

MONDAY

3 MAY

Acts 14:5-18

Psalm 118:1-3.14-15

John 14:21-26

TUESDAY

4 MAY

Acts 14:19-end

Psalm 145:10-end

John 14:27-end

WEDNESDAY

5 MAY

Acts 15:1-6

Psalm 122:1-5

John 15:1-8

THURSDAY

6 MAY

Acts 15:7-21

Psalm 96:1-3. 7-10

John 15:9-11

FRIDAY

7 MAY

Acts 15:22-31

Psalm 57:8-end

John 15:12-17

SATURDAY

8 MAY

Acts 16:1-10

Psalm 100

John 15:18-21

REFLECTION

My peace I give to you"; "I have loved you; abide in my love";
"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you".

Jesus speaks these words of promise to his disciples at a time of confusion and fear about what's just happened and an unknown future. Their last meal together has been overshadowed by talk of betrayal, denial and the disconcerting washing of their feet by their Lord and master. Jesus has told them they will face persecution by those who cannot understand God's word revealed in Jesus. And now they set out into the darkness of a garden that was once a safe place for them. They face further betrayal and their own denial of Jesus. They will see the injustice and cruelty of Good Friday, as the darkness seems to overcome the light of the world. As this horror unfolds will those promises of peace, love and joy seem hollow, empty, worthless?

And in those times when we too walk in the valley of shadowy death, can we remember and hang on to those same promises of Jesus: to give us his peace, to abide with us in love and to bring joy into our hearts, even in our darkness?



PRAYER

Loving God, in times of pain and grief,
give us the comfort of your Holy Spirit
and the gifts of peace, love and joy,
that your son Jesus promised to us.
May we know always that we are held safe in your love.

CHURCH MUSIC

PART I – WHY DO WE MAKE MUSIC IN CHURCH?

Why do we use music in our liturgy? What is the purpose of standing together to sing acclamations, hymns, antiphons and psalms? Why do we play voluntaries on the organ, or – if we do – bring guitars and other instruments to church?

Early in my musical education I was given a copy of Dom Gregory Murray's setting of the Mass, and I can remember playing it on the piano. The music helped me pause over the words, and some of the harmonies and chord progressions seemed to fuse with the intensity of the words, enhancing their meaning and connecting with my soul in a way that they didn't when I simply heard them read.

I'm sure the opposite can be true – for some people music gets in the way. Harmony and descants distract rather than enhance. But I've always loved music, and none more than church music – from medieval plainsong to renaissance polyphony, Methodist hymns, Anglican psalm chants, modern Catholic parish mass music, Eastern Orthodox music and evangelical praise songs.

Music is a vehicle for bypassing my intellect and communicating with my heart and soul. It moves me to tears when a beautiful melody is crafted skilfully to combine with the words it sets, helping me to feel deep within me that God knows and loves me. The words from the hymn "My Song Is Love Unknown", written by Samuel Crossman and set to music "over lunch" by the British composer John Ireland, spring to mind. It never fail to move me: "This is my friend, in whose sweet praise / I all my days could gladly spend."

Music can be beautiful, but it is not there simply to decorate or prettify, nor to provide a commercial break after the sermon. Music is there to enhance our liturgies, edify us and glorify God. So if we want to know why we sing, a deeper understanding of why we have liturgy in the first place is essential. Over the next few weeks, I'd like us to explore these questions together.

Andrew is a church musician and publisher.
Find him online @andyhodderfaith

LIVE
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



Fifth week of Easter

Monday 3 May to
Saturday 8 May
2021

WEEK