

## Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for use while we are unable to gather together to worship. If you are well enough we invite you to spend a few moments with God, perhaps at 10:30am, the usual time our worship begins, knowing that other people are also sharing this act of worship with you.

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***As we come to worship you may like to have a time of silence and light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.***

### **Song: StF64 Praise is Rising**

*Paul Baloche*

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen: <https://youtu.be/ioL62cqH3iM>

Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You, we turn to You  
Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You, we long for You  
'Cause when we see You we find strength to face the day  
In Your presence all our fears are washed away, washed away

*Hosanna, Hosanna*

*You are the God who saves us*

*Worthy of all our praises*

*Hosanna, Hosanna*

*Come have Your way among us*

*We welcome You here, Lord Jesus*

Hear the sound of hearts returning to You, we turn to You  
In Your Kingdom broken lives are made new, You make us new  
'Cause when we see You we find strength to face the day  
In Your presence all our fears are washed away, washed away.

*Chorus*

### **Reading: Psalm 116: 1-8**

*Singing the Faith 828*

I love the Lord, for he has heard the voice of my supplication  
Because he inclined his ear to me on the day I called to him.

The snares of death encompassed me, the pains of hell took hold of me,  
By grief and sorrow I was held.

Then I called upon the name of the Lord,  
O Lord I beg you, deliver my soul.

Gracious is the Lord and righteous,  
Our God is full of compassion.

The Lord watches over the simple  
I was brought very low and he saved me

Turn again to your rest Oh my soul  
For the Lord has been gracious to you

For you delivered my soul from death  
My eyes from tears and my feet from falling

I will walk before the Lord  
in the land of the living.

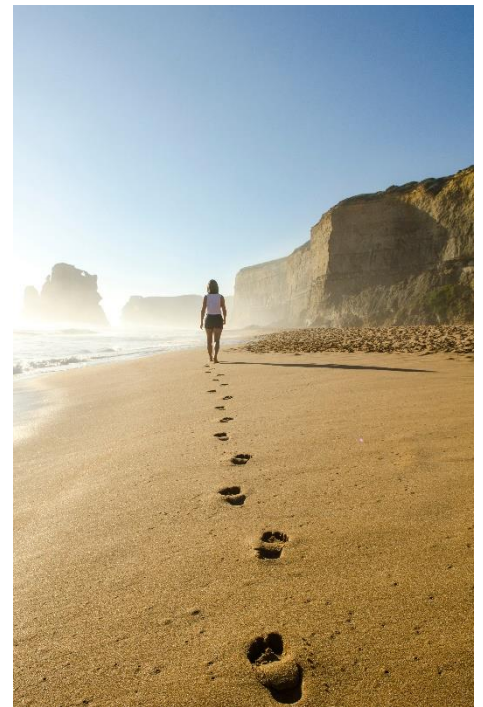
### **Prayer of Praise**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
We are reminded today,  
of how your followers must have felt as Easter dawned,  
Women walking sadly to the tomb,  
Disciples trudging wearily home along the Emmaus Road,  
Apostles gathered behind locked doors,  
All of them, to a man or woman, devastated,  
Stunned by what had taken place,  
Overwhelmed by sorrow and confusion.

**Gracious Lord, sovereign yet servant,  
In weakness you are our strength,  
Receive our Easter Praise.**

We praise you that at the empty tomb,  
On the Emmaus Road,  
And in that room locked against the world,  
You demonstrated that you were not defeated but victorious,  
Your purpose not destroyed but gloriously fulfilled,  
The events of Good Friday were seen for what they were,  
Not a hideous mistake or an unseen catastrophe,  
But an integral part of your sovereign plan,  
The ultimate expression of your love,  
Through which you brought life to all.

**Gracious Lord, sovereign yet servant,  
In weakness you are our strength,  
Receive our Easter Praise.**



We recall then, how your followers must have felt,  
On the day of Resurrection,  
Women running back to tell the news,  
Disciples returning from Emmaus rejoicing,  
Apostles gazing in wonder as you stood there among them.  
We recall how tears of sorrow turned to tears of joy,  
How eyes closed to the truth were opened,  
At the breaking of the bread,  
How minds clouded by doubt were illuminated by faith,  
New purpose, new confidence, new faith,  
emerged in lives which seemed broken,  
your triumph was complete.

**Gracious Lord, sovereign yet servant,  
In weakness you are our strength,  
Receive our Easter Praise.            Amen**

**Reading - Luke 24:13-35** *(see separate sheet)*

**Additional Readings** - Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Acts 2:14a, 36-41

### **Reflection**

As we continue in this period of Resurrection hope, we meet two people on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They are so focused on their problems and disappointment of the events of the past days, they don't recognise the stranger who appears beside them.

They were obviously anxious and their world had been turned upside down as ours has now. How can it be that this stranger doesn't know what has happened? Can you imagine coming across someone at the moment who hasn't heard of Coronavirus?

One thing that we note is that Cleopas and his companion took time to stop and learn from the stranger. They didn't just rush on by. Conversations when walking alongside people are important. It can sometimes be easier to have difficult conversations when side by side rather than face to face. They are in the moment, eagerly listening and learning from Jesus.

At this time when we are asked to Stay at Home, we might take the opportunity to get to know Jesus better in extra Bible reading and prayer.

When they get to their home, Jesus doesn't push himself onto the couple, he makes as if he is going to carry on. Something encourages them to invite him in and they are rewarded as they realise that the Risen Jesus has been with them all the time, as they share food.

Do we recognise Jesus with us at difficult times or are we tempted to rely on our own abilities? In this unusual time, it is important to keep looking for signs of resurrection hope. This week it has been heart-warming to see Captain Tom doing his 100 laps for the NHS and the generosity of the public in donating to the cause. (£23million at the time of writing.) There are people sewing items for the NHS around the country. There are rainbows decorating houses that make us smile. I have included a photo of a decorated fence that cheered me up as I walked by. On Thursday evenings many of us are clapping for the NHS and other keyworkers, which has an unexpected benefit that neighbours who might normally see each other about once a year are smiling and chatting and supporting a shared cause. We are rediscovering a sense of community. Let's keep looking for ways to encourage one another, however small they may seem.





Jesus allows us to choose whether to invite him in to our lives. Jesus says come to me you who are weary and I will give you rest. We are welcome as we are. No special qualifications or preparations are needed. At this time when we might be finding it difficult to stay hopeful we can call out to God as David did in the Psalms.

*The snares of death encompassed me,  
the pains of hell took hold of me  
By grief and sorrow I was held.  
Then I called upon the name of the Lord  
O Lord I beg you, deliver my soul.  
Gracious is the Lord and righteous  
Our God is full of compassion (Psalm 116:3-5)*

After Jesus left, Cleopas and his companion, they got up and ran back the 7 miles to Jerusalem to tell everyone else. It is hard to imagine that as we are restricted to one period of exercise a day and many have to stay indoors. Can we capture this kind of enthusiasm in our lives? How can we share our resurrection hope with those who might be struggling at this time? As well as helping in practical ways, we can share our moments of joy as we talk to others, noticing the signs of spring, sharing stories of people helping others and of how our faith gives us peace. The current situation means that one of the popular ways of meeting people is via video over computers, tablets and phones. There are quizzes, fitness groups, virtual choirs and various types of virtual church to name but a few. I have been fortunate to take part in a virtual choir singing an arrangement of The White Cliffs of Dover, a song with an uplifting message from World War II that resonates again now. The organiser thought that about 30 people might join in and was pleasantly surprised to find that there were over 200 contributions from 13 countries. The end result is very uplifting and is bringing joy to a large number of people, including those who have lost loved ones to the virus.

As we move through the Easter period, we start to think about Pentecost which this year we mark on 31<sup>st</sup> May. After the resurrection appearances, Jesus tells the disciples to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24 v48). We have further weeks to stay at home until the spread of the virus decreases. This might include learning some new skills or simply learning to be still in God's presence. However it is, let us take some time out to seek the

guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we might emerge from this period confident in the power of God to transform lives.

## Reflect

*Where do we recognise Jesus today?  
How do others recognise Jesus in us?  
How might we be transformed after this period of waiting?*

## Prayer of Confession

Risen Lord,  
we are sorry for the times when we fail to recognise you in our midst,  
for the times when we are too preoccupied with ourselves

We are sorry.  
That we let you down,  
That we don't always share what we have with others.

We are sorry.  
That we welcome friends but not always the stranger,  
Or anyone who makes us feel uncomfortable.

Forgive us Lord,  
Help us to be generous people,  
May our church, our homes and our hearts,  
Always be places of welcome. Amen

**Hymn: StF594 Lord Jesus Christ you have come to us** *Patrick Appleford*  
*Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen: <https://youtu.be/VhoyOFo9oFo>*

Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Come To Us  
You Are One With Us, Mary's Son.  
Cleansing Our Souls from All Their Sin  
Pouring Your Love And Goodness In  
Jesus Our Love For You We Sing, Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ Now And Every Day  
Teach Us How To Pray, Son Of God.  
You Have Commanded Us to Do  
This In Remembrance Lord Of You  
Into Our Lives, Your Power Breaks Through, Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, I Would Come To You  
Live My Life For You, Son Of God.  
All Your Commands I Know Are True,  
Your Many Gifts Will Make Me New,  
Into My Life, Your Power Breaks Through, Living Lord.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

*You may wish to use a candle or a cross as a focus for your prayers*

Loving God,  
We bring our prayers for our community and our world.

For those people suffering from COVID-19...  
For those with other medical problems afraid to seek treatment...  
For those who are anxious about health, work or lack of money...  
*Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer*

For those who have family members who are sick, especially where they are unable to visit...  
For those suffering from mental health problems which are made worse by having to stay at home..  
For those trapped in situations that are unsafe...  
*Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer*

For those working in health and social care...  
For all keyworkers keeping people fed, educated and safe...  
For those working in foodbanks...  
*Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer*

For Governments across the world seeking the best ways to respond to the Coronavirus crisis...  
For those parts of the world where there is war and conflict, guide those seeking paths to peace...  
*Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer*

Gracious God, help us to be an answer to prayer where your Holy Spirit leads us.  
Give us the confidence to respond.  
In Jesus name. Amen  
Let us join together in The Lord's Prayer. *Our Father .....*

## Hymn: StF306 Now the Green Blade Rises

John Macleod Campbell Crum

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen: <https://youtu.be/UVduVOustWw>

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid him, love whom men had slain,  
Thinking that never he would wake again.  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
He that for three days in the grave had lain.  
Quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Thy touch can call us back to life again;  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.



### **Sending out prayer**

Jesus we thank you that you walk  
alongside us.  
Thank you that we can recognise you  
in one another.  
May your light shine in us and  
through us now and always.  
Amen