Psalm 31
To the leader. A Psalm of David.
In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.
Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name’s sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.
Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’
My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

Prayer
Almighty God, in Christ you have shown us the way, revealed to us your truth, and offered to us everlasting life.
Keep our eyes upon him, that we may see your path more clearly, know your truth more fully, and receive your life more abundantly; through Christ who dwells with you and the Holy Spirit in eternal glory.

Whoever believes in Christ will not be put to shame. Confident in this promise, let us confess our sin.
Holy God, compassionate and loving,
your word offers freedom from sin,
but we confess that we have not obeyed your word.
We have harboured malice toward our enemies;
we have been deceitful in our relationships;
we have been insincere in our commitments;
through gossip we have slandered our friends.
Forgive us our sins and lead us to genuine repentance.

Help your children long for your pure, spiritual milk
that we may grow into the joy of salvation
through Jesus Christ.

Sisters and brothers,
once you were not a people,
but now you are God’s people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.
In the name of Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Amen.

John 14:1-14

Jesus the Way to the Father

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’
Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.'
Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

**Reflection**

_Lord, as we listen to your holy Word,_
<em>open our hearts to the power of your Spirit,_
call us out of darkness,_
and lead us into your marvelous light. Amen.</em>

When the gathered disciples feared for their future without Jesus, the words which Jesus speaks them are words of comfort and reassurance.

Today it is we who hear Jesus saying, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled’. We are reminded of the fear and anxiety the disciples felt as they gathered around Jesus, sensing that that dark shadows of hatred and fear and jealousy were gathering around them as night fell. They feared for Jesus, and they feared for themselves.

Throughout this season of Easter we remember with joy the resurrection, so that we can hear the great promise once more of Christ’s victory and its salvation offered to all.

If we can imagine ourselves as the disciples were on that evening, we will know our own frailty and fear, the faltering nature of our faith when we find ourselves in difficult times. As we can imagine their fear of what lies ahead, we can admit that we, like them, are often anxious or fearful about the future, about what we cannot know and cannot discern.

In these days many of us find ourselves wondering what the coming weeks and months will bring – and wonder what kind of world we will find ourselves in, and what kind of life we may be able to live, as long as the coronavirus is a present threat to our wellbeing, and our lives. It seems certain that there will be no quick return to life as it was before, when we took so much for granted – freedom to meet families and friends, freedom to travel, freedom to worship together.

Not only physical and mental health are at stake, but the health of our economy and wider society. What opportunities will there be for us, for our children and grandchildren, in this brave new post-pandemic world? What of our work, our careers, our prosperity and security? From where we are now, the future looks a lot more uncertain than it once did.

It is for times like these that Jesus speaks those words: as he sought to reassure them, when the shadows gathered around them, and night fell, so we should also be reassured, of God’s presence and perfect love that drives out fear, and in its place nurtures confidence and trust and hope: the marks of a
life grounded in God and of faith in God’s good purposes, that where Jesus has gone, we will follow – we know the way to that future, that life, that kingdom, because we know Jesus, and because in Jesus we have seen and known the true nature of God.

When the disciples questioned his meaning, Jesus replied to them, saying ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’. Believing in Christ, imitating Christ, following Christ reveals the truth of God to us. Where once it had been said ‘no-one can see God, and live’, in Jesus God has shown us who God is: in coming to the world, in coming to us, God allows us to know and understand God’s nature and God’s purposes; the revelation of God who is compassionate, loving, and always faithful; the God who longs for us to be reconciled one with another, and with the One who brought us to life and who waits to welcome us with open arms at this life’s end.

Although we cannot know or see Jesus as the first disciples did, we know him in the words of scripture, and we know him as the living Word, that is active through the Holy Spirit that renews us and sustains us, and encourages us to hold fast to the promise of life, now and always, in Jesus Christ. It is that same Spirit that opens to us knowledge and experience of God’s love that is the foundation of all our Christian living, and all our Christian hope for the life that is yet to be.

As Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, there is nothing in death or life, in the world as it is, or the world as it shall be, nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We need not be afraid, then, of what tomorrow or the next day or month or year will bring; for all things are in God’s hands, who loved us from the first, and who loves us until the end, and who brought Jesus back from the darkness of the grave into the glorious light of Resurrection and a new creation to which we all belong through him.

**Prayer**

Let us unite our hearts in prayer.

For the church throughout the world, that all who profess to honour the risen Lord may be faithful in their witness and courageous in their testimony to the way of Jesus.

For ministers, teachers and church workers that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, they may seek to build the church upon Christ, the cornerstone, and humbly lead in faithful service.

For the governments of the world and its leaders that the nations may dwell in peace, that good will prevail over strife, and people of faith may freely worship as their hearts direct.
For rain and sun in proper measure,
and for abundant food and water
for all who dwell upon the earth.

For the sick and those in need,
and for any who are oppressed by wounds of the soul.

For our neighbours
that we may live together in amity,
and that strangers among us
may find us to be hospitable friends.

For our enemies,
that their sins may be forgiven them
and that they may find your peace.

Almighty God,
your Son promised to grant whatever we ask in his name.
By your Holy Spirit empower us to minister to the world
as his faithful disciples,
that our work may testify to what we pray
and show forth your eternal glory,
through Jesus Christ.

**The Lord's Prayer**

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,
and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Do not lead us into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and for ever.

Amen.