

## The choice is yours



### CALL TO WORSHIP

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

**CHRIST IS ALIVE! LET CHRISTIANS SING - StF297** Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqaw-VzM7ms>

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
His cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
His love in death shall never die.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
he suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, though ever crucified.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
he comes to claim the here and now,  
and conquer every place and time.

Christ is alive! And comes to bring  
good news to this and every age  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

### PRAYER OF PRAISE

Dear Lord, we come before You, resting in Your faithful love that never fails. You are the same yesterday, today, and forever, and we are grateful for the security we find in You. Your love surrounds us like a shield, and Your presence is our refuge in times of trouble. We worship You, O Lord, for Your grace is sufficient, and Your power is made perfect in our weakness.

When the storms of life rage around us, we find peace in the knowledge that You are with us. You are the Good Shepherd who leads us beside still waters and restores our souls. We thank You for Your unfailing love that carries us through each day, and we praise You for the hope we have in Christ. May our hearts overflow with gratitude as we reflect on Your goodness. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

### PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

We confess that we have not listened to your voice or followed your will. We have sinned against you by what we have done and what we have left undone. Forgive us, Lord. Help us to obey your commands and to do your will from this day forward. Amen.

**O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING - StF 364** Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sZbkfji1cl>

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
he sets the prisoner free;

his blood can make the foulest clean;  
his blood availed for me.

He speaks, and listening to his voice,  
new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.

See all your sins on Jesus laid  
The lamb of God was slain  
His soul was once an offering made  
That all may heaven gain

In Christ, your head, you then shall know,  
shall feel your sins forgiven;  
anticipate your heaven below,  
and own that love is heaven.

## READING LUKE 24: 13 - 35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still; their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

"What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

### WHEN WE WALK WITH THE LORD

*Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVNyfEav3GU>*

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His  
Word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.

*Refrain:*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But His smile quickly drives it away;  
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
But our toil He doth richly repay;  
Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,  
But is blessed if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favour He shows, for the joy He bestows,  
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;  
What He says we will do, where He sends, we will  
go;  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

## ADDRESS : The choice is yours

I know our reading today is an Easter Day reading, but the story of the two on the Emmaus Road invites us onto our own journey of understanding and renewal all year round.

Question! Do you know the risen Jesus? There is no doubt in my mind that all of you know something about Jesus; I am sure that if I we had a quiz show and asked you questions on Jesus someone in this room would have the answer. But there is a difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing him. There is a hymn that goes "Knowing you Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing; you're my all, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness and I love you Lord". They are wonderful words, yet have we truly encountered the risen Jesus in our lives – can we honestly say that yes, I know You Lord.

To know Jesus is not just a mind thing; Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms that we should love the Lord your God with all our hearts, mind, soul and strength; every part of us is in this faith thing together. We cannot split one part from another. If you took any one part of an engine away it would not work; in the same way our faith and our knowledge of the risen Jesus cannot be fully functional without our whole self being involved. The story we have heard today is about encountering the risen Jesus. It is a story we know well, perhaps too well because it can become just that, a story, but it goes way beyond any ordinary writer. This is a story which should speak to us every time we hear it; it should inspire, and astound, and most of all strengthen our faith and understanding of what impact the risen Jesus has on our lives.

Here are two men walking the Emmaus Road; where this actually was is not certain, but walking it they were and as they walked, they talked about all they knew about the events that happened and about Jesus, the person they thought they knew. These two men are a fine example of what I am talking about; they knew about Jesus but did not know him. Anyway, they were walking and talking when Jesus came and walked alongside them; they have at last encountered the risen Jesus – they did not know it of course – and I would think the majority of us have the same problem – we encounter him in our lives – he walks alongside us in our lives – yet we don't always recognise him. When you look at that one small sentence, ***Jesus walked alongside them***, it just encompasses everything about the risen Jesus; it gives us the knowledge of who he was, is and ever shall be; it tells of the sheer magnitude of the love he had for them and for us, as he walks alongside in the hour of greatest need. The disciples came to the house and urged the stranger to stay...they invited him into their place to share a meal. And pay close attention to what the scripture says here... "He (Jesus) walked ahead as if he were going on. But they *urged him strongly*, 'stay with us for it is early evening, the day is almost over!'"

How crucial when we are in the midst of our tough experiences to invite the stranger in. That is, to make a place for the presence of Christ in our lives, and when we do he will *always* respond! Jesus enters the home of the two disciples and sits down in the lamplight. There is a simple meal to share. It was the very natural thing for them to ask him to say grace and as he took the bread in his hands, a miracle of recognition took place. Suddenly he was revealed to them! Perhaps it was the way in which he broke the bread or the old familiar blessing which they must have heard on his lips before, maybe it was the light on his uplifted face or in the dim light they caught a glimpse of the nail prints in his hands... we cannot know for sure.

But this one thing we *do* know. As he took the bread in his wounded hands and broke it, they knew him as Jesus Christ. This was the very same Jesus who had three days before died on the cross. Now they saw that the answer to their broken hearts and shattered dreams was indeed here in the presence of the one who had poured out his life for them. The seeming tragedy of crucifixion was transformed into triumph. It was not after all, a hideous, heartbreaking mistake, but a rich heart-healing revelation of God's power and love! Never again would their hearts be broken beyond repair. The divine healer had conquered even death.

It is no accident that we are most likely to reach out to Christ when our hearts are broken... and there is no shame in that. It is exactly a time like that when Jesus came to these two disciples who were crushed. How it must have lifted their spirits to know that even though they were not a part of the twelve, Jesus cared enough to come to them personally! In the breaking of bread, in their time of deepest sadness, and now in their total exhilaration they encountered the risen Jesus. They at last not only knew of him, but their eyes were opened, their hearts burned with fire, and they knew him. There is a real difference between knowing *about* the love of

Christ and *knowing* (experiencing) the love of Christ. The disciples on the Emmaus Road knew *about* Jesus before they met him on the road. But it was in their invitation to him to enter and in the breaking of bread that they came to experience who he really was. Ordinary people, like you and me and like the two on the road to Emmaus, can be empowered by God to do extraordinary things. We can be empowered to have "burning hearts" as we accompany each other on the road of life. The gift of Emmaus awaits you. Wherever you are on that road, pray that when the Risen Lord comes to you, your eyes may be opened so you can behold him in all his glory; and then, renewed in faith, run to tell others the Good News.

I will end as I began with a question! Do you know about the risen Jesus, or do you know the risen Jesus? The answer of course is in the breaking of bread as he makes himself known to us. But what will you do when you meet with him; will you let him carry on his journey, or will you like the two people on the way to Emmaus, invite him in – as they say in all good quiz shows – *the choice is yours*.

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Mighty God, your Son revealed himself again and again and convinced his disciples of his glorious resurrection. Help us to feel his risen presence so we can lovingly feed his sheep, and care for the lambs of his flock. *(Short Silence)*     **Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Almighty God, you have called us to follow in the way of your risen Son, and to care for those who are our companions, not only with words, but with acts of love. As we seek to be true friends of all, we pray for our families, our friends and our neighbours especially in areas where there are problems with our relationships. Let us always be the ones to make the first steps towards reconciliation. *(Short Silence)*  
**Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Gracious God, we remember this morning those who are sick, sad or lonely and those who are brave and patient when things are going wrong. We pray that they may be aware of your comforting presence and know that in your hands they are safe and loved. *(Short Silence)*     **Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Creator God, through the glorious resurrection of your son Jesus Christ you have freed us from the grip of the tomb. We pray for those who have departed this life and we pray for those bereaved by their passing. *(Short Silence)*     **Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Lord, us to be an example to others. Show us, as you did with your friends, the practical steps we need to take so that we can change the ways in which we do things and so develop consistency and integrity in all that we do in our lives.

Merciful father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

**KNOWING YOU JESUS -StF 489**     **Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4E16EKZ8RMM>**

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

*Knowing you, Jesus  
Knowing you, there is no greater thing  
You're my all, you're the best  
You're my joy, my righteousness  
And I love you, Lord*

To be found in you and known as yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings  
To become like you in your death, my Lord  
So with you to live and never die

*Graham Kendrick  
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Now my heart's desire is to know you more

**BLESSING** : The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. AMEN