

Peace be unto your home and all who dwell in it

Introduction by Don and Ro Rodgers

This is the day the Lord has made: we will rejoice and be glad in it (psalm 118)
Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is
God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5 16-18)

A cheer up for everyone. Sunshine in the shadows of life.

It is Jesus' life we live so wonderfully, so many blessings.

Love and prayers

Don & Ro XX

Hymn

This is the day

<https://youtu.be/ViedvSdt0gc>

Thanksgiving and confession

Loving God

This is the day you have made
We thank you for all those good things which surround us –
our homes and families and our friends,
the vastness of the universe
the beauty of the natural world
the sights and sounds of everyday life

For all that you have given we praise and worship you

Loving God

You are ever at work in our lives and our world
striving to help and strengthen, heal and comfort
restore and forgive

We thank you for all the opportunities this day will bring to serve you
And we thank you for the love of Christ encircling us and his Spirit guiding us

For all that you have given we praise and worship you

Loving God

Forgive us that we have sometimes lost sight of your great love
that we have been forgetful of you, greeting some days with indifference,
even reluctance, instead of welcoming them as your gift.

We have failed to count our blessings,
we have not shown thanksgiving in our hearts,
and have not lived as your people.

Have mercy on our weakness, pardon our sins, renew our faith

And restore us to your side
that with your help, through the grace of Christ
and the power of the Holy Spirit
we may be empowered to live more faithfully,
act more carefully and serve you more diligently
this day and evermore. Amen

May our mighty God, who makes all things new,
fill us now with new faith, new commitment,
new purpose and new life,
through the power of the risen Christ. Amen

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!
He is Risen indeed Alleluia.

Collect for the 3rd Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ
you filled our disciples with boldness and fresh hope
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace
to the glory of God, the Father. Amen

First reading

Acts 2; 14a, 36-41

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.'

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers what should we do?' ³⁸ Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' ⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' ⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Hymn

All I once held dear
(knowing you Jesus)

<https://youtu.be/oxpPIa-BskY>

Gospel reading

Luke 24; 13-35

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” ⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.^[e]

The Walk to Emmaus

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” ¹⁹He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us.

They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” ²⁵ Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So, he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

Jane had been listening to the last week's Morning Service on the BBC. She found it very moving. There was a report from a Prison Visitor in a South American Country who described the total isolation of prisoners and how one woman was enraptured by the sound of birdsong. The pandemic meant that for once the traffic was stilled and the birds could be heard.

Jane writes:

We are SO, SO, lucky. Yet I never take nature for granted: on the contrary, it's my therapy. The prisoner was enraptured at the sound of birdsong. How absolutely awful to be without it! I even deliberately wake up in the early hours to listen to the dawn chorus. It's just so magical!!

A couple of days ago, I felt almost guilty at the enormous happiness I felt (amongst all of this horror) at the unexpected sight of a thrush having a bath in a dish of water on the ground amongst shrubs outside my bedroom window. Thrushes are so rare nowadays.

It was such a privilege to watch this dear, shy little bird enjoying a long splash-about, fluttering her wings, dipping her head beneath the water, stopping every now and again to check that all was safe, then starting all over again! Then, she hopped on to a branch of a nearby camellia and had a long, thorough preen. Magical!

Truly a God-given gift, unblemished by Man.



The disciples must have been horrified at the joy of Cleopas and his companion as they burst into the upper room. They were so wrapped in their fear and distress they couldn't take in the wonder of the moment. Just as a few hours later Thomas would also refuse to accept the joy of Easter morning.

Now with so many dying of Covid 19, nurses and doctors losing their lives as they care for the sick, joy seems an inappropriate reaction.

And yet, cooped up in lockdown we suddenly find that the smallest things do give us a profound sense of joy. A picture of Thomas eating a custard tart, Emily in her bath, the sight of sunlight glinting on the windblown water, the daisies on the country park that managed to duck when the mower went across the grass.

All these things give us a sense of life reasserting itself, of the continuity of nature and beauty.

Jane followed up her email of last week with another

I just HAVE to share this with you!! A shining light in this awful darkness that's engulfed the world.

Every year, a mother duck nests in the horse chestnut tree in our neighbours' front garden. Once the ducklings are born, they have to drop quite some distance on to the grass below. They then have to somehow find their way to Pannels Brook, which means negotiating traffic (thankfully far less at the moment but, nevertheless, sometimes ridiculously fast). Easier said than done, because the gardens of many properties along Mill Road are "secure", hence no access through to the field behind... which the Mummy Duck needs to cross in order to lead the ducklings to the stream.

By chance, Richard glanced out of our front window this morning, only to see the ducklings being led up our drive, under the 5-bar gate, and on to the road, heading towards Southminster Road. He alerted me and, whilst he and some neighbours tried to head the duck family away from the main road, I phoned a neighbour whose garden we'd used previously as an escape route. They got their dogs inside but the (bird-loving) cat escaped. One of them rushed down and sorted access into the field whilst the other risked life and limb and grabbed the cat!

Once we'd shepherded the little family through to the field, one would have expected things to be plain sailing. Definitely not, this year!

Just as the duck family was waddling into the field (Mummy quacking to them constantly, and the little bundles of fluff -who must already be so exhausted- tweeting in little high-pitched voices), we saw a dog walker approaching with three dogs off the lead. Another neighbour called out and asked her to put the dogs on leads. Thankfully, she was just in time, as it appears that the youngest one chases birds. Disaster averted!

Safe at last? No fear! The field was being seeded!! However, the tractor driver obligingly halted tractor and equipment so that we could carry on with our journey.

By this time, I think we were ALL exhausted!! WHAT a brave mother duck. It never ceases to amaze me, the lengths that they will go to, to protect their young.

Finally, we were able to guide the little family towards an area of riverbank that was relatively weed/nettle free, but the mother duck had already smelt the water by then. She led the nine little ducklings down into the water, where they pirouetted in circles before following their mother. Was it just fantasy, or did she look up at us before making her way downstream?

A very wonderful, emotional happening. God is good!! Thanks be to God!!



In these days, with so much to worry us, so much to fear, the saving of these little lives seems essential – they represent how precious life is to us – all life. This is a triumph of hope over adversity – something that we all need to hear.

Feeling a sense of joy in the face of all the bleakness of the news is not inappropriate, Far from it. It is a recognition that there is so much

good in the world, so much to be thankful for. And with the Easter Story so much in our minds, there is hope.

As the scriptures say; when I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have set in the sky, what are human beings that you care for them. (Psalm 8)

Or; there's not a single thing in this universe, - no star, no mountain, no puppy, no duckling, no flower – that wasn't planned, designed and given to us by God and meant by God to do one thing.

What?

To make our hearts sing.

(from Thoughts to make your hearts sing by Sally Lloyd-Jones}

So, let us remind ourselves of the miracle of Easter in this version of the Creed which is based on word from St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians

The Creed

Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself and was obedient to death
Even death on the cross. Therefore, God has raised him on high,
And given him the name above every name;
That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow
And every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord
To the glory of God, the Father. Amen. [cf *Philippians 2; 6-11*]

Hymn
Psalm 23, Stuart Townend

<https://youtu.be/pN4tPkX0MG0>

Intercessions

Written by Maureen Noye

Another day dawns Lord and with it comes feelings of great sadness, fear and
strangely joy

It is with heavy hearts we face another day of not being able to see, hug or care
for our dearest family and friends

But the joy each day when we are able contact them and are able to tell them
how much we love them.

The fear and sadness we feel as we await the latest death figures

But also, the joy Lord of knowing You are there for us during this difficult time.

We give you thanks Lord for the skills and bravery You have bestowed on
people

The scientists as they work in their laboratories trying to develop a vaccine

The volunteers bravely allowing their bodies to be used to test these vaccines

The medical and ancillary staff in our hospitals devotedly carrying out their duty
of care to their patients

The care workers both those working in care homes and domiciliary carers
tending to the care of the elderly and infirm

The politicians tasked with having to find ways to keep our country safe

Our spiritual leaders who are finding so many ways to provide for our spiritual
needs

The armed forces deployed to defend us albeit in a very different form of
defence

The postal workers, the refuse collectors, the shop workers and delivery drivers
who bravely deliver the services we need

And last but not least the thousands of volunteers doing what they can for who
they can in their own communities

We gain strength knowing You are always there Lord, there for us when we
need You the most

We pray that those whom we know and those known only to you, especially those who have succumbed to this unrelenting virus felt Your presence during their darkest hours

We remember especially

Alex, Anne & Geoff, Catherine, Derek & Val, Eileen, Frances, Harriet, Jacky, Matthew and Lucy, Michelle, Peter, Val Adams, Jake Agnew, Elizabeth Bailey & family; Ken Baker, Peter Black, Nonnie Bridge, Doreen Clarke, David Kloose [Close], Guy Coxeter, Jim Cromar, Beryl Dabson, Peter Dickinson, Barry Dowsett, Jean Foster, Tom & Kylie Freeman & Family, Doreen Gilbert, Gillian Grafham, Eddie Gordon, Richard Green, Kaye Head, Kath House, Stephen Johnson, Hayden Keeling, Colin Lister, Rene M, Claire and Andrew MacLeod, Rhys Maples, David McNeill, Jim Melhuish, Carole Noble, Harriet Pearson, Cecilia Phelps, Dave Phillips, Robert Price, Martin Taylor and, Doug Watson, and the family and friends of the late David Fleming, Mike Davies, Neil Gretton, Lynette Hansell and Joe Dalzell

And we pray that those who have lost their loved ones and were unable to be with them in their final hours rest in the knowledge that You were there to gather them into Your loving arms and guide them into Your Holy Kingdom safe in the knowledge that one day they will be together again.

Merciful Father

accept these prayers

for the sake of your son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

We pray in confidence the prayer Jesus has taught us

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.

Closing Prayer

Now from here Oh God
We journey on our way
What need we fear
When you are near
O king of night and day
More safe are we within your hand
than if a host did round us stand
Our lives we yield to your command
And bow to your control
In peaceful calm, for from your arm
No power can snatch our soul
Could earthly foes ever appal
A soul that heeds the heavenly call
Attributed to St Columba -6th C

Farewell

Lord Jesus Christ
You are the peace of all things calm
You are the place to hide from harm
You are the light that shines in dark
You are the heart's eternal spark
You are the door that's open wide
You are the guest who waits inside
You are the stranger at the door
You are the calling of the poor
You are my Lord and with me still
You are my love, keep me from ill
You are the light, the truth, the way
You are my Saviour this very day.

Amen

Closing hymn

To God be the glory

<https://youtu.be/-15v9iworAU>

The Lord bless us and keep us

The Lord make his face to shine upon us

The Lord. give us his strength, his joy and his peace

And support and sustain all those we love and pray for

This day and evermore. Amen

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed Alleluia