



'Worship at home' May 22nd 2022



In this liturgical season of Easter, we continue to celebrate the risen Christ who brings light, love and life. **Light a candle** to remind yourself that Christ is indeed risen and with you.

Opening

From God comes the wonder of creation.

We will worship God the Creator.

From God comes healing for the brokenness we see.

We will worship God our Redeemer.

From God comes the strength to face the new day.

We worship God our Sustainer.

~ written by Katherine Hawker for the Union Church UCC of Tekonsha, 1994.

*Posted on **Outside the Box.** <http://liturgyoutside.net/>*

The Scriptures tell how those first followers continued to experience Jesus' presence with them for around 40 days after his resurrection, in new and sometimes unexpected ways. They were able to recognise him, same yet different, as he appeared through locked doors, invited them to touch him, talked and ate with them. We can imagine them trying to understand what this meant for them in their everyday lives, as they found the risen Christ with them, offering light and love and life.

What difference does the presence of the risen Christ make to your life?

**Does it change how you live,
or how you respond to others?**



We too grapple with what difference the risen Christ makes in our lives and how then we are to live. The teachings and actions of Jesus are enduring and form the basis of our Christian faith. We too experience the divine presence with us, as God continues to be revealed in and through these holy stories of faith. In God we find light, love and life. 1

John 5:1-9

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralysed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in

this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

New International Version

Scripture is full of stories where Jesus made a difference to people's lives, bringing healing and wholeness, and the promise of new life. In Jesus' time, illness and disability were seen as punishment for sin. However, Jesus lays no blame or judgement. As theologian Debie Thomas writes, “all four Gospels attest to his deep compassion for the sick and the disabled. Not once in Scripture does he respond to pain or illness with contempt, mockery, or condescension. Not once does he tell a sick person that her illness is her own fault. In fact, he corrects that cultural misunderstanding about disease and disability at every opportunity.”

This story takes place at a man-made pool near one of the gates in the Jerusalem city wall. The pool had acquired a reputation for bringing healing powers, where the first person into the pool after the water was churned up would be healed. The man in the



story had been waiting for a very long time. Jesus asks him a challenging question: “do you want to get well?” The man did 2

not respond directly. We so often cling to what we know, uncertain about what changes might mean for us. There are times when we are challenged to take a good look at our lives. When we are called to embrace the new life that Christ offers us, we might need to find the courage to leave behind our mats, get up and follow. The healing that Christ offers goes beyond our physical ailments and restrictions, bringing fullness of life and a new way of being.

Christ is risen, and he stands before us, like he stood before that rather non-committal man at the Pool of Bethzatha, and says, “Arise. Get up from your mat. Rise up from your grave. Life in all its fullness lies open before you, waiting to be embraced and lived to the full. Get to your feet, gather up your things, and get on with living it. There isn’t anything you need to wait for or sort out first. Get up and live, now.”

Nathan Nettleton <http://southyarrabaptist.church>

In Christ we can find wholeness even in our broken and imperfect world. However, our hope is that one day all of creation will be made whole, reconciled, in Christ. John presents a vision of that day in the book of Revelation.



Revelation 21 – 22: selected verses

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. Then the

angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. They will

not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.

And they will reign for ever and ever.

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Prayer

Loving God, we pray for that image of a river of life to come to reality throughout our world.

We know that there are many who are thirsty, who live in places of drought, who travel far to get one container of clean water, who do not have the luxury that we take for granted of turning on a tap and having fresh water gush out. May the world find ways to provide fresh, clean water to those who are thirsty.

We know that many are thirsty for hope, who long for the day when a life-giving river might flow to their door, and not simply pass them by. Bring rivers of hope, of truth, of light gushing into places of dryness in our world.

We know that there are those for whom rivers are frightening and harmful. Bring relief to those who are plagued by floods, or who are overwhelmed by a crazy life that washes over them and carries them away.

Help us, loving God, to see every river, every stream, every lake, every precious drop of water as a symbol of your commitment to life and hope. May we savour the goodness of the waters of life and find new and exciting ways to share them with a thirsty world.

Amen. *adapted from Seasons of the Spirit™ SeasonsFusion Lent • Easter 2019*

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Closing *inspired by Psalm 67*

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us

In the darkness that was
and the dawning that is
and the daylight that is to come

May we praise God today
and join the angels of heaven and all of creation

In the name of the Father and the Son
and the Spirit. Amen

~ Bill & Kristi Gaultiere, inspired by Psalm7 <http://www.soulshepherding.org/> 4

