



# *Morning Worship*

19 April 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Morning Worship here at the Parish churches of Coxley with Godney, Henton, and Wookey. Although we are currently apart due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) it is hoped that following this liturgy knowing that others in the benefice will be doing so at the same time might help provide a spiritual connection between us.

It is suggested that alongside this liturgy you have a means to listen to the suggested hymns which have links to videos with lyrics within this document. There is a mixture of traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs. If you do not know the tune then why not listen to the hymn/song and worship through reading the words alone.

The service is designed to be used easily by one person. If there is more than one person participating, either one can lead with others joining in with the responses in **bold** OR everyone present may join in with all the words.

The sections in *red italics* are rubrics: these explain what needs to happen at various points.

Materials in this booklet are drawn from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* which is copyright © The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England 2006; *New Patterns for Worship* copyright © The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England 2002. All Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version.

# MORNING WORSHIP

## GREETING

Praise God! For even though we are apart the Lord is in our midst!  
**Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is risen!  
**Christ is risen indeed!**

Though we find ourselves isolated  
in homes, apartments, and residential places,  
**we look out our windows and remember,  
the heavens declare the glory of God,  
all creation rejoices in our creator.**

*Psalm 19:1*

Though we cannot reach out and touch  
our friends and neighbours,  
**we rejoice that Christ is in our midst,  
he is with us always, until the end of the age!**

*Matthew 28:20*

Though we have to stand at a safe distance from others,  
giving space to those who pass us by,  
**we recall we are all made in the image of God,  
connected to one another,  
connected to God.**

*Genesis 1:27*

## HYMN: CHRIST OUR HOPE IN LIFE AND DEATH

[Listen here](#)

## CONFESSION AND WORDS OF COMFORT

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world  
and knows our every word and deed.  
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord  
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.  
We are not worthy to be called your children.  
We turn to you again.  
Have mercy on us,  
bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead  
but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*A period of silent reflection follows*

Hear the words of comfort, our Saviour Christ says to all who truly turn to him:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish  
but have eternal life.*

*John 3:16*

## COLLECT

Let us pray.

*A period of silent prayer is kept.*

Risen Christ,  
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts,  
that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father.

**Amen.**

## HYMN: AND CAN IT BE THAT I SHOULD GAIN

[Listen here](#)

## THE WORD OF GOD

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**24** <sup>13</sup>That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup>But their eyes were kept from recognising him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" <sup>19</sup>And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But 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 happened. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup>So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, <sup>29</sup>but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at

table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> And their eyes were opened, and they recognised him. And he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" <sup>33</sup> And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## THE SERMON

*By Revd David Thomas*

Are you getting your daily exercise? It is one of the few opportunities we are allowed to leave our homes and resume something resembling normal life (though the deserted high street in Wells looks anything but normal). I am making sure of at least an hour every afternoon, and I have found new walks around Wells, and re-acquainted myself with a walk I used to know years ago. A new walk is a route down on Westhay Moor past the rush pools where the ducks and swans go on with their business as though the world had never changed. It has been a delightful place during Holy Week and Easter Week, particularly in the unseasonably sunny afternoons when I believe I have managed a tan.

Maybe my favourite walk is around Hay Hill near Coxley, starting from Burcott, going down onto the levels and then back up through Coxley Wick and back to Burcott. It takes me past the house my family moved into from South Wales in the late 1960s, and it is laden with memories of the dogs I used to own, the places I had returned home from, and the people I used to know. Believe it or not, when I was training for ordination and had to study the New Testament in its original language I used to practise my Greek verbs on this walk, at the same time as keeping

the dogs from straying into the middle of the lane. The walk around the hill is replete with recollections of a past that is fifty years old.

When you walk, obviously you think, not only about what used to be but about what is happening now. My mind has been filled with the pandemic, just like yours and everyone else's. I think of my nephew and his wife, both doctors, working in Edinburgh hospitals, how they manage to keep their spirits up during entire shifts among very sick patients (she has taken to yoga each morning) and have to take very hard decisions about who to give assistance with breathing and who not. A close member of my family in Wales has had heart trouble for years and lives a very careful life. Now her husband will not let her near a supermarket, and they have not seen either of their children or grandchildren for weeks. Walking along, my mind fills with these and other people, as well as what I will be having for supper tonight and how to get it. Sometimes I try to pray.

When I do pray, walking along, my thoughts inevitably move to the question that I hardly like to put into words: Where is God in all this? It has been asked for millennia when people are afflicted, and many answers have been attempted. It used to be that when a great natural disaster such as a famine occurred, or an army swooped down over the hill, men of God said it was a punishment for people's sins, or a sign that the end of the world was nigh. But I cannot bring myself to think along these lines and if I'm honest, I am not persuaded by any answer I know. So, where is God?

One of the stories about the followers of Jesus in the days after his execution is recorded by Luke towards the end of his Gospel in Chapter 24:13-35. Two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a village about seven miles away (as long as my most ambitious daily walk). As they went, they were talking about the events that had taken place in Jerusalem when Jesus entered the city and was greeted by the people, when he was arrested and

tried and then put to death on the cross. The two must have been trying to make sense of what had happened, and maybe searching for answers to the question: 'Where was God in all this?' because God had apparently abandoned this man who had talked about Him so vividly and tenderly that God had seemed like his Father. In their consternation, or maybe their involvement in their conversation, the two only just became aware of a third man who fell in with them as they walked along.

The two disciples were amazed when their new companion appeared to know nothing about the events they were discussing. Jesus' trial and execution had caused such a tumult in Jerusalem that anyone coming from there must surely know about it. More than that, they had heard that his body was not in his tomb when some women disciples went to visit it. These women had said that angels had told them Jesus was alive. What did all this mean, and who could make sense of it? This gives the resurrected Jesus the opening to explain to them how the whole of Jewish scripture (our Old Testament) made it clear why he had to die.

Jesus's explanation must have been quite something to listen to. The two men who had followed Jesus must have been listening with such rapt attention as the meaning of their teacher's death was explained to them that they did not seem to recognise him as he talked to them. It was only when they reached Emmaus and prevailed on him to stay with them, and they saw him breaking bread at supper in his characteristic way, that they realised.

On many a walk over the last few weeks I have thought how good it would be to have someone like this teacher to explain all that is happening in our society and in societies throughout the world. Is it too much to look for a meaning to this pandemic, to find an answer to the question 'Where is God in all this?' Do we expect him to give us answers? Do we expect to find him and recognise him as we walk along?



A distinctive feature of my walks around Wells has been what has place as I approach people walking along towards me. I do not just mean the involved ritual of ensuring we keep our distance by calculating which of us will move to the left and which to the right, or the dance we join in together as we circle around. What I mean is that more often than not, in addition to the 'Good morning/afternoon' or 'Hello', or just a friendly grunt, we very often catch one another's eyes (though there are a few to avert their gaze as though I was a carrier of the virus and could infect them just by looking at them). It has made me realise how this glance of recognition has slipped out of currency in the hurrying world we have emerged from, and how easy it had often become to buy something in a shop or supermarket without actually looking at the person at the till. Now, all of a sudden most people seem to have recovered a courtesy that had long disappeared. As we pass at a distance or stretch over the counter to buy our newspaper, we have a new-found need, it seems, to catch the other person's eye. As we do this, are we signalling something like 'We are in this together', or 'I know what you're going through, and you know what I am going through'? The brief glance, even a shy smile, is a recognition of shared humanity, maybe of human community as we are brought out of our concerns with ourselves to touch the concerns of another.

I have not recognised the person of Jesus in any of these passing glances –maybe I will one day down on the levels or behind Hay Hill, though that's too fanciful. What I do recognise is the glimmer of meeting in human solidarity. If there is anything good emerging from this horrid nightmare of Covid-19, then it must be here in encounters between strangers and the recognition that is passed between them. Where is God? It is difficult to deny that there is something of Him in the brief glances that communicate human concern.

## **HYMN: I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS**

[Listen here.](#)

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## **INTERCESSIONS**

*Use the silence between each prayer to bring before God your own concerns around that topic.*

Jesus, our exalted Lord, has been given all authority.  
Let us seek his intercession that our prayers may be perfected  
by his prayer.

Jesus Christ, great high priest,  
living for ever to intercede for us,  
pray for the Church, your broken body in the world...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, King of righteousness,  
enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high,  
pray for the world, and make it subject to your gentle rule...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Son of Man,  
drawing humanity into the life of God,  
pray for your sisters and brothers in need, distress, or sorrow...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus, pioneer of our salvation,  
bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection,  
surround with your saints and angels  
those who have died trusting your promises...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Lord over all things,  
ascended far above the heavens and filling the universe,  
pray for us who receive the gifts you give us for work in your service ...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ,  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet;  
for you are alive and reign with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

## HYMN: WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

[Listen here.](#)

## DISMISSAL

*'Remember, I am with you  
to the end of the age,' says the Lord.*

*Matthew 28.20*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, evermore. Amen.

With the risen life of Christ within us,  
we go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**