

# Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2021

*Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.*

## Opening Prayer

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Come Lord Jesus; bring assurance of your presence right where I am, here and now.

**Hymn:** Come People of the Risen Christ (MB)

 [Come People of the Risen King.mp4](#)

Who delight to bring Him praise  
Come all and tune your hearts to sing  
To the Morning Star of grace  
From the shifting shadows of the earth  
We will lift our eyes to Him  
Where steady arms of mercy reach  
To gather children in

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!  
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, those whose joy is morning sun  
And those weeping through the night  
Come, those who tell of battles won  
And those struggling in the fight  
For His perfect love will never change  
And His mercies never cease  
But follow us through all our days  
With the certain hope of peace

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!  
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, young and old from every land  
Men and women of the faith  
Come, those with full or empty hands  
Find the riches of His grace  
Over all the world, His people sing  
Shore to shore we hear them call  
The Truth that cries through every age:  
"Our God is all in all!"

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!  
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

**Prayer:**

Let us pray together

Lord God, as we continue to celebrate the season of Easter with all the joy and hope it brings, we give you our thanks and praise.  
As we are experiencing springtime and the resurrection of nature after the dark chill of winter, we give you our thanks and praise.

As we reflect on the faithfulness of your immeasurable, eternal love for all, we give you our thanks and praise.

Forgive us, Lord;  
if we have lost the wonder and delight of the Easter good news.  
when we do not have real regard for your creation, and live selfishly.  
for those times when we neglect to respond to your care for us,  
by our inaction.  
*(We bring to God, those things which we are sorry for)*

Jesus' words assure us of this love. "My child, your sins are forgiven."

**Amen.**

**Bible reading:** Luke 24 v 36b -48

**Hymn:** Everlasting Arms (MB)

 [Everlasting Arms.mp4](#)

## Reflection on Luke 24: 36b – 48

I remember when my children were small they used to enjoy completing dot to dot puzzles. When you first look at that mix of dots on a page its difficult to imagine what it will eventually become.

Our bible passage tells about disciples who are frightened and confused about what has happened and what is going to happen to them. So much has happened in such a short time and they are struggling to make sense of it. Jesus' appearance helps them to join the dots!

- Jesus wanted to dispel their fear and offer peace

When he first appears the disciples think they have seen a ghost. Jesus says 'Peace be with you!' It is a greeting but in a room full of anxious followers it also offers reassurance. His first words were to comfort them, "Peace be with you" or 'shalom'. 'Shalom' is a Hebrew greeting meaning peace and concern. After all that he has suffered; after having been deserted by some of these same disciples; having explained beforehand to them that he would be crucified and would rise again and now, finding them in disbelief ... still Jesus' first concern is one of love and comfort towards them. I looked up the definition of peace and one of the quotations I came across was this...

Peace 'It does not mean to be in place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work, it means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart'.

(unknown) He is the Prince of Peace and His presence brings inner peace and calm.

- Jesus wanted them to believe, to assure them he wasn't a ghost.

This is the third of the resurrection appearance. Over the last couple of weeks we've heard of Jesus appearing to Mary in the garden, and to Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus and neither recognised him initially. Whether it's a case of not expecting him in that circumstance or that somehow he looks different is something we can't fully understand. However, in today's passage Jesus wanted them to recognise he is real, he is not a ghost. He invites them to touch his body and he eats with them. "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." As he spoke they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. He is patient with them and offers more reassurance. He asks them if they have anything to eat. They give him a piece of broiled fish, and he eats it. There's a similarity here to the road to Emmaus experience. There's something about the sharing of food... something comfortable and reassuring in recalling meals shared with others. Jesus wanted them to understand. Alongside the familiarity of the meal he also reminded them about all the things that had been written and said about him and by him.

*'When I was with you I told about the law and the prophets and that the Messiah would suffer and die and would rise on the third day'.* He opened their eyes to the scriptures and they understood. The picture came together and they saw things more clearly.

- Jesus wanted them to be witnesses.

Finally, when their eyes were opened, he says that His story needs to be told to the world. You are witnesses to this. The disciples are called to 'proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations'. A read of the book of Acts confirms that they followed their calling.

What is the relevance of this for us now? The disciples had been through a difficult time and were feeling unsure. In a similar way we've just been through an unprecedented year and maybe we feel worried and insecure. I think if Jesus appeared in our room or church today he would still share the same encouraging words and call us to be His witnesses.

He says 'Peace be with you'. There is a painting by Jack E Dawson called 'Peace in the midst of a Storm', it portrays a cliff side battered by wind and rain and tucked inside a ledge protected from it all is a bird. We live in the world and all it has to offer good or bad but Jesus offers us inner peace. He triumphed over death, leaving an empty tomb and offering life. Through him we can have peace in the midst of a storm. He wants us to be confident in our faith. If we feel uncertain about what we believe he will be patient with us and work with us to help our unbelief. We can read our bibles, sing our hymns, pray together and share with one another and open our eyes.

He wants us to share our faith and witness about the truths we believe to others. Given the past few months how important is it to share God's love and reassurance with those we meet? There are many people who need to the message God has shared with us. He didn't say to the disciples you could be witnesses, would you like to be witnesses, he said you ARE witnesses. This suggests that witnessing is not optional. It's not something you can decide to do one day and then simply take the next day off. It's a way of life. It's who we are. It's how we live and what we say to others. Some of us may feel challenged or out of our comfort zone to be asked to be witnesses but when you think it about it we share our stories about our life all the time. How easy is it to tell a tale about a rugby match we've seen or that TV series we've watched? We talk about the important events in our family or work lives. We chat about the things that matter to us all the time. Isn't that bearing witness? Simply telling someone about an experience we've had. It's not really all that different when it comes to faith. Witnessing can be simply telling others where we sensed God at work — at home or work, at church or school, through a stranger or a friend, a doctor or teacher or neighbour, even through ourselves. Bearing witness is sharing

where you think God is at work in your life and the world. Let us pray that, as we and the world gradually emerge from the pandemic, we may accept the peace that God offers to us, understand and believe the truth about the risen Christ and his presence in our lives and share our story with others.

**Hymn:** In Christ Alone (StF 351)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjiiF83q7G0>

**A time of prayer:**

We pray for our world, for the environment and people. That all who have any power or influence will work with integrity and wisdom, and seek to bring healing to our planet, and peace and justice to all people.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for the church; for those who are persecuted and suffer for their faith; for those who have experienced hurt instead of healing; for those who are wondering and doubtful. Lord bring your revelation and transformation.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for family, friends and neighbours who are living through difficult times. Particularly, who are struggling with bereavement, isolation and loneliness, exacerbated by lockdown.

*(We call them to mind and bring them to God)*

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen**

## The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

**Hymn:** Jesus, Hope of the Nations (MB)

 [Jesus Hope of the Nations.mp4](#)

**Benediction:** (please respond with the words in bold)

Christ is risen in our world,

**alive in our hearts, our conversations, and our activities.**

He bears God's love ready for the world to share.

**We will share all we know as Christ's people.**

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you all,  
now and always.

**Amen**

(Church of Scotland)