

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN



Easter to Pentecost Prayer Resource



Our hope for this booklet is that you will go on a journey with God between Easter and Pentecost. The words on the back cover refer to the picture on the front. They may be relevant at many points on your journey.

We offer the set gospel readings for the Sundays in the period and stories, poems and prayers written by people from our circuit who share something of their walk with God. We pray the bible readings or the personal accounts will help you remember aspects of your faith journey and give you a yearning for a more vibrant relationship with our loving God and a desire to share the transforming reality of this with others.

The gospel readings are linked to questions that we hope will give you much to reflect upon and to pray about. There are also short prayers that you could use daily in the week they appear.

For the last week of the journey we will join Christians everywhere as they respond to a call to prayer issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The core of this initiative are the words **"Thy kingdom come . . ."** but the focus this year is prayer that more people will come to know Christ. Our hope is that your reflections during this time will lead you to a place where you can pray this in a deep and heartfelt way.

We finish at Pentecost, a timely reminder that we are utterly dependent on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in everything we undertake and everything we are.

May the blessings of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you.

Easter Sunday John 20:1-8

Surprise / Joy / Reassurance

In your on-going relationship with God what has surprised you?

What has caused you joy?

Where have you found reassurance?

Loving God,

Thank you for raising Jesus from the dead.

Thank you for the hope and joy and reassurance that brings.

Help me to remember this incredible, surprising reality every day so that I may have new life with you always.

Thank you for the people who brought me to Christ and the reality of his risen power.

Thank you for the people around me who are still sharing what Christ means to them today.

Amen

An occasion when I felt close to the presence of Jesus

Standing by the open grave, the cold wind found its way between my cassock and my surplice, sending chills over my body, which mirrored the mood of the mourners with their falling tears and their clutched hankies.

I started the words " We commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust..." The coffin was lowered. There was sobbing. The sound of the wind, caused me to raise my voice as I spoke the next words " In the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life."

As I finished that sentence, the chill wind suddenly died down and one of the West Indian mourners started up a song: When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there. Despite the cold and despite the tears, there came a strange warmth at that graveside. It felt like we had been wrapped around.

In that place of bereavement and grief there was the assurance of the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the life everlasting. I felt that the risen Lord was standing amongst us.

June Hardcastle

Who represents us in the Easter story?

I had spent a week at a county show ground in Peterborough, at Kingdom Faith Camp, in August, and was travelling down the A1(M) to the M25. As I drove along a story unfolded.

I was in a Roman jail with two friends, we were awaiting crucifixion that day. The conditions in the dark jail were disgusting with the stench of human waste. We blamed each other for the predicament we were in. The guards taunted us with what was about to happen to us, the whips and the nails were dangled before us. "This one will be a screamer" said one " This one will call for his mummy" said another. They roared with laughter and left.

Now none of us spoke as we knew what a Roman crucifixion entailed. A dreadful terror over took us, no escape, we all had to go through this public execution. We trembled with fear at what was about to happen. Suddenly I was hauled to my feet by two Roman soldiers and dragged up towards the light of day; as I got nearer to this light I could hear a crowd shouting my name. As I was carried into the light, I brushed past a bloodied figure.

Then an amazing thing happened, my hands were freed and I was hurled into the crowd. I was free, but why... why? This was my day to die in agony. I deserved to die - I was a criminal. What had happened in the last few hours to change everything? I had been saved by this stranger; he had died on my cross and now I was free.... saved... alive! What would I do now?... I arrived at the M25.

Who are we in the Easter story?

A disciple running for his life in the dark garden?

A Roman governor making a judgement?

A mother standing by a cross, watching?

But my story, unfolded to me on a sunny August day, tells us who we are in the story of God on a cross.

We are Barabbas.

What are we going to do with the rest of our lives ?

Mike Kimber

Easter Morning in Dubai

Every Easter is special but this one changed things for me. It changed the way I feel the presence of the risen Christ in my life. I left the hotel at 4.30am, clutching the pictorial map that the United Church in Dubai had faxed me. They knew that no taxi driver working at that time would speak English or Arabic. I exited the taxi outside the 10 foot walls of the compound in the dark. The gates were shut. Had I been foolish to come?

I was welcomed by a family who came to make breakfast for over 300 people. Together we waited for the doors to open. When they did I helped my new friends gladly, wrestling with the many tables to be put out.

The worship was outside, where we gathered around a baptismal pool. It was still dark and the tone of the worship was sombre, awaiting the dawn, awaiting resurrection. And then the keyboard struck up and we broke into song, and as we did the sun rose above the wall of the compound and hit the glass wall of the church with dazzling brilliance. The light was incredible. It was only then that I saw the teenagers on top of the wall way above our heads celebrating together.

We all sang "Christ the Lord is risen today!". I felt unspeakable joy. Following the dawn service, over twenty baptisms took place with many of the young people saying how deeply Christ had impacted their lives. Inside the church, other people were cooking eggs for those that could stay to share together. I wondered whether they felt they had missed out on the opportunity to witness the baptisms but they were confident that they would get a chance on the following year.

Over breakfast strangers and friends, humbled and moved, shared stories of their lives and rejoiced. Someone gave me a lift back to the hotel. I crept back into bed at 8.00am and Michael, awakening, said. "So you decided not to go then!"

I smiled and revelled in the joy I was feeling and hummed to myself.

Christ the Lord is risen today: Alleluia.

Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia.

Raise your joys and triumphs high: Alleluia

Sing, ye heavens; thou earth reply: Alleluia. by Charles Wesley

Thank you, risen Lord, for all the joy you give us.

Alison Parker

Second Sunday of Easter John 20:19-31

Peace / Doubt / Commission

"Peace be with you". Where do you find peace through the presence of the Risen Jesus? Have you struggled through doubts in your relationship with Christ?

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you." To what and to where do you believe God has sent you?

Loving God,

Thank you for the times you have led us and inspired us when we have struggled with doubts.

Thank you that even though we doubt and are afraid, you trust us and send us to share you with others.

Thank you for the power of your Holy Spirit that fills us with your peace.

Thank you that we can have a transformed life because you give us faith to believe in the risen power of your son, Jesus Christ.

Amen

The Road was Rough

The road was rough, the going tough
I knew not what to do.
Then Jesus came and spoke my name
and helped me work it through.

With Him I walked and with Him talked.
It was so good to pray.
For me He cared, my burden shared
and helped me through each day.

Roy Allen

A time I felt God's presence

It was a month after my son's sudden death. I was sitting on the settee, disconsolate, thinking "Is every day going to be like this from now on?"

I missed him so much and thought about him constantly.

As I sat there, so lost, I felt a presence, like a warm blanket come over from where my son would sit. It enveloped me, it was almost tangible.

I sat there, cocooned. Then it slowly moved away, leaving me totally at peace and knowing that I would never be so low again.

Dorothy Flint

Who are you sending me to?

I have been very aware recently (the Holy Spirit nudging me perhaps), that most of my friends are church goers.

Who could I be praying for that doesn't know my Lord?

The girl that I see several times a week out running, who always smiles as she runs past? Perhaps.

But who else is there? How do I get to know those who don't know Jesus? It would be of little use my randomly joining things, as my lack of real interest and enthusiasm would soon show.

In my younger days, I used to read 'Jackie'. I always used to read the problem page, very naïve by today's standards I should think. But I vaguely remember the letters from girls who were desperate for a boyfriend, and the advice to follow your interests if you wanted to meet like-minded males.

Does the same apply to my search for non-Christians? Is a common interest the key to being able to tell others about the main interest in my life?

I have thought for a long time now, that words alone are nowhere near enough. People need to see that I am trying to live it. After all it's easy to spout any old rubbish to people you may never see again, but those who are part of your life, will be able to judge by what you do, not just what you say. And I know we are all works in progress, but our honest struggles can still be eloquent.

Denise Baugh

My 'Habakkuk' experience

Things were bleak and the outlook was bad.
My soul despaired and my heart was sad.
No job and no income. How shall I provide?
I needed to know that God was on my side.

"What shall I read?" I said to the Lord
thumbing the pages of His Living Word.
"Read Habakkuk," He said to me so clearly
so I read my bible as He commanded me.

I felt much worse as the first chapter I read
"This is not helping me," to the Lord I said.
"Read on dear child," the Lord said to me
and so I read on in faith, obediently.

And then I found it! There in chapter three
written so clearly as though just for me.
It lifted my soul to the heavens above
and assured me of God's presence and love.

*"Though nothing on earth seems to bloom
and all appears to be doom and gloom,
no sheep in the pen, no cattle in the stall
and no grapes growing on the vine at all."*

*"Though the olive crop does not yield
and no produce comes from the field,
even though the fig tree does not bud,
yet still my soul will rejoice in the Lord."*

*"I will joy in the God of my salvation;
give Him all my praise and adoration."
Here on earth, "The just shall live by faith"
and trusting in the Lord they will be safe.'*

Secure in the knowledge that God's in control
and that He's the keeper of my immortal soul.
I said to myself "Be not cast down or sad,
but rejoice in the Lord always and be glad"

Roy Allen

Third Sunday of Easter Luke 24:13-35

Conversation / Interpretation / Recognition

What conversations with people have helped you along your journey with God?

How have interpretations of the Scriptures and of life helped to give you insight?

When have there been moments when you have glimpsed something of the reality of God?

Loving God,

Thank you for the gift of listening and conversation that can bring new understanding.

Help us to recognise opportunities you give us in our conversations with others so that we can help them explore these deeper questions.

Thank you for new insights from Scripture or from life that help us grow closer to you and your will for us.

Thank you for those moments when we glimpsed the wonder of your glory as it breaks into our lives.

We pray for those who would love to have a relationship with you but struggle with doubt.

Amen

Thoughts on the presence of God

In May 2013 I was very low (depression) and I went for a "time with God" on my own to St Michael's Church in Basingstoke (open for personal prayer every day).

Writing things down really helps me so I wrote down all my problems, pains and hurts. It was draining. I was aware whilst doing that of a very heavy rain storm outside and the church had become quite dark.

Then I felt I should turn the page in my notebook and write down all the positives in my life. As I turned the page the sun broke through and flooded the church with light and God was confirming that yes - I should concentrate on all the good things – he showed me he loved me.

It was a simple change in the weather but it had a profound effect on me. It encouraged me, it calmed me and helped me to move on.

Thelma Rich

How I came to faith

As a child my experiences of church were limited to the occasional Nativity Crib service and going along to parade services. I learnt it was important to polish your shoes before going to church but not much about Jesus.

At university I had a close friend who was a Christian and was always busy going to meals with other Christians or out with the CU and sometimes I used to tag along. One day she told me about a 'bring a friend' service at her church that evening and how she had no-one to take so would I like to go – I said OK.

It was a service to launch an Alpha Course and whilst my friend sat praying and wondering the best way to ask me if I'd like to attend I turned to her and said the course sounded great and where could I sign up? The free food may have influenced me a bit!

So each week I enjoyed the sandwiches and lots of cake and watched the Alpha videos whilst unbeknown to me many were praying for my salvation. I didn't have many questions during the course, I think I'd always believed there was a God, I just didn't know I needed to invite Him into my life.

Towards the end of the course I read the 'Why Jesus' booklet and prayed the prayer at the end to invite Jesus to become my Lord and Saviour. I told my friend I'd done this and started going along to church with her. I still didn't really have any big and challenging questions, although singing hymns frequently made me cry.

After a year or so I attended confirmation classes and was baptised and confirmed by the Bishop. I'm so glad my friend had the courage to invite me along and for the many people that prayed for me, the wonderful cakes served at St Saviour's Guildford and most of all for a loving God.

Sarah Liriano

A dependable rock

I grew up in a church-going family, but then I married, had two children under two, and lost contact with the church. Through the children I met a member of the Parish Church in our village and she invited our children to attend Sunday School with her daughter.

Then one day shortly after the birth of her second daughter this friend was rushed into hospital. The incident left an impression on me as I saw how she and her husband coped with the emergency and aftermath. Nicola had something that I needed and that was, I eventually realised, God in the centre of her life. I had grown up knowing the stories of Jesus but hadn't learnt the true meaning of faith.

We were about to move house, so I found out about churches in the village we were headed for; a parish church but also a chapel.

A couple of days after the move I invited my friendly neighbour into coffee, and unexpectedly she brought her husband with her. At some point Margaret asked me if I went to church and I said I had decided to try the chapel. After an exchange of "looks" they informed me that Eric, her husband, was the pastor!

I believe God sent us to live there as we nearly didn't view the property because of the dull photo on the agent's sheet. (Before the days of the internet)

God didn't make the journey into faith easy from then on, but I knew he was on my side. My neighbours encouraged and taught me about knowing God personally, letting him take control of my life.

Living in the faith can still be difficult but now the saviour is constantly with me, not just a cushion for support but a dependable rock!

Carol it's me

Lying in a hospital bed, I felt a hand on my shoulder. The words I heard were "Carol it's me". At first I thought it was my recently deceased Dad but the voice did not have my Dad's broad Cornish accent and I felt I did not know this person.

I now know that life is precious, but then I was so desperate and in such turmoil I was prepared to take my own.

How could my life unravel so quickly? A husband and wife for 30 years, then nothing. My life as I knew it was gone. "I am gay, but I will always love you" he said. Stunned and silent I simply walked away.

When life becomes so traumatic your mind will take you to other places, places which at the time, seemed to be better. Mental illness just creeps up on you and you have no control. I now thank the Lord that there are people who are trained to help people like me and so many others like me who have faced a difficult time in their lives.

To say I was a patient at the local psychiatric hospital sounds scary, but it wasn't. That hospital was my sanctuary, a place that gave me the knowledge and strength to overcome the trauma that was dealt me.

It was while I was sat in the hospital prayer room that I read the beautiful and captivating poem "Footprints in the Sand". As I read this poem I felt a warmth engulf my body and I knew that at that moment I was being carried.

Two years on I am the person you see. A person that has had to completely reinvent her life. My emotions towards my husband are not as intense and I am blessed to have two wonderful children who have been amazing throughout this dreadful experience. They may be 28 and 25 but this has affected them too.

The most uplifting part of this story is that I now like myself again, and I am a stronger person today than I have ever been and the best bit is I have come to love the Lord my God with all my heart. Jesus is in my life and for that I am truly blessed.

Carol Phillips

Fourth Sunday of Easter John 10: 1-10

Personal knowledge / Care / Life

When have you become aware of something of the depth with which you are known and understood by God?

Have there been times when other people's care for you or someone you have known, helped you to glimpse something of God's care for people?

How would you express the gift of abundant life Jesus brings?

Loving God,

We celebrate the depth of your love and care for us. We rejoice in your abundant life, shown so often to us through the love and care of your people.

We confess that we are slow to share our experience of the abundant life we have with you.

Show us someone we can pray for, expectantly trusting that they will come to know you. Help us to be persistent in our prayer for this.

Amen

The Divine Gift

He gives me love
Generously; unstintingly; abundantly.
His love is a blanket
Over me; surrounding me; warming me.
His love is an ever-flowing spring
Cleansing me; refreshing me.
His love is the light that makes life begin
Filling me; feeding me.
He gives His love
Faithfully; selflessly; unconditionally.
What have I done to deserve His love?
Nothing at all
.... His love is a gift, undeserved and free
And in all the world you will never see
Love like my Saviour's love for me!

Sylvia Stalder

A Dark Place

I was in a dark place, a trough of deep despair
My God an unsolved mystery
My faith in tatters – history!

I felt the darkness closing round,
pressing in, pushing down.
Trying to pierce the gloom, no glimpse of light
and no way out I found.

O who will rescue me? Where is God?
Where is that 'kindly light' to
"lead me through the encircling gloom"?
Was it vain hope, a con, a trick, a sham?

I was in a dark place
Wandering through the winter wood
Looking up to heaven
Seeing only sky.

Deep dark storm clouds gathered
Trees stood stark and bare
No comfort then in nature
I found no solace there.

When will this emptiness leave me?
When will I be filled again?
Silence - my cold answer
Sleep my only friend.

Just when I reached my lowest
A light shone down into that place!
A word, a glance, a gesture
And there was His shining face!

"You thought I had left you helpless,
It was you who turned away
But my child I will always find you
No matter how far you stray

Your tears were a veil, a blindfold
Blacking out my light
I was waiting, my arms wide open
You were always in my sight
As the sun is always shining,
No matter how dark the cloud
So the light of my love is shining
Through the gloom of your life's dark hours".

It's so hard to remember sometimes
When the darkness of grief presses in
That our dear Lord knows us, laughs with us, weeps with us
In spite of us, amazingly, keeps on loving us.
He alone can rescue us, light a candle in the gloom
The smallest light is all we need -
As long as it's held by His hand.

Sylvia Stalder

A Psalm

(Written while searching for Reading station)

O Lord God, out of the dark I cried to you.
I thought I had put my trust in you as I went out into the dark.
The way was unknown, but I thought that you would guide me.
My heart was rejoicing.
Fear began to grip my soul as the road seemed hard and unknown.
The paths seemed unmarked and I began to be afraid.
You sent me a sign that I recognised and
which gave me hope to try again, but hope ran out,
You inspired me to call for human help and soon
with my guide I was safely at my journey's end.
I will speak of your love for ever, for you make our
rough journeys smooth and bring us safe home.
Praise the Lord

Trish Cooper

How I came to faith

Born into a large northern family of 9 siblings with no religious background, my introduction to the Methodist Church came about as a result of playing Table Tennis. At the age of 11, I was selected to play Table Tennis for the school & enjoyed the sport tremendously. When I was 15, my school friend's brother told me that they played Table Tennis at the Youth Club he attended in the centre of Bradford & thought I might like to come along.

At the Youth Club the evening always finished with an epilogue, which my friend & I regularly stayed for. Eventually we were invited to join the Youth Fellowship which met on a Sunday evening after church.

When I first entered the church building, it was nothing like I expected it to be – it was more like a theatre. The young people sat upstairs & right at the front was the Youth Club leader wearing a dog collar – I didn't know that ministers were normal people!

The Youth Fellowship met at different houses each week for various activities. We also went away on holidays together. During the summer of 1976, while camping in the Lake District, I knew those young people had something special that I wanted to share in too. It was after climbing the highest mountain in England that I made a commitment to follow Jesus.

There is something about mountains which makes you feel closer to God. The views are astounding as you look down & around at God's wonderful creation. You feel as though you are free from all the noise & busyness of the world below, & alone with God. It was an experience I shall never forget – an experience that was to affect the rest of my life.

Sarah Whithorn

Fifth Sunday of Easter John 14:1-14

Troubles / Promise / Seeing God in Jesus

How has the strength of God in life's troubles helped you?

How do you understand what Jesus promises and what does it mean to you?

How do you see God through Jesus?

Loving God,

Thank you that you are the way, the truth and the life, and for all your promises to us.

Thank you that we can know you because your son revealed your love to us.

Thank you for the privilege of praying for others to know you and I pray for

Give us grace to listen attentively to those who we are praying will come to know you. As we listen with openness may you help us follow your lead in our response to them.

Amen

Sharing Jesus

I don't know what got into me. It was totally out of character. I parked my car on the street, because I couldn't find a space in the car park, and as I was walking away, a car pulled in a couple of cars away from mine, and the driver was shouting at me. Why didn't I just hurry away? Avoid confrontation and perhaps violence. But I turned and walked towards him. I began to apologise, not really knowing what was wrong. He yelled at me that I should park in the car park. I continued to apologise, explaining that I had tried. I had driven round three times trying to find a space. Was I in front of his house? I really was sorry. And then he was calm, accepting my apology, realising that I really had tried to park elsewhere. So he went into his house and I went to my meeting. Had I mentioned Jesus? Not at all. But had I shown him Jesus? Maybe. As I said, it was totally out of character for me. I'm sure he had seen me as just another self-centred, inconsiderate person. But hopefully we parted with him realising that another person did care about the feelings of others. To share Jesus isn't always about words.

Denise Baugh

Life so often does not seem to deliver what we feel it should have

I expected, as a youngster, that I would grow up to marry a man who loved me, and that I would have lovely children. I expected holidays to give me perfect unspoilt beauty and delight, food to be delicious, my body to be as slim and lovely as a magazine cover.

But life is not like that. So I was often – usually – disappointed. I did not realise that sickness, death and heartbreak were all a normal part of most people's lives.

My parents were not Christians. I was not baptised, and I knew nothing about Jesus, God the Father or the Holy Spirit. My parents told me, when I asked, that intelligent people didn't believe things like that these days. I struggled to make sense of it all. What was life all about? I would have liked to have a meaning.

Well, I did marry a lovely man, who showed me a lot about love that I didn't know before. But it didn't last; I became ill. I would never have the children I dreamed of. I'd be lucky if I lived. I felt so poorly. Then my lovely man became ill too. We looked after each other. Things began to look better, but I was desperately miserable inside. What was the use of being alive? It was meaningless.

One morning I crawled downstairs. I hadn't bothered to wash. I just stared out of the window. Who could I turn to? My mum was dead. I had no brothers or sisters or aunts or cousins like everyone else. Everything was pointless. Why bother with anything anymore?

THEN... I saw this light. It was brilliant, a sort of oblong. It was outside the window. It came in through the window, and seemed to come into my head through my eyes. It lit up my mind. And suddenly I seemed to understand everything. Love was the answer. Oh, but it was so incredible, words cannot convey what I felt. As I write this so many years later, once more tears of joy are in my eyes. I'd just met God; the Holy Spirit probably. Everything was different – so different.

The next Sunday I went to the little chapel round the corner and asked to be baptised. The hardest thing I ever did, **but** I absolutely had to do it. No-one tuned a hair. My lovely man came with me.

A few years later we adopted two smashing children. But life had not finished with me yet. My lovely man died; I so needed God in my life. I was heartbroken, with two heartbroken children. But we got by. And now I've lost my beautiful granddaughter.

But I've got this wonderful warm thing in my heart. It's called Jesus.

What can life do to me?

Kim Kelly

Sharing the story of how I came to faith

It was late in the evening when I dropped Chris, my son, at Reading School. He was 14 at the time. Waiting for us was his friend Ben. They had homework to complete. They had to find an account of a conversion experience and analyse it.

Mine was not a very dramatic experience, just an overwhelming sense of peace when I was at the end of my resources following the death of my grandma, who had meant the world to me. There was more detail from that night to be shared, and I went through what happened with them, grateful that it remains vivid in my mind. As I spoke I could see the cogs whirring in their minds. Eventually they fell into debate: had I had a temporary moment of insanity or delusion or a real experience of the living God?

They weighed up the evidence and came to a conclusion. "I think it must have been real" said Ben, "because you could not maintain such a long-term committed radical response if you were just momentarily insane." I had not thought that being a minister was radical but I guess to teenagers, faced with so many secular role models it could be that!

Of course God has been very real to me many times since but I will always be grateful for that night, when my angry, sorrowing self was surprised by Jesus' peace and joy.

I am grateful for the conversation with Chris and Ben too. Chris still has faith despite the challenges of his disability and Ben works sharing his extraordinary gift for music in York Minster.

Our God is an awesome God.

Alison Parker

Sixth Sunday of Easter John 14:15-21

Love / Presence / Obedience

How does the presence and love of Jesus reveal itself to you?

When have you become aware of the presence of God in Jesus?

How have you experienced God's love as you have grown in your love for him?

Thy Kingdom Come

This week we join our prayers with Christians everywhere responding to the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation to share in a Novena from Ascension to Pentecost (**25th May – 4th June 2017**). We pray for God's Kingdom to come and we urgently and vibrantly pray that others will come to know Christ. We celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit living and working in our world.

There are some wonderful resources at the following website

<http://www.thykingdomcome.global>

If you do not have the internet perhaps you could ask someone who does to help you. This may spark an opportunity to share about God.

Read the prayer which thousands of people across the world will be praying during *Thy Kingdom Come*, and which will be at the heart of every event.

***Almighty God,
your ascended Son has sent us into the world
to preach the good news of your kingdom:
inspire us with your Spirit
and fill our hearts with the fire of your love,
that all who hear your Word
may be drawn to you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

A special moment when I experienced the closeness of the Father

When I was working for the MOD in London I used to go to the Thursday lunchtime ½ hour worship slot at All Souls Langham Place.

On one occasion as the service was about to begin I was deep in prayerful thought for my team back in the office. I was thinking through how I was doing my best to support them and praying for each one. Then my thoughts went on to myself: who is supporting me was the question I asked myself? How can I sustain the effort I am putting into my work?

As I asked these questions and was in danger of feeling sorry for myself I became aware that the first hymn had begun. It was "Praise my soul the King of heaven". For the lunchtime worship they usually shortened hymns and on this occasion missed out the second verse. As I came to they were on the third verse and these words were being sung, "Father-like He tends and spares us; well our feeble frame He knows; in His Hands He gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes." It was just as if God the Father was speaking directly to me answering my unspoken thoughts.

It was a very special moment! It was an important reminder to me that our Father sees and understands what we are going through. He will supply our needs and strengthen us by His Holy Spirit as we serve Him and do His will.

Brian Rich

Another prayer for Thy Kingdom Come

***God of our salvation, hope of all the ends of the earth, we pray:
Thy kingdom come.***

***That the world may know Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace,
we pray: Thy kingdom come.***

***That we may be bold to speak the word of God while you stretch
out your hand to save, we pray: Thy kingdom come.***

***That the Church may be generous in giving, faithful in serving,
bold in proclaiming, we pray: Thy kingdom come.***

***That the day may come when every knee shall bow and every
tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, we pray: Thy kingdom
come.***

Amen

Pentecost Sunday John 20:19-23

Joy / Peace / Forgiveness

*What are you rejoicing about this Pentecost?
How do you experience the peace Christ offers?
How could your forgiveness witness to other people?*

O thou who camest from above

the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return,
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

***Come. Divine and generous Spirit,
Come in a rushing wind and bring me your love,
Come in leaping flames and bring me your joy
Come in the quiet form of a dove and bring me your peace.
Gracious Spirit show me God's will.
Give me the courage to follow Him.
Moses came from the mountain, his face transformed,
So transform my life, by your Spirit, that others will know
that I have met with the Lord and will want to do likewise.***

Amen

Paddy Jose

Pentecost

They thought their journey with Jesus was finished.
He was dead and they had deserted him. They were grief stricken.
And then they saw him again; spoke with him, ate with him.
He was alive – they met resurrected Jesus.
What joy!

And then he told them he had to leave them.
“Wait for the gift my Father promised”
What a roller-coaster of emotions they must have felt.
And then the day the Spirit came to them.
A life-changing day!

Who would have thought these men who had been so fearful
Could speak with such courage and authority!
Simple, uneducated fishermen became witnesses to all that Jesus had done.
No more fear; challenging those who would persecute them –
often suffering so much for their life and teaching.
A life of faith!

Father God, thank you for all the accounts recorded in the Bible for us to read.

Accounts to challenge but also encourage us.

Thank you because you took ordinary people and changed them into extraordinary witnesses.

Thank you for the faithfulness of these disciples who witnessed to all that happened, in spite of the savage wrath of those in authority.

Thank you for generations of people who have been your witnesses, passing on the message of your life, resurrection and power.

Thank you for those who have influenced me.

Thank you especially for your grace which brought it all about.

Father, as I look back on my own Christian journey, I can see how you have been with me; times when I have especially felt your nearness.

Thank you for the occasion when I first felt the presence of the risen Jesus.

Thank you that when doubt creeps in, your Spirit encourages me to continue in faith.

Father, I pray that I will witness to people I meet. May I be part of this present generation passing on the good news of the Christian faith.

Amen

Jacqueline Simpson

We are no longer our own but yours.
Your will be done in all things.

I invite you to be quiet for a moment, close your eyes, relax and be in touch with the rhythm of your breathing.

When you open your eyes, I invite you to look at the picture on the front cover of this booklet and to know that you are held in the loving gaze of God.

The fiery heart with the cross at its centre speaks of the unfailing love of God revealed to us in Christ.

The person in the centre of the heart, in whom a flame of sacred love has been kindled, responds to the amazing grace of God with an offering of self that says, "Your kingdom come in me. I am no longer my own but yours. Your will be done in all things."

The heartbeat of Love sends a pulse beyond each personal relationship with God.

Our call as disciples of Jesus Christ is to work with the risen Christ for good in all circumstances and to help others discover that they too are held in the loving gaze of God.

The colours which spread out and intermingle speak of this working together with God and other people in love and service. I could write more about this picture; I see more as I ponder it.

What do you see in this prayer picture?

How do you want to respond to God as you look at it?

Angela Webb



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