



WEST SUSSEX (COAST AND DOWNS)
METHODIST CIRCUIT

Worshipping Together

April 2022

Worshipping Together comprises an act of worship for the month, with a different set reading and reflection for each week, shared as a starting point for your own reflections. As you worship and draw closer to God, may God draw close to you, speak to you and journey with you beyond the words of these pages, strengthened by God's ever-present Spirit.

We invite you to use **Worshipping Together** at a time that suits you, in whatever way works for you, to spend time with God knowing that you are **Worshipping Together** with others across the circuit family.

Please share these resources with others.

Also available at: www.westsussexcoastanddownscircuit.co.uk

As you prepare to worship, you may like a period of quiet, or to light a candle. Become aware of God's already present presence.

GATHERING



Gathering to Worship¹

God invites us in with extravagant love.

We come to worship with joy.

God beckons us in to experience his grace.

We come to worship with hearts open.

God calls us to meet with him today.

We come to worship – and to meet our Lord.

¹ Adapted from All Age Worship Year C, Companion to the Lectionary, Joyce Barrass, p60

Sing: Make Way, Make Way²

1. Make way, make way, for Christ the King in splendour arrives;
fling wide the gates and welcome him into your lives.

*Make way (Make way),
make way (make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);
make way (make way),
make way (make way),
and let his Kingdom in.*

2. He comes the broken hearts to heal, the prisoners to free;
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance, the blind shall see.

3. And those who mourn with heavy hearts, who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown he'll beautify.

4. We call you now to worship him as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him, their thrones must fall!

Prayers of praise³

We come to you, eternal God,
and offer you our praise.

Unsurpassed in majesty,
matchless in your holiness,
you have shown to us in Jesus,
unconquerable love.

As we contemplate your Passion,
As we travel with your journey of suffering,
may your Spirit guide us,
that we may worship you
with sincerity and in truth.
For Jesus' sake. Amen



² Graham Kendrick, Singing the Faith No.264

³ Adapted from 'Praying with the scriptures' by Neil Dixon, p48

Below are readings and reflections for each week of April.

These reflections are mere starting points, and you are encouraged to ponder and pray through and beyond what is written, as you listen and respond to God.

Pure Nard⁴

Week beginning Sunday 3rd April

Reading: John 12:1-8

A final time at Bethany, in old, familiar company
Jesus, were your thoughts pierced through, with knowing what you had to do?

And did you clutch within your heart, a world about to break apart –
or steady, with a conscious will, a brimming cup so soon to spill?

Lazarus sat next to you
so grateful, and yet puzzled too
the dark thoughts of his tomb not quite
extinguished by the rising light

while diligent Martha, unreserved
and practical as always, served
her living brother, sitting by
the healer who had let him die

and round the table, sharing food,
those dear disciples loved and known
a band as close as flesh and blood
in whom the kingdom seeds were sown
yet no companion understood
the fullness of the fears you faced

until that generous sister
with a love learned from the master
poured out a salve so precious
that it seemed just like a waste.



⁴ Pure Nard, by Amy Robinson from www.engageworship.org

Norman Adams - Christ's entry into Jerusalem⁵

Week beginning Sunday 10th April

Reading: Luke 19:28-40



Jesus is at the centre riding a donkey, with a foal or colt, along a sunlit road lined with sunflowers. There is no obvious depiction of Jerusalem, no garments or palm-tree branches cast before Jesus, but there is a joyous crowd with bunting and decorations. Various flags are flown, some on their side or upside down.

The figure to the right, at a window, may be Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree to see Jesus. Luke records this as happening at Jericho, but it is often included in the Entry into Jerusalem. The rich luminous colours recall medieval stained glass. When commissioned to undertake this work for the Collection in 1990, Norman Adams replied 'I would like to do this very much ... It is a wonderful subject'.

**Follow up: Reflect on this image, the reading and the commentary.
*What is God saying to you today?***

⁵ Image & commentary from Methodist Modern Art Collection, © TMCP

Resurrection Surprise

Week beginning Sunday 17th April



Read: Luke 24:1-12

**Christ is Risen!
He is risen indeed
Alleluia!**

Resurrection day has come upon us once more, and so we come to what may be a familiar gospel story to you – the story of the empty tomb. The empty tomb testimony and evidence of Christ’s death (the body was put there) and resurrection (the body was then gone), are at the centre of our Christian faith.

The resurrection subverted all expectations – so much so, that even Jesus’ own disciples and friends thought the women’s story to be an idle tale that Sunday morning (see v11). However, we are told that Peter’s response stood out. Peter, we are told, heads to the tomb, and then leaves with amazement. Peter, according to Luke at least, is the first man to believe the story the women have told them.

The death of Christ had already turned the disciples lives upside down – now the resurrection turns life upside down again. The resurrection is a turning point for the world, and for all time itself – where love and grace are emphasised as the centre of our relationship with God – who’s love and grace for us is unconditional and unending.

Reflect: What does your faith in God mean to you?

What do you believe? What is at the centre of your faith?

Recognising You⁶

Week beginning Sunday 24th April

Read: John 20:19-31

Jesus in the garden, newly risen from the dead,
who stood by weeping Mary, and who heard the words she said
as if you were the gardener, till at last your shepherd's voice
called her 'Mary' and with one word gave her reason to rejoice,
Jesus in the garden, ever new but still the same,
help me recognise you in the speaking of my name.

Jesus on the journey, fellow traveller on the road,
who met two sad disciples, walking with them as you showed
the meaning of the scriptures that predicted you would rise,
but only when you blessed the meal could they believe their eyes.
Jesus on the journey, meet me where my hopes have fled,
help me recognise you in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus in the locked room, breaking through despair and doubt,
who comforted your friends when they had shut the whole world out,
who came again for Thomas, and revealed your hands and side
so that he could touch and know you as alive, though you had died.
Jesus in the locked room, breaking through our self-built bars,
help me recognise you in the touching of your scars.

Jesus on the shoreline, cooking breakfast for your friends,
who offered guilty Peter one more chance to make amends,
who filled a net with fish for him, and helped him to recall
the first catch that convinced him to respond to your first call.
Jesus on the shoreline, know my best, forgive my worst,
help me recognise you in the way I met you first.

Reflect: How do you recognise Jesus today?

⁶ Recognising You Poem by Amy Scott Robinson & Richard Lyall, from www.engageworship.org

Sing or prayerfully reflect on these words:⁷

Jesus lead us to the Father
 by your Spirit, help us draw near.
 Jesus lead us to the Father
 by your Spirit, help us draw near.

As we come with awe and gladness, help us draw near.
 As we come with awe and gladness, help us draw near.

Prayers of Intercession⁸

Compassionate Parent God,
 your children are weeping:

they weep because they are hungry and poor;
 they weep because they are caught up on war;
 they weep because they are powerless and exploited.

Compassionate Parent God, bring your comfort and your hope.

Compassionate Saviour God,
 our sisters and brothers are weeping:

they weep because they are ill or in pain;
 they weep someone they love has died;
 they weep from guilt, emptiness or anger.

Compassionate Saviour God, bring your comfort and your hope.

Compassionate sustaining God,
 your people are weeping:

they weep because they have let you down;
 they weep because they have let others down;
 they weep because loving hurts.

Compassionate sustaining God, bring your comfort and your hope.

Parent, Saviour & Sustainer – our saving, loving, gracious God
 Fill us with faith, as we journey with you. **Amen.**

⁷ Jesus lead us, by Sam Hargreaves, StF29

⁸ Adapted from Companion to the Lectionary: Intercessions, by Christine Odell, p133.

Sing: All I once held dear⁹

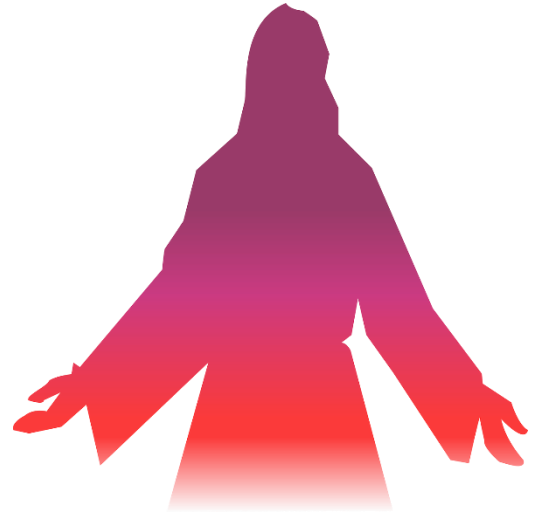
1. All I once held dear, built my life upon,
all this world reveres, and wars to own,
all I once thought gain I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you,
there is no greater thing.*

*You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness, and I love you, Lord.*

2. Now my heart's desire is to know you more,
to be found in you and known as yours.
To possess by faith what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift of righteousness.

3. Oh, to know the power of your risen life,
and to know you in your sufferings.
To become like you in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live and never die.



Closing Prayer¹⁰

Abide in the love of the Father who upholds you.
Abide in the peace of the Son who enfolds you.
Abide in the power of the Spirit who sustains you.
And the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
Be with you, those you love, and those we are called to love,
this day and forever more. **Amen.**

Acknowledgements

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⁹ All I once held dear, Graham Kendrick (b. 1950), StFNo.4897.

¹⁰ Adapted from Glimpses of Glory, David Adam, p56