

twelvebaskets



EASTER 3A

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Third Sunday of Easter - Year A
19th April 2026



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR

401 STF – Come, sinners, to the gospel feast

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me OR

37 STF – You're calling us and so we are gathered here

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

Hymn:

357 STF – Jesus - the name high over all OR

508 STF – Purify my heart, let me be as gold

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

657 STF – You give rest to the weary OR

314 STF – This joyful Eastertide

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

Blessing

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Call to worship

In the midst of the business and busy-ness of this week,
Come holy Lord.

In the midst of the fear and conflict in our world,
Come prince of peace.

In the midst of the signs of spring around us,
Light up our life with your love, we pray

Amen.¹

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR

401 STF – Come, sinners, to the gospel feast

Opening Prayers

Redeeming Lord,
Awakener of our hearts,
You walk with us through every step of this life and beyond.

You hear our cries; when fear has a tight hold on us, You break its grip,
showing us mercy as You free us from fear and anxiety.

How can we show our gratitude to You?

We show our love through our praise
and by how we choose to live our lives,
living out the purpose You placed within us.

Through our witness to Your miracles,
let us see the urgent need in this world to turn back to You.

Turn our confusion into deeper understanding.

Open our eyes and hearts to what a life with You truly is,
a life full of hope, healing, gratitude, love,
and above all, faith.

We pray to live lives of faith that are not shallow or self-centered,
supporting our communities with courage,
speaking truth and sharing Scripture
to bring clarity and hope to those without it.

Awaken all our hearts and fill us with confidence to proclaim You.

Let us boldly declare Your name and the power it holds
with conviction of heart.

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

As we live our lives, we ask You to take us firmly by the hand and lead us,
lead us from confusion to clarity, from fear to freedom,
from watching to doing, and from doing to truly living,
until we reach the end of this road that leads back to You.

Lord, hear our prayers.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Ask those gathered together: do any of us here like to do jigsaw puzzles? (hopefully a few hands will raise!) Ask one or two of them what it is that they enjoy about doing a puzzle. Maybe you yourself have a story to tell about a jigsaw puzzle you completed. *You may wish to complete a simple jigsaw puzzle by placing the pieces under the seats of those in the congregation, having them brought forward and one or two people do the puzzle together.* It's fair to say that although all the pieces can be in front of you on the table, it's impossible to see the big picture. At the start it just looks like a messy jumble and the pieces need to be sifted through, gradually pieced together so that the final image becomes clear.

That's a good way to describe what is happening for Jesus' friends and disciples at this time after he died, was placed in the tomb but was then resurrected three days later. In today's reading from the gospel of Luke we hear how two of them were trying to make sense of what had happened but simply couldn't work it all out. They have all the pieces of the story but placing them together is proving a real challenge!

Going for a walk can often be a good way to help us ponder and think things through, which is what these two disciples are doing when Jesus appears to them. They walk and talk together, sharing what's happened and trying to work it all out. It is only later, once they're sat at the table and Jesus breaks bread that they finally see him for who he really is. The big picture becomes clear at last and they say "were not our hearts burning within us". Meeting with Jesus was the final piece to complete the puzzle.³

Hymn:

367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me OR

37 STF – You're calling us and so we are gathered here

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

² Opening prayers written by Alice Arbon

³ All Age Talk written by Gail Adcock

Hymn:

357 STF – Jesus - the name high over all OR

508 STF – Purify my heart, let me be as gold

Reflections on the readings

Easter: a moment that changed history. A moment that changed the relationship we have with God. A moment of long ever-lasting change that still impacts the world today. Jesus continues to transform lives on a daily basis. Through Jesus, people are drawn into a personal relationship with God which changes each and everyone of us. God challenges us to be better people, to live as he calls us, to live a life that does not always fit with our peers.

Our faith stories unfold as ongoing journeys. Our relationship with God is never just one encounter with God but endless moments of encounter throughout our lives.

You may want to consider if there is anyone who wants to share testimony in your congregation. There are some prompts which may encourage conversation with neighbours; however you could change this for some expanded testimony sharing.

Acts 2: 14, 36-41

The passage from Acts comes just after Pentecost and is an extract of the first sermon that Peter preaches to the crowd of people. We don't journey to Pentecost within our liturgical year for a few more weeks, however in the context of this passage it is important to recognise that the disciples have just been anointed by the Holy Spirit, and there is a crowd of intrigued people.

What our passage shares with us today is the response of the crowd in hearing this sermon. The crowd were 'cut to the heart' – they felt convinced and challenged by the words that Peter said, so much so that they made a lifelong change. When asked what to do, they were told to repent and be baptised, and 3000 people did. Their church grew by 3000 people in one day because of how God moved through Peter's sermon.

This was their first experience of God. This was the start of their journeys.

Conversation prompt:

Do you remember the first time you encountered God?

Luke 24: 13-35

The Road to Emmaus is such a well-known passage from the Bible, however, it is an example of a common experience that is faced by most Christians at some point on their faith journeys.

The passage presents two disciples who are deeply grieving the death of Jesus. Despite having walked alongside him and absorbed his teachings, they now find themselves in a period of profound confusion and sorrow, a true wilderness experience. Their expectations had been high—they believed wholeheartedly that Jesus would be the one to redeem Israel and to overcome the power of the Romans. However, the reality they faced was quite different from their hopes. They witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus, a traumatic event that left them feeling unsettled and distressed. This unexpected turn of events has left them struggling to make sense of what has happened and to understand the reasons behind it. It is disappointment and confusion that they feel as they attempt to process the loss and the apparent collapse of their hopes.

Yet they suddenly they find themselves with a guest on their walk. Someone who, in that moment, they don't recognise. Instead of revealing himself straight away, this companion waits, listens and explains.

The truth is, we all have these moments. Moments when we can't quite recognise God beside us, when people could have been stood there with an arrow saying 'This is Jesus' and we still wouldn't have been able to see. But God is always there and will show his face at the moment we need it most. It is sometimes only looking back on those wilderness experiences that you see how God was your companion on that journey.

Conversation prompt:

Can you think of a wilderness experience when you looked back and recognised where God was in that situation?

Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19

The lectionary readings take us to another step on the faith journey – the story of redemption. The psalmist celebrates how God has changed their life, freeing them from the fear of death that was overwhelming them, and enabling them to see that they are loved and precious in the eyes of God. The psalm is a reflection on those beautiful moments where God meets you, challenges you, forgives you and changes you.

But the psalmist doesn't just praise God for their redemption but instead asks a question: 'What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me?'

The psalmist's response to this question is to

- Call on the name of Lord
- Fulfil their vows and promises to the Lord in the presence of his people
- Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

In other words, the psalmist promises to

1. Pray – continuing to fall at God's feet in prayer for forgiveness, praise and thanksgiving,
2. Seek to live according to God's Word
3. Be accountable to their faith within a community
4. Offer gratitude to God.

In our lifetimes God will redeem us and forgive us over and over again. We are flawed individuals that struggle to not sin, but God sees beyond our sin and draws us close to them. And every time God redeems us from a time of trial, offers us forgiveness, breaks the chains that are holding us back – we are called to respond to God as the psalmist did, we are called to make changes.

Conversation prompt:

So... what shall you return to God in response for all that The Divine does for you?⁴

Hymn:

657 STF – You give rest to the weary OR

314 STF – This joyful Eastertide

Prayers of intercession

Gracious God, we know that you are a God of journeys and transformation. You take the broken and make it whole. The power of your spirit ignites hope, joy and peace, so we join together in prayer.

⁴ Reflection written by Naomi Prince

The world is being torn apart. Political tensions are growing, wars aren't ceasing and harsh words are frequent. You teach us to be a kind and loving people Lord and yet our world is plagued with the opposite.

We think in particular of.... (*insert appropriate events*)

God, may your peace descend upon these places and people, bringing permanent change. We pray that hate turns to love, anger turns to peace.

You are a God of transformation

Transform the world around us

Your world is hungry Lord. We think of those who are physically hungry, scrounging for food or accepting their empty stomachs. Thank you for the loyal commitment of food banks and charities in trying to ensure that there is food for everyone. We pray for those who don't have access to food banks, where accessing support for hunger is a privilege. Provide them with a way forward Lord.

People are also spiritually hungry – longing to know and understand the 'something bigger' that they sense. Help us respond to this spiritual hunger Lord. As you redeem our lives, may we help others draw close to you and know of your forgiveness and everlasting love.

If there is any work in your local church related to the growing of disciples, pray for them here

You are a God of transformation

Transform the world around us

Loving God, your love flows through us in all that we touch, ignite in us the spirit that brings wholeness and healing to those in our community and beyond. In particular we pray for those who you have gifted medical knowledge to. Equip them with what they need to do their job well, enabling your healing love to be known to all who are cared by them. Enable science to continue to develop and create drugs that give life to those who have been struggling.

We pray for those in our church community who need prayers for healing now...

You are a God of transformation

Transform the world around us

Sometimes life can feel incredibly lonely, but you are a God of companionship. Sit with those who feel cut off from the world, with those who are struggling to make sense of what they are facing, and those whose minds overwhelm them. Make your presence known. We pray that your everlasting peace becomes present as they wander along their wilderness path – may they know that they aren't alone on the road they are travelling along.

You are a God of transformation

Transform the world around us

Lord, we hold with you all that has been spoken and unspoken. Hear these prayers

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Naomi Prince

Spirit of the living Lord,
There is boundless generosity in your world,
Your goodness flows in all sorts of surprising ways.
Help us to join in with your Spirit, wherever we encounter her.
Come, Lord Jesus, and bless these gifts, we pray

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

Blessing

In this Easter season,
May you be a symbol of resurrection, of healing, of life and love,
In your home, your community and the world,
In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker