



St Matthew's Bethnal Green

EST 1746

Prayer & Worship Resources for Easter Season



*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, today and forever.
Alpha and Omega:
all time belongs to him and all ages.
To him be glory forever and ever, Amen.*

Dear St Matthew's community,

And so we press on through this season of Easter, as of yet unable to gather physically for prayer and worship together. We are in the season of Jesus' resurrection, when we celebrate that because of what he has done, death no longer has the upper hand. Following Jesus, Christians are 'resurrection people' who know how to lament death, of course, but not let it have the last word. Alleluia for that!

Whether you are taking part in worship from home by watching a livestream of our mass, or some other church service, or whether you're making a quiet act of Spiritual Communion on your own, I pray that you would know the Holy Spirit's presence alongside you, comforting you, reassuring you, and stirring you up to greater depths of faith and prayer. May you not be overwhelmed by worry, frustration, illness or loneliness.

Please make use of whatever resources you like in this document, joining with groups where you feel you are able.

And do join me in prayer for a 'prophetic imagination' — that as the coronavirus crisis subsides, we might have the boldness to follow the Spirit of Christ in imagining and putting into action a more loving just and free world, starting right here, where we are.

Do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with God. [Micah 6.8]

With love,

Mother Erin

Contents of this document:

1. Eucharistic prayer for those taking part in livestream mass
2. Spiritual communion sheet
3. Bite Size Bible Study
4. Prayer Labyrinth

This is the Eucharistic Prayer we'll be using during Easter Season & perhaps beyond! Do join in with the bolded bits from home.

The Lord is here.

All God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise,
Lord God of truth,
for by the breath of your mouth
you have spoken your word,
and all things have come into being.
You fashioned us in your image
and placed us in the garden of your delight.
Though we chose the path of rebellion
you would not abandon your own.

Again and again you drew us into your covenant of grace.
You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets
to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace.
As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth,
we echo the song of the angels in heaven,
evermore praising you and *saying*:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.]**

Lord God, you are the most holy one,
enthroned in splendour and light,
yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ
you reveal the power of your love
made perfect in our human weakness.

All Amen. Lord, we believe.

Embracing our humanity,
Jesus showed us the way of salvation;
loving us to the end,
he gave himself to death for us;
dying for his own,
he set us free from the bonds of sin,
that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

All Amen. Lord, we believe.

On the night he gave up himself for us all
he took bread and gave you thanks;

he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

All Amen. Lord, we believe.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

All Amen. Lord, we believe.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross,
we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb,
we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high
and we long for his coming in glory.

All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption,
Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation
be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
form us into the likeness of Christ
and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

All Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Look with favour on your people
and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts.
Bless the earth,
heal the sick,
let the oppressed go free
and fill your Church with power from on high.

All Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth
to feast with [*N and*] all your saints
at the table in your kingdom,
where the new creation is brought to perfection
in Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Settle yourself into a quiet place and allow your attention to silently withdraw from external things and focus into the heart.

You can do this by breathing deeply and slowly into your heart, the centre of your being, or by repeating some reflective verses. For example:

O God, come to my aid;
O Lord, make haste to help me.

Next, if you have a Missal, say the Entrance verse or:

In the name of the Father, of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

and then call to mind any sins you have committed and make an Act of Contrition in words such as:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God;
have mercy on me, a sinner.

Then, if you are able, pray the Collect for the Day and read the lesson concluding the Gospel with a time of silence.

Offer your own prayers ending with the Our Father.

Now imagine Jesus, Mary or one of the saints coming to you in a gracious and kind manner, holding out to you the Blessed Sacrament.

As you see them approach, say:

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

Then, make an Act of Spiritual Communion in these or other words:

My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in
the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.



*As you imagine yourself receiving the Bread of Heaven,
be still and rest in the love of God.*

BITE SIZE BIBLE STUDY - a journey through Psalm 23

with thanks to Eric Baldwin for these resources

We'll be working our way through Psalm 23 a verse at a time. Each week, give yourself a little time to read & pray through the verse and reflect on what it means for you, or the questions it brings up.

Read the verse slowly, a few times, taking a pause in between each time. Pay attention to what comes to your mind and heart as you read through it.

We'll be gathering each week on a Wednesday at 7pm for brief discussion. Join in if you'd find that helpful. You can use zoom or a regular telephone to join in.

Week 1 - gathering April 29th at 7pm

Psalm 23 verse 1: *The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*

Questions to consider:

- Does the image of God as a shepherd feel 'right' to you? Why or why not?
- 'I shall not want' is sometimes translated 'I will lack nothing' or 'I will have all I need.'
What's the difference between getting what we want and what we need?
- Can you recall a time in your life where your faith helped you move towards contentment, or that one of your needs or wants was provided for by the help of God?

Week 2 - gathering May 6th at 7pm

Psalm 23 verses 2-3a: *He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul.*

Questions to consider:

- Why do you think God wants us to rest? Why might God want to guide us to green pastures and still waters?
- What images or memories to 'green pastures' or 'still waters' bring up for you?
- We hear a lot about 'work/life' balance. How do you think the idea of balance might fit in with this verse?
- What does it mean to have your soul 'restored'?

Week 3 - gathering May 13th at 7pm

Psalm 23 verse 3b: *He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.*

Questions to consider:

- Have you ever felt like you don't know what path to take? How did you bring that into your prayer?
- Often we hear people saying 'For God's sake!' in frustration. But here, God says that for God's sake, for the sake of God's holy name, we will be guided and directed. Why would it be important to God to lead us?
- How do you know if you are in 'right paths'?

Week 4 - gathering May 20th at 7pm

Psalm 23 verse 4: *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me.*

Questions to consider:

- The Authorised Version gives us, 'Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...' Have you ever been there?
- How have you struggled with fear in your life? Was God presence helpful with this, and if so, how?
- Is there anything you fear right now, whether it feels 'evil' or not, which you would like to give to God, trusting in God's holy comfort?

Week 5 - gathering May 27th at 7pm

Psalm 23 verse 5: *You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

Questions to consider:

- A table is for nourishment and even feasting, an overflowing cup of wine for joy! How can you hold fast to this promise of blessing, nourishment and joy amidst hardship?
- Anointing would have taken place to honour an important person, someone who perhaps had won a victory in battle or who had particular spiritual need or role. Anointing is a sign of God's choosing to act powerfully in and through people. In what area of your life would you like to know God's anointing?

Week 6 - gathering June 3rd at 7pm

Psalm 23 verse 6: *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.*

Questions to consider:

- Does this verse ring true for you — do you feel you are followed by goodness and mercy? Where in your life does this feel — or not feel — true?
- Why would God want to show us God's goodness and mercy?
- What do you think it could mean to 'dwell in the house of the LORD'? Do you feel like you dwell there?

—

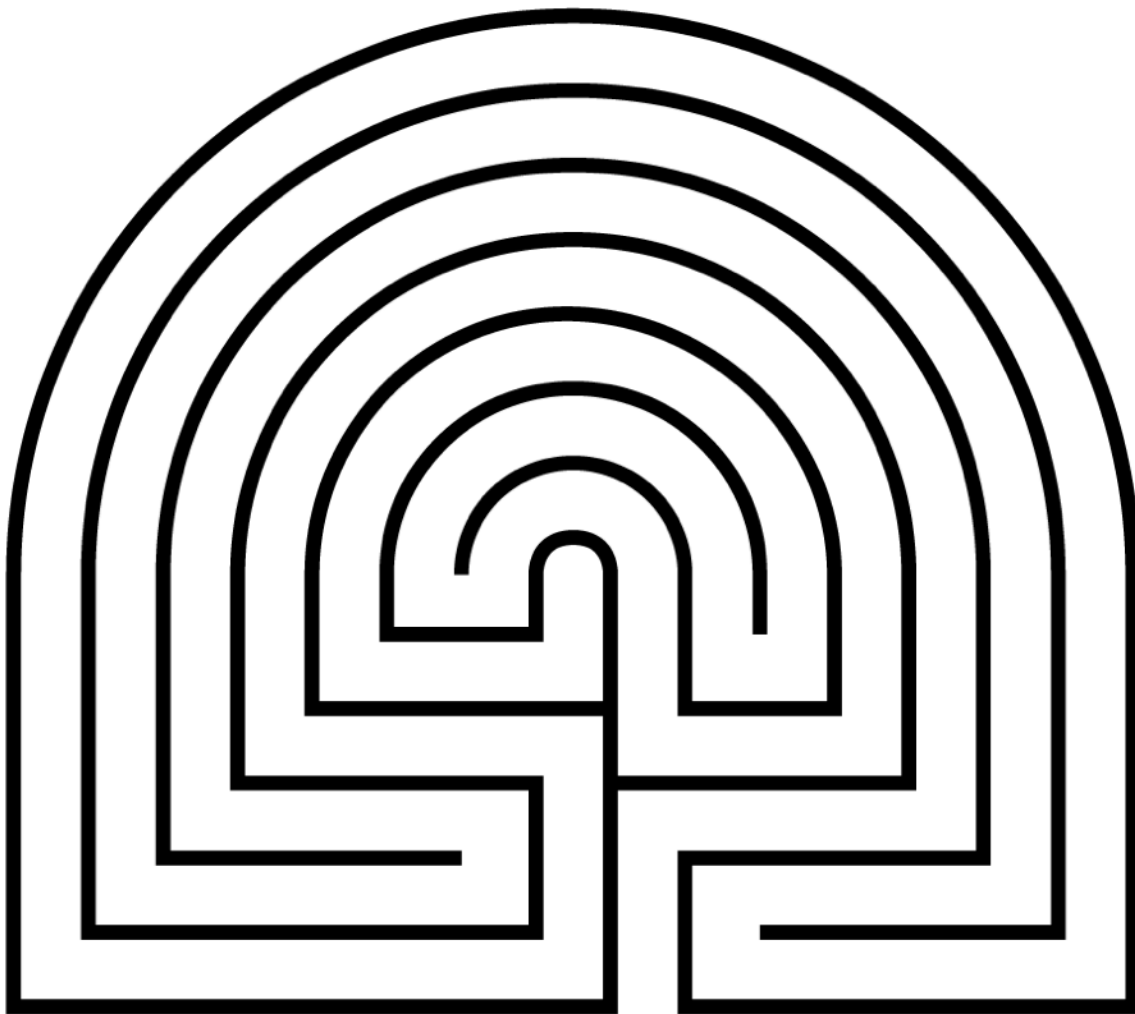
Are there any other thoughts or questions these verses have brought up for you? You don't have to stick to just the questions provided — please share your own reflections!

PRAYER LABYRINTH

Many of you shared that you found the labyrinth in the Lent Resources a helpful way to pray. So here's another one to trace with your finger.

It's totally OK to just let your mind wander while you trace the path of the labyrinth as a prayer. Calming ourselves down before God and *doing nothing* is a big part of prayer, and often the hardest part.

Don't forget to pause at the centre & rest.



If you want some things to reflect on, here are few questions:

- where am I on a journey in life at the moment? Where do I feel most alive (closest to God) and where do I feel most depleted (furthest from God)?
- Where is the 'still point at the centre' of my day or week where I can rest in God's love?
- The labyrinth can feel boring, repetitive. But it has a purpose: to spend time with God. How can I transform those things in my life which feel boring or repetitive into moments to quietly spend time with God, no fuss?
- This labyrinth is shaped like a door. Am I standing at any doorways or thresholds right now in my life? How can I listen to God at this threshold?