

Worship at Home service Sunday 7th April 2024 with John Atkin

A prayer of approach:

Generous God, who shares our life,
pouring out the Spirit of Jesus, afresh this Easter
open our hearts and hands to reach out
to one another, and to those we live or work among in caring and service,
love and compassion. Vibrant God, call us afresh today

Amen.

Hymn: Come People of the Risen King

Come, people of the Risen King
Who delight to bring Him praise
Come all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace
From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, those whose joy is morning sun
And those weeping through the night
Come, those who tell of battles won
And those struggling in the fight
For His perfect love will never change
And His mercies never cease
But follow us through all our days
With the certain hope of peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, young and old from every land
Men and women of the faith
Come, those with full or empty hands
Find the riches of His grace
Over all the world, His people sing
Shore to shore we hear them call
The Truth that cries through every age:
"Our God is all in all!"

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

[Come People of The Risen King by Keith and Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#)

Prayer of confession

Response after each line: Lord, forgive us.

For our greed and self-centeredness:

For our failure to see the needs of those around us:

For our failure to be generous with our time:

For our failure to share when we have more than enough:

For our failure to see that often our lifestyle choices harm and disenfranchise others:

For our failure to love as you have loved us:

For these and all our failings:

Remember the Lord, our God, is merciful and kind to all, and says to each one of us who has confessed their sins, failings and shortcomings:

‘My child, I love you, I live with you; your sins are forgiven.’

Amen.

Bible readings: Acts 4.29-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1.1-2.2; John 20.19-31

Prayers of Praise

Praise to God who from the birth of time
has enriched the world and all its people.

Whose love is poured out in abundance
for each and every one of us. Who calls us and guides us as a shepherd
to his sheep. Who has unending patience and perseverance.

Praise to God for forgiveness and renewal, and the world around us, rich
and diverse.

For the community of people around us

For the gift of insight, and hearts feeling strangely warmed. For the gift of
the Holy Spirit, to dwell with us and within us. Praise to God, Praise to
God. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Eternal, Everlasting God Help each of us to show patience and
perseverance with others; and with this prayer in our hearts and on our
lips, we pray for those we know and love and hear us this day. God, in
whom we believe: **Bless them.**

For those struggling to accept the Easter message of resurrection; for those who long to have faith but miss the final step; who long to see Jesus but doubt what they see, seeing only as if in a mirror dimly; who long to hear your word, but grasp only a muffle and murmur; who yearn to feel your presence but shy away from contact; for those who need convincing of the truth in an age of fake news and skewed views. God, in whom we believe: **Bless them.**

For those whose health and well-being teeter on the edge of uncertainty or insanity, pain, disfigurement and anguish; for those living with illness in all its forms, for those whose treatment is delayed and who are ground down by the mental and physical pain that can't yet be treated; for those who live with darkness and dread bombarding their waking moments.

For those without meaning and purpose in their lives, who wake to the morning light and dread the empty day that lies ahead; for those who dread the dark nights of wakefulness, tossing and turning; for those who feel there is no hope for tomorrow, no vision for the future, no plan for their lives; for those without a stable home life, without meaningful work and prospects. God, in whom we believe: **Bless them.**

For those without the shelter of a home, with no roots to a place, who are constantly forced to move on, change direction through war or violence, political unrest, prejudice, religious hatred and so much more; for those who seek refuge in new places and new lands with new languages and new 'norms. God, in whom we believe: **Bless them.**

The disciples gathered behind closed doors not only for fear of the Jewish authorities but they gathered to grieve the loss of their friend, their leader, their visionary, their Lord. We pray for those who mourn the loss of family or friends and especially those who have had to grieve alone without the support of those who love them – may the gentle lengthening of the days bring them light and hope for the life ahead. God, in whom we believe: **Bless them.**

The Lord's Prayer

Time to reflect:

Luke gives a brief description of life in the new Christian community. No-one claimed exclusive ownership of their possessions or wealth; everything was held in common. Property and land were sold to make sure no-one was left in need.

And, supported by this, the apostles were able to preach powerfully the message of the risen Christ. Even after Peter and John were threatened by the authorities and told 'not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.' The believers then prayed that they may speak with boldness while 'signs and wonders are performed' in the name of Jesus.

They were again 'filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness'. This second outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in response to prayer, encourages us to think of Pentecost not only as a past event but also a present experience for a people of prayer. The first outpouring in Acts is particularly associated with evangelism and this second outpouring is associated with the generous sharing in today's passage that follows on immediately.

There is a strong connection established here, between evangelism, speaking with boldness, and healing, performing signs and wonders. This is not surprising given the squalor in which so many people lived. Poverty and disability, pollution and sickness, social exclusion and malnutrition, unemployment and mental affliction are interlinked. This is the important social context of the wondrous signs of the healing power of God.

They are securely rooted in the common life of the apostolic community. The preaching of God's word is accompanied by the embodiment of God's generosity.

So, isolation gives way to time together, hunger is satisfied by shared meals, and basic needs are met by the distribution of possessions. This description of the Early Church in Jerusalem is both attractive and challenging. Our context today is different, but this does not prevent us from recapturing something of the vibrant generosity found within the Church and in its outreach.

At a time when so many suffer from insecurity, economic anxiety and loneliness, we need to show that ours is a welcoming and generous faith, one that listens, cares, acts, and engages with people where they are.

StF 611 – Brother, sister, let me serve you.

[Brother Sister let me serve you song lyrics \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road; we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ light for you in the night-time of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will! weep when you are weeping; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you; I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony, born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

A going out prayer:

So now we go out with confidence in you; our loving God who leads us;
You know our weaknesses and our strengths. Lord call us, guide us, and strengthen us in your service. **Amen.**