

Sunday 19th April 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use as you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you

Opening Prayer

In places of darkness and in the fullness of light
Christ is risen
In times of doubt and in strength of faith
Christ is risen
In our pain and in our joy
Christ is risen
The Lord is risen
He is risen indeed! Hallelujah

Hymn: This joyful Eastertide (StF 314)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tipsbcfuB4>

**This joyful Eastertide,
what need is there for grieving?
Cast all your cares aside
and be not unbelieving:
Come, share our Easter joy
that death could not imprison,
nor any power destroy,
our Christ, who is arisen!**

**No work for him is vain,
no faith in him mistaken,
for Easter makes it plain
his kingdom is not shaken:**

**Then put your trust in Christ,
in waking and in sleeping.
His grace on earth sufficed;
he'll never quit his keeping:**

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Let us pray together

In the chaos before anything was, Lord, you spoke bringing life in abundance.

We praise and adore you, God of life

In the darkness of an early morning garden and the dank coldness of death and the tomb, Lord, you spoke bringing resurrection, defeating death and giving us abundant life

We praise and adore you, God of Life

In the dark places of our lives, Lord, you speak and bring recreation transformation and calling us to life in abundance

We praise and adore you, God of Life

God of abundant life,
you have called us to be your people and to walk in your way but there are times when we wander away, when we close our ears to your call and our eyes to your life. We remember those times before you.

Take all we have been and done and all we have left undone and transform it through your love and grace.

Open our ears to your words of forgiveness and our eyes to your glory.

May we hear the words
"Your sins are forgiven"
and know their truth.

Amen

Today's Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 16

Today's Gospel Reading: John 20: 19-31

Time to Reflect

What does resurrection mean?

Shut behind closed doors for the disciples it comes first in disbelief, confusion and fear. The inability to believe Mary's words, to take in the impossibility. The fear that they might follow to a terrorist's death. Confusion that it could all have come to this.

Into those shut doors and fearful hearts Jesus comes to bring resurrection and peace. It is a resurrection that does not turn back the clock, does not erase the horror of the Friday but bears its marks and is recognised by them. Without those marks, the pierced hands and side, the resurrection could not be real, the life it offered could not be full.

It is a resurrection that joins the disciples where they are shut behind the closed doors of the room and of their fear. That again seeks them and Thomas out behind closed doors a week later. It's a resurrection that will seek us out where we are and however we are feeling. It does not expect us to make a leap of faith and travel towards it but comes to us and meets us in our need.

It is a resurrection that offers life, calling forth peace and breathing the Spirit echoing God's breath at the dawn of creation or the breath of the Spirit in Ezekiel's Valley of bones. It comes to empower and to change and to lead us onwards into the Kingdom of abundant life.

But stop, notice the closed doors, not just at the first encounter but the second as well. It appears Thomas isn't the only one doubting. The disciples are still locked in. John's "Pentecost Moment" is not met with the throwing open of doors or the shouting of praises or the preaching of sermons. In John the giving of the Spirit is met with a gradual resurrection and empowerment of the disciples which crescendos with Thomas's declaration 'My Lord and my God!' It echoes Lazarus's first stumbling steps from his tomb

before he is released from the grave clothes that bind him.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Into the closed doors of this world come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life

We pray for all those who are afraid at this time.

We pray for all those who are ill and for those who yearn for their health.

We pray for those who are homeless and for those who struggle to feed themselves and their families.

We pray for those who have lost their incomes or whose businesses are at risk.

We pray for all those who offer care during this crisis often putting their lives at risk to do so.

We pray for our government and all the governments of the world, for business leaders and all who hold any power.

We pray for those who feel voiceless and powerless.

We pray for those situations that no longer make the headlines for those suffering from conflicts, war and oppression, for those seeking refuge and those who have no place of safety.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to Now the green blade rises (StF 306)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwVEIxKp-0>

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,

wheat that in the dark earth many days has
lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up
green.

In the grave they laid him, Love who had been
slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had
lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in
pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have
been:

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958) (alt.)

or

Lord I lift your name on high (StF 332)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6l6orjM3NI>

**Lord, I lift your name on high,
Lord, I love to sing your praises;
I'm so glad you're in my life,
I'm so glad you came to save us.**

**You came from heaven to earth
to show the way,
from the earth to the cross
my debt to pay,
from the cross to the grave,
from the grave to the sky:
Lord, I lift your name on high.**

Rick Founds

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May the light of the resurrection shine on
your way
May the peace of the resurrection hold you
fast
And may the abundant life of the resurrection
fill you and empower you

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

Original Materials by **R A Bending**

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Psalm 16

Song of Trust and Security in God

A Miktam of David.

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.'

As for the holy ones in the land, they
are the noble,
in whom is all my delight.

Those who choose another god
multiply their sorrows;
their drink-offerings of blood I will
not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.

The Lord is my chosen portion and
my cup;
you hold my lot.
The boundary lines have fallen for
me in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.

I bless the Lord who gives me
counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs
me.
I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I
shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my
soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.
For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.

You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness
of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures
for evermore.

John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When it was evening on that day,
the first day of the week, and the

doors of the house where the
disciples had met were locked for
fear of the Jews, Jesus came and
stood among them and said, 'Peace
be with you.' After he said this, he
showed them his hands and his side.
Then the disciples rejoiced when
they saw the Lord. Jesus said to
them again, 'Peace be with you. As
the Father has sent me, so I send
you.' When he had said this, he
breathed on them and said to them,
'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you
forgive the sins of any, they are
forgiven them; if you retain the sins
of any, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the
Twin), one of the twelve, was not
with them when Jesus came. So the
other disciples told him, 'We have
seen the Lord.' But he said to them,
'Unless I see the mark of the nails in
his hands, and put my finger in the
mark of the nails and my hand in his
side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again
in the house, and Thomas was with
them. Although the doors were shut,
Jesus came and stood among them
and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then
he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger
here and see my hands. Reach out
your hand and put it in my side. Do
not doubt but believe.' Thomas
answered him, 'My Lord and my
God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you
believed because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.'

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in
the presence of his disciples, which
are not written in this book. But
these are written so that you may
come to believe that Jesus is the
Messiah, the Son of God, and that
through believing you may have life
in his name.