

An act of Worship for Kettering and Corby Circuit on Sunday 26th April 2020
Prepared by Pat Basson

Words adapted from Peter's first letter:

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, exiles scattered throughout Burton Latimer, Corby, Cottingham, Desborough, Kettering and Rothwell (and beyond), who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance..... In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Welcome. We may be physically separated but we worship today joined by the Spirit.

Lets sing STF 628 Faithful One, so Unchanging

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PjSO5Thl0M>

Faithful One, so unchanging,
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again.
I call out to you again and again.
You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm your love is the anchor,
my hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)

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A prayer of worship at Easter written by Nick Fawcett

Almighty God, with joy and praise, **with awe and wonder,**
with gladness and celebration, **we bring our Easter worship.**

We lift up our hearts, **we lift up our thoughts,**
we lift up our voices, **we lift up our souls,**
recognising afresh all you have done for us in Christ.

We rejoice in the message of this day, **the Good News at the heart of our faith -**
light after darkness, **joy after sorrow,**
good after evil, **life after death!**

Almighty God, speak to us again today through all we read,
all we hear, all we sing, all we do.

May the truth of the resurrection inspire us with new hope.
May the victory of Christ fill us with new joy.
May the reality of his presence fill us with new faith.
And so may we serve you with new vigour to the glory of your name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Today we're sharing another of the resurrection appearance stories, Luke 24: 13-35 but we'll listen to it in the form of a video "The Seriously Surprising Story" produced by the Bible Society.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndtnZV-5QTo&t=15s>

When you hear the story of the walk to Emmaus do you sometimes wonder, like me, why Cleopas and his companion failed to recognise Jesus? Have you ever come across someone in a shop, in a cinema, in a restaurant and looked at them with a vague feeling that you've seen them before, but you just can't place them? We get used to seeing people in a certain setting or context and when this is taken away we struggle to identify them. Could that be the reason? Or maybe it was their grief and shock at what had happened that clouded their sight, like Mary in the garden. After all Jesus was the last person they would have been expecting to see.

On the walk back to Emmaus time passed, conversation, teaching and an invitation to join in a meal. And then the moment of truth, the breaking of the bread. I wonder could it have been that Cleopas and his friend were at the passover meal shared in the upper room when Jesus broke the bread and said "This is my body broken for you" before his betrayal, trial and crucifixion. Suddenly their eyes were opened and they recognised him. Jesus, not dead but risen, alive, triumphant. Hallelujah.

Life for most of us right now is unsettling to say the least. For many the bottom has dropped out of their world, there is anxiety, grief, confusion, loneliness, similar emotions to those felt by Cleopas and his companion on their journey back from Jerusalem.

So where is the unrecognised Jesus walking alongside? He is the nurse or doctor holding the hand of the patient dying in isolation. He is the volunteer delivering food to the shut in. He is the friend phoning, texting, emailing to make sure I'm OK. Because the risen Jesus is at work in so many places where we probably wouldn't expect or believe he could be and so he goes unrecognised. Lord, open our eyes to see you wherever you are.

"Recognising You" a video poem by Engage Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j12TJruN7fl>

An intercession prayer written by Nick Fawcett

Loving God,
we praise you for this day of celebration,
this day of praise, this day of thanksgiving,
a day that changes the way we think,
the way we act, the way we live - that changes everything.
Lord of life, **hear our prayer.**

And so we pray now for change in our world,
for change in all those places where there is human need.
We pray for the poor, the homeless, the sick and the hungry.
Lord of life, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the victims of war, for refugees,
for divided communities and countries,
Lord of life, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sorrowful, the fearful,
the troubled in heart and mind.
Lord of life, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the oppressed, the persecuted,
the imprisoned and the exploited.
Lord of life, **hear our prayer.**

Living God, may the truth of Easter
break into each and every one of these situations,
bringing help and healing, strength and support,
comfort and courage, hope and help,
faith and freedom, love and life, the change you alone can bring.
Lord of life, **hear our prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
Amen.

Let's bring our act of worship to a close with the hymn STF 296

"Christ has risen while earth slumbers"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2e1glH6vgNk>

Christ has risen

while earth slumbers,

Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised,
as we doubted and denied.

Let the moon embrace the blessing;
let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumour.
Christ is risen, God is here!

2 Christ has risen for the people
whom he loved and died to save;
Christ has risen for the women
bringing flowers to grace his grave.
Christ has risen for disciples
huddled in an upstairs room.
He whose word inspired creation
is not silenced by the tomb.

3 Christ has risen to companion
former friends who fear the night,
sensing loss and limitation
where their faith had once burned

bright.

They bemoan what is no longer,
they expect no hopeful sign
till Christ ends their conversation,
breaking bread and sharing wine.

4 Christ has risen and forever
lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or
mangled,
all who find religion strange.
Christ is risen. Christ is present,
making us what he has been —
evidence of transformation
in which God is known and seen.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham
Maule (b. 1958)

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