

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: Now the green blade rises (StF 306)

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

Songs published under CCLI No 1144191

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

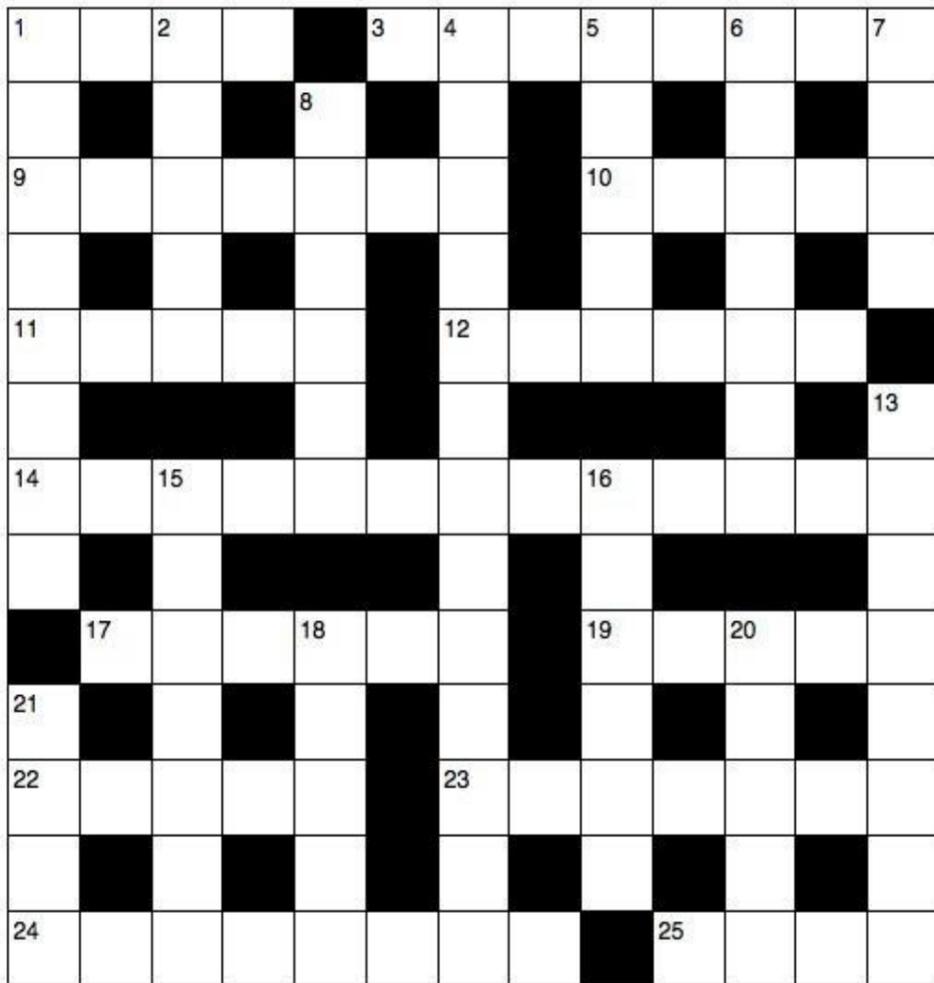
mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

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.

Just For Fun – Stay Home, Stay Safe and help protect our NHS



- 5 Dr Martyn — Jones, famous for his ministry at Westminster Chapel (5)
 6 Port at which Paul landed on his way to Rome (Acts 28:13) (7)
 7 Observe (Ruth 3:4) (4)
 8 Minister of religion (6)
 13 'I am — of this man's blood. It is your responsibility' (Matthew 27:24) (8)
 15 'Greater love has no one than this, that he — — his life for his friends' (John 15:13) (3,4)
 16 Archbishop who calculated that the world began in 4004BC (6)
 18 'No one can — the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5) (5)
 20 Establish by law (5)
 21 Product of Gilead noted for its healing properties (Jeremiah 46:11) (4)

Crosswords Clues, answers at the bottom of the sheet – but no peeking!

Across

- 1 'Therefore let us — passing judgment on one another' (Romans 14:13) (4)
 3 'I — — these persons here present' (Marriage service) (4,4)
 9 According to a prearranged timetable (Numbers 28:3) (7)
 10 Group of eight (5)
 11 The cell into which the Philippian jailer put Paul and Silas (Acts 16:24) (5)
 12 — Taylor, pioneer missionary to China (6)
 14 Otherwise known as the Eucharist, Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Table (4,9)
 17 'So that after I have preached to others, I — will not be disqualified for the prize' (1 Corinthians 9:27) (6)
 19 Attend to (3,2)
 22 Approximately (Acts 4:4) (5)
 23 Tea rite (anag.) (7)
 24 Rule of sovereign (8)
 25 Test (anag.) (4)

Down

- 1 The name of the street where Judas lived in Damascus and where Saul of Tarsus stayed (Acts 9:11) (8)
 2 'The playing of the merry — , sweet singing in the choir' (5)

Answers.

ACROSS: 1, Stop; 3, Call upon; 9, Regular; 10, Octet; 11, Inner; 12, Hudson; 14, Holy Communion; 17, Myself; 19, See to; 22, About; 23, Iterate; 24, Monarchy; 25, Stet.

DOWN: 1, Straight; 2, Organ; 4, Abraham's faith; 5, Loyd; 6, Puteoli; 7, Note; 8, Cleric; 13, Innocent; 15, Lay down; 16, Ussher; 18, Enter; 20, Enact; 21, Balm.