

## 'Spiritual Communion' in the weeks after Easter

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

### Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

**We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.**

### Opening Sentences Reminding us of our Easter Joy

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia, Alleluia, alleluia.**

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;  
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. **Alleluia.**  
He has defeated the powers of death. **Alleluia.**  
He turns our sorrow into dancing. **Alleluia.**



### Prayers of Preparation and Confession

**Almighty God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Lord You are always so much closer than we might imagine,  
Yet we often do not take the time to even imagine ...  
Help us now to open our minds to your presence with us.

Where has God been present this week where we had not previously acknowledged?  
How is God particularly present now in our 'isolated togetherness'?  
What will God's presence look like amongst us, and within us, in the future?

I remind myself that, as I sit here now,  
God is before me, above me, beneath me and within me, holding me in Love.

You may wish to pray

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**



A reading from the Gospel

Read John 14:1-12 (A reflection attached to the end of the service sheet)

Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer. **Our Father...**

Let us give thanks that our Creator knows us and cares about all the concerns in our life.

Lord, teach me to live in the knowledge  
that you who care for me today,  
will care for me tomorrow and all the days of my life.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Here are words you may trust.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead:

He is our salvation, **our eternal glory.**

If we die with Him, **we shall live with Him;**

If we endure with Him, **we shall reign with Him.**

For he has broken the power of death;

**and brought life and immortality through the gospel. (2 Timothy 2.11-13 )**

Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace of the Lord be always with you



## Reflection on John 14 v 1-12

This beautiful passage from the Gospel is both powerful and poetic. It is no doubt familiar to us as a frequent source of comfort at times of grief and loss. Is it possible, however, that we sometimes limit its message to times of bereavement, and in doing so, we forget the true power of this message is found not at our time of death in our life here and now. It is not so much a message about future salvation but a message to offer strength and courage and joy **now!** The message of John 14 is not to be limited to funerals and cards of condolence.

Jesus is speaking to His disciples about how they must continue to live their lives, of which most had many years ahead of them. He speaks into their full and continuing lives saying 'do not let your hearts be troubled'. This is a message not just to the dying and bereaved but to the living and the young. How much do we need to embrace this message at the current time? How much do our children and young people, our families just starting out in business and careers, our vibrant entrepreneurs and our aspiring academics need to hear this message in the middle of their lives saying 'do not let your hearts be troubled'!

In the confusion and concern of a somewhat unknown future is it not crucial for us to hear even with life left to live, 'I have gone to prepare a place for you and I will come back for you when it is ready.' The relief that this could bring to many troubled hearts as they walk this earth is profound. Not that we should dwell on death but that we should find freedom and joy in life through escaping the fear of death. This is not a message for the dead but for the living. Do not live with troubled hearts ... the future is safe and is one of Peace.

The challenge for us is to move beyond the response that Thomas makes to this message. It is so easy to say with Thomas 'but how do we know, how can we be sure'. Our initial response to Jesus' words can often be 'we do not know the way to live this hope out in our lives. How can we live as people who are secure in their knowledge of their eternal destination? How can we live in the freedom that there is a place for us in God's eternal home? Jesus' answer to these questions is belief. Believe ... believe .. believe he continues to say to His disciples both then and now!

We might feel this is a troublesome answer. Isn't 'belief' such a hard thing when we have no proof or evidence. But belief is not such a troublesome idea as you might think. In fact it can be very mundane. Consider the fact that few of us ponder whether the sun will rise each morning, we just assume, or believe it will, but it is not a certainty is it? Simple trust and "belief" is an important aspect of mundane life in so many areas .. why not in terms of Jesus' promise of a welcome home after our death. Would this 'belief' not free us to live our lives in a much better state well in advance of finally receiving that promise?

Jesus' message to us in life is to 'believe' that at our final end all will be well. Whilst this is a comfort to those experiencing acute loss it must also be a source of peace to those whose lives lay ahead of them and for whom such knowledge brings abundance to all that lies ahead of them. Is there someone you know who needs to hear this message this week? Is there someone who does not need a card of condolence but who needs a card of comfort in life that Jesus told us 'everything is going to be OK.'