

“COUCH CHURCH”: WORSHIPPING GOD AT HOME
SUNDAY 29 MARCH 2020
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Before you begin, you may wish to light a candle.

Gathering Prayer:

God of new life, God of risen hope,
as we gather today, not in one place but in many,
may we know your resurrection power in our lives.
May our spirits be renewed.
May our bodies be restored.
Amen.

Prayer of the Day:

**Life-giving God, your son came into the world
to free us from sin and death:
breathe on us with the power of your Spirit,
that we may be raised to new life in Christ,
and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.**
Amen.

Readings:

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!
If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.
It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, ‘Lord, he whom you love is ill.’ But when Jesus heard it, he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world.¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

John 11:1-41 (NRSV)

Sermon:

If you have received this document by email, listen to the sermon by clicking on the link to Rev. Cathy's podcast which is in your email.

Creed:

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose from the dead;

he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions:

You may wish to include the prayers below as well as your own.

Loving God,
source of healing and comfort,
at this time of fear, fill us with your grace
that the sick may be made whole,
this virus contained and a cure found.
Strengthen those who care for the sick,
calm the anxious
and protect the most vulnerable
in the power of the Spirit and
in the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PACT Prayer-

Loving Father

We thank you for the beauty of your world and especially the Northern Rivers area here where we live. Lord bless us in the confusion, concern and anxiety that is in the world at the moment, with the spreading of the Coronavirus. Stretch out your hand and bless, heal and bring peace to those who are in need. Help us to continue to trust you as we live today by the rules and regulations set in place to help containment. We are in an unusual space where we have not been before and for many of us it is strange, isolating and unknown. We know we are safe in your love, thank you. Help us to show safety and love to those around us and those in our church community who are in our care. Help us stay safe and well. May your presence surround, encourage and bless each of us, Amen

EAC Prayer-

Please pray for all staff, students and families at Emmanuel Anglican College as they adjust to online education. Pray especially that our Year 12 students will know God's peace as they prepare for their HSC in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

ABM prayer -

Jesus brings his friend Lazarus back to life. Jesus can make any situation, no matter how bad, immediately better. Invite him into your heart.

- Pray for all who find themselves in difficulties. Ask Jesus to knock on the door of their heart so that he may help.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, the Philippine Independent Church

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

Ria Mars, Joy Swinbourne, Lucy van Eck, Neil Maclean, Norma Meehan, Malcolm Streher, Josh Stanley, Fran Shepherd, Bonnie Kerkenezov, Lana Kane-Herrera, Anne Marie Troutman, Ellen Goodger, Margaret Leadbeatter, Margaret Waller, Neal Watt, Maureen Colburt, Lynda Garde, Sue Hurford, Rachael Hampton, Alton Rowe, Ros Rowe, and Elaine Frederiksen.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray-

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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Confession:

Lord, forgive us when we don't always trust you,
when we don't always trust that you know best.
Forgive us when we think our timing is better than yours,
when we think that we know best.
Forgive us when we demand things from you,
when we want everything now,
and stamp our feet when we don't get it.
Forgive us when we turn away from you,
when we don't understand why things have gone wrong,
when we feel let down and hurt,
thinking that you have rejected us and abandoned us.
For you never reject or abandon us.
Forgive us, Lord, and give us renewed hope.
Amen.

Words of Assurance:

1 John 1.9 tells us that, 'If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

Concluding Prayer:

As we wait on you, Lord God,
renew our strength, our hope, and our vision
to be your arms in this world,
reaching out and enfolding with love
all those we meet this week.

Amen.

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