



‘Worship at home’ April 14th 2024



Alleluia! Christ is risen:
Christ is risen, indeed!
Making all things new:

**Bringing the promise of new beginnings
and the hope of new opportunities.**

We continue in the Easter season in the church’s liturgical calendar. During this time the focus is on the risen Christ, as experienced by the first disciples, and by us today.

Opening

The disciples went about their everyday lives fishing, walking, eating and you were with them. The disciples pondered the mystery of life and love and you opened their minds. The disciples were transformed by their experience of you the Risen Christ. May we too experience you with us in the everyday things of life renewing and transforming enabling us to be your witnesses in love.



<https://www.workingpreacher.org>

Luke 24:36b-48

And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

“Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as

you see that I do.” As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched. Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened

their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ You are witnesses of all these things.

New Living Translation

We can imagine Jesus’ followers trying to comprehend the events of Easter: Jesus’ arrest, suffering and crucifixion; now followed by the disciples’ experience of him risen and present with them. Much of our faith is difficult to understand simply by reason: we need to experience it to make sense of it. Jesus greets them offering peace... *Shalom Aleichem ... Peace be with you. Shalom* refers to a communal state of wellbeing and wholeness, a way of being in right relationship with God and with each other. The risen Christ, with his scars and suffering still evident: present with them, talking and eating, explaining and teaching, opening their minds so that they might experience and understand, inviting them to open their hearts to find forgiveness, love and grace.



Witnesses

How do we find the faith to believe the story of Easter, Jesus?
How do we grasp its truth?

We can only accept it; refusing to reduce it to scientific debate or historical literalism

kneeling with humility and awe
beside the blood-stained cross and the empty grave;
For then, we are your witnesses.

How do we understand
the mystery of your death and life, Jesus?
How do we explain it?

We can only live it;
allowing it to permeate every grain of this sand that forms us,
every thought, every priority, every act and every interaction,
For then we are your witnesses,
and you deserve nothing less from us. © John van de Laar, [Sacredise](#)

A witness is someone who can give evidence about something:
who attests to what they see or know to be true. Those disciples
experienced Christ's teaching, his healing, his living and dying
and resurrection. Now they are called to witness these things to
others, proclaiming the good news of *shalom* and love and
forgiveness that all may come to know and experience God's
grace at work in their lives.

Easter brings the promise of new beginnings and the
hope of new opportunities. When we experience the
risen Christ for ourselves, we are changed, our lives
are transformed. Those disciples were not simply
called to 'witness to' but to 'be witnesses'. This
involves more than just speaking out, but is a state of
being, encompassing all of who we are and how we
live.



**In what ways does your life witness God's grace
to others... by your words?
by your actions?
by who you are?**

- As witnesses, we choose to be authentic and act with integrity, not only speaking up, but living out our discipleship.
- As witnesses, we choose to walk Christ's way of love, service and sacrifice.

- As witnesses, we choose to seek after God's strength and pursue God's wisdom, rather than going along with the values and expectations of the world.
- As witnesses, we choose to open ourselves up to God's life-giving, transforming grace, and to live out of that grace, at all times.

Prayer

You come to us in unexpected places,
 In a crowded room,
 In a journey on a dusty road,
 In conversation,
 In the stillness.



You come in the midst of our doubt, our fear, our sorrow
 You come in the power of the resurrection
 No pain and suffering is unknown to you.

You bring us peace
 And we pray for the places where there is no peace
 Countries torn by war
 Refugees seeking homes
 Prisoners facing torture

You bring peace
 Peace to the tensions and conflicts within us
 To the regrets, the failure,
 The broken relationships
 The lost friendships

You bring peace
 For you are a friend to us
 When we are alone
 When we are lonely
 Unseen you are there

You bring us peace
 And we pray that we too may become peacemakers.

~ Susan Miller <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

Closing: This week, do what you can to live as a witness to God's grace, and to bring peace to those around you.