



The Sunday Supplement

Issue 7: 2nd May 2020

Call to Worship

God of all time,
ancient of days,
alpha and omega,
you have called us into a new day.
We come before you just as we are to
worship and give praise.

God of all forgiveness,
merciful one,
salvation of the world,
you welcome and rejoice in all who seek
your face.
We come before you just as we are to
worship and give praise.

God of all compassion,
familiar with sorrow and acquainted with
suffering,
you kindle the faltering flame and protect
the reed that is bruised.
We come before you just as we are to
worship and give praise.

God of all promise,
water of life,
refining fire,
you seal your covenant in our hearts.
We come before you just as we are to
worship and give praise.

Reading



Luke 24: 13-35

Prayers for our Church family

Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Philippians 4:6

COVID-19 continues to affect everyone in Britain. Members of our church family face differing challenges both at home and in their working lives. We stand together in prayer for each other in these most unusual times. Together we are one part of the Body of Christ here in Highams Park. These suggestions are offered to help you pray for our work and witness in the coming days.

Healthcare

Pray for health and strength for those working in hospitals and GP surgeries

Give thanks for the practical and pastoral care they provide in difficult circumstances

Remember the current concerns that supplies of protective equipment are low and the risk this poses to healthcare workers

Care homes

Pray that staff in care homes will be given the health, strength and wisdom needed

Give thanks for staff providing care for vulnerable elderly people

Remember the families of residents who have died due to contracting Covid-19

Public services

Pray for bus drivers, postal workers, police and council staff in their daily work

Give thanks for the ongoing provision of

public services and for the commitment of workers to this essential work

Remember that exposure to the coronavirus puts workers and their families at increased risk of contracting Covid-19

Business and commerce

Pray for those who are working from home and for those continuing to travel daily

Give thanks for those maintaining supplies of food, medicine, and other essentials

Remember those now out of work due to the closure of many businesses

Education

Pray for pupils, parents and staff as schools remain closed

Give thanks for the provision of materials online to support home education

Remember parents and children as they adjust to learning at home

Self-Isolation

Pray for the shielded group, for the medically vulnerable, and for older members

Give thanks for available support from Waltham Forest Council and voluntary groups

Remember council staff working to meet increasing demand for their services



Thought for the week



A surprise encounter on the Emmaus Road changed everything for two lesser known followers of Jesus. Cleopas and his unnamed companion were confused and anxious as they headed home from Jerusalem. The events of the day were still fresh in their minds. The company of a stranger was perhaps a welcome distraction. Astonished that this man knew nothing of all that had happened over the past three days, they shared what they had seen and heard. What happened next would turn everything around.

Luke does not identify the second disciple by name. We are left not knowing whether this was a friend, as is often assumed, or as seems more likely, the wife of Cleopas. On arrival at their destination, the pair invited the traveller to join them for a meal. As they broke bread together all became clear. This was Jesus. Why had they not recognised him earlier? How could this be?

Had emotional distress rendered these two disciples unable to see clearly? Did the risen Christ look in some way different from the teacher they had known so well? No explanation is offered in the gospel. The confused band of disciples back in Jerusalem who would soon hear of this encounter were equally puzzled. Until Jesus showed up again. In the flesh and asking for food.

In common with the early disciples we find ourselves caught up in much that we cannot understand. The coronavirus pandemic has changed our lives in ways that many are struggling to comprehend. Confusion surrounds us as analysts assess and politicians ponder what might come next. Companionship and community have, at least for now, been redefined and relocated online. Breaking bread or sharing a meal with others is a memory from another time, a distant dream that seems unlikely to become a reality any time soon.

So it was with the two travellers returning to Emmaus. To their surprise, they were quite literally turned around by their encounter with Jesus. Returning to Jerusalem where they re-joined the larger group, they once again met the risen Christ. There could be no doubt. This was the new normal. Strengthened by their collective experience, the group stayed together to work and witness to their community.

As followers of Jesus in a different time we identify with the confusion and distress of those early believers. As the Body of Christ we too are called to work and witness in our community. We are now the living proof that God is present and active in the world. Walking together in faith and hope, in whatever ways are possible for us at this time, we find ourselves strengthened and turned around ready to face the future.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper rev'rence, praise.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and
fire,
O still, small Voice of calm.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.



Blessing

Go now as God's chosen witnesses
to testify that Christ has been raised
and that we are raised with him.
Do not look for him among the dead,
but be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

And may God raise you from all that would entomb you;
May Christ Jesus call you by name and go ahead of you;
And may the Holy Spirit empower you for all that is good.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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