

starters for Sunday

Third Sunday of Easter

4 May 2014

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Nicola Frail, Chaplain to the 9 Regt Army Air Corps, for her thoughts on the third Sunday of Easter.

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Quick Guide...

Helping people prepare for reading the Bible in worship can make a real difference. Overcoming nerves, reading in ways suitable to the text, speaking clearly etc.

You may wish to email these three links to the people reading Scripture on Sunday to support them in their involvement in worship: [Managing your nerves](#); [Creative readings](#); [Worship at the Lectern](#)

[Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19](#)

Psalm 116 is a Psalm of Thanksgiving from a pilgrim or traveller who has come near to death and credits God for his survival. This Psalm has also been described as Jesus' Passover Song and its references to deliverance from death are particularly appropriate in the context of Jesus' own death and resurrection. As such, it is not only part of the Hallel (Psalms 113-116), recited at the Passover amongst other Jewish festivals, but it is also one of the lectionary readings for Maundy Thursday.

[1 Peter 1: 17-21](#)

The author of 1 Peter writes to the churches in Asia Minor, to an audience of a largely Gentile Christians, many of whom were formerly Pagans. In this first chapter, the author gives advice and encouragement to these new converts as to how to live a holy life in obedience to God so that they may build a community of mutual love. While it is possible that some may have been living as exiles in a foreign land, Bartlett observes that "they were not rescued from exile; they were rescued into exile. Their alienation is a mark of their faithfulness." (1: 17-18). 1 Peter's audience are reminded that it is through the "precious blood of Jesus" (1: 19) that their conversion has been possible, however, the saving acts of God reach back to the beginning of time and extend into the future bringing an eschatological dimension.

[Acts 2: 14a, 36-41](#)

This reading forms part of Peter's speech to the gathered masses on the day of Pentecost. Herein lies a call to repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Bartlett notes the link between today's epistle and Peter's speech. "Acts enacts what Peter claims. Hearing the word preached by Peter, three thousand people were 'cut to the heart' and baptised. The message of the risen Christ convicts and redeems; born



anew Christians at Pentecost and a generation later in Asia Minor turned from their old patterns of life to devote themselves to the pattern of the disciples.”

[Luke 24: 13-25](#)

The post resurrection appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus is a rich well from which to draw for the preacher. This is a fitting text both for Easter evening services and indeed for later in the Easter season when we both celebrate and reflect upon the significance of the resurrection for our lives individually and the wider world. The readings continue to prompt a response of celebration and thanksgiving. The mood in this pericope moves from grief and despair at the apparent death of Jesus to joy and wonder upon recognising Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Craddock (Interpretation: Luke) identifies 6 major theological themes, each of which is worthy of much closer examination:

1. Christ is known by revelation.
2. Summary of gospel recited.
3. Old Testament Scriptures witness to Jesus.
4. Christ is revealed in the sacramental meal.
5. Disciples understand by remembrance.
6. Disciples witness to what they have seen and heard.

This long narrative comes to a sudden and swift close. After Cleopas and his travelling companion speak with Jesus on the road to Emmaus and offer him hospitality in keeping with near Eastern customs, it is upon hearing the words of thanks and subsequent breaking of the bread that they recognise who is in their midst. No sooner are their eyes opened than Jesus vanishes from sight.

The biblical commentator Culpepper observes: “God’s presence is always elusive, fleeting, dancing on the edge of our awareness and perception. If we are honest we must confess it is never constant, steady or predictable. The Nuns in the sound of music sing: “How can you catch a moonbeam in your hand, how do you hold a wave upon the sand? ...” God’s faithful perceive God’s presence in fleeting moments, and then the mundane close in again.”



Illustrations

Dr. Viktor Frankl, a Jewish holocaust survivor, once recalled: “I remember how a foreman secretly gave me a piece of bread which I knew he must have saved from his breakfast ration,” he said. “It was far more than the small piece of bread which moved me to tears at the time. It was the human 'something' this man also gave to me — the word and the look which accompanied the gift.”

At Arnhem cemetery in the Netherlands there are over 1700 military personnel buried, most of whom took part in Operation Market Garden in September 1944 - an airborne assault by mainly British and Polish servicemen which it was hoped would bring an early end to the war. Outside Arnhem museum there is a monument to the people of Gelderland - “This stone marks our admiration for your great courage remembering especially the women who tended our wounds. In the long winter that followed your families risked death by hiding Allied soldiers and airmen while members of the resistance helped many to safety. You took us then into your homes as fugitives and friends. We took you forever into our hearts.”

Sermon Idea

Although Luke states that Emmaus was situated 7 miles from Jerusalem, biblical historians and cartographers have been unable to determine its precise location. Perhaps Emmaus is not so much a geographic location as symbolic of the places where hopes have been quashed, dreams shattered and the raw emotion of grief felt most profoundly.

Scott Hoezee: “There are any number of things in our lives that drive us to Emmaus. But if we can find Jesus even there, then we sense with renewed wonder the punch of the line, “Surely, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” The first time Luke shows us the reality of that divine presence was in Emmaus. Emmaus, of all places. Of all places! But that's just the point: all places, all the time. It's Jesus.

Thanks be to God!”



Prayers

Collect

God of life and love,
Your Son made himself known to his disciples
in the breaking of bread.
Open the eyes of our faith,
that we may see him in his redeeming work,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Prayer of Approach

God of Wonder and of unexpected delight,
as we celebrate Christ's risen presence among us today
we pray that you would open to us your holy word.

Talk to us as we journey along life's way,
meet us as we share in fellowship with one another,
and so move in us that we may claim all your promises as our own.

Forgive us O God for the times that we fail to notice your presence among us.
In the wonder, the beauty, the richness of the world you have made,
we often miss seeing your glory,
creator God.

In the mystery and beauty of a newborn child,
in the extraordinary complexities of the human body and soul,
we often miss seeing your glory,
creator God.

In the sacrificial giving of a son,
loved more than we can ever know or understand,
we often miss seeing your glory,
saving God.



In your coming to us,
in the meeting of our needs,
when sadness or loneliness threaten to overwhelm our very being,
we often miss seeing your glory,
comforting God.

In the meeting with other people,
in the being with a friend,
in the sharing of a meal,
in the listening to someone in need,
we often miss seeing your glory,
loving God.

As we make journeys along the road of life,
some joyous, others with a heavy heart,
you walk with us,
loving God,
We praise and thank you that you always see us.
Open our eyes and quicken our hearts,
in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

(source unknown)

Prayer of Intercession

God of compassion, we pray that we may never forsake the means of grace that you have granted to us. Keep us true to the way of prayer, to the reading of scripture and to the practice of gathering in your name and of welcoming both friends and strangers into our homes and our hearts. We pray that as Christ appeared on the road to Emmaus, so he might appear to us, and through us to others. Hear us now O God as we share our joys and concerns in silence:

Lord, today we pray for those in our church and our community who are troubled and upset as were the disciples on the first Easter Day. We hold before you those who are experiencing the grief of losing that which is important to them - that which has helped shape their lives - be it a



loved one, a way of life, a home or a job. Grant that they may encounter the Risen Christ and know that the future is safe in God's hands.

Gracious God, we pray for those who reach out in our church and our community to minister to others your healing presence. We pray for those who listen, for those who counsel, for those who share your word, for all those who break bread with us and give you thanks. Bless them in their love that they may ever more fully experience the love that they share.

We ask all these things as we give you our deepest thanks for being with us and listening to us through Jesus Christ, our Risen Saviour and Lord, Amen

(Rev. Richard J. Fairchild, adapted)

Time with children

Theme: Hidden in plain sight

You will need: A picture of Wally from the Where's Wally books and a picture of a crowd scene in which Wally is hidden.

Background: The Where's Wally books have sold more than 50 million copies in over 50 countries and 30 languages. The crowd scenes are drawn by illustrator Martin Handford. Handford says he hides Wally so children can learn "to be aware of what's going on around them. I'd like them to see wonder in places it might not have occurred to them."

Ask the children if they have heard of Wally from the Where's Wally books.

Have a picture of Wally to hand. Discuss what he looks like and what he is wearing.

Explain that in the books Wally is hidden in the crowd scenes and part of the fun is trying to find him. See if the children can spot Wally.

Explore the idea of being hidden in plain sight, drawing in the story of the disciples failing to recognise Jesus on the road to Emmaus.



Musical Suggestions

CH4 404	I danced in the morning
CH4 417	Now the green blade riseth
CH4 786	May the peace of God go with us
CH4 753	Alleluia, alleluia
CH4 429	Alleluia! Jesus is risen!
CH4 539	I want Jesus to walk with me
CH4 609	Come, living God, when least expected
CH4 433	Haven't you heard that Jesus is risen?
CH4 443	He is Lord, he is Lord
CH4 415	This joyful Eastertide
CH4 580	Abide with me
CH4 662	Jesus thou joy of loving hearts
CH4 416	Christ is alive! Let Christians sing
CH4 606	Lord, you sometimes speak in wonders



Additional Resources

Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Pray Now 2013](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#). [Revealing Love](#) will be available to purchase from November 2013.



Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music magazine [Different Voices](#).

Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and

delivering sermons regularly.

Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Worship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to the Rev Nicola Frail for providing us with this Sunday's material.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

