

W@H 19th April 2026

Introduction

Hello, my name is Helen Watson and I'm a Methodist Local Preacher in the Berkshire and Hampshire Borders Circuit. It's lovely to welcome you to worship today.

Call to Worship

All you nations, praise the Lord. All you people on earth, praise him.

Great is his love for us. The Lord is faithful forever. Praise the Lord! . Psalm 117,

Hymn **STF56 King of glory, King of peace I will love thee**

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| 1 King of Glory, King of Peace,
I will love thee ;
and that love may never cease
I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request,
thou hast heard me ;
thou didst note my working breast,
thou hast spared me. | Though my sins against me cried,
thou didst clear me ;
and alone, when they replied,
thou didst hear me. |
| 2 Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee. | 3 Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee ;
in my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
to enrol thee :
e'en eternity's too short
to extol thee. |

George Herbert (1593–1633)

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Prayer² and Lords Prayer

O Lord, who walks with us along life's way,
we come before you today, joyful to be back with you in worship.
Draw near to us as we draw near to you, we pray,
and may we step forward together on this journey of worship and praise.

In this hallowed hour when you welcome us
into your house, O Lord, and we experience your hospitality:
we offer our humble thanks and praise.
When you stop us in the tracks of our frantic lives, and offer succour to our weary souls:
we offer our humble thanks and praise.
When our eyes are opened and we realise how blind we have been, how unheeding of your
presence:
we offer our humble thanks and praise

Lord, we confess that we live our lives distracted by so many things.
Often when life is not going the way we want, we are distracted.
And like the pair who trod the Emmaus road, our feet carry us forward,

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but our thoughts go round in circles;
and at such times, when you come to us, Lord, we often fail to recognise you.
We are sorry and ask you to reveal yourself to us afresh..

All-seeing, all-knowing, and ever-present God, you understand how easily we are caught up
by life's cares, spiralling into despair and distance.

Yet in your grace, O Lord, you forgive us and walk the way with us,
welcoming us back into your presence.

You feed our souls with comfort and hope, teaching us to see life in a new light.

For that and for so many other things, we praise and thank you.

Amen

And now we say together the Lords Prayer in the traditional form.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.

For ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading¹ Luke 24: 13 – 35

On the road to Emmaus

That same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village called Emmaus. They were
talking with each other about everything that had happened.

As they talked Jesus himself came up and walked along with them But God kept them from
recognizing him.

Jesus asked them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stood still, and
their faces were sad.

One of them was named Cleopas. He said to Jesus, "You must be a visitor to Jerusalem. If
you lived there, you would know the things that have happened there in the last few days."

"What things?" Jesus asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet. He
was powerful in what he said and did in the eyes of God and all of the people.

The chief priests and our rulers handed Jesus over to be sentenced to death. They nailed
him to a cross. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to set Israel free.

"Some of our women amazed us too. Early this morning they went to the tomb.

But they didn't find his body. So they came and told us what they had seen. They saw
angels, who said Jesus was alive.

Then some of our friends went to the tomb. They saw it was empty, just as the women had
said. They didn't see Jesus' body there."

Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are! How long it takes you to believe all that the
prophets said!

Didn't the Christ have to suffer these things and then receive his glory?"

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Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures. He began with Moses and all the Prophets.

The two men approached the village where they were going. Jesus acted as if he was going farther.

But they said, "Stay with us. It is nearly evening. The day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

He joined them at the table. Then he took bread and gave thanks. He broke it and began to give it to them.

Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. But then he disappeared from their sight. They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them. They were all gathered together. They were saying, "It's true! The Lord has risen! He has appeared to Simon!"

Then the two of them told what had happened to them on the way. They told how they had recognized Jesus when he broke the bread

Reflection

We had a long reading today, longer than usual. But I think it is important to hear the stories of Jesus's resurrection in the full. To hear them and to take heart from them.

And on reflection, I want to bring you three things from our reading. First, the story wouldn't have been a story if the two disciples had not welcomed the stranger into their conversation and then later into their home. They were naturally hospitable, and we, too, are challenged to show hospitality to strangers. As the song says, 'Often, often, often goes Christ in the strangers guise.'

Secondly, it is a very real story, in that the stranger helps them to make sense of something in their lives. It can happen, can't it, that we may be struggling to understand something, it seems so difficult and we feel foolish because it might be something very important. But if we explain the subject to someone else, they often add something new into the mix, something we haven't thought of which helps us understand better.

And thirdly, after Christ had vanished from their sight, the two go to tell their fellow disciples about their encounter. Jesus always wants us to tell others about him; he always wants us to speak of him and to show that he is in our lives.

So let's be encouraged by this story, encouraged to welcome God into our lives, encouraged to learn from him, and encouraged to tell others what we know about the Risen Christ.

Amen

Hymn STF306 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain

This is an Easter hymn of hope. Notice particularly the last verse:

'When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again
Fields of our heart that dead and bare have been,
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.'

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1 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.

2 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 :

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872–1958) (*alt.*)

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Prayers of Intercession

God of all compassion, we bring before you the needs of our world, our communities, and our own hearts.

For nations in conflict Grant wisdom to leaders, protection to the vulnerable, and courage to all who work for peace. Where fear has taken root, sow understanding. Where injustice prevails, raise up voices that speak truth.

For those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit Be near to the sick, the lonely, the exhausted, and the grieving. Strengthen those who care for others — nurses, carers, volunteers, and all who give of themselves quietly each day.

For our communities Bless our schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods. Help us to notice those who feel unseen, and to offer kindness without hesitation. Guide us to be people who build bridges rather than walls.

For the Church Renew our hope, deepen our faith, and widen our love. Make us attentive to your Spirit and bold in our service.

For ourselves Where we are anxious, bring calm. Where we are discouraged, bring light. Where we are complacent, stir us to act with compassion and courage.

God of mercy, hear these prayers — spoken and unspoken — and shape us into people who reflect your love in all we do. **Amen**

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Hymn STF481 The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want (Townend)

1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not
want ;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.
*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

2 He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil ;
and my cup — it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

3 And though I walk the darkest path
—
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod
and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

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Blessing

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and with those we love and remain with us forever.

Amen

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