

Sunday 11 April 2021  
**MORNING WORSHIP**  
BUNYAN MEETING BEDFORD



Image from Pinterest



**The Bible is placed  
in the pulpit  
at the beginning  
of our service.**

Today's readings are:

- Acts 4: 32-35
- John 20: 19-31

---

## **Prayers**

Almighty Father,  
remove our despair and renew our faith.  
Grant us a vision of your Son,  
victorious over suffering and death,  
so that we too may be filled with his faith  
in the infinite power of self-emptying love.  
Grant that we too may share your cross  
and inherit your kingdom. Amen.

*A prayer from India, by M. M. Thomas*

Our Father who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

---

## Hymn - Alleluia, alleluia! hearts to heaven and voices raise

Click for:  
[Alleluia!](#)  
[Alleluia!](#)  
[Hearts to  
heaven and  
voices raise](#)

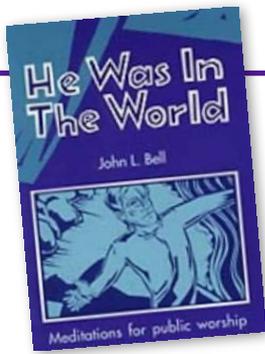
Alleluia, alleluia!  
hearts to heaven and voices raise:  
sing to God a hymn of gladness,  
sing to God a hymn of praise;  
he who on the cross a victim  
for the world's salvation bled  
Jesus Christ, the king of glory,  
now is risen from the dead.

Christ is risen, we are risen;  
shed upon us heavenly grace,  
rain, and dew, and gleams of glory  
from the brightness of thy face;  
that we all, with hearts in heaven,  
here on earth may fruitful be,  
and by angel-hands be gathered,  
and be ever save with thee.

Alleluia, alleluia!  
glory be to God on high:  
to the Father, and the Saviour  
who has gained the victory;  
glory to the Holy Spirit,  
fount of love and sanctity:  
alleluia, alleluia  
to the Triune Majesty! Amen.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807–1885)





## **He was in the world by John L. Bell**

He was in the world,  
but the world, though it owned its being to him,  
did not know him.

He came to his own,  
but his own did not receive him.

Yet to all who did receive him,  
in those who gave him their allegiance,  
he gave the right to become children of God.

So the Word became flesh, and lived ... among ... us.

He took five loaves and two fish,  
and blessed and broke them  
and fed the crowd.

And no-one understood,  
but all forgot their hunger.

He spat on clay to moisten it  
and rubbed the mixture on the eyes of a blind man.  
And no-one understood,  
but the man began to see.

He lay asleep in the midst of a storm  
and, when wakened,  
told the wind and the waves to be quiet.  
And no-one understood,  
but all became calm again.

He was in the line of the prophets.  
He was able to meet with the great.  
He knew people of knowledge and intellect.

But when it came to showing  
who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,  
he did not take a ruler or a wise man  
or a religious guru.

He put a toddler in the middle and said,  
'Unless you become like a child,  
you'll never enter the kingdom of heaven.'





He called people to follow him,  
to leave self behind and to go with him,  
to take up their cross,  
and to keep in step  
with him who carries the weight of the world.

‘Whoever cares for his own safety is lost,’ he said.  
‘Whoever loves husband, wife, parent or child  
more than me  
is not worthy of me,’ he said.

‘Whoever loses herself for my sake,  
will find her true self.’ he said.

He came to his own,  
but his own would not receive him.  
Yet to those who do receive him,  
to those who give him their allegiance,  
he gives the right  
to become sons and daughters of the living God.

Taken from ‘He Was In The World’ by John L. Bell



Below  
Easter Sunday Morning  
Worship 2021 in the  
garden at Bunyan Meeting



## Hymn - Christ is alive! Let Christians sing

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
His cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
His love in death shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
he comes to claim the here and now,  
and dwell in every place and time.

Not throned above, remotely high,  
untouched, unmoved by human pains  
but daily, in the midst of life,  
our Saviour in the Godhead reigns.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
he suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, though ever crucified.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
'till earth and all creation ring  
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

Brian A.Wren (b. 1936)

Click for:  
[Christ is alive!](#)  
[Let Christians](#)  
[sing](#)



---

## Flowers at Bunyan Meeting



---

The flowers in church *would* have been provided by **Dorothy Yerrill** in memory of her **husband**.

---

---

## Reading - Acts 4: 32-35

Click for Bob reading: [Acts 4: 32-35](#)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there was no needy person among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.



---

*The Apostles Baptizing in Jerusalem*  
Engraving by Maarten van Heemskerck (1498-1574)

## **Hymn - Love's redeeming work is done;**

Click for:  
[Love's redeeming  
work is done](#)

Love's redeeming work is done;  
fought the fight, the battle won:  
lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er,  
lo, he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;  
Christ has burst the gates of hell;  
death in vain forbids his rise;  
Christ has opened paradise.

Lives again our glorious King;  
where, O death, is now thy sting?  
dying once, he all doth save;  
where thy victory, O grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led,  
following our exalted Head;  
made like him, like him we rise;  
ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!  
Praise to thee by both be given:  
thee we greet triumphant now;  
hail, the Resurrection thou!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

---

## Reading - John 20: 19-31

Click for Julie reading: [John 20: 19-31](#)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!'

But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'



A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'

Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

---

*Jesus and Thomas*  
from St. Mary and Archangel Michael  
Coptic Orthodox Church

---

## **Anthem - Christ the Lord is risen again by John Rutter**

Click for:  
[Christ the Lord  
is risen again](#)

*Christ the Lord is risen again;  
Christ has broken every chain!  
Hark, the angels shout for joy,  
singing evermore on high: Alleluia.*

*He who gave for us his life,  
who for us endured the strife,  
is our Paschal Lamb today,  
we, too, sing for joy and say: Alleluia.*

*He who bore all pain and loss,  
comfortless upon the cross,  
lives in glory now on high,  
pleads for us and hears our cry: Alleluia.*

*Now he bids us tell abroad,  
how the lost may be restored,  
how the penitent forgiv'n,  
how we, too, may enter heav'n. Alleluia.*

*Now, our Paschal Lamb indeed,  
Christ, today thy people feed,  
take our sins and guilt away,  
that we all may sing for aye: Alleluia*



---

## **Sermon by our Minister, The Rev'd Chris Damp**

*“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus”*  
Acts 4 v 33

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead not only transformed the lives of Christ’s followers, but has changed the very course of human history. The disciples encountered the risen Lord on many occasions after His resurrection and we read in Acts, that “the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”

Throughout its history, the church has testified to the resurrection of Jesus in differing contexts and situations. As we begin to think about emerging from lockdown and returning to more regular church activities, it is timely for us to consider how we might effectively testify to the resurrection of Jesus. Our last Church Meeting established a small working group to consider how we might meet

---

the challenges facing us as a church as we go forward into the future. How should we best use our many resources and opportunities to tell of the risen Christ?



Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus pressed determinedly onwards with His Divine mission. He was impatient of conventions, reluctant to be held down, He was always pressing forward, moving onwards, stretching the boundaries, breaking new ground. They killed Him and laid Him in the tomb, but even death could not hold Him. Bursting forth from the tomb, He continued onwards, still pursuing

His Divine mission. The disciples, coming to look for their Lord at the tomb were told “He is not here. He is risen. He has gone before you into Galilee.” He met with friends on the road and “acted as though He were going further.” When they urged Him to stay with them “He disappeared from their sight.” Pressing onwards, pursuing His mission, always going onwards. Always going further, His eyes fixed on wider horizons.

He infects His people with the same Spirit. During His earthly ministry, Jesus had urged His disciples: “Launch out again into the deep”, and echoing this story, the risen Jesus invites the disciples to throw their net into the water again when they had caught nothing. Press onwards, go further, attempt the seemingly impossible. The resurrection appearances of Jesus urge us on to greater fields of service.

Still He urges us onwards: “Work whilst it is yet day”, He says. The night has not yet fallen, and there is still much to be done. The fields are white unto harvest and the labourers are few. This is the time to go onwards. This is the hour for which Christ has called us and on every hard pressed field of Christian service there are unique opportunities that are never far away.

This living Christ calls us to venture with Him, to intensify our spirit of service, to work unceasingly for the kingdom. And however great the task, Christ urges us to fear not. Strength will be given according to our day and hour. We need not seek a lighter task, but only His strength that is equal to it.

“Throw your net on the right side of the boat”, cries the risen Jesus.

Disappointment and failure had marked that early morning fishing expedition, when the disciples encountered the risen Christ. Venture again, try a different approach.

---

The disciples heeded the call of the risen Jesus and were unable to haul in the net, such was the weight of the catch.

We too readily resign ourselves to failure, we can often talk ourselves into a sense of despair. We close our hearts and minds to the possibilities that the risen Christ brings. Routine and tradition can prevent us from hearing His call. Have we become far too comfortable with those activities and modes of service with which we are familiar? Do we hold back from spiritual advance, from venturing into unknown territory, from casting our net afresh?

Christianity is not just a fortress for our souls, it is a march of faith. There are countless ways to advance the kingdom and many means of service but only one way of standing still. We are no more to stand still than to turn back. Christ calls us to press onward, to journey further, to cast out our net into the deep.

At the heart of any forward movement lies the life of faith. Through their encounters with the risen Jesus, the disciples were mystically drawn into a deeper and closer relationship with Him. We may be very familiar with the name of Jesus, we may respect that name and worship that name but have we drawn close to Him as our risen Lord and Saviour? We may revere that name, but do we love Him? There are many temples of reverence that have no altar fire blazing within. Yet if invited, there is no temple of the human heart into which Christ will not enter, bearing the love of Calvary and the light the Easter.

The risen Jesus comes to us when we are shut up in the locked room of a closed mindset. He comes to us as we hide behind the bolted and barred doors of unbelief and doubt and He opens up the possibilities of faith. He urges us to trust Him. If we would allow Him, He would warm our hearts, instruct our minds, unveil our eyes and make Himself known to us. He longs for us to set doubt aside that we might know Him as our risen, living, loving Lord.

That first Easter morning had dawned bright, yet the hearts of the disciples were initially dark with grief and hopelessness. But Christ was risen! As the disciples began to realise this fact, their sadness and despair was dissipated; gone was the questioning and doubt; banished was every fear; it was a new world; Christ is risen! These disciples were changed people and they went forth and testified that Christ was risen indeed!

Will we journey onwards with the risen Christ?  
What possibilities He opens up for us here at Bunyan Meeting! How He urges us ever onwards to break new ground, to cast our nets afresh. But what of us? Is our progress slow, our growth stunted? That



---

small flame of faith may well flicker within us but does it shine? There may be smoke but is there a blazing fire within our hearts? Our living may reflect Christ to some degree but could we do more?

Still the risen Christ comes and meets with us; He stirs us up, He leads us forth, He urges us onwards. He invites us venture further, to broaden and deepen our



Christian service, to break new ground, He calls us into a deeper, more vital spiritual life. It is when the soul rests everything upon God, risks everything and dares everything, that God means most.

This ruthless, relentless, loving and living Lord, lures us on, calling us to journey with Him that we might continue to testify that Jesus is risen.

---

*On the road to Emmaus*

---

## Hymn - Jesus lives! thy terrors now

Jesus lives! thy terrors now  
can no more, O death, appal us;  
Jesus lives! by this we know  
thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.  
*Alleluia.*

Jesus lives! henceforth is death  
but the gate of life immortal:  
this shall calm our trembling breath,  
when we pass its gloomy portal.  
*Alleluia.*

Jesus lives! for us he died;  
then, alone to Jesus living,  
pure in heart may we abide,  
glory to our Saviour giving.  
*Alleluia.*

Click for:  
[Jesus lives! thy  
terrors now](#)

Jesus lives! our hearts know well  
naught from us his love shall sever;  
life nor death nor powers of hell  
tear us from his keeping ever.  
*Alleluia.*

Jesus lives! to him the throne  
over all the world is given:  
may we go where he is gone,  
rest and reign with him in heaven.  
*Alleluia.*

Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-1769)  
tr. Francis Elizabeth Cox (1812-1897)

---

## Prayers

Click for Steve: [Let us pray ...](#)

Let us come to God in prayer.

I would like to invite you to join me in a simple response – when I say ‘Lord in your mercy’, please reply with **‘Hear our prayer’**.

Dear Lord,

As we come together as your Church today, we bring to you our cares and concerns.

As we continue to rejoice over Eastertide, we thank you for the transforming message of the cross – sacrifice, love, triumph and forgiveness, and above all ‘you did it for us’.

We thank you we were once again able to gather at Mill Street on Easter morning.

Thank you that we can freely access this service and read our Bibles without fear of reprisal or persecution.

We lift up our brothers and sisters to you across the world who do not have such privilege, especially the five countries where persecution is most extreme: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya and Pakistan. Please make your presence very real to them.

We ask your blessing on the work of Open Doors, thinking particularly of their undercover field workers.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Thank you for the beauty of your creation, and the promise of spring, evident from blossom, flowering bulbs and birdsong. We lift up the many countries suffering from the impacts of climate change, a growing and very real threat to our planet.

Please help us as individuals and as a church to be better stewards of your creation.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who have been affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic:

- patients in hospital;
- bereaved families;
- workers who have been made redundant, put on furlough or uncertain over the future;
- those who feel lonely and isolated;
- victims of domestic abuse;
- those struggling with mental health problems;
- parents exhausted from the challenge of home schooling and providing new activities for their children over the Easter holiday.



'COVAX is a groundbreaking global initiative which will include African countries and ensure they are not left at the back of the queue for COVID-19 vaccines.'

Dr Matshidiso Moeti  
WHO Regional Director for Africa

Thank you for our amazing NHS staff and care workers, working long and often distressing shifts. Please grant them your protection.

Please bless the work of the Samaritans who are receiving an ever increasing number of calls for help.

We thank you for the continued roll out of the vaccination programme, and ask this would be replicated across the world, particularly in developing nations.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord thank you so much for our church family and the support we can offer each other at this anxious time. We lift up those on our church prayer list - Bob Allen, Brian and Anne Tolley, Pam Drysdale, Wendy Carter and Jocelyn Harper.

In a few moments of silence, we lift those to you whom we know and are especially in need of prayer today.

Please help us to be Easter people and share its message of hope when opportunities arise.

In the words of Stuart Townend.

*I will not boast in anything,  
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,  
His death and resurrection.  
Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer;  
But this I know with all my heart –  
His wounds have paid my ransom.*

We gather all these prayers together in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

---

## Hymn - Christ is the King! O friends, rejoice

Click for:  
[Christ is the King!](#)  
[O friends rejoice](#)

Christ is the King! O friends, rejoice;  
brothers and sisters, with one voice  
make all men know he is your choice.  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*



The blessed apostles round them drew  
thousands of men, good men and true.  
sharing the faith, forever new.  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Then magnify the Lord, and raise  
anthems of joy and holy praise  
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days.  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

O Christian women, Christian men,  
all the world over, seek again  
the way disciples followed then.  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Christ through all ages is the same:  
place the same hope in his great name,  
with the same faith his word proclaim.  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Let love's unconquerable might  
yours be the way we may unite  
in service to the Lord of light.  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

G. K. Bell (1883-1958)

---

## The Grace

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

*Hymns in today's service are used By Permission. CCL Licence No. 3740  
The texts are from the New International Version (UK) of the Bible*



**Bunyan Meeting**  
Mill Street  
Bedford MK40 3EU

email [bunyanmeeting@gmail.com](mailto:bunyanmeeting@gmail.com)  
website [www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk](http://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk)

---

## Resources - Psalm 23: 'The Lord's my shepherd'

In our prayers this morning, Steve quotes the words of Stuart Townend. In the YouTube video below, Stuart sings his own version of Psalm 23.

In chapter 10 of John's gospel, Jesus says - 'I am the good shepherd.'

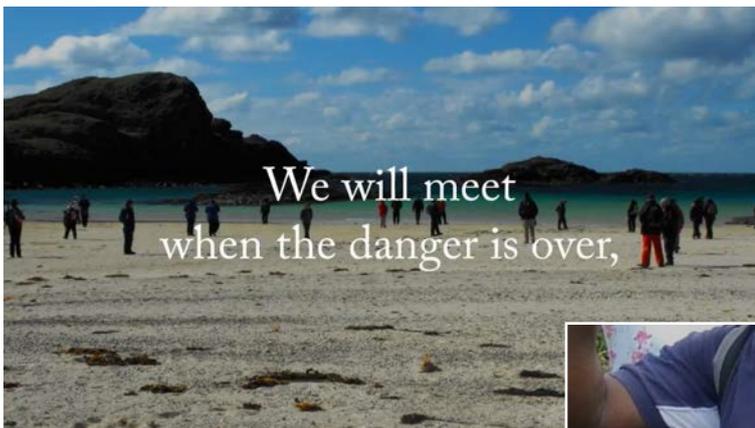


Click here for:  
[The Lord's my  
Shepherd -  
Stuart Townend](#)

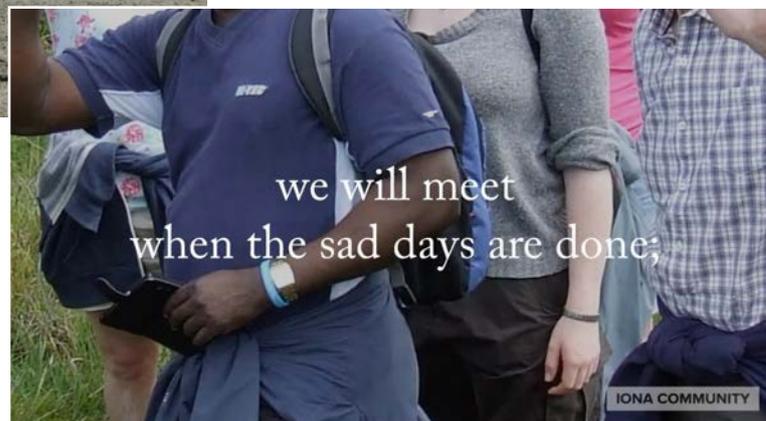
---

**Resources - 'We will meet':** a song of hope by Hans-Olav Moerk and John L.Bell, offered as the coronavirus restrictions are beginning to be relaxed in our own country. We continue to pray for the countries around the world where Covid-19 infections are rising.

Music copyright © 2020 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland [www.wildgoose.scot](http://www.wildgoose.scot)



Click here for:  
['We will meet'](#)



---

**Jesus is the Good Shepherd ... who was raised from the dead on Easter Sunday**



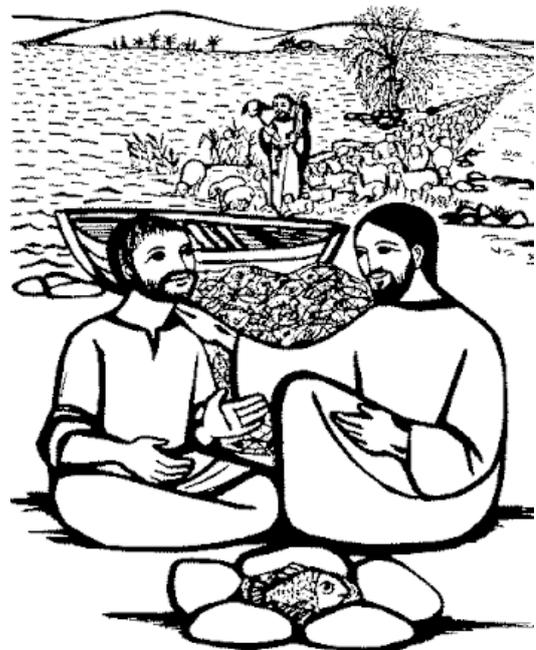
'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. **John 10: 14-15**



On the evening of that first day of the week ... Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. **John 20: 19-20**



Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'  
**John 20: 28**



... Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'  
**John 21: 16**