



**Chet Valley Churches**  
**Last Sunday Praise**  
**26 April 2020**



# Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

## Introduction

Our theme for this service is 'Seeing is Believing'. We are all required to keep apart, which still feels odd, even though we have been doing it for a number of weeks. We cannot see God, and yet we can be close to him and we can always praise him. So let's start with some worship songs that we probably all know and love.

♪♪ *All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words:*

### ♪♪ All Heaven declares

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPkZAJA6l0k>

### ♪♪ Meekness and majesty

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gtt52JEW\\_Zo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gtt52JEW_Zo)

### ♪♪ I stand amazed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoV4koFy-Is>

## Pause for thought, and prayer...

We have just celebrated the greatest festival in the church's year, remembering the time when Jesus triumphed over sin and

death when God raised him to life. This week we remember the fact that while some of his first disciples were energised and excited, others found it hard to believe that this had actually happened. Today's society often wants concrete evidence and struggles with faith and trust. Let us pray that we may share the love and trust that comes through faith.

The prayer for today (the Collect) gives us a moment to pause and think the hope we have in Jesus.

*Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.*

## **The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day**

Risen Christ,  
you filled your disciples  
with boldness and fresh hope:  
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life  
and fill us with your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father.

### **♪♪ O Praise the Name of the Lord our God**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kImHJYjFUx4>

### **♪♪ O Church Arise**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXNO-OGUGyU>

### **♪♪ My hope is built on nothing less (Cornerstone)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvLxZEU02ul>

## **Pause for thought, and prayer...**

Christ gives us a basis of hope and the chance to grow close to God. He doesn't have to keep himself at a distance of 2 metres – He holds us in His arms.

*Perhaps you might like to read aloud the following prayer that has been written for this time.*

## **A prayer for this time**

God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;  
in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light.  
Be close to all of us as we worship today  
in countless homes across the world;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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## **♪♪ Light of the world**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MmRGSEG2LM>

## **♪♪ To be in your presence**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=typ7cueKdT4>

## Bible Reading

### *Luke 24 verses 13-32*

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[a] from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

<sup>19</sup> “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

<sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

## Talk

*Belinda Barwick has written this reflection.*

It is many years ago now that I drove back from London (where I lived at the time) to Chedgrave, to stay with my parents. As I drew level with the carpark near Bridge Stores I saw them walking towards town, so I pulled in and asked for the front door key, so that I could get in the house. They stared at me blankly and then I heard my mother say ‘She’s very friendly. Do we know her?’ I took off my sunglasses and said ‘It’s me. Can I have the key?’ It took several more seconds for the penny to drop- it was probably my abrupt request for the key that got through in the end. Most strangers do not demand house keys.

When I think of the disciples on the road to Emmaus failing to recognise Jesus I often recall that incident, and realise how much we depend on what we expect to see to make sense of the world. My parents were just not expecting to see me at that point, their minds intent on an impending visit to the dentist (many of us become slightly obsessive on our way to the dentist) and were obviously thrown by the sunglasses I was wearing. The disciples were almost certainly obsessive, on a knife edge of tension – their beloved friend and leader had died a horrible death 2 days before. They were rudderless, unsure of what to do and where life would lead them next. They may have lived in Emmaus and were walking home to take stock. They may have been in a hurry to get away from the dangerous place that Jerusalem had become for all of Jesus' followers. What they didn't expect to see was Jesus himself. Jesus was dead.

Two women from their group had come up with some disturbing story about an empty tomb and a vision of angels. The stress was getting to everyone. Sensible people were seeing things, imagining things. You can't blame them for wanting to get away, to get back to normal life and to escape from the febrile atmosphere of a group of confused disciples who were all wondering what on earth was going on. How could this situation resolve itself? How could they pick up their lives and return to a normal existence?

I am sure that many of us have that urge to get away to normal life, to go somewhere where there is no need to be worried or frightened, where we don't need to be wary of getting near anyone or to wash our hands regularly or to wonder if we have just touched our face and put the virus into our own bodies. We would love to escape from now and go back to 'then'. The time when everything was okay, when we knew where we were and we could do exactly as we wanted.

The tiny virus that is having such an incredible impact on so many millions of lives cannot be seen by the naked eye. We might want it to not exist, but it does. Seeing may be believing, but right now we are in a new situation, a place where what we can't see is very real indeed, too real and too powerful to be dismissed. It's a place of uncertainty and dependence – we depend on the scientists to work out what is best, on the NHS to take care of our sick and on each other for moral support and practical help. Most of us like to think we are very independent creatures, plotting our own actions and following our own path, not dependent on anyone else. This situation is quite a shock for all of us. We have all realised how dependent we all are, not just on our neighbours or on those who live elsewhere in the county or in our country, but on everyone else in the world. For any of us to flourish, all must flourish.

This does not apply solely to the human race either, it applies to all creation. 150 years ago Chief Seattle, a leader of the Northwest Indian Nations told the American Government in Washington:

‘This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us. We do not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.’

I wonder if one of the effects of this current pandemic will be to help us all to see that profound truth for ourselves, albeit 150 years late. I wonder what else God is wanting to reveal to us through this experience? What else is staring us in the face? What else do we need to open our eyes to, to see the truth?

This is a unique time for the human race, when countless millions have time for reflection, and time to take stock. In that way it is a gift. A gift that we ignore at our peril, because we may be drinking in the last chance saloon as regards the very survival of our human life. Doesn't it send more than a tingle down your



spine when you think of the catastrophes and disturbances that have occurred in the past few years? The disarray in our Houses of Parliament, the awful, ongoing refugee crisis, the floods in this country, the clattering hordes of locusts devastating parts of Africa, and now Covid 19 – what is God saying to us in all of these events?

Last year it was moving to see students in this country and throughout the world demonstrating for the sake of their future, because ‘There is no planet B’. Young people have got the message that greed and self-interest have brought our beautiful planet to its knees. but it has taken a major worldwide health emergency to make many adults see. If we miss this chance maybe we’ll have missed forever the chance to start to put things right. All those leather back turtles returning to the beaches in Thailand, or the jellyfish swimming in the clear waters of the Venetian lagoon, all those gloriously clear blue skies above cities throughout the world, they will all vanish forever. And so could we.

In the 6th century BC the prophet Jeremiah said this to the Israelites in exile in Babylon:

‘I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with your whole heart.’ (Jeremiah 29, 11-13)

In one of the most glorious springs that I can remember we have been privileged to see our Norfolk countryside at its very best. In parallel we have seen the very best of human nature too, with the self- giving dedication of the doctors, nurses, care workers, cleaners and many others working to help the sick and vulnerable. In this season of the resurrection of Jesus we have seen much that inspires and delights us. What are we going to

do with what we have seen? Are we going to use it as a platform for a new and better future, seeking out those plans that God has for the world, or are we going to go back to sleep walking towards disaster? Are we listening to the risen Christ as he moves among us, or are we turning the telly up a bit louder and hoping that all the tricky questions will go away? Are we praying that God's will for his people is for that hope to be extended to all human kind, or are we looking back to the days of our blindness to God's truth and really imagining that we can go on just as we always have?

What can we do to truly be a resurrection people, a church full of hope? If seeing really is believing, what are we going to do with the truths that have been revealed by the events of these past few months? How should we interpret the message of the current crisis? How should we understand those plans that God has for us? Perhaps we could use our time of isolation to ask some of these questions of ourselves and of God. We could remind ourselves that the disciples after the crucifixion didn't expect anything good to happen. They were reconciling themselves to disaster, dispersing, unsure what to do, when the hope of the risen Christ entered their lives, and they didn't even see him coming.

This is from the Old Testament reading set for today, from the book of Zephaniah:

- <sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!
- <sup>15</sup> The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.  
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

- <sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.
- <sup>17</sup> The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you[a] in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing
- <sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.

We are going through a turbulent and difficult period in world history, a time of uncertainty and fear, but God will not leave us floundering. He never has and he never will. That is what those disciples on the road to Emmaus discovered, and it is what is waiting for us to discover too – ‘then their eyes were opened and they recognised Him.’

## 🎵 Be Thou my vision

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY54pCBs-Io>

## Time for prayer...

Let's take time to pray for:

- The leaders and decision-makers of our nation
- Other countries of the world
- The leaders and decision-makers of the church
- People we know who are ill, either with the coronavirus or other ailments
- People who are lonely or afraid
- Ourselves and our families

*You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!*

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as it is 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 for ever. Amen.

♪♪ **O perfect love, O perfect sacrifice**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsXvclC\\_zb0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsXvclC_zb0)

♪♪ **Amazing grace (My chains are gone)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbe7OruLk8I>

♪♪ **Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yubLGTOcm8c>

## **A blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.  
Amen