

# Trinity United Reformed Church Wimbledon



**Sunday 19 April 2020**

**Order of Service for Worship At Home**

## ***Preparation***

*You might like to use this resource at 11am on Sunday: it will be good to know that, even whilst we can't meet in person at the church, Trinity folk will be 'gathering' for worship at the same time. However, it can be used at any time on Sunday or during the week. A video of this service will be made available via Trinity's website in time for 11am on Sunday (though with slight adaptations), so you may like to follow along.*

*If possible, find somewhere to sit where you won't be distracted. Turn off your mobile phone, and have some calm music playing beforehand. You might like to have a candle to light, a pen and paper to hand, and a jar in which to place your offering.*

*It may seem odd, but try reading aloud for the parts of the service in normal type (you don't need to recite the sections in italics, which are for information, instruction, or reflection). You could even try singing the hymns – but if that makes you feel too self-conscious, then simply read the words!*

## ***Gathering in God's presence***

*If you have one, light a candle.*

### **Call to Worship** *based on Acts 2.24, 26*

God has raised up Jesus, freeing him from death,  
because it was impossible for him to be held in death's power.  
Therefore let hearts be glad,  
let tongues rejoice,  
let us live this day in hope.

### **Hymn**

Crown him with many crowns,  
the Lamb upon his throne;  
hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns  
all music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy chosen King  
through all eternity.

Crown him the Son of God,  
before the worlds began:  
and ye, who tread where he hath trod,  
crown him the Son of Man;

who every grief hath known  
that wrings the human breast,  
and takes and bears them for his own,  
that all in him may rest.

Crown him the Lord of life,  
who triumphed o'er the grave,  
and rose victorious in the strife  
for those he came to save:  
his glories now we sing  
who died, and rose on high;  
who died eternal life to bring,  
and lives that death may die.

Crown him, the Lord of Love!  
Behold his hands and side,  
rich wounds, yet visible above  
in beauty glorified.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail!  
for thou hast died for me:  
thy praise shall never, never fail  
throughout eternity.

*M. Bridges altd., G. Thring (public domain text). Tune: "Diademata"*

### **Praying our Praise & Thanksgiving**

*Pause to make a note (mentally or on paper!) of three things for which to be thankful. If you're sharing in this act of worship with others in your household, you might like to talk about and identify these three things together. Then recite this prayer.*

Lord our loving God:  
we praise you, for you have brought us to birth,  
and now by your great mercy  
you give us new birth into a community of hope  
in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For our sake he was handed over to suffer for our sake  
at Golgotha, the place of the skull, the place of death.  
But death could not hold him:  
you raised him up,  
and even the locked doors of our fear cannot keep him out.  
Among us today, and wherever his friends are found,  
Christ's presence and Christ's peace are made known,  
so that eyes may be opened, and spirits lifted,  
in gratitude and praise.

Today we give you thanks especially for... *(name the thanksgivings you've noted).*

Now may we, who have not seen Jesus,  
still know his breath upon us, to seal us in the Holy Spirit,  
the assurance of salvation which is our inheritance through faith.  
Keep us bound together in a community of mercy and mutual trust,  
united in Christ, our Lord and our God, now and always.  
Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer** *Use either of these forms, or a version/language of your choice:*

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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and 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.

## ***Listening for God's Word***

### **Bible Reading: John 20:19-31**

**19** When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21** Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' **22** When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

**24** But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

**26** A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' **27** Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' **28** Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' **29** Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

**30** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. **31** But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

### **Theme Introduction**

*Sometimes when we read from the Bible, it can feel hard to find a connection between those ancient words and our lives today. The context is so different, the way that people lived and struggled, without the technological advances (for example in communication and transport) that are so familiar to us.*

*But in the Bible's Easter narratives which we're reading this particular year, there seem to be no shortage of points of contact between their world and ours. The uncertainties and anxieties being faced amid the current Covid-19 pandemic give us something in common with the first disciples of Jesus as they struggled to come to terms with his crucifixion, and with what they were hearing about his empty tomb.*

*Today, though, the message of our Gospel reading is one of reassurance and renewal. Jesus came and stood among his disciples, and said "Peace be with you." And seeing him, they rejoiced.*

*Jesus is risen. The tomb has been vacated – he lives. And just as he has not been defeated by the cross of death, so assuredly he will not be defeated by any virus of fear.*

*Still the followers and friends of Jesus, in the Gospel story and in our story, meet behind closed doors, because they must. In their case, out of fear of the Judean authorities who had conspired to have Jesus put to death; in our case, out of a concern and determination to play our part in protecting one another by slowing the spread of the virus.*

*Again, let this be a point of contact for us. It is behind closed doors that Jesus comes calling. If the heavy stone can't keep Jesus in the tomb, then locks and bolts can't keep Jesus out of our houses.*

*Admittedly, like Thomas, we may not always 'get' that straight away. For him it was necessary to see Jesus, to be able to touch him, if he was going to trust what his friends were now telling him about his risen Lord.*

*But I think Jesus' words to him are intended more as a comfort and an invitation for us: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."*

*Seen or unseen, Jesus is risen – and he can come to meet us even behind closed doors!*

***[The video of the service will include a Junior Church item at this point]***

### **Hymn**

O Breath of life, come sweeping through us,  
revive your Church with life and power,  
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
and fit your Church to meet this hour.

O Wind of God, come, bend us, break us,  
till humbly we confess our need;  
then in your tenderness remake us,  
revive, restore; for this we plead.

O Breath of love, come, breathe within us  
renewing thought and will and heart;  
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
revive your Church in every part.

*Bessie Porter Head (public domain text). Tune: "Spiritus Vitae"*

## **Bible Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

8 Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

## **Reflection**

*Reading the words of 1 Peter chapter 1, it again feels like there's a clear point of contact with our present circumstance. The apostle speaks of the Christian community having "to suffer various trials" - and whilst of course it's not just faith communities currently facing restrictions and the closure of buildings, we certainly share in the suffering and the trials.*

*But the writer's focus isn't upon the ordeal in itself; and it would be a mistake to interpret his words here - about having the "genuineness of your faith... tested by fire" - as a suggestion that this is all some kind of inquisition to root out the individuals whose spirituality isn't sufficiently robust. Instead this is imagery borrowed from the process of purifying precious metals; and so the "genuineness" is not a test of quality, but rather an assurance that the one in whom we believe is authentic and trustworthy indeed. For this reason, says the apostle, we can rejoice and be joyful even in the midst of our troubles - and this joy is the true focus of the passage.*

*What's more, there is a particular character and context to our rejoicing. Uppermost in the mind of this Letter's author - and in the mind of the writer of John's Gospel from which we read earlier - is the significance of the COMMUNITY of faith, as the setting in which mutual love and encouragement is expressed and shared as we come to know Christ's presence together. In 1 Peter chapter 1, the "you" being addressed by the writer is always plural - it's the believers TOGETHER in their fellowship. And similarly in the Gospel passage, it is to the community of gathered disciples that Jesus appears, breathing upon them words of peace and the promise of God's Spirit.*

*Today at Trinity we give thanks for this community of faith in which Jesus has brought us together, and through which he continues to meet and minister to us. And as a sign of Christ's presence with us in community, our worship today includes the Ordination and Induction of Elders who will share in a ministry of service and leadership in our church.*

*At its best and most authentic, this is a community that will be open and hospitable, still ready to receive and accommodate even such folk as Thomas, folk on the fringes and at risk of missing out, of being passed by. That's especially important just now, of course. So, let's continue to keep in touch with one another at Trinity, by phone or online or even by post. And let's continue to be mindful especially of all who might be*

*on the fringes of our church community and our local community. It would be terribly easy to become inward-looking; but even if the doors of our church and our homes must remain closed at the moment, let's be sure not to lock the doors of our hearts.*

## ***Responding to God's grace***

***[The video of the service will at this point include Ordination & Induction of Elders, recorded a few days previously.]***

### ***Praying for Needs & Concerns (today written by Michael Young)***

Dear Lord, we come unto you this morning, not as usual gathered in our church, but from our homes in the various parts of London and beyond gathered together by means of modern technology with all its frustrations especially those of us who are older. We do not know how long it is going to be before we can all come together again in Mansel Road – be with us all during this strange and difficult time.

Lord, be with all the people of this world, none of us are untouched by Covid-19. Especially we pray for those who have contracted this terrible virus and are suffering greatly from it, be also with those who only had mild symptoms and those who are worried that they may have been exposed to it. We think especially of those living in the poorer countries and those living in cramped and insanitary conditions where any disease can rapidly spread. Even here in the UK there are families living in one room with shared cooking and bathing facilities – Lord be with them and help them.

We pray for the bereaved, for the relatives and friends who are worried about loved ones and those who must suffer alone for fear of passing on the virus to others. Be with those in isolation specially the elderly and vulnerable, those who cannot understand why their family and friends cannot visit and those whose heart longs for a cuddle or kiss from their nearest and dearest.

At times like these that the best, and sadly sometimes the worst, of us comes to the fore, dear Lord we pray that it will always be the best. We thank you so much for our NHS and ask that you will be with everyone working in that organisation, we have all come to realise that we are dependent upon all whether they are cleaners, porters, auxiliary workers, nurses, doctors, surgeons, administrative staff -all play their part. Be with others who work in the emergency services, carers whether paid or unpaid, staff in food stores and pharmacies, delivery drivers, postmen and women, public transport staff, dustmen and women, teachers and broadcasters. When this terrible situation ends be with us and our governments so that we never forget the important part all these and others play in our lives.

Dear Lord many of our NHS staff and carers have had difficulty obtaining PPE and are thus at increased risk of contracting the virus and passing it on to others. Be with all those ordering, producing, delivering and distributing the PPE and ensure that red tape does not prevent this reaching those who need it so badly.

Lord be with the parliaments and assemblies in our four nations and with the local authorities and all those who serve in them that they will govern wisely for the benefit of all their people.

We pray for all those who have lost jobs temporarily or permanently and those whose

businesses have taken much toil and sacrifice to set up. Lord be with them all and with the agencies who are trying to help them.

Some people are having to go out to work knowing that this puts them at risk because they must earn money to pay their rent and purchase food, Lord be with them and keep them safe.

Today, at Trinity, we should have been saying good bye to Dominic, Miriam and Matt as Dominic moves to his new ministry, we are so thankful that he has decided to stay with us to see this crisis through and we pray for him and for the people of Barnet and Chesterfield Road United Reformed Churches who have lent Dominic to us for a little longer. Be with us all here at Trinity and in the wider URC during this period and grant that we will come out of it stronger in our faith and mission.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

### **Offertory**

*This is an opportunity to set aside your regular financial contribution to Trinity's ongoing work and witness. You might like to put it in a jar for now, ready to be brought in person when circumstances allow. Then say the prayer below (if you already participate in Trinity's Planned Giving scheme via direct bank transfer, then simply recite the prayer – no need for a jar!).*

Generous God, your gift to me  
is life, and sustenance, and hope.  
I bring to you my gift, and myself.  
Receive, Lord, and bless:  
so that both gift and giver  
may bring blessing to others,  
and glory to your name. Amen.

### **Hymn**

Blest be the tie that binds  
our hearts in Christian love;  
the fellowship of kindred minds  
is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne  
we pour our heartfelt prayers:  
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
our comforts and our cares.

When for a while we part,  
this thought shall soothe our pain:  
that we shall still be joined in heart,  
until we meet again.

This glorious hope revives  
our courage on the way:  
so each in expectation lives  
of Christ's reunion day.

*John Fawcett altd. (public domain text). Tune: "Franconia"*

**Blessing**

Keep the LORD always before you;  
so that in the assurance of God's presence,  
you may never be cast down.  
Find there the path of life;  
and in God's presence the fulness of joy.  
So may the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be upon us and among all who are dear to us,  
whether near or far, today and always. Amen.