

Meeting the Risen Jesus

A liturgy for the Easter season for use at home



You are the Church – We are the Church!

In these strange times where we are having to keep physical distance from each other, we are having to find creative ways of staying connected to each other – as well as to God.

The words in this booklet are very close to those we would have used on Sundays in the Easter season at our 10.30am communion service, but we've adapted them for you to use at home, knowing that your sister and brother Christians will be using them in other places nearby.

If there is more than one of you in your home, you might want to share around the parts of a leader/reader, and all join together in the words in **bold type**. If you are on your own, hopefully you'll feel able to say all the words yourself – either out loud (it's worth trying this!), or quietly in your head and heart.

Behold! Behold!

***I make all things new, beginning with you,
and starting from today.***

Behold! Behold!

***I make all things new, my promise is true,
for I am Christ the way.***

What you'll need

As well as this booklet, you might want to gather together:

- A pot plant or some flowers
- A stone, or another heavy object to hold
- A permanent marker pen (e.g. Sharpie)
- One or more candles, and something to light them with
- A bowl, and a jug of water to pour into it
- A Bible
- A cross, or a picture to remind you of God's presence with you

GATHERING

If the weather is good, you might want to sit in your garden, or on your balcony or doorstep. If you need to stay inside, you might want to have a plant or a flower nearby.

You might be in the habit of lighting a candle at the beginning of your prayers. In this season, we suggest you wait until a little bit later in the service.

Introduction

The garden is the place where life begins.

In a garden, God moulded and breathed life into the first human beings,
and called them to tend the earth and all its creatures.

In a garden, Mary Magdalene met the risen Jesus,
and discovered that God's love is stronger
even than death.

In this Easter season, we return to the garden:

**to meet with Jesus,
to open ourselves afresh
to his love, joy and peace,
and to follow where he leads us.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Prayers of confession

*If you have a stone (or something else that is heavy), take it
and hold it while you reflect:*

- ***What situations are feeling hard and heavy?***
- ***What might God's life and hope look like for those situations?***

The risen Jesus came to his sad and frightened friends,
and said "*Shalom aleikhem* – Peace be with you".
And then they were not afraid, they were glad.

Jesus has come bringing God's peace, joy and love,
and perfect love casts out fear.

*Spend a moment in quiet now, offering to God those things
for which you are sad, sorry, or afraid...*

When we're despairing;
when the world is full of grief;
when we see no way ahead,
and hope has gone away:
Jesus our peace,
come with your light.

Although we fear change;
although we're not ready;
although we'd rather weep and run away:
Jesus our peace,
come with your light.

Because we've come to the garden;
because we hope where hope is vain;
because you call us from the grave
and show the way:
Jesus our peace,
come with your light.

As you lay down the stone and light your candle(s), read these words:

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

In the booklet for each Sunday, you will find:

- *A Collect (Prayer for the Day) to pray*
- *A Psalm from the Hebrew Bible ('the Old Testament'), and a reading from a gospel*
- *A picture and/or a poem to reflect on*
- *A space to offer your prayers to God, and a prayer to end this time*

You might want to end this time with these words:

God of resurrection life:

hear our prayers for your broken world.

Come with your touch of love.

Come with your breath of peace.

Come with your feast of joy.

Amen.

GIVING THANKS

*This is the moment in our normal Sunday service where we would gather around God's table and share communion together. Although we long for the time when we are able to do that again, **Jesus promises to be with us wherever we are** – whether we are with other people, or on our own.*

The prayer that follows is an adapted Eucharistic Prayer for the Easter season – a prayer of thanksgiving (that’s what ‘eucharist’ means) to God, that any of us can pray.

Loving God,
the world you made is beautiful and fragile.
You made us, with all your creatures,
and called us to tend the earth with love.

But the garden you planted, we have trampled;
in the places of life, we have brought death;
your world surprises us with joy,
but we also feel the pain of its brokenness.

Your Holy Spirit,
who brooded over the waters of creation,
in Mary brought Jesus to birth,
one like us,
treading the earth lightly,
bringing healing with his touch
and hope with his words.

In the garden of betrayal
he was arrested by the powers-that-be.
On the hill outside the city
he was crucified,
breathing words of forgiveness,
before he breathed his last.
In the garden where hope was dead and buried,
you rolled away the stone,
and raised him to new life,
by your love, stronger even than death.

To his fearful disciples,
huddled behind locked doors,
he came – and still comes –
breathing peace, and forgiveness, and hope,
and freeing our voices to sing your praise:

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,
holy is the Lord God almighty.
Who was, and is, and is to come,
holy, holy, holy is the Lord.**

So with Jesus we praise you,
with Jesus we pray
for healing for our hurting world,
for locked doors to be flung open,
and for your resurrection life
to be seen, and heard, and tasted and touched
as we proclaim with confidence:

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

As your Spirit groans
for the renewal of all creation,
send your Spirit on us
that we may be channels of your peace,
witnesses to your hope,
and dwellers in your joy,
through Jesus Christ,
life-giver, pain-bearer, love-maker.

Amen.

*We join together in saying **The Lord's Prayer** (in whatever version is most familiar)*

**Our Father
in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today
our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into
temptation.
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory
are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.**

**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.**

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

God of resurrection,
we thank you for meeting us here
as we offer our prayers and praises to you.
As our journey continues,
open our eyes to see your presence,
open our ears to hear your voice,
and open our hands to receive you with joy,
that one day
all creation might shout ALLELUIA!
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Before you finish this act of worship, you might want to write a word on your stone – or draw a small picture – of something that you hope and pray for your neighbourhood today (e.g. peace, love, hope, joy). Think about where in your neighbourhood, when we're able to move freely again without risk of infection, you might like to place this stone.

When you're ready, say these words:

Where compassion is earthed

Christ is risen!

Where generosity overflows

Christ is risen!

Where trust takes root

Christ is risen!

Where friendship grows

Christ is risen!

Where hope blossoms

Christ is risen!

Hold your hands open to receive Jesus' peace, for you today.

Though the doors were locked,
the risen Christ came
and stood among his fearful disciples.
He showed them his wounded hands,
he breathed on them the breath of life,
and he said:

Peace be with you.

Peace be with you.

Peace be with you.

He breathes his peace on us today.

Amen!

As you finish, think for a moment:

Who could you make contact with, to offer Jesus' greeting of 'peace be with you' today?

You could make a phone call or, if you're able, have a face-to-face conversation (so long as you're at least 2m or 6' apart!): could they open their door or window?

Pray. Love. Give...

If you are able to give financially at this time, we invite you to continue to do so. Although we are unable to meet together on Sundays, the work of Hodge Hill Church continues, and we continue contributing to the common funds of the wider Church too. There are also ways in which you can support vital lifelines for our neighbours in these challenging times.

Please consider giving online, or via telephone banking, to one or more of the following:

- **Hodge Hill Church** (joint account – to enable our ongoing mission and ministry)

Sort code: 30-93-09

A/c no: 01912563

- **Bethany Foodbank** (supporting people in the Hodge Hill area with emergency food supplies)

Sort code: 40-11-07

A/c no: 81642995

Reference: LoveYourNeighbour

- **Hodge Hill community mutual aid fund** (supporting people in the Hodge Hill area who are facing serious financial challenges at this time)

Sort code: 30-93-09

A/c no: 06465158

Payee: Hodge Hill PCC

Reference: LoveYourNeighbour

