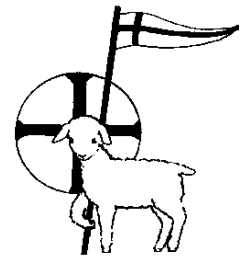


# Church of St John the Baptist, Tisbury

reflecting Jesus Christ



**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**The Fifth Sunday of Lent**

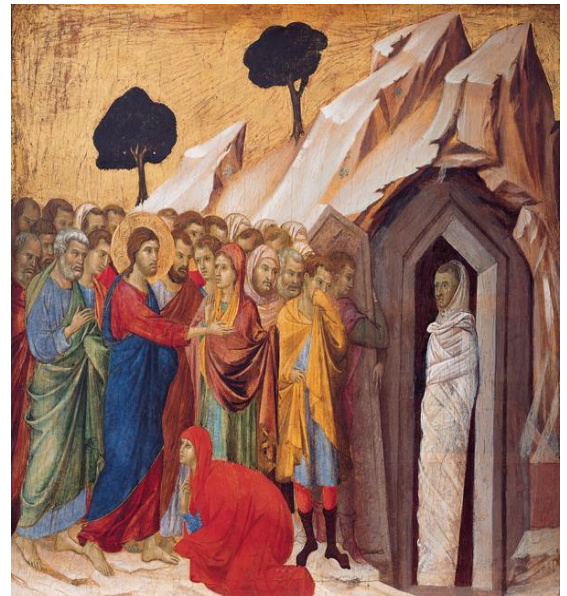
We welcome as our preacher today the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury

## A message from the Revd Juliette Hulme

This week so much more has changed in our daily lives. All, except key workers, are confined to their homes to reduce the spread of Covid-19. So what do our reading and Gospel for the Fifth Sunday of Lent have to say to us in this situation? For each of us it may be something different. One way to sense God's 'still small voice' speaking to us is to read the Gospel passage through twice, slowly and meditatively. During this slow reading, your eyes and heart will alight on a particular verse or phrase. Stay with this and reflect on what this verse may be saying to you today. Pray with the verse and ask God to open your heart to his voice. This practice is known as *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading) and is from the monastic tradition. During this time of increased isolation for many of us, it can be a powerful way of allowing the Gospel to speak to us.

In our Old Testament reading from Ezekiel, the Israelites in exile from their homeland say, 'Our hope is lost; we are cut off completely' and God reassures them, 'I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil.' At this time of being house and garden bound, let us give thanks for the springtime bringing hope, and for the Wiltshire countryside around us when we take our daily walk. We can be reassured that, although we too might feel cut off at times, as did the Israelites, we are blessed with technology and can be in touch by phone, email or Skype, or even Zoom. We are broadcasting our services via Zoom, and anyone is welcome to participate (see details overleaf).

In our Gospel reading we read of the death of Lazarus, one of Jesus' closest friends, and the grief of his sisters Martha and Mary. With our daily news relating the rising number of deaths from Covid-19 each day, we are bound to be fearful, especially for those we love who are elderly or with other health issues. 'Do not fear', is very frequent advice in the Bible. 'Be not afraid.' In this story we see how Jesus understands grief; he is concerned for his friends Martha and Mary, and Jesus himself also weeps at the loss of his dear friend (v 35).



Then we read of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, which has been depicted in many paintings. I especially like this one by the Italian, Duccio, painted in 1310. In the story, Jesus shows his faith in God his Father, and God's glory is shown in his power over death. It reminds us that often God's glory is revealed during the hardest times. Let us hold onto that during these difficult days. Keeping you all in my prayers. God Bless. *Juliette*

## The Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Old Testament Reading set for today is Ezekiel 37.1-14

The Gospel: Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life (from John 11.1-44)

A man named Lazarus, who lived in Bethany, was ill. Bethany was the town where Mary and her sister Martha lived. This Mary was the one who poured the perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. The sisters sent Jesus a message, 'Lord, your dear friend is ill.' When Jesus heard this, he said, 'The final result of this illness will not be the death of Lazarus: this has happened in order to bring glory to God, and it will be the means by which the Son of God will receive glory.'

Jesus loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he received the news that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was for two more days. Then he said to the disciples, 'Let us go back to Judaea. Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; I will go and wake him up.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been buried four days earlier. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died! But I know that even now God can give you whatever you ask him for.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise to life.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise to life on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes Lord! I do believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who has come into the world.'

After Martha said this, she went back and called her sister Mary privately, 'The teacher is here and is asking for you.' When Mary heard this, she got up and hurried out to meet him. The people who were in the house with Mary, comforting her, followed her. They thought that she was going to the grave to weep there. Mary arrived where Jesus was, and as soon as she saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been there, my brother would not have died.' Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people who were with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you buried him?' They said to him, 'Come and see, Lord.' Jesus wept. Someone said, 'See how much he loved him!' But others said, 'He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Could he not have kept Lazarus from dying?'

Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. Jesus then ordered, 'Take the stone away!' Martha said to him, 'There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed?' They took the stone away. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me.' Then he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave clothes, and with a cloth round his face. Jesus told them, 'Untie him and let him go.'

## A Prayer for use during the Covid-19 Coronavirus Outbreak

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

## Services online in the Nadder Valley Benefice

Sadly, in accordance with the government directive, we have had to close the churches until further notice. We are streaming services live online via Zoom – please do join us from your home, using these links:

Sundays at 09.30	Parish Communion (CW)	<a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/523852423">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/523852423</a>
Mon 08.30, Tues-Thur 0800,		
Sat 09.00	Morning Prayer	<a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/708870684">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/708870684</a>
Fridays at 0800	Holy Communion (BCP)	<a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/708870684">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/708870684</a>
Wednesdays at 10:00	Holy Communion (CW)	<a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/693769788">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/693769788</a>
Mon-Sat at 17.30	Evening Prayer	<a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/729945400">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/729945400</a>

The orders of service for Morning and Evening Prayer can be found online at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

The orders of service for Parish Communion / Holy Communion can be obtained via email from the parish administrator (contact details below).

## Children's Holiday Workshop – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April

A virtual "Workshop at Home" set of resources is being prepared. For details, please contact either Revd Jo Naish on [revdjoannanaish@gmail.com](mailto:revdjoannanaish@gmail.com) or Revd Elaine Brightwell on [elainebri57@gmail.com](mailto:elainebri57@gmail.com). Details can also be found on Facebook on the 'What's going on in Tisbury' page.

## Parish Office

The Parish Office is closed until further notice; please feel free to contact the parish administrator, who is working from home (details below).

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The Revd Juliette Hulme, Team Vicar  
Canon Judy Anderson, Parish Administrator

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