

Prayer of the Week:

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:

Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may, by your life-giving Spirit, be delivered from sin and raised from death; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Easter)

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

**The Uprising Begins**

Luke 24:1-35 (NRSV)

April 12, 2020

Leaving Jerusalem

Put yourself in the disciples shoes for a moment:

They had spent the last several months listening to the teaching of Jesus, amazed at his miracles, and were now convinced he was the long-awaited Messiah. Now Jesus was dead; crucified by the state.

Watching that happen was utterly disorienting.

Their journey away from Jerusalem is symbolic of where they were at emotionally and spiritually.

In just a matter of days, their lives had been turned upside down. In many ways, as they left Jerusalem, they were also leaving certainty, clarity, and order. They were walking now with disappointment, confusion, doubt, and fear. They were walking away from the hope they once had (vs. 21).

We've Left Jerusalem

Perhaps that feeling sounds familiar. With the challenges we are facing as a global community, you may have moments where you step back and look at the scale of what is going on and think, "With all of our technology and the resources available, we should be able to stop this."

Maybe you were certain it would never get this bad. Perhaps you are mourning the loss of the way things used to be. Our lives have been turned upside down in just a matter of days. There is a lot that feels like walking away from Jerusalem.

Return To Jerusalem - The Uprising

During their journey away from Jerusalem, Jesus joins them in their disorientation (though they don't recognize him at first). Hear this: in their journey **away** from certainty; in their journey **away** from the religious center of their lives, in their journey **away** from comfort they are joined by the resurrected Christ.

Jesus speaks to them about resurrection and their hearts are opened! They learn to see in new ways. After sharing a meal in Emmaus, they realize it was Jesus all along!

The scriptures say "that same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem." (vs. 33) They return to the place they had just left a few hours earlier, but they do not return in the same way.

Now they return with wonder instead of order, awe instead of certainty, a sense of presence instead of rules of religion. Everything had changed for them because of their encounter with the living Christ in the midst of their disorientation.

It was an uprising....not just in the sense that Jesus has risen, but now new things have the possibility of rising up! Usually an uprising refers to a violent revolt against oppressive leaders and regimes. This is certainly an uprising that confronts oppression, but in a different way! This is an uprising of hope instead of hate, love instead of violence, life and peace instead of hostility and death. It's an uprising of open hands instead of clenched fists. It's a journey to something new that is brought about in a new way!

Our Return To Jerusalem

In the midst of disorientation, the risen Christ is present with us speaking words of resurrection and hope. It is no small thing that in the midst of walking away from everything they thought they knew, Christ joined them there. The presence of Christ is not dependent upon our certainty or the measure of our hope. Christ joins us in our journey - even as we walk away!

Be confident that the presence of Christ is with us during this time. Whenever you hear of people caring for one another, helping each other, putting themselves in harm's way to care for the sick. In all these ways and a thousand others the resurrected and universal Christ is present.

I'm hoping and praying that one day we'll return to Jerusalem, but I hope we'll return in a new way! My hope is that as a Church, nation, and global community, we won't just try to return to the same old order of things, but that we'll return back to the

rhythms of live with a sense of togetherness instead of competition; with awe at the gift of life instead of mundaneness; with humility instead of arrogance. For when we embody these things, we honor the God of life and resurrection.

Easter 2020, as we gather in our living rooms to worship and celebrate the resurrected Christ despite the dangers that lie outside our front doors, I pray that we would know the presence of the living Christ and be confident that He is the God of life who has defeated death through resurrection.