



## **DSW Written Service Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

### **Opening prayer:**

Loving living Lord as we bring ourselves into your presence with joy, help us to remember that you are here with us now;

May we pray to you in faith,  
sing your praise with gratitude,  
and listen to your word with eagerness;  
through Jesus our risen Lord. Amen.

### **Hymn [STF 310]:**

Sing a song, sing a joyful song,  
sing a joyful song to celebrate!  
Sing a song, sing a joyful song,  
sing a joyful song to celebrate!  
*Jesus is alive, you know,  
he's risen from the dead!  
He was crucified but now he's risen like he said.  
(Hallelujah!)*

Clap your hands, clap your hands like this,  
clap your hands like this to celebrate!  
Clap your hands, clap your hands like this,  
clap your hands like this to celebrate!

Jump up and down, up and down and around,  
up and down and around to celebrate!  
Jump up and down, up and down and around,  
up and down and around to celebrate!

Dance to the beat, to the beat of the drum,  
to the beat of the drum to celebrate!  
Dance to the beat, to the beat of the drum,  
to the beat of the drum to celebrate!

Wave your hands, wave your hands in the air,  
wave your hands in the air to celebrate!  
Wave your hands, wave your hands in the air,  
wave your hands in the air to celebrate!

Sing a song, sing a joyful song,  
sing a joyful song to celebrate!  
Sing a song, sing a joyful song,  
sing a joyful song to CELEBRATE!

Mark Johnson and Helen Johnson

### **Reading: Luke 24:13-35 New International Version On the Road to Emmaus**

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

<sup>19</sup> "What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

<sup>33</sup> They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup> and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." <sup>35</sup> Then the two told what

*had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.*

### **Reflection: Walking to Emmaus**

This story from Luke's gospel is one of the accounts of encounters with Jesus after the resurrection. Here, 2 disciples are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, trying to make sense of what's happened in the last few days and what they'd been told by the women who came back from the tomb. They travel with a companion they don't recognise even when Jesus takes them through the Scriptures, explaining the prophecies about him in the Old Testament foretelling what would happen to Jesus.

Only when they're sitting with Jesus eating their evening meal, and he takes the bread and breaks it and gives it to them do they recognise him. And just then he disappears! And they each realise in hindsight that their hearts were burning when Jesus was talking to them about all the prophecies about himself.

Sometimes we don't see what's right in front of us, do we?

When my children were young they loved watching "Nanny McPhee", a film with a screenplay by Emma Thompson, who plays the lead character. Nanny McPhee arrives at the home of a widower with 7 very clever but very naughty children who've managed to get through 17 nannies since their mother died a year or so earlier! She arrives calling herself a "government nanny" and explains that she has 5 lessons to teach them.

When she arrives she has an interesting appearance with a very big nose, warts on her face, eyebrows that meet in the middle, a protruding front tooth and bushy hair. She's kind and loving but firm, and as the children & their father learn each lesson, her warts fade, her nose shrinks, her hair changes, her big tooth disappears and she begins to look more normal, less frightening.

As Emma Thompson explains, Nanny McPhee is the same person throughout the film so it's not Nanny McPhee who changes, but the perception the children and their father have of her that changes as they begin to see her for who she really is.

So perhaps part of the point of the story of the road to Emmaus is that it's not Jesus who changes,

but the 2 travellers, who initially don't see that it's Jesus perhaps because of their preconceptions & ideas about who he is.

Only when they really start to "tune in" as Jesus shows them how all the signs pointing to the Messiah have been fulfilled in what happened to Jesus, are their eyes opened to the truth of who Jesus is.

Jennifer Rees Larcombe, the Christian writer and speaker, shares her experiences of how God often speaks to us through people & in ways we don't expect, that challenge our preconceptions and ideas, and sometimes require us to trust him even when we feel way outside our comfort zone.

After her marriage broke down and her 6 children had grown up, Jennifer tells how she contracted a brain virus which attacked her immune system, resulting in many stays in Intensive Care in hospital and an inability to move unaided. She continued to write and speak and while speaking at a church event about living with disability, a young woman in the front row stood up and said "I think God wants to heal you." After finishing her talk, Jennifer went to speak to this young woman and asked if she'd pray for her, but the young woman refused because she was a very new Christian who'd never prayed aloud.

Eventually Jennifer persuaded her to pray for her, and when she did, Jennifer found she could move her muscles again and started to walk, eventually regaining full mobility after 8 years as a wheelchair user. She later reflected that if she'd let her preconceptions about how God works and who he uses to bring healing through prayer (even brand new Christians!) govern her decisions she might not have received that gift of healing.

I wonder if there are times in our lives when we fail to recognise Jesus' presence in our lives?

Or when our ideas about how things should happen, and who God is, get in the way of our being able to see and trust that God is at work, and even prevent him from being able to work in us?

Jesus appearance to his followers on the road to Emmaus was the first of many (acc to Luke & Paul who record that 500 witnesses saw the risen Jesus at different times). But at this point the travellers

haven't experienced Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit, so perhaps that's why it doesn't all make sense yet. **At Pentecost** a few weeks later the Holy Spirit comes upon them in power.

Our journey with Jesus is all about discovery isn't it? Finding out more about who he is – learning how to recognise his voice, in our prayers, in our quiet times, when we read scripture and particular words jump out or strike us even in familiar readings or hymns we know so well – all of these are ways in which we can recognise the presence of Jesus in our lives, but they take time, and it can be a challenge in our busy lives to find the time and space to be quiet to be still and be open to the presence of God in Jesus.

One of the things I love about this Emmaus story is at the end where we read that those two travellers are so excited about meeting Jesus that they turn around and walk all the 7 miles back to Jerusalem to tell their friends that Jesus really is alive!

Many people are finding the current times of global economic and political uncertainty difficult. But as Christians we believe in a God who is present with us always, and who transforms seemingly hopeless events - like the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross- into wonderful life-changing things - like Jesus' Resurrection, and the gift of his Holy Spirit,. And that's something to celebrate today isn't it? That God is with us, Jesus is alive here and now, and through his Spirit he lives in us and gives us courage and perseverance when we get fed up or frightened, and he gives us his peace and his joy.

We follow a God who transformed the horror of the crucifixion into the joy of Easter day! We follow Jesus, who came back to tell his friends that he is alive and that he will be with us to the end of time, who blesses us with the gift of His Holy Spirit, and who calls us to be channels of blessing to each other.

### **Hymn [STF 308]**

On the journey to Emmaus with our hearts cold as stone —  
the One who would save us had left us alone.  
Then a stranger walks with us and, to our surprise,  
he opens our stories and he opens our eyes.

And our hearts burned within us as we talked on the way,  
how all that was promised was ours on that day.  
So we begged him, 'Stay with us and grant us your word.'  
We welcomed the stranger and we welcomed the Lord.

And that evening at the table as he blessed and broke bread,  
we saw it was Jesus arisen from the dead;  
though he vanished before us we knew he was near —  
the life in our dying and the hope in our fear.

On our journey to Emmaus, in our stories and feast,  
with Jesus we claim that the greatest is least:  
and his words burn within us - let none be ignored -  
who welcomes the stranger shall welcome the Lord.

*Marty Haugen (b. 1950)*

*Words and Music: © 1995, GIA Publications Inc., 7404 S. Mason Avenue, Chicago, IL 60638, USA. www.giamusic.com All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

### **Prayers:**

Loving Lord, we remember and give thanks for your followers trying to make sense of what had happened on that first Easter morning. We rejoice in the wonderful news they received on the day of your Resurrection; but we confess that there are times when we too are slow to recognise you; when we're so concerned with our own comfort, routines or presumptions that we fail to see where you might be leading us. Please talk with us, like those two disciples, and open our hearts to recognise you and know your will. Thank you that even though perhaps at the time we didn't notice you, you were with us every step of the way, you were there in moments of pain and sorrow, as well as times of deep joy and fun. We thank you that you are always present, whatever our circumstances. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and give us the courage, faith and commitment we need as your followers and your church, to be your hands, your feet, and your mouthpiece, spreading the good news of your saving grace with all the people you place us among each day, we pray:  
*Lord Jesus, help us to recognise the signs and to see and share your presence.*

Lord Jesus, you are with each of us in all the tiny details of our lives and in the important moments: We bring to you now all the upcoming moments for our church and local communities this week... weddings/funerals/baptisms, meetings of house groups, coffee mornings, Messy Church, Toddler groups, Warm Welcome or dementia cafés, Foodbank sessions and other outreach activities ..... and we pray that those who will be at these events and in these places will have a real sense of your love and care for them.  
*Lord Jesus, help us and them to recognise and share your presence.*

Lord, you are also there in the big events in the world. We bring to you now the places and people who have made the headlines this week. We lift people and places in the Middle East, Ukraine, Syria, parts of Africa, South America, and other places not in the news, where war and conflict seem to hold sway and people struggle to find places of safety and the means to survive and flourish.  
In all of these places and people we pray for a desire for peace in place of conflict, for reconciliation & compassion in place of prejudice & hatred:  
*Lord Jesus, help us and them to recognise and share your presence.*

Lord, we pray for those who need a sign of your presence this week as we pray for people of all ages who are anxious about the future or worry about where they fit in.  
We pray for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, for those who are lonely, isolated or housebound and all those who are sorrowful today. Please bring healing and comfort to them in their pain.  
We pray for carers, paid or unpaid; known or unknown, who look after others, for patience and courage.  
Help each and all of them to know that your resurrection means that there is hope for the future.  
*Lord Jesus, help us and them to recognise and share your presence.*

Lord, as we think of the week ahead of us, we thank you that you are already going before us and preparing our way.

Show us how to be bringers of hope and joy wherever we go, so that others will see the truth that you are alive through us.  
As we commit the new week to you, we pray that you help us see you at every turn, and lead us forward into all the new wonders that are ready to greet us, in the resurrection hope you've given us.  
*Lord Jesus, help all of us to recognise and share your presence.*  
We ask in the name of Jesus as together we say:  
**The Lord's Prayer**

### **Hymn [STF 314]**

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 powers 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) ©1969 Stainer & Bell Ltd,  
[www.stainer.co.uk](http://www.stainer.co.uk)*

### **Closing Prayer & Blessing**

As we go into the world from this time of worship, may our risen Lord Jesus walk with us, enabling us through his Holy Spirit to see more clearly the wonder of the Easter story, and inspiring us to share our Easter joy with others,  
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and always.  
**Amen.**

*Rev Jane M Wilson  
April 2026*