

# Worship At Home

## 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Opening Prayers

Take a moment to centre yourself and listen to your breath. Once you feel still and a bit calm, you might like to read these words out loud. God of all time - today I worship you as the Author of Life, the Source of all that is good. I pause in wonder; to give thanks for the world you have created, for my life, for this day.

God of all time - today I worship you as the Incarnate Word, the One who knows what it is to be human.

God of all time - today I worship you in the power of the Holy Spirit, poured out on me this and every day.

Use this time - this time marked for worship and reflection, but also, this whole day, my whole life, as a blessing for the world. May I receive your love and share it with the world.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are comfortable.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 154 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

<https://youtu.be/iIbJptxBJWE?si=WkiF80HqTpdJw4k9>

### Let us pray together

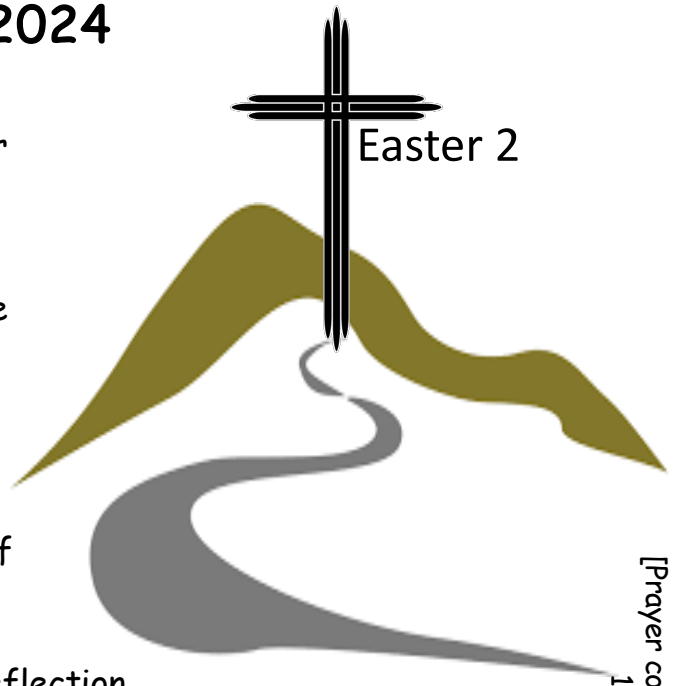
Lord of creation, as we continue in the season of Easter, we give thanks for the joy in our hearts at your resurrection and at the Spring weather we are hoping for. As we come together today, we recognise that we have all made mistakes; we all have regrets about what we have said and done; we all want to start afresh so we can put our wrongs right. Coming to God we have hope, healing and forgiveness.

God of mercy and grace, you know our weaknesses, as we come with open hearts and minds, help us to learn from our mistakes and learn more of your ways. Help us to live our lives with you at the centre. Please forgive us for those moments when we've not cared for your creation; when we become obsessed with life and with possessions and stay silent when we should speak out.

And, in this moment of silence, please forgive us for events, words and deeds that are weighing heavily on our hearts today...

We have been told that a worry shared is a worry halved and You teach us to offer our worries to you. So, today we share our greatest worries with you Lord. In doing so, may we feel your presence and your peace with us.

May we be blessed by being in your presence each and every day. Amen



[Prayer comes from Vine at Home,  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2024]

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn -CH4 189 Be still for the presence of the Lord.

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U?si=WsGxIPY-JYKwMh9v>

Reading: [Luke 24:36b-48](#)

Reflection: Peace be with you



Cleopas and his companion are telling the other disciples how Jesus appeared to them on the road to Emmaus when Jesus, again, shows up out of nowhere, interrupting their conversation. "Peace be with you," he says. They see him, they hear his voice, but they don't recognize him. They "thought that they were seeing a ghost." They know Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried. They know dead men don't come back to life. This can only be a ghost, a spirit without a body. The tomb is open but their minds are closed.

They are unable to recognize the holiness that stands among them. They are continuing to live, think, and

understand in the usual human categories. They have separated spirit and matter, divinity and humanity, heaven and earth. Whenever we make that separation we close our minds, we deny ourselves the resurrected life for which Christ died, and we lose our sense of and ability to recognize holiness in the world, in one another, and in ourselves.

With Jesus' resurrection, however, God shatters human categories of who God is, where God's life and energy are to be found, and how God works in this world. Resurrected life can never be comprehended, contained, or controlled by human thought or understanding. Jesus' resurrection compels us to step outside our usual human understandings of reality and enter into the divine reality.

That new reality begins with touching and seeing, flesh and bones, hands and feet, and broiled fish. Jesus said to his disciples, "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." Then "he showed them his hands and his feet." After this he ate a piece of broiled fish in their presence.

Don't necessarily try to answer all these questions now, but read them through, and reflect on anything that speaks to you.

- What does "peace" mean to you, and how does Jesus' greeting of "Peace to you" challenge your understanding of peace in today's world?
- How can you embody Jesus' message of peace as an agent of reconciliation in the place that you call home and in the wider world, particularly in the face of division and conflict?
- In what ways can the church or community that you are connected to work towards justice and liberation for the marginalised and oppressed, following the example of Jesus' ministry? How are we already doing that?
- Is there something different or more you could be doing, or could stop doing?

Reflecting on the concept of peace as transformation, how can you allow Jesus' message of peace to transform your hearts, minds, and actions, and how can we be agents of transformation in our communities?

These are big questions, take your time with them, think them over, make some notes, talk to a friend. Perhaps some of these thoughts might help you as you continue to reflect. In the Luke passage, you can read that Jesus' disciples were filled with fear and doubt, grappling with the reality of his resurrection. Did they believe? Did some of them, and not others? Were they fearful that they might have got themselves caught up in something rather bigger than they had realised?

Perhaps they also had mixed reactions to the recognition of how radical this Jesus message was... If the rumours were true, that Jesus really was coming back from the dead (or already had), then this might well be the revolution, it might just change everything... surely a time of great uncertainty, conflict and pain was ahead, even if it was to bring about the change they wanted... Maybe some of them were energised by this, but most - we can see - were full of fear and doubt.

Yet, in the midst of their turmoil, Jesus offers them peace. This radical peace transcends circumstances and transforms hearts. It is in this context of potential revolution, political unrest and radical change that Jesus begins with peace. The resurrection, remember, was illegal... Jesus' body had been condemned, and was now no longer dead. But this was not an act of war, rather one of ultimate, deep, radical peace.

True peace cannot exist without justice. Jesus' ministry was marked by a commitment to justice and liberation for the marginalised and oppressed. As followers of Christ, we are called to work towards a world where all are treated with dignity and equality, where justice flows like a mighty river. Not that we continue to invest in the status quo, because it's 'easier', but we work for those who do not get a good deal at the moment, and ensure that peace also brings justice.

Finally, Jesus' greeting of "Peace to you" signifies more than a mere wish for tranquillity. It is a proclamation of transformation - a transformation of hearts, minds, and communities. As you seek to embrace Jesus' message of peace, each of us is called to be transformed and to be agents of transformation in the world around us.

As you reflect on Jesus' words, "Peace to you," may you be challenged and inspired to embody radical peace in your life and in our world. May the peace of Christ be with you.

May the peace of our Lord be with you.





## This week's prayer list.

1. Pray for wisdom for all leaders that they might think before they speak/act particularly about the consequences of what they say or do. May they then have the wisdom to modify improper speech and/or their actions.
2. As we look upon the pain of the people of Gaza, Ukraine and Yemen, pray for an end to the violence and for their needs to be met and their yearning for peace heard. Commend the leaders of factions and nations and pray that they may reflect upon the past and be guided for the future.
3. As we our lives may we promote peace in our village, town, city... world.
4. As we look upon rising prices and see more and more people affected by the cost-of-living crisis we pray for those living in poverty not just in this country but all around the world. Commend to God those with responsibility for national and global economic policy and pray that they may learn from mistakes of the past and be guided in decisions for the future. If we are able we can back up this prayer by donating to the many foodbanks or soup kitchens or our neighbours in times of need.
5. As we grow in awareness of the inequalities of our world: see your children suffering discrimination because of their gender, race, background and disability. Pray for guidance as to how we may foster equality of opportunity for all people.
6. As we look upon your Church, we recognise that not all people find a genuinely warm welcome. Sometimes we are happy as we are and difference can be challenging. We commend to you all Christian people and pray that we may learn to value those who are like us and those who are different. Take a moment when we are able to welcome strangers and those in need in our Churches.
7. Pray for the people in our community, notice those in need. Take time to pray for those who are suffering as a result of their health or the health of loved ones, those who feel isolated and those who grieve the passing of a person they love.
8. For ourselves pray that we may reflect on our lives, learn from our mistakes, seek your wisdom and grow as disciples of the Risen Christ.
9. On the 17<sup>th</sup> April in 1521 (yes, 503 years ago!), the trial of the reformationist Martin Luther began over his controversial teachings that helped change the landscape of the Christian church. Pray this week for all who are daring to push the boundaries of what is 'acceptable' and 'normal', in order to help us grow and develop as church, as people, as a world.

### Activity : Something to think about

Pour a glass of water. Think about the things you do that get in the way of your relationship with God. You might think it muddies the water of your life, but God forgives us for all these things, and offers us living water. Drink some of the water and give thanks for the way God reaches out to you with love and forgiveness.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 419 Thine be the glory

<https://youtu.be/9Dtxbp6EGpQ?si=kaPU5HhELSh4EDak>

*May you go out with joy and be let forth with peace, and may the streets and houses be filled with hope, and the trees of the field clap their hands!*  
*May you go and be that people - a joy-filled, joy-giving, joy-bringing kind of person, an Easter person! Go about your daily business in peace. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. Amen.*

*Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week. May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.*  
*Rev. Susan Thorburn, [sthorburn@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:sthorburn@churchofscotland.org.uk)*  
*If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you.*