

**Christ Church New Southgate, Friern
Barnet 23.04.2023**

1.

Call to worship is on the screen. (1 Peter 1: 3, 4, 8b & 9).

One: Let us give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who in His mercy gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death.

All: This fills us with a living hope. And so, by faith, we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for His people.

One: He keeps them for you in heaven where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away.

All: Rejoice with a great and glorious joy because we are receiving the salvation of your souls, which is the purpose of your faith in him.

Hymn: King of Kings

Hymn: Happy Day

Prayer of Approach

Loving God, we have come together, to be clothed with power and to render to you the praise and the worship that is so richly due to you.

We pray you, meet us here with truth we can wear with confidence, and with joy we can share with sincerity.

Awaken us, by the power of your Holy Spirit, to life in all its fullness.

Be with us as we lift our hearts, and our voices, to you and prepare us for everlasting life with Christ Jesus, in whose name we worship. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

Let us silently confess our sins to God.

Merciful God, forgive us our sins. Renew and restore us. In your infinite grace,

help us to be more Christlike by our words
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and deeds. In name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

Assurance of pardon

‘God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.’

May the God of our Saviour Christ, grant us all forgiveness.

Renew his grace in our lives and grant us his peace and his strength. **Amen**

As Jesus taught us, we pray---- ‘Our Father’---

All- Age Talk.

I wonder what makes you feel afraid or scared.

Are any of you afraid of spiders?



Or wasps?



Or dark room?



Or thunderstorms?



What other things are you afraid or scared of?

Many of us are afraid or scared of something? What do you do when afraid or scared? I know some people hide from the thing they are frightened of!

Over two thousand years ago, on the very first Easter evening, some of Jesus’ disciples were hiding away in a room. **3.**

They were all really scared. They had even locked the door so that no-one could come in. They were scared they were going to be arrested and put to death, like Jesus had been a few days earlier.

These men had seen the way that the Jewish leaders had worked together against Jesus to get Him arrested and killed, and they thought that the same thing might happen to them. And then something wonderful happened.

The Bible tells us that “Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you’ (John 20:19b) The last thing that the disciples expected was to see Jesus again, having seen Him crucified 3 days earlier. Yet here He was, in the room with them.

He had come into the room, through a locked door! When Jesus saw how frightened His followers were, he gave them His gift of peace. Peace that set them free from their fear. Now Jesus is the same today, as He was yesterday.

So, when we are really scared or afraid, not just of spiders but any other situation like bullying, illness, or money worries, we can turn to Jesus and ask Him to come close to us and give us He gives us His gift of peace, like He did to the first disciples.

Let us be quiet for a moment and ask Jesus to come close to us.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, would you come close to us now and help us to receive the gift of peace that You want to give to us, in place of our fear. Help us hear Your voice saying, “Peace be with you,” **Amen.**

Bible Reading: John 20: 19 - 31

Hymn: Breathe on me breathe of God

4. Sermon

Let us pray.

Faithful God, open our ears, help us to listen; open our eyes, help us to see you; open our hearts, help us to receive your Word, even Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The title of sermon is ‘**Peace be with you.**’

Euphoria in the dictionary is a feeling or state of intense excitement and happiness. The opposite of euphoria is misery, a state or feeling of great physical or mental distress or discomfort. On Easter Sunday we all had some euphoria, as we celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Three Sundays after, misery may be slowly creeping back due to worry about paying the bills for example or an illness. The joy of the risen Christ and His power to do the miraculous may have slightly faded.

The disciples of Jesus were in a state of euphoria when Jesus was with them especially after he rode on the donkey into Jerusalem, and they thought the time had come for Him to overthrow the Roman invaders and become king. Then Good Friday arrived. Instead of becoming king, the disciples witnessed his humiliation, suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. Euphoria had turned to misery. They were scared and worried the same fate bestowed on Jesus by the Jewish leaders might happen to them. They hid behind closed door. Can you relate to this transition? Today, persecuted Christians live misery due to fear of abuse and death.

The disciples’ hope was dashed and wondered what the future holds with their Rabbi gone. They found it illogical to believe Mary Magdalene who claimed to have seen the resurrected Jesus. They also wondered if it is true, why is Jesus not coming back to them to start His new Kingdom instead of telling Mary

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Magdalene, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Then, Jesus came through the locked door and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. After saying this, he showed them his hands and his pierced side. To assure them he was not a ghost or an apparition or someone that merely looked like Him. But Himself, the one who had been nailed to the cross and pierced in the side who now stood in front of them, raised from the dead. The disciples were filled with joy. Jesus again said, 'Peace be with you.' 'As the father sent me, so I send you.' He sent them to tell everyone about Him. He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit, the Power, to you need to carry out my instruction to tell everyone about my love and salvation.

Thomas was not with the rest of the disciples at the time. He also found it illogical and difficult to believe Jesus appeared to them. He said, "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later, the disciples including Thomas were gathered in the house behind locked door. Still afraid despite having seen Jesus, received his Holy Spirit and given authority! Again, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop your doubting and believe!"

We are not told whether Thomas touched Jesus, but his doubt about the resurrected Jesus disappeared as he exclaimed 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me!' Jesus used the incident to bless all future believers in Him and not necessarily to rebuke Thomas. Jesus was

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telling His disciples present and future to live by faith and not by sight. To trust God's character and promises even if we cannot see Him physically or understand His ways. To live in a life of obedience, sacrifice, service, and hope in God.

Do you feel low, anxious, or scared this morning? Are you struggling to believe Jesus is alive and with you, saying 'Peace be with you'? It is human to doubt Jesus is with us or can help during tough times. We live in a world of logic, where seeing is believing after all. And faith, 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' is incomprehensible to many. Even where we have some faith in Jesus, it gets sorely tested when the storm of life rages around us.

Be encouraged, the disciples who were with Jesus, witnessed his miracles and heard his teaching that was like no other Rabbi doubted too. They also struggled to obey His instruction at first and went back to their day job of fishing. It was not until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples had the peace and courage to speak to crowds of thousands, testify to the Jewish leaders who crucified Jesus and travel vast distances at significant risk and suffering to spread the gospel.

Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit who at Pentecost gave the disciples the power to spread the gospel has been given to all the followers of Jesus and is at work today. We hear stories of fearful, persecuted Christians in hiding encountering Jesus while praying and being emboldened to draw others to Christ. Of Christians praying for youths in gangs to abandon knives and violence and in the power of the Holy Spirit have done so. If we try to trust the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we too will be emboldened to talk more about the love of Jesus and His salvation.

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Community turn arounds and revivals would happen more often as many hear. Jesus saying, 'Peace be with you.' Churches will brim with people again. It will happen because God had raised Jesus from death. Jesus had been able burst out of the sealed tomb, enter locked rooms and can fill hearts that need and yearn for Him with His Power.

There is no need to hide behind closed door. In faith, try to see brighter times ahead of you. Believe it. Ask Jesus what you need. He is able and willing to replace our misery with euphoria. This is because reality of Easter, the Risen Christ is forever with us. Not just on Easter Sunday. Brothers and Sisters as we await his second coming and the rich blessings God keeps for His people in heaven where they cannot decay, or spoil or fade away, Jesus says, 'Peace be with you.' **Amen.**

Let us pray.

Renewing, risen Lord, increase our faith and trust in you. Help us to stop hiding behind closed door. Grant us the peace and confidence to tell all about your salvation, grace, and love in the power of the holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Hymn: In Christ alone my hope is found

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Lord, we know you with us and hear us. In faith we bring you our prayers of intercession.

The response when I say Lord hear us is Lord graciously hear us.

Lord, hear us --**Lord graciously hear us.**

Eternal God, we thank you that Jesus has risen and has left us with His peace. We thank you that despite our doubts and faltering faith, you never leave us or forsake us and that we can always encounter you. We thank you that your

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Kingdom is everlasting, and that all who believe in your Son Jesus Christ are assured of eternal life with you. Gracious God, touch your church everywhere in the world today. Help the church to be one. Breathe your peace into them and renew her in the power of your Holy Spirit. Help the church be the beacon of light, love, and grace through which many will come to know you and find peace. This we ask especially for our church, Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet. Breathe your spirit afresh on our Minister, Revd. Ruth Moriarty. Strengthen her and all who help her to proclaim your peace, love, and grace in this community.

Lord, hear us -- **Lord graciously hear us.**

Generous Lord, we ask for your power and your Spirit for the world leaders. Help them to be selfless in the promotion of social justice, and the equitable distribution of your abundant resources. We pray you walk through the doors we hide behind out of fear as individuals, and as a society. Open our eyes and let us see, open our ears, and let us hear, and open our hearts that we may receive your Spirit. Renew us so there will be lesser hatred, conflict, and war. Breathe your peace into places of hostility, conflict, and war. Lord, hear us --**Lord graciously hear us.**

Gracious God, we pray for the homeless, the hungry, the oppressed, the lonely and the ignored that you grant them essential practical help and your peace. We pray for the countless people who have lost hope or faith in you. Breathe into them and restore their faith in you, the risen Lord and Saviour as you did for Thomas. Encounter and draw close to you those who do not know of you in your miraculous power. Lord, hear us -- **Lord graciously hear us.**

Let us silently lift to God those on our hearts.

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Lord, hear us ---- **Lord graciously hear us.**

Lord, we ask your healing touch for those unwell. Your peace and comfort for the bereaved and especially those struggling to cope with their loss.

We pray for ourselves, family members, relatives, and friends. You know what each one fears or is hiding from. Loving God, speak peace into our fear, faith into our doubt, and hope into our despair. As you have blessed us, may we be a blessing for others, bringing the promise of the kingdom near, by our words and deeds. These we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Hymn: Great is Thy Faithfulness

Blessing - 'The Grace'

**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy
Spirit
Be with us all, now and ever more.
Amen.**