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## Service for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021

*A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

HYMN: Good Christians all

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Good Christians all, rejoice and sing!  
Now is the triumph of our King!  
To all the world glad news we bring:  
"Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

2 The Lord of life is risen for aye;  
bring flowers of song to strew his way;  
let all the world rejoice and say:  
"Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

3 Praise we in songs of victory  
that Love, that Life, which cannot die,  
and sing with hearts uplifted high:  
"Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

4 Your name we bless, O risen Lord,  
and sing today with one accord  
the life laid down, the Life restored:  
"Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

*Cyril Alington*

### PRAYER

*Let us pray*

Father God, I'm coming to your house today.

Father God, we come before you to offer you our praise and worship. Grant that we may be sincere of heart.

If we come doubting our own worth and faithfulness to you, remind us of those moments when WE have been agents of your love: those simple gestures – a smile, a touch, a helping hand – which shared something of the Gospel message with those we have come alongside.

If we come full of our own self-righteousness, remind us what pleases you. Bring us down to earth again, so that we are not raised above the crowds, but amongst your people where your work is really done. May our praise and worship be pleasing to you.

Let us not offer you wordy prayers that have little meaning.

Let us not offer you spare change at little cost to ourselves.

Let us not praise you today, then go out to live lives which, for the rest of the week, express little of your goodness.

May we come with open hearts and open minds ready to be cleansed by your spirit and inspired by your word.

**Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who 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.**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### Acts 3: 12-19

<sup>12</sup> When Peter saw the people, he said to them, "Fellow Israelites, why are you surprised at this, and why do you stare at us? Do you think that it was by means of our own power or godliness that we made this man walk? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has given divine glory to his Servant Jesus. But you handed him over to the authorities, and you rejected him in Pilate's presence, even after Pilate had decided to set him free. <sup>14</sup> He was holy and good, but you rejected him, and instead you asked Pilate to do you the favour of turning loose a murderer. <sup>15</sup> You killed the one who leads to life, but God raised him from death—and we are witnesses to this. <sup>16</sup> It was the power of his name that gave strength to this lame man. What you see and know was done by faith in his name; it was faith in Jesus that has made him well, as you can all see.

<sup>17</sup> "And now, my friends, I know that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was due to your ignorance. <sup>18</sup> God announced long ago through all the prophets that his Messiah had to suffer; and he made it come true in this way. <sup>19</sup> Repent, then, and turn to God, so that he will forgive your sins.

### I John 3: 1-7

**3** See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children—and so, in fact, we are. This is why the world does not know us: it has not known God. <sup>2</sup> My dear friends, we are now God's children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. <sup>3</sup> Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.

<sup>4</sup> Whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law, because sin is a breaking of the law. <sup>5</sup> You know that Christ appeared in order to take away sins, and that there is no sin in him. <sup>6</sup> So everyone who lives in union with Christ does not continue to sin; but whoever continues to sin has never seen him or known him.

<sup>7</sup> Let no-one deceive you, my children! Whoever does what is right is righteous, just as Christ is righteous.

### St Luke 24: 36-48

<sup>36</sup> While they were still talking, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

<sup>37</sup> They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

<sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.

*Thanks be to God.*

HYMN: Now the green blade rises

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Now the green blade rises, from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

2 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:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

3 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:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

4 When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

*J M C Crum*

ADDRESS: *Mrs Kathleen Phillips*

The Gospel for today recounts the events of that first Sunday evening after the crucifixion, when Jesus was suddenly there in person among his terrified disciples; putting their fears to rest, telling them that they can tell people they are forgiven and forgiving them in the name of Jesus Christ, the risen Saviour.

Can we begin to understand how they must have felt?

Despite his suffering on the cross and his subsequent death, here is Jesus focussing on repentance and forgiveness. Why? Why does he focus on repentance and forgiveness? Surely it is because something happened during those hours and hours of agony on the cross – and at the moment of dying – which changed things for ever. We are told that the

curtain of the temple ripped from top to bottom: a symbolic tearing down of the barrier of sin between God and his People?

Now from the perspective of the resurrection, Jesus passes on to his disciples the urgent work of the tearing down of that barrier wherever it exists, in every person of every time. This message is for us too. We know there are many barriers out there.

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we see Peter doing exactly what Jesus had said. He used every opportunity, including in this case where he amazed the people by healing a lame man. He directed their attention to the real power – and the powerful reality – that through Jesus the man is healed.

John also speaks from the viewpoint of one who knows what a difference it makes to be set free like this. The extent of God's love, which makes such an enriched life possible, still amazes him. It isn't a one-off operation, this forgiveness; though it often starts with a dramatic change of direction. We need to come regularly before the throne of God with humility to voice our sin, our longing to be forgiven, and to experience the cleansing and refreshing that comes from God's acceptance and forgiveness.

In fact, as our relationship with the living Jesus Christ deepens, we shall find it increasingly uncomfortable to carry on in a state of sin without going to God to have our sin lifted from us; to restore us once again to that wonderful, marvellous freedom we have experienced before.

It is God's longing and desire that ALL humanity should be able to share the liberating joy of repenting and being forgiven.

Amen.

PRAYERS of intercession

*Let us pray*

May God be glorified now, as we commit ourselves to the work of prayer, interceding for all those in need.

In our worship and our openness to the Spirit of Life, in the Church's longing and outreach, in priests, in the people, in all seekers;  
in all this, **may God be glorified.**

In the welfare programs and peace-making missions, in the struggle to uphold justice, in the aid given to the hungry and homeless;  
in all this, **may God be glorified.**

In the loving and costly commitment of mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, daughters and sons, in the determination to forgive and be forgiven, in all the lives shared and cherished;  
in all this, **may God be glorified.**

In the work of nursing, comforting, and healing, in the daily patient struggle, with pain and weakness, and in the practical, good-humoured caring that we have witnessed during this awful pandemic;  
in all this, **may God be glorified.**

In twilight years and facing death, in lives well lived and now breaking into eternity;  
in all this, **may God be glorified.**

In freedom offered through forgiveness, in the joy of resurrection life, in hope of eternity;  
in all this, **may God be glorified.**

**Amen.**

HYMN: O for a thousand tongues

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my dear Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

2 Jesus! the name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life and health and peace.

3 He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
he sets the prisoner free:  
his blood can make the foulest clean;  
his blood availed for me.

4 He speaks; and, listening to his voice,  
new life the dead receive,  
the mournful broken hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.

5 Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,  
your loosened tongues employ;  
ye blind, behold your Saviour come;  
and leap, ye lame, for joy!

6 My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim  
and spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of thy name.

*Charles Wesley*

THE GRACE

**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.**

**Amen.**

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