

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025:** Sixth Sunday of Easter

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

**Theme for today is "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you"**



**Opening words:**

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

**Hymn StF 125                      Praise and thanksgiving, Father we offer**

**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 72                      Father God, I wonder**

**Bible readings:              Psalm 67              Acts 16: 9-15              Revelation 21: 10, 22-25              John 14: 23-29**

**Reflection**

*Our reflection for this Sunday is brought to us by Elsie Warby one of our Local Preachers*

What does peace mean to you?

We talk about world peace, or lack of it, and we would all like to see the kind of peace which is the absence of conflict. But peace is more than that. If you have young children around, you may find yourself crying out, 'Give me some peace!' Often, my idea of peace is time to myself, without having to be anywhere, or do something, but just to relax in the garden or with a good book, and preferably far away from a phone. At other times we find peace when walking in the countryside, off-road on quiet tracks with no sounds at all, apart from the birds. We will all have our own definition of peace, perhaps it will be among family and friends, or in a special building.

But what kind of peace does Jesus mean, when he says, "Peace, I leave with you, my peace give you, I do not give to you as the world gives"? The disciples were probably anything but peaceful, being devastated that he is leaving them. Can they really believe what Jesus is saying? That he will give them something the world cannot give? He is drawing out the contrast between living in a turbulent world, without his peace, compared to the joy of dwelling serenely within the troubles of the world. What the world gives, is unsatisfying, transient and unsettled. The ways we may find peace are only temporary, then we have to come back down to earth, and face the world again.

A Scottish preacher, Oswald Chambers in the early 1900's said, "Life is more tragic than orderly." Was he being pessimistic or just realistic? Often it is true. But Jesus offers us something the world cannot give – his peace. Peace with God, and with our own consciences; peace that fills the soul with constant, even tranquillity.

How do we know this peace that he gives? "We will come to them and make our home with them". There is just one proviso, that we love him, and obey his teaching; and God's presence will be in our hearts, 'at home' in us at all times.

**Hymn StF 395    Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me**

### **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 705            It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand**

**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.**