

## **Worship at Home Service: Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026, with Revd Alan Sharp.**

### **StF 297 Christ is alive!** <https://tinyurl.com/3sf5zfn>

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

Christ is alive! No longer bound to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now, and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war, where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more, and lives, where even hope has  
died.

Women and men, in age and youth, can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
and find the way, the life, the truth, revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

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

### **Opening prayer**

Loving Lord, we come in this moment, to worship you. We come as we  
are – young and not so young, happy, sad, worried, carefree – full of faith  
or maybe struggling a bit. And we know that in these moments, we will  
meet with you, and you will meet with us.

Risen Lord, may we discover more of you,  
and experience your presence not only in our worship, but throughout our  
lives. **Amen.**

### **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<sup>1</sup>), 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<sup>1</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## **Reflection**

Thomas had not been with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared to them after the resurrection, and when they told him about it his first reaction was a normal one - he did not believe it. Thomas is permanently labelled a 'doubter' just because of this story. Perhaps we should not fault him for that, - he was being confronted with a story that simply defies human imagination. One Christian magazine had a cartoon which shows an angry Thomas crying out, "All I'm saying is why don't you call Peter 'Denying Peter.'"

And that's a thought - after all Peter denied three times!!

We know, of course, how the story of Thomas came out. Jesus appeared again to the disciples a week later, and the first person he speaks to, after he says to his disciples "Peace be with you", is Thomas. "Put your finger here", he says to Thomas. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

And Thomas - seeing him, believes and says to him, - and I can imagine the awe and conviction in his voice - "My Lord, and my God!"

And history suggests that Thomas became a driven person. He is traditionally believed to have sailed to India in 52AD to spread the Christian faith among Jews who were living in Kerala at the time.

He remained in India, dying a martyr's death, but 2000 years later his work remains evident in the "Mar Thoma" Churches of India, still surviving as testament to his activity.

Thomas was martyred. And throughout 2000 years Christians have faced challenges as they proclaim the Gospel. Just as the marks of his love were once shown in Christ's own physical body, they have been shown in the people of his church, which is everywhere called the Body of Christ - and are meant to be shown in us.

Over the years I've met a wide variety of people in the Church - some very different from me. But among them were many who had the hallmark of Christ upon them, who walked in the light with lives touched by the grace of God, and I learnt something from each of them. The risen Christ wishes his hallmark to be seen in each of us, to help us break through our fears and doubts. Let us hear his words "Peace be with you" and respond "My Lord and my God"

*The following hymn brings to God our doubt, fears – and all that can undermine our faith. But it goes on to say "You bear my cross and dry my human tears"*

**StF 629 God of my faith** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNJr-hC7r4o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNJr-hC7r4o)

God of my faith, I offer you my doubt, For life at times seems far too dark for me,  
And my belief becomes more insecure,  
When worldly cares produce uncertainty.

God of my hope, I offer you my fear, When I am scared by my anxiety,  
When all I hear is suffering and woe, In all my shadows you will walk with me.

God of my joy, I offer you my grief, when I sink down in sadness or despair,  
When in depression I cannot be touched, I pray in all my depths to find you there.

God of my love, I offer you my pain, when I'm alone and feel nobody cares,  
In aching age or in rejected youth, You bear my cross and dry my human tears.

God of my life, I offer you my dreams, light in the darkness where I hide  
from view, light in my faith, my hope, my joy and love,  
Light in my life and all my life in you.

### **Prayers of intercession**

Father, into your hands I commend  
the world and all its pain;  
my family, friends and neighbours,  
all people of faith and love,  
and all people who stand in special need.  
Be with those who face doubts and fear  
And grant your presence and peace. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **StF 293 All heaven declares** <https://tinyurl.com/54py6uhj>

All heaven declares. The glory of the risen Lord  
Who can compare with, the beauty of the Lord  
*Forever He will be*  
*The Lamb upon the throne*  
*I gladly bow the knee*  
*And worship Him alone*

I will proclaim  
The glory of the risen Lord. Who once was slain  
To reconcile man to God  
*Forever You will be ...*  
*The Lamb upon the throne*  
*I gladly bow the knee*  
*And worship Him alone*

### **Benediction.**

Lord Jesus, walk with us through this week,  
and support us when we try to see the truth  
in things that puzzle us. Give us courage to search for answers, and hold  
us in your unfailing and all-encompassing love, each and every day.

**Amen.**

*(Opening prayer and Benediction from "Roots." Intercessions adapted from St. Edmund of Abingdon)*