

## Sibyls service 25 April

Welcome everyone to this short time of worship. It is lovely to greet each other from different parts of the country, whether our day has been busy or quiet, frustrating or gratifying, this is a time for us to be together to share our love, joys, fears, companionships, to share the peace and uphold each other.

*For where two or three gather together in My name, there am I with them. Matthew 18: (19-21)*

Over the past few days we have been dwelling on the resurrection and what the resurrection means for us. First a few short readings, then a reflection.

Jesus said to her, 'Why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?'  
*John 20: 15*

Late that Sunday evening, when the disciples were together behind locked doors..... Jesus came and stood among them. 'Peace be with you!' he said.  
*John 20.19*

Simon Peter dragged the net to land, full of big fish... Jesus said, 'Come and have breakfast'. *John 20: 11-12*

Jesus said, 'Because you have seen me you have found faith. Happy are they who never saw me and yet have found faith' *John 20: 29*

John describes three moments when Jesus encounters people after the resurrection. I am struck by the simplicity, the mundanity of these – ‘let’s have breakfast’. John says there is much else that Jesus did, enough to fill many books. But as Jesus says to Thomas, ‘Happy are they who never saw me and yet have found faith’

We are all in that group. Christ is made manifest to us in all kinds of ways, sometimes in a moment of clarity; sometimes emerging slowly, such that, looking back, you realize how faith has become established.

The self-knowledge of being trans, whether we are out or private, creates a vulnerability where we really need God. And because it comes from a deep place, it can also be an ‘opening’, where we are drawn to faith. ‘...the promptings of love and truth in our hearts’ is a Quaker phrase for that revelation.

Being open to Christ's leading is such an important part of our personal journeys, when things can be so difficult. Trusting in God is a way of putting all the problems and practicalities into perspective.

It is why being part of a faith community is so valuable for trans people. In worship, we offer our self up and make ourselves open to the light. That is super-helpful. But being in church, being part of a worshipping community, is important too, when all uphold each other without question. Through faith we find God's affirmation, and in church we affirm the worth of each person.

Sadly, in many churches, this upholding is not evident. Sometimes, as we grow, we might encounter new love in our church; or need to find a new church.

We should not need to state, to explain, to justify, to ask permission. We just need to make ourselves open to our own encounter with Jesus, whenever and how ever we might be led.

We will have a time of prayer.

*Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness;*

*and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another,*

*and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another,*

*and helping one another up with a tender hand.*

I will say a few words and we will have three periods of silence in between, during which, please speak if you are moved to.

Some will be absent from this meeting but would like to be present; some are facing fears, troubling situations, illness, crises, sadness, grief, distress and personal concerns. Either silently or aloud, let us bring to mind those we know and others in such situations and pray for them.

Jesus Said: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

*John 14:27*

There are many things to be thankful for. Either silently or aloud, let us give thanks. For things that have happened, for families and friends who have supported us, for opportunities, for celebrations, for our friendships, and for the help and care we have received.

Let us now look to the future and to our hopes and desires. Either silently or aloud, let us bring to mind those things we hope for - for ourselves, family, friends, futures, things to happen in the world.



Lord, grant us all your Peace, that we may all face the future with calmness and confidence in the true knowledge and fellowship of the Love of Christ

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. *Zephaniah 3:17*

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## **CLOSING**

Lord, we thank you for our fellowship this evening. Inspire our hope, diminish our fears. Forgive us for those things which we ought to have done, but have not done, Give us strength and courage to bring the fruits of our fellowship and your Gospel to the world

Let us share the peace -  
Peace be with you

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen