

DSW Written service
For Sunday 14 April 2024

Call to Worship

Come let us worship our Risen Lord:
Alleluia! He is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn [STF 393]

All heaven declares
The glory of the risen Lord.
Who can compare
With the beauty of the Lord?
Forever He will be
The Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee
And worship Him alone.

I will proclaim
The glory of the risen Lord,
Who once was slain
To reconcile man to God.
Forever You will be
The Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee
And worship You alone.

Noel and Tricia Richards. © 1987 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

Opening Prayers

A prayer from Brother Roger of Taizé:

If you were not risen, Lord Christ, to whom
would we go to discover a radiance on the face
of God?

If you were not risen, we would not be seeking
your communion. We would not find in your
presence forgiveness, wellspring of a new
beginning.

If you were not risen, where would we draw
the energy for following you right to the end of
our existence, for choosing you again and anew?

We praise and adore you Father God, because
you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us
victory over death and giving us eternal life.
We praise and adore you Lord Jesus, because
you came to live among us to show us God's
ways of love and grace; you gave your life for us
on the cross and you rose again to offer us the
gift of new life in this life and beyond death.
We praise and adore you Holy Spirit, because
you lead us into the truth and breathe new life
into us.

Triune God, as we celebrate your amazing love
for us, we remember the ways in which we've
brought hurt to you, to each other, and to
ourselves;

Forgive us when we've doubted your love or
your power; when we haven't recognized you in
each other; when we haven't listened to your
voice; when we haven't loved others as you
commanded us to.

Thank you for your word of grace to us: Go in
peace – come and follow me. Fill us with your
hope, joy and love, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Reading : Luke 24:36-48 (NRSVA)

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself
stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be
with you.' They were startled and terrified, and
thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said
to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do
doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands
and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me
and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and
bones as you see that I have.' And when he had
said this, he showed them his hands and his
feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving
and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you
anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of
broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their
presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that
I spoke to you while I was still with you—that
everything written about me in the law of
Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be
fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to
understand the scriptures, and he said to them,
'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer
and to rise from the dead on the third day, and
that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be
proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning
from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these
things.'

Reflection

This passage comes at a point when the disciples
are in hiding, behind locked doors, after Jesus'
crucifixion and trying to make sense of the
women's story of finding angels at the tomb
where Jesus was laid who tell them Jesus is not
there, and the Cleopas and the other believer's
story of meeting with Jesus as they travelled
away from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

They must have been wondering what it all meant as they juggled feelings of fear, anxiety, doubt, disbelief, hoping that there might be some truth and meaning all these things.

We have all probably been in situations where we're trying to make sense of something that's happened which we can't explain or didn't expect or which we haven't experienced before. Sometimes we know when changes are going to come in our lives— if we're moving to a new house or job, or becoming parents for the first time, for example - and at other times we don't – for example when we face an unexpected diagnosis or illness of a loved one or ourselves, or something else happens which we hadn't expected or planned for and suddenly we find ourselves in unknown territory.

We're not told how Jesus came through the locked door, but the first thing he says when he appears is "Peace be with you". Jesus shows his love for his disciples by offering them the gift they need in this moment most of all – his peace, the peace that can only come from God. And they are "startled & frightened thinking they've seen a ghost" says Luke. We don't know whether they believed in ghosts, but whatever you believe in, if you see someone you love who you know died on the cross a matter of days before, now appearing in a locked room as if he's alive again, I guess you might feel a bit startled mightn't you?

And I wonder what the disciples thought when Jesus then said "Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your mind?"

Imagining myself in that situation there's part of me that would want to say "Well where do you want me to start, Lord? I've seen you do many miracles, including healing and even raising dead people. and yet you let the priests and Romans crucify you. I've watched you die on the cross, and seen your body laid in a tomb with a massive stone across the entrance and then I've listened to our friends' strange stories about finding your tomb empty, and meeting you on the road to Emmaus – why would I not be troubled by doubts?!"

And Jesus' response is to give his disciples the proof he knows they need, before they ask for it. He invites them to touch his hands and feet

and satisfy themselves that he is no ghost. Another gesture of love and reassurance. But Luke says they still did not believe, they were still wondering. So Jesus asks them for something to eat.

And I wonder if this is yet another gift from Jesus, a reflection of his humanity in all his divinity.

He's the risen son of God, resurrected from the dead, but he's also human and he knows what his friends need at this point in time. How utterly and amazingly normal it must have been for the disciples to hear him say "Have you got anything to eat?"

Jesus gives them the opportunity again to minister to his needs – perhaps to recover a little bit of the normality of all the meals they'd shared during his time with them.

It almost feels like the British equivalent of "Let's have a cup of tea", because in times of crisis and turmoil that's what we do isn't it?! Which is not in any way to belittle this episode, but instead to suggest that Jesus is so lovingly concerned for his disciples and perhaps wanting to calm them and to give them a little piece of normality in the whirlwind of the supernatural events that have almost overwhelmed them. Later Jesus talks with his disciples, explaining to them how everything that's happened fits in with what was written in the Old Testament scriptures about him.

And then he gives them another gift that only he can give – he opens their minds giving them the insight and wisdom they need to understand what he's telling them. And he tells them they are witnesses of these things: they're going to be his witnesses, sharing their stories and memories of Jesus and their God given understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done and what he promises to do for those who believe in him.

And that's the same for us isn't it?

We too are called to be witnesses of what Jesus has done in our lives, telling our stories of what we've seen and experienced God's love and how we've been blessed by the gifts of his Holy Spirit in our lives. We're called to share how we've been blessed by having a personal relationship with Jesus, God's only Son, who was supernaturally raised from the dead and is alive today, whose humanity means that he

understands exactly how we feel and what we need and who longs to bless and equip us to do the job he's called us to do wherever we find ourselves in life.

Because he also longs to help others understand too that they are loved by God and to bless them and us with his peace and with understanding and openness of heart and mind.

Let's pray:

Living Lord Jesus

To get to resurrection there's a rainbow of emotions to go through:

jubilant with the waving of palm branches;
confusion and disbelief with the betrayal of a friend;

anger and terror at the scene of your arrest in the garden;

despair as those who had no right, took your life away;

emptiness as your body was laid in the tomb, then fear and desolation.

As we reflect on what it must have felt like to meet you again, suddenly and unexpectedly, risen from the dead, still bearing the scars of what had been done to you, and to have sorrow transformed into joy, despair into amazement, fear into courage, we remember that we too, know what it's like to be human and experience all these things.

Lord Jesus, as your words resonate in our hearts: "See, I am alive, just as I promised...I will be with you until the end of the ages.....Go in my name and share the good news you have received..."

We pray that you will empower and equip us to be the people you call us to be: witnesses to your amazing grace and transforming love wherever you may send us, for we ask in the power of your Holy Spirit & in your precious name. **Amen**

Hymn [STF 424]

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to.

*He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received,
Freely, freely give;
Go in My name, and because you believe
Others will know that I live.'*

All power is given in Jesus' name,
In earth and heaven in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His power as He told me to.

*He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received,
Freely, freely give;
Go in My name, and because you believe
Others will know that I live.'*

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Intercessions based on a prayer by Angela Ashwin:

Lord, without your resurrection
Our faith would be empty and without hope.
But you are alive,
And we rejoice and dance and wonder
in the mystery of your presence among us.

We pray for your church:

Free us from the shackles of guilt and legalism,
apathy and inertia
And help us to proclaim the message of healing
and forgiveness for which you died.
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Lord, your friends and disciples,
must have been utterly bereft at your death,
with all their hope and purpose broken.
So we pray now for those who are in darkness
and pain today; those facing the keen
disappointment of broken hopes;
lives damaged by broken relationships and
broken trust; people with broken hearts;
bodies broken by torture; or by the constant
search for enough to live on; spirits broken by
injustice;
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who live in broken
communities....and for those working to bring
peace, justice and reconciliation, a fair sharing of
resources and respect for the value of every
single person regardless of age, gender or
background;
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Risen Lord, we lift to you all those who are ill or
in pain whether physical, emotional or spiritual,
and all those who care for them, remembering
especially those whose needs are on our hearts
today: fill them with your healing presence and
peace we pray;
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Lord we humbly ask that you accept our prayers
And take them up into your creative energy of
love which you let loose into the world
on those extraordinary Easter days.
Amen.



The Lord's Prayer

Hymn [STF 303]

I know that my Redeemer lives -
What joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my everlasting head.

He lives, to bless me with his love;
He lives, to plead for me above;
He lives, my hungry soul to feed;
He lives, to help in time of need.

He lives, and grants me daily breath;
He lives, and I shall conquer death;
He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives and leads me safely there.

He lives, all glory to this name;
He lives, my Saviour, still the same;
What joy the blest assurance gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives.

Samuel Medley (1738-99)

Closing Prayer

Just as the risen Christ appeared to his disciples,
bringing them his peace and sending them out as
his witnesses, so we are sent out to witness to
his life, death and resurrection.

May our Risen Lord help us in everything we
experience this week, to hold onto and to share
the joy and hope his resurrection brings.

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

Amen.

Alleluia! Let us go in joy and peace to love and
serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Alleluia!

*Rev Jane Wilson
March 2024*