

# Simple Prayer, Simple Praise

## Worship for Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>

### Opening Prayer

Creator of the universe,  
you made the world in beauty,  
and restore all things in glory  
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured  
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,  
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

### A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 24:13-35



By Gebhard Fugel, Public Domain

Now on that same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 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 took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us.

They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they

recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## **Meditation**

Two disciples, engrossed in conversation. Approached, they stop, listen and invite this “stranger” to stay with them.

In this day and time, we disciples are finding that the road seems as indistinguishable as the worn-out path taken by the early disciples. Most of us feel unprepared for this walk as we’re exposed to relentless distraction, anxiety, and frustration. The pebbles of fear and despair poke us with each step.

What if you and I stop, stand still, meet Jesus in an unexpected place and listen to words that cause OUR hearts to burn within us? Through prayer and contemplation we’ll uncover new ways to be “the church”.

Being courageous enough to raise our eyes to meet the gaze of the stranger, perhaps we’ll discover ideas, dreams long dormant.

In this season of new life, might we, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, nurture the seeds within our souls, allowing ourselves to become “Edens” where rivers of compassion flow from a bountiful source. May we strive to respect the dignity of every person. Will we with God’s help cherish the wondrous Works of God and protect the beauty and integrity of all creation?

The Commandments to love God, and love our neighbor as ourselves, help us live lives of service that benefit the human family and creation, and to shine our Jesus-powered light of love everywhere.

Russian Orthodox author Dostoyevsky wrote:

Love all Creation. The whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, and every ray of light. Love the plants. Love the animals. Love everything. If you love everything you will perceive the Divine Mystery in all things. Once you perceive it you will comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last, to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.



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(Rev. Deacon Martha Farone,  
Deacon, Diocese of WNY, serving at  
Christ Church, St. Andrews, and St. Johns)

## Prayers

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbors. As his disciples in this age, we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe in which we are privileged to live and our neighbors with whom we share it.

*Take a moment to pray for your needs, lift up your worries and offer them to God. Remember the people that you are concerned for, pray for all those that are in distress, those that are struggling. Pray for those that are helping amid this crisis. Offer up your hopes for the resurrection in your life and the lives of those around you. Say a prayer of praise knowing that the Lord has risen. Raise all of this up in prayer through the words our Savior taught us:*

**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, and the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Open our hearts to your power moving around us and between us and within us, until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy, in communities transformed by justice and compassion, and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

In this time of confinement, let us remain expectant for the risen Christ to be in our lives. Jesus said "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." We are not alone, though we may be confined to the house. Jesus meets us there—Face to face we meet Jesus in our sorrow, our fear, and our disorientation. That encounter leads us to restoration, to joy, and to new life. Invite Jesus to take your hand in these difficult hours, and pray that fear may be transformed into faith. Pray for a new life when we will all rise again.

## The Grace

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:20,21)

Call a neighbor, a friend, and a family member this week and let them know you are praying for them. Consider sharing this message with them.

Prepared for the Dioceses of NWPA and WNY by the Rev. Stephen Lane and the Rev. Claudia Scheda.

Prayers adapted from Revised Common Lectionary Prayers and

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

**Join online worship with Bishop Rowe Sunday at 10 am**

<https://episcopalpartnership.org/>