

Sunday 11th May 2025: Fourth Sunday of Easter

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is "An army of ordinary people"

Opening words:

Christ is Risen! **He is risen indeed alleluia!**

Hymn StF 6 Father, we love you

Opening prayers:

Glory to you, O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

If we have fallen into despair, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have failed to hope in you, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have been fearful of death, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ, **Lord, forgive us.**

Silence

May the living God raise us from despair, give us victory over sin and set us free in Christ. **Amen.**

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 305 Low in the grave he lay, Jesus, my saviour

Bible readings: Psalm 23 Acts 9: 36-43 Revelation 7: 9-17 John 10: 22-30

Reflection

Our reflection for this Sunday is brought to us by Dee Moden our Local Preachers' Secretary

It's funny how some things stick in your mind. I must have been to thousands of services in my lifetime most of which are long erased from my memory, but one sticks in my mind from when I was in my teens. I cannot remember the details, but the preacher based it on one of the more obscure stained glass memorial windows, which was of Dorcas.

Stained glass windows originated in medieval times, as one way of telling bible stories to those who were illiterate.

Later they became common as memorials. I find it fascinating to go into churches and decipher the characters and stories on display. When I have been back to my home church, I look at that window and remember. Dorcas (Greek) or Tabitha (Aramaic) is the main character in the lectionary reading for today (Acts 9 36-43).

Tabitha was a real woman of faith. She got on with organising things, helped others and gave the church in Joppa a real heart. Perhaps we have known, loved and remembered quiet workers like her. Sadly, she became ill and died. Knowing Peter was nearby they called for him to come. I wonder what they expected of him and the thoughts going through his mind. Perhaps he was remembering the widow's son at Nain, Jairus's daughter or Lazarus who Jesus brought back from the dead. Perhaps he was wondering if his faith was strong enough to do the same.

As the passage tells us, he prayed for her, and she came back to life. A lovely cameo with real personal first-hand detail that sounds authentic. It brings the bible to life and demonstrates the continuing power of the Holy Spirit in the extraordinary healing of an ordinary person. Some of us may be called to be leaders, bold and upfront like Peter. To me however Tabitha is the real role model. Quietly serving others in small ways. In worldly terms perhaps not much, but as an expression of resurrection love and power timeless and priceless.

Many famous people have come and gone over the years and are long forgotten. Perhaps you had to read a short poem by Shelley at school, Ozymandias. It gets the point across well. Powerful and famous in his day but now not even remembered in history.



I am sure Tabitha would never have imagined that of all the people in Palestine at that time people would still be talking about her and her faith 2000 years later.

I wonder how we will be remembered. Worth pondering.

Hymn: (to be read unless you know the tune)

An army of ordinary people,
A Kingdom where love is the key,
A city, a light to the nations,
Heirs to the promise are we.
A people whose life is in Jesus,
A nation together we stand.
Only through grace are we worthy,
Inheritors of the land.

*A new day is dawning,
A new age to come,
When the children of promise,
Shall flow together as one:
A truth long neglected,
But the time has now come,
When the children of promise,
Shall flow together as one.*

A people without recognition,
But with Him a destiny sealed,
Called to a heavenly vision:
His purpose shall be fulfilled.
Come let us stand strong together,
Abandon ourselves to the King
His love shall be ours for ever,
This victory song we shall sing.

*A new day is dawning,
A new age to come,
When the children of promise,
Shall flow together as one:
A truth long neglected,
But the time has now come,
When the children of promise,
Shall flow together as one.*

Prayers of Intercession:

In the power of the resurrection, we offer our prayers to God.

Let us pray.

Remember, O Lord, in your love the Church throughout the world . . . those recently baptized and confirmed . . . those who minister to others . . .

Silence

May your whole Church know your power and be a sign that Christ is risen.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love the world you have made . . . those who seek a fair and proper use of the world's resources . . . those who strive for justice and peace among the nations . . .

Silence

May the whole earth be transformed by mercy and rejoice in hope.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who suffer . . . the victims of violence and injustice . . . those who mourn . . .

Silence

May all in need find comfort, strength and freedom in the living Christ.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who have died: those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone.

Silence

May all your children receive grace and light according to their needs and come at last to share with all the saints in life eternal.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 664 Lord, you call us to your service, each in our own way.

Closing blessing –

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.