

Sunday 12th April '26 (2nd Sunday of Easter) (prayers from Roots)

Call to worship

Come and know the Lord your God.
Come and know the joy of your God.
Come and know the love of your God.
Come and know by faith alone.

Hymn StF 155 Come, Holy Ghost

Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,
let us thine influence prove;
source of the old prophetic fire,
fountain of life and love.

Come, Holy Ghost (for moved by thee
the prophets wrote and spoke),
unlock the truth, thyself the key,
unseal the sacred book.

Expand thy wings, celestial Dove,
brood o'er our nature's night;
on our disordered spirits move,
and let there now be light.

God through himself we then shall know,
if thou within us shine;
and sound, with all thy saints below,
the depths of love divine.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Prayers

Heavenly Father, although we can't see you, we love you, and we know your voice.
We answer your call to draw close to you today.
Setting aside our other cares and concerns, we gather together to know you better in worship.

A prayer of confession

Lord, in some traditions, today is known as Low Sunday, and we confess that is how we often feel after the celebration of Easter.
We love the holidays, the days of feasting and joy when we share our faith together.
Remind us that we are drawn together in knowing you better, through the companionship of one another travelling together in the ordinary every day as well as the celebratory holy days.

Assurance of forgiveness

Heavenly Father, sometimes when our faith is tested, we falter; we fail to live up to your holy standards. But with you, Lord, there is forgiveness.

We call to mind any times this week when we have fallen short in faith.

We feel your forgiveness refreshing us, lightening our load.

Thank you for knowing our hearts.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: John 20 19-31

Reflection Knowing together



What does it feel like when out of a group of friends you are the only one who doesn't know something. You may feel on the margins, not included, sidelined. Maybe this is how Thomas felt when he returned from wherever he had been to find he wasn't there when one of the most important thing ever happened. Jesus had appeared to the disciples. It would be natural to become a little defensive and awkward in the reply when told about the event. 'Well if I don't see the marks in his hands and feel the cut in his side I won't believe.' Perhaps you have made a comment a bit like that when someone tells you about an event that starts 'You'll never guess what happened to me....' After all maybe, just maybe the disciples were having a joke at his expense and Jesus hadn't appeared at all. Well about a week later Thomas had a chance to believe for himself when Jesus reappeared and he was able to see what the others had said was true. He too was able to join in the conversations about the time when... no longer on the margins.

There are all sorts of things that we experience that are better when experienced with others. That ability to talk about the time when... is a way of reliving and re-experiencing those feelings. Some things are really hard on your own, for example you can do a jigsaw on your own but playing a board game is not a lot of fun. I was talking to a friend recently who lives on their own and loves chess. (I don't play) They were telling me with great delight that they had found a zoom chess club which meant they could play in real time and how exciting that was. The look on their face was one of real happiness and delight. The sort of look I imagine Thomas may have had once he'd got over the shock of Jesus actually being in front of him.

What would you do if Jesus was stood in front of you? How would you know it was him?

What would you ask him?
What would you tell him about?
Would you actually believe what was happening?

The disciples were working out how to manage without Jesus to physically lead them. How to fill the gap. But we have a clear instruction from Jesus himself.

“Whatever you do for others, you do for me.”

So as we journey through the few weeks following Easter I encourage us all to think about that instruction and to share the love of Jesus with others.

Prayers for others

Lord, lead us forward:

lead us closer to you.

Lord Jesus, we come to you today full of the thoughts of the week that has just passed – a week when your disciples had such a rollercoaster of emotions as they heard that you were alive; doubted the news of their friends; saw you for themselves and experienced your risen presence. As we think, in the stillness, of the week we have had we also acknowledge times of joy; confusion; sorrow; disbelief. We bring our emotions and experiences to you now. Help us to see them with your eyes. Help us to step forward from this moment with renewed understanding of who you are and who you call us to be.

Lord, lead us forward:

lead us closer to you.

We pray today for our world. We pause for a moment to consider all the places that we have heard about in the news this week. Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, we remember places where there has been unrest and violence. Lord, you offered peace to the confused disciples in the upper room, yet the world is still such a place of strife. Help us to breathe deeply of your peace and learn to be peacemakers ourselves wherever we are.

Lord, lead us forward:

lead us closer to you.

Lord Jesus, the comforter, we pray for all those we know who are sick, sad or sorrowful today. We pause to name them out loud or in our hearts. Lord, we saw your love and compassion as you wept at the death of your friend, so we ask you to come especially close to these people we have named. Help them to know that your arms of love are wrapped around them. And help us to be bringers of comfort in our places of learning, work or recreation this week.

Lord, lead us forward:

lead us closer to you.

Lord, the first disciples were afraid of what might happen to them after your death. We pray for all those who live in fear for whatever reason. Bring them

release from their fears and anxieties and help them to see a brighter future ahead.

Lord, lead us forward:

lead us closer to you.

Lord Jesus, you gave Thomas the assurance of your reality. We pray for all those we know who need the same reassurance... We pray that you will give us courage to tell our friends and family that we believe and trust in a crucified but risen Lord. Help us to be people of hope and to bring that same hope to everyone we meet

Lord, lead us forward:

lead us closer to you.

Lead us to the brightness and assurance of your resurrected glory.

Amen.

While sitting in a short time of quiet bring your own thoughts and concerns to the Lord.

Hymn StF 508 Purify my heart

Purify my heart,
let me be as gold and precious silver.
Purify my heart,
let me be as gold, pure gold.

*Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire
is to be holy, set apart for you Lord.
I choose to be holy, set apart for you my master,
ready to do your will.*

Purify my heart,
cleanse me from within and make me holy.
Purify my heart,
cleanse me from my sin, deep within.

Brian Doerksen (b 1965)

Closing prayer

Dear God,
thank you that we can know you
and that we know you in different ways.
Help us to know you more as we go out
and share your love with all we meet.

Amen.

As we come to the grace, cup your hands together and imagine all those you hold dear cradled there, then bring them close to your heart as you say the words:

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever more. Amen