

Stuart Townend, *See what a morning*

Opening Prayer

In places of darkness and in the fullness
of light
Christ is risen
In times of doubt and in strength of faith
Christ is risen
In our pain and in our joy
Christ is risen
The Lord is risen
He is risen indeed! Hallelujah

**The day of resurrection,
earth, tell it out abroad!
The passover of gladness,
the passover of God!
From death to life eternal,
from earth unto the sky,
our Christ has brought us over
with hymns of victory.**

Our hearts be pure from evil,
that we may see aright
the Lord in rays eternal
of resurrection light;
and, listening to his accents,
may hear, so calm and plain,
his own 'All hail!' and, hearing,
may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful,
let earth her song begin,
the round world keep high triumph,
and all that is therein;
let all things seen and unseen
their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord is risen,
our joy that has no end.

St John of Damascus (c. 675-c. 750) translated by John
Mason Neale (1811-1866)

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Let us pray together
In the chaos before anything was, Lord,
you spoke bringing life in abundance.

We praise and adore you, God of life

In the darkness of an early morning
garden and the dank coldness of death
and the tomb, Lord, you spoke bringing
resurrection, defeating death and giving
us abundant life

We praise and adore you, God of Life

In the dark places of our lives, Lord, you
speak and bring recreation
transformation and calling us to life in
abundance

We praise and adore you, God of Life
God of abundant life,
you have called us to be your people and
to walk in your way but there are times
when we wander away, when we close
our ears to your call and our eyes to your
life. We remember those times before
you.
Take all we have been and done and all
we have left undone and transform it
through your love and grace.
Open our ears to your words of
forgiveness and our eyes to your glory.
May we hear the words
"Your sins are forgiven"
and know their truth.
Amen

A Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 16
Gospel Reading: John 20: 19-31

Time to Reflect

*Shut behind closed doors for the disciples
it comes first in disbelief, confusion and
fear. The inability to believe Mary's
words, to take in the impossibility. The
fear that they might follow to a
terrorist's death. Confusion that it could
all have come to this.*

*Into those shut doors and fearful hearts
Jesus comes to bring resurrection and
peace. It is a resurrection that does not
turn back the clock, does not erase the
horror of the Friday but bears its marks
and is recognised by them. Without
those marks, the pierced hands and side,
the resurrection could not be real, the
life it offered could not be full.
It is a resurrection that joins the
disciples where they are shut behind the
closed doors of the room and of their
fear. That again seeks them and Thomas
out behind closed doors a week later. It's
a resurrection that will seek us out
where we are and however we are
feeling. It does not expect us to make a*

leap of faith and travel towards it but comes to us and meets us in our need. It is a resurrection that offers life, calling forth peace and breathing the Spirit echoing God's breath at the dawn of creation or the breath of the Spirit in Ezekiel's Valley of bones. It comes to empower and to change and to lead us onwards into the Kingdom of abundant life.

But stop, notice the closed doors, not just at the first encounter but the second as well. It appears Thomas isn't the only one doubting. The disciples are still locked in. John's "Pentecost Moment" is not met with the throwing open of doors or the shouting of praises or the preaching of sermons. In John the giving of the Spirit is met with a gradual resurrection and empowerment of the disciples which crescendos with Thomas's declaration 'My Lord and my God!' It echoes Lazarus's first stumbling steps from his tomb before he is released from the grave clothes that bind him.

**Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.**

**In the grave they laid him, Love who had been slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:**

**Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:**

**When our hearts are wintry, grieving,
or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:**

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958) (alt.)

A time of prayer

Into the closed doors of this world come, Lord, and speak your word of peace and life

We pray for all those who are afraid at this time.

We pray for all those who are ill and for those who yearn for their health.

We pray for those who are homeless and for those who struggle to feed themselves and their families.

We pray for those who have lost their incomes or whose businesses are at risk.

We pray for all those who offer care during this crisis often putting their lives at risk to do so.

We pray for our government and all the governments of the world, for business leaders and all who hold any power.

We pray for those who feel voiceless and powerless.

We pray for those situations that no longer make the headlines for those suffering from conflicts, war and oppression, for those seeking refuge and those who have no place of safety.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

A prayer of blessing

May the light of the resurrection shine on your way

May the peace of the resurrection hold you fast

And may the abundant life of the resurrection fill you and empower you
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

In Christ Alone, National Methodist Choir of Great Britain

Original Materials by **R A Bending**
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Psalm 16

Song of Trust and Security in God

A Miktam of David.

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.'

As for the holy ones in the land, they
are the noble,
in whom is all my delight.

Those who choose another god
multiply their sorrows;
their drink-offerings of blood I will
not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.

The Lord is my chosen portion and
my cup;
you hold my lot.
The boundary lines have fallen for
me in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.

I bless the Lord who gives me
counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs
me.
I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I
shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my
soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.
For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.

You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness
of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures
for evermore.

John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.