



Worship at Home

16th April 2023

Easter 2



Call to worship

Come, embrace the risen Christ.
Come, embrace the Prince of peace.
Come, embrace his pierced hands.
Come, meet your Lord and your God.

Hymn StF 314: This joyful Eastertide

Sing/ Read /pray the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sT1dFvQqAM>

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 or in sleeping.
His grace on earth sufficed;
He'll never quit his keeping:

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

A Time of Prayer

Creating God, whose work is sustained by change and decay, by death and new life, yet whose love, mercy and grace are limitless: we praise you for your promise to save us for time and eternity.

You watch over us, guarding and protecting us, with us in all our dangers and sorrows as much as in our joys and triumphs.

Lord Jesus Christ, whose commitment to God was stronger than life itself; who bore with the sin of the world and faced down death: we thank you for speaking peace to us, commanding us not to be afraid, but to trust and hope in you. You are our joy and delight, the bringer of eternal life to humankind.

Holy Spirit, whose presence moves us to love and praise, service and sacrifice; whose energy shapes creation and history; we praise you for your encouragement to hope and for your energy to do all that God wills at this time, strengthen us in our times of trial, that we may bring honour and glory to the God who saves us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Epistle: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Time to Reflect

We humans seek pattern and order in the world around us and the things that happen to us. It is one of the ways that we make sense of life. Unpredictability makes us insecure, yet if the last three years have taught us anything, it is that we cannot control much in this world. We may learn to live with things, as we have recognised we will have to a disease like the coronavirus. We may endure downturns and tough out the path through shortages, but ultimately so much is out of our hands.

Life may seem tough, but it is this very quality that draws out of us the best we have to give. Jordan Peterson, the Canadian professor of Psychology, says that the hardness of life calls us to shoulder our responsibility to make the world a slightly better place for everyone, and this seems to be a secular rendering of much that the New Testament inspires in Christian people.

Peter writes to Christians who are a minority in a hostile environment, finding their faith tested by the world around them and the way in which it attacks their faith, in some cases literally.

Yet by keeping faith with God, they prove that they are genuine, and they will be honoured for their endurance and resilience under fire.

Their inspiration is the conviction that Jesus Christ is risen, the promise of an inheritance guaranteed by God and kept beyond change and decay.

They trust in God's inexhaustible love and they hold onto unconquerable hope.

'Change and decay' reflect the impermanence of life in this world. Nothing stays the same, and the current world crisis is challenging the myths of control and power for everyone. The good news we have in Jesus is that there is a bedrock below us on which we can stand firm, be bold and hopeful.

The first disciples were locked away "for fear" of what might happen to them. When Jesus comes to them for the first time, he shows them his hands and side – the dangers are real and present, for what the authorities did to him they could do to his followers - yet he also gives them his peace, inspires their joy and breathes the strengthening Holy Spirit into them, because he is alive.

This is a message that has inspired faith, hope, service and devotion for millennia. It can inspire us, too, as we let Christ come to us in our time of trouble, dispelling the darkness and despair with his light and life, and reminding us that, in a changing world, 'This too shall pass.'

A time of prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the places in the world that need your peace:
places where wars continue to threaten the stability of the nations;
and the lack of peace has caused so much destruction;
places where people have to flee their homes, their families destroyed, lives lost.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

Give wisdom to world leaders:
to presidents, prime ministers, politicians of all governments,
that they may strive for lasting peace and true justice,
not putting personal ambitions before the needs of their people.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

We pray for those who need peace of mind:
those weighed down by the stresses and strains of everyday life,
or who suffer with anxiety, or are oppressed by worry and fear;
for those who find it hard to let go of things and simply trust.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn StF 303: I know that my redeemer lives

Sing/ Read /pray the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gkw-LI7dWZs>

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, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name ;
he lives, my Saviour, still the same ;
what joy the blest assurance gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives !

Samuel Medley (1738–1799)

A prayer of blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you;
deep peace of the flowing air to you;
deep peace of the quiet earth to you;
deep peace of the shining stars to you;
deep peace of the gentle night to you;
deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you.

Amen.

(Trad)

Original materials by Rev Dave Bonny

Other prayers taken from rootsontheweb.com

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