those we care for.

Amen

A song:

What songs spring to mind for the time we are in?

Look them up on YouTube or Spotify and sing along or just sing the words you can remember.

On a phone call this week we talked about the relevance of "Guide me, O thou great redeemer"

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven
Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer;
Be thou still my strength and shield
Be thou still my strength and shield.



Thanksgiving:

Times like this bring out the best and worst in people.

Think about your neighbours and community.

What positives have you felt, seen or heard about that you can thank God for?

Into the word...

When, in your life, have you experienced God being at work even in the darkest of times?

Read John 11:1-45

This is an incredible story of the transforming power of God to bring joy from despair.

When have you seen the light of Jesus in the darkest of times?

When their brother was sick, Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus.

They knew from experience he could help.

- When we need help, Jesus is there.
- Bring your present fears, needs and worries to Jesus now.

Jesus didn't go to Lazarus' aid straight away and he died. This seemed like the worst thing, but it enabled Jesus to demonstrate his power over death.

- God's timing isn't the same as ours and we can get impatient – bring again to God those situations that you have been praying for that do not yet seem to have answers.
- Pray that God will show you how he is at work, perhaps in surprising ways.

Verses 25-26 are one of Jesus' most famous "I am" sayings.

- What difference do these verses make to our lives and how we live them?
- How might they speak into the despair of the coronavirus situation we find ourselves in?

In this story we hear that Jesus wept with his friends. He cares. He doesn't promise to lift us out of every painful situation but he does promise to always be with us.

- The Rend Collective song "Weep with Me" is a power reflection on this. Listen to it online if you can, or meditate on some of the words below. They have helped me in hard times...

Weep with me
Lord will You weep with me?
I don't need answers, all I need
Is to know that You care for me

*Yet I will praise You
Yet I will sing of Your name
Here in the shadows
Here I will offer my praise*

Part the seas
Lord make a way for me
Here in the midst of my lament
I have faith, yes I still believe

Hear my plea
Are You even listening?
Lord I will wrestle with Your heart
But I won't let You go

*What's true in the light
Is still true in the dark
You're good and You're kind
And You care for this heart*

That You love me
Your plans are to prosper me
You're working everything for good
Even when I can't see

You know I believe,
Help my unbelief

*Lord I believe
You weep with me*

The event recounted here is the beginning of Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem and the cross and a foretaste of Jesus defeating death.

- Spend a moment thanking Jesus for all he accomplished on the cross so that we can have life now and for all eternity.



Prayers – from the Church of England for this time

Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,
that all who are fearful and anxious
may be at peace and free from worry:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For the isolated and housebound,
that we may be alert to their needs,
and care for them in their vulnerability:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For our homes and families,
our schools and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Other prayers & readings to use the rest of the week:

Monday – Isaiah 30:18

Tuesday – Matthew 11:28-30

Wednesday – 1 Peter 5:6-7

Thursday – John 16:31-33

Friday – 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

Saturday – John 8:12

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of
trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom
we pray,

to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

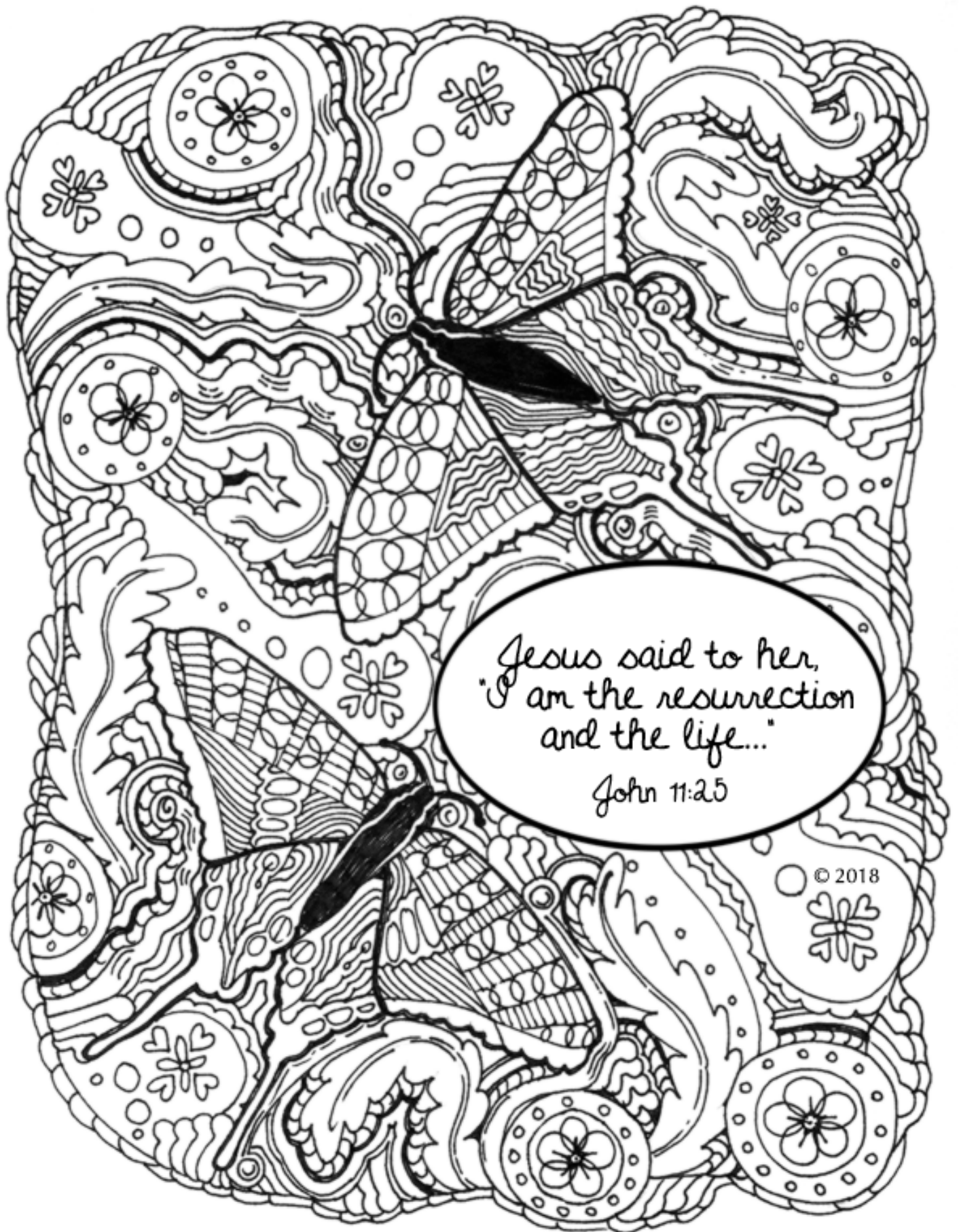
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Pray the Lord's Prayer...



**O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that
you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing
can separate me
from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**



Jesus said to her,
"I am the resurrection
and the life..."

John 11:25

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