

'Recognising the Risen Christ'

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Dear Friends

Welcome to this Local Arrangement service resource. The theme for this service is 'Recognising the Risen Christ'.

Please feel free to 'customize' your service to your own congregation... e.g. ... The hymns are only suggestions - if your congregation knows others that fit in with the theme, especially any newer ones, feel free to use those. You will also need to prepare for the prayers of intercession, to reflect current concerns. This is *your congregation's* service of worship to God, so make it as individual as you think appropriate!

I have suggested that you use 2 leaders and 4 readers, but you can adjust this too.

Chris Odell (Sheasby)

“RECOGNISING THE RISEN CHRIST”

Call to Worship:

Leader 1: The Lord is risen.

Leader 2: He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Leader 1: The Lord is here.

Leader 2: His Spirit is with us. Hallelujah!

Leader 1: Who is it that you seek?

Leader 2: We seek the Lord.

Leader 1: The Lord is here.

Leader 2: Let us worship the Lord in spirit and truth.

Introduction to the service: Leader 1

Have you ever wondered what it must have been like for those first disciples, meeting the Risen Christ for the first time after seeing him crucified and dead upon the Cross? They found it difficult to believe their eyes! In our service today we are going to think about how we recognise the Risen Jesus, in three ways – in our daily lives, in life-changing encounters and in the needs of others. We stand to sing our first hymn -

HYMN: Christ is alive, let Christians sing...*StF 297; H&P 190*

Prayer of Adoration: Leader 2

During our prayer of Adoration, there will be a sung response to the words ‘And so we sing’ - **“He is Lord”**, verse 1 of *StF 348; H&P 256; or MP 220*

Let us pray: God of surprises, we thank you that your love for us is new every morning:

The love that gives life to the world;

The love that raised Jesus from the dead;

The love that has given us new life in his name.

And so we sing:

He is Lord, He is Lord,

He is risen from the dead

And He is Lord.

Every knee shall bow,

Every tongue confess

That Jesus Christ is Lord.

God of surprises we thank you for meeting us here in this church today:

In our prayers,

In the words and music of our worship,

In our friendship with one another in Jesus’ Name.

And so we sing:

He is Lord, He is Lord....

God of surprises, we thank you for the ways in which you meet us in our daily lives:

In times of prayer and contemplation;

In the ways in which we try to serve you;

In our encounters with others.

And so we sing:

He is Lord, He is Lord....

We make our prayer in Jesus’ Name, **AMEN.**

Gospel Reading 1: Reader 1 - John 21:1-14

Reader 2: ‘Life goes on’ so they say
And so we returned to home and work,
Confused, excited, nervously hopeful

And not knowing what to do next,
But aware we needed to work and eat.

But we caught nothing to meet our hunger.
The fish were just not to be found.
Then a far away voice came from the shore
Guiding us to find so much more
Than we had hoped for, or even needed.

We hadn't recognised that stranger on the shore
We had not expected to see you there
But then we knew it to be you
Our Risen Messiah and our Friend
And we gladly ate of what you prepared for us.
Who would have thought to have met you
In the return to our everyday lives?

Prayer of Confession: Leader 2 Let us pray:
Loving God, So often your coming into our lives
Takes us by surprise,
And you find us unprepared.
We expect to find you in church
Blessing our offering of money;
We do not expect to find you
Begging from us on the streets.
We expect to meet you
In bread and wine;
We do not expect to meet you
In the eyes of a starving child.
We expect to find you
In the emotion of prayer;
We do not expect to find you
In the dull pains of everyday living.

Loving God,
Fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may hold ourselves in readiness
For the coming into our lives of Jesus Christ,
At the time least expected.
In his name we pray, **Amen.**

We stand to sing
HYMN: Jesus calls us o'er the tumult ...*StF250; H&P 141; MP 359*

New Testament Reading: Reader 3 - Acts 9:1-11, 17-20

Reflection: Reader 4
Saul was so sure he'd got it right.
He was so sure he knew what God wanted him to do.
He was so sure he could see what life was all about.

Then he was blinded by the brilliance that is the Lord
He no longer knew where he was going, what he should do.
He could no longer manage on his own.

There was no certainty, only questions.

But there was hope and there was love
As anger dissolved and faith grew strong.

In his blindness he had met Jesus
And now he could truly see and know
The way ahead.

Prayer of commitment: Leader 2: Let us pray:

Commissioning God,
from earliest times
you have called women and men
to serve your loving purposes
in many different ways.
You ask us to be alert to your call to us,
ready to drop everything
to go and follow you.

We pray that we may be
obedient to that call;
committed followers of Jesus
willing to be his body in the world,
ready to share his good news

We ask that your Holy Spirit
may give us all that we need
to follow our calling.
may we be loving and wise,
steadfast and rich in faith.

We look forward, loving God,
to our life ahead with you.
Help us to work and pray together
so that the world can see
the love, hope and joy we know
living by faith in you.
In Jesus our Leader's Name, **Amen**

Life Story: Reader 5

John Newton who wrote the popular hymn "Amazing Grace" was born in the eighteenth century. He lost his Christian mother at an early age and grew up a "bad boy". He says that through much of his youth and life at sea, "I loved sin and was unwilling to forsake it." He renounced the Christian faith. In West Africa he went into partnership with a slave trader. Life was good, he recalled. "We lived as we pleased and business flourished." One day on board ship, Newton was reading—casually, "to pass away the time"—an edition of Thomas à Kempis' classic, *On the Imitation of Christ*. He wondered, "What if these things were true?" Dismayed, he "shut the book quickly." Newton called himself a terrible "blasphemer" who had rejected God completely. But then, God showed up.

That night, a violent storm flooded the ship with water. Fearing for his life, Newton surprised himself by saying, "The Lord have mercy on us!" Spending long hours at the ship's helm, he reflected on his life and rejection of God. At first, he thought his shortcomings too great to be forgiven. Then, he says, "I . . . began to think of . . . Jesus whom I had so often derided . . . of His life and of His death . . . for sins not His own, but for those who in their distress should put their trust in Him." In coming days, the New Testament story of the Prodigal Son particularly impressed him. He became convinced of the truth of Jesus' message and his own need for it. "I was no longer an atheist," he writes. "I was sincerely touched with a sense of undeserved mercy in being

brought safe through so many dangers. . . . I was a new man." After his dramatic experience at sea, Newton changed his life. He attended church, read spiritual books, prayed, and spoke outwardly of his commitment. But he still took part in the slave trade. Two days before he was to embark on his fourth slave-trading voyage as ship's captain, a mysterious illness temporarily paralyzed Newton. His doctors advised him not to sail. Now out of the slave trade, Newton became a prominent public official in Liverpool. He attended Christian meetings and grew in his faith. Newton's biblical worldview had matured to the point that he became active in the abolition of the slavery movement. It was after spending a day with Newton that William Wilberforce recorded in his diary his decision to focus on abolishing slavery. In early 1807 Britain outlawed the slave trade. On December 21 of that year, grace finally led John Newton home to his Maker.

Now we sing John Newton's best known hymn...

HYMN: Amazing grace!...*StF 440; H&P 215, MP 31*

Gospel Reading 2: Reader 2 - Matthew 25:31-40

Offering & Prayer: **Leader 2** Let us pray –

Lord, we thank you

For the many times we have recognized you coming into our lives,

And we ask that you might use us, and use these gifts,

To help others to recognise you in their lives. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession: Leader 2

In these prayers there is a response – Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Let us pray:

Leader 2: 'When I was hungry, you gave me food; when thirsty you gave me drink.'

Leader 1: God with us, we pray for the hungry and thirsty of our world:

for the victims of famine, drought, natural disaster and the disruption of warfare, for

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Leader 2: 'When I was a stranger, you took me into your home; when naked, you clothed me.'

Leader 1: God with us, we pray for those without homes or protection from the elements:

For refugees, the destitute, those thrown out of home and those living on the street, for

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Leader 2: 'When I was ill, you came to my help'

Leader 1: God with us, we pray for those who are ill:

For those with chronic or life-threatening physical conditions

And those who are sick in mind or spirit, for

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Leader 2: 'When I was in prison you visited me.'

Leader 1: God with us, we pray for those who are imprisoned:

For criminals and for prisoners of conscience

And for those who feel imprisoned by fear or guilt, for

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

For Jesus's sake we love and serve. For Jesus's sake we pray. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

We stand to sing

HYMN: The Church of Christ in every age...*StF415; H&P 804*

Blessing: Leader 1 Wherever we go, Christ is with us.

Whatever we do, Christ is beside us.

Calling us, challenging us, upholding us.

May his blessing rest upon each of us, now and always. **Amen.**