

INTROIT: TiS 769 Now to the king of heaven

CALL TO WORSHIP

When fear and doubts stroll through our doors:

God stands beside us, whispering of peace.

When we toss and turn late at night:

God sits by our beds, singing lullabies of love.

When we stumble through the shadows of sin:

God illuminates the paths of goodness and joy.

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Spirit of the living God,

As we join together to sing and pray and learn of you,

Open our eyes,

Open our minds

And open our hearts

So that we know your presence as you reveal yourself to us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

"We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today and pay respect to their elder's past, present and emerging."

WELCOME

HYMN 390 Alleluia, alleluia

Bible Reading: 1 John 3:1-7

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, there are many reasons why sometimes we get life wrong.

Sometimes we just don't know what we don't know.

Sometimes we misunderstand the situation.

Sometimes we haven't taken the time to look around and see what was in plain sight, and to think about anything or anyone but ourselves.

Sometimes we deliberately choose to stir the pot to get a reaction regardless of whether the outcome causes harm.

Sometimes we choose inaction when we could have intervened because we are anxious and afraid.

Sometimes we thoughtlessly just want what we want and refuse to let your word influence us.

When we get life wrong and bring about harm and cause hurt, extend your mercy and grace to us, forgive us we pray.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

No matter our choices, no matter the rightness or wrongness of our actions – we are never separated from the love of God. This is Easter's reassurance.

We are loved and forgiven people, thanks be to God. Amen.

AN EARLY WORD

HYMN TiS 465 Father in heaven

BIBLE READINGS: Luke 24:36-48
Acts 3:12-19

REFLECTION

Last week the gospel reading came from John's gospel and recounted the experience the disciples had of Jesus coming to them through locked doors. He showed them, and later Thomas, his hands and his side, and blessed them with words of peace. "Peace be with you".

This week we are invited to share Luke's account of the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples.

I invite you to put yourself into the story. Imagine what it was like. Try to imagine what the disciples and other followers were feeling immediately after Jesus' crucifixion. They must have been feeling overwhelmed, frightened and confused, not knowing where to turn or what to do next. Their leader and teacher who had held them together all those long months was dead and buried, executed like a common criminal, and lying in a tomb (or so they thought). What a disappointing turn of events! With Jesus into that tomb went their hope, their vision, their sense of direction and purpose in life. They were left only with an overwhelming sense of failure, loss, and shame, because they knew they had deserted Jesus in his hour of need.

And then – come into the room as we pick up the story where those on the road to Emmaus had come back to tell the others that they had broken bread with Jesus... Suddenly Jesus himself is standing among them, and again – those words: "Peace be with you."

What a roller coaster those first followers of Jesus had been on – the highs of entering Jerusalem; the solemnness of the Passover meal; the fear of Jesus being arrested in the night; the deep, deep sadness of Jesus' death and resurrection. Imagine the joy in others when they said they had seen the risen Jesus, the confusion in still not really understanding what is going on, the uncertainty of what might come next...

Into all of this, Jesus enters. If it was hard to deal with the feelings before, imagine what it would have been like at that point! This is not a ghost – this is Jesus – flesh and bones – standing in front of you. And he speaks: *Peace be with you...*

And with those four words – *peace be with you* – the turmoil and uncertainty of that week is gone. There is a new peace – a peace that hasn't been known before.

There is no doubt we have had (or will have) times like this in our lives – those times where we feel like there is no way out. But we can find peace in Christ, even if the circumstances or the outcome doesn't change. How we feel, how we react, how we keep going, all change with those words of peace.

Verse 41 reminds us that the disciples' heads had not caught up with their hearts yet. They were overjoyed at seeing the risen Christ, and yet this was not or could not be matched by any understanding in their heads. Surely, there were more questions than answers. And yet, there was still peace.

Have there been places or times in your life where you have experienced uncertainty and doubt; a time when there have been more questions than answers?

Have there been places or times in your life where you have experienced the peace of Christ in

the midst of all that is going on?

Whatever overwhelms us, God comes to us in the midst of our fear and says, "Peace be with you." Whatever doubts churn in our minds, whatever sins trouble our consciences, whatever pain and worry bind us up, whatever walls we have put up or doors we have locked securely, God comes to us and says, "Peace be with you." As we continue to celebrate the risen Christ in this Easter season, may you find a place in your life where you can hear Christ say to you, "Peace be with you," as you allow him to fill your heart and life with his peace that passes all understanding. Amen

HYMN TiS 210 O for a thousand tongues to sing

OFFERING and DEDICATION

Living Spirit, be companion to these gifts as we send them on their way. May they be a revelation of the goodness of God to all who receive them. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Risen Christ,
Open our eyes to what you would reveal to us -
How to heal broken hearts and spirits,
How to feed the hungry and provide shelter to those without a home,
How to speak words of peace into situations of conflict,
How to offer hope to those are weighed down by worry,
How to see the face of a sister or brother in all those who pass our way,
How to be in awe of creation and tend and care for the earth,
How to walk in the world with patience and goodness and joy
And to know that you are with us always.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying:

***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 for ever. Amen.***

HYMN 380 Yours be the glory

COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

We are God's children, forgiven, loved and blessed,
and knowledgeable in the ways of God's compassion and justice.
***We leave this time of worship readied and prepared to be Christ's people,
bearers of hope and joy in the world. Amen***

HYMN TiS 755 You shall go out with joy