

## Suggested outline for family worship – Easter Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 11.00am

Good morning everyone - it's Easter Sunday morning but not as we know it! No dawn service for those of us who are early birds – and no times of worship together in Muckamore or any other church with special praise and so on. It's all a bit different, these days – I hope, like me, you're missing it. But I hope, too, that you're making the most of the opportunity to worship together in your family. Please continue to pray with us and for each other in this lockdown period; for family and friends, including those living in other parts of the world at the moment; for residents and staff in nursing and residential homes and hostels of one kind or another, including the 17 homes and units provided by PCI; for staff in the various departments of the health service, especially those on the frontline of care for people who are ill; for people of all ages with learning and other disabilities that make them vulnerable at the best of times and even more so in times like these; for Christians away from home working with churches, relief agencies and missionary societies across the world. We so often allege that we haven't enough time to read the Bible or pray – well, many of us don't have that excuse at the moment, do we? So let's spend time with God by reading his Word and let's do what we can to support others by bringing them and this whole situation to the Lord in prayer. Perhaps you could use what I've just written as an outline to pray together at the end of these notes.

**Prayer** - maybe using ACTS as a guide – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (asking).

**Song suggestion:** please play a suitable track from one of your CDs or, if you have internet access, use this one by clicking on the link.

**“See, what a morning!”** – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgE\\_E7yaz4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgE_E7yaz4)

We want to read two Bible passages this morning. If there's more than one of you, maybe each of you could take it in turn to read the verses together?

John 20:1-10

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!”

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

John 21:1-19

After some time, Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. “I'm going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We'll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, haven't you any fish?” “No,” they answered.

He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

If you have internet access, please click on the link which will take you to our Facebook page where you will find a video from Peter that includes the Devotion and a prayer. The video can be found here: [www.facebook.com/muckamorepc](http://www.facebook.com/muckamorepc)

When the video is finished, please continue to worship together by praying for others and watching/singing along with the final song suggestion or a track from one of your own CDs.

## Devotional: "A Fresh Start"

If anyone was well placed to understand something of the cost Jesus paid for our salvation it's my namesake, Peter, one of his closest disciples. Peter'd seen it all first-hand; he'd walked the roads with him as he went about proclaiming the Kingdom of God and providing evidence of the truth he spoke and his claim to be the Son of God through the signs and wonders he performed. He, with James & John, witnessed things that the rest didn't – at Jairus' house when Jesus raised his daughter; on the mountain when Jesus' appearance and clothes shone with light; in the darkness of Gethsemane as Jesus prayed alone. Peter had watched in horror as Jesus was tried, condemned, rejected, despised and brutally put to death on a cross – these would be experiences he'd carry with him to his own grave. And yet he'd also witnessed the fact of Jesus' resurrection – he'd heard of it initially from some of the women but then as he and the rest of the disciples met together behind locked doors afraid of what the Jews might do to them because of their connections with Jesus, lo and behold didn't he appear to them in person; standing right in front of them in the middle of the room. He did the same thing a week later bringing peace and reassurance to them. But somehow things weren't the same as they'd been before his death. For three years or so they'd been continually in his company; ate with him, walked with him; slept where he slept – now there was such a void, an emptiness and no one knew what to do with themselves. Peter decided to do what he knew best: fishing – he and six others. Out all night, they were, but the only thing they were in danger of catching was a cold! Not a single bite; the fish didn't want to know! They'd been in similar circumstances before, in the early days of Jesus' ministry. Back then, four of these same men had fished all night and caught nothing. Back then, this same Jesus had got into Peter's boat and told him to try one more time and their nets became

full to breaking point. Back then, Peter realised this was no ordinary man; this was the Lord and fell to his knees and told the Lord to go away from him because he was too sinful to be in the Lord's company. Back then they simply left everything and followed him. So, what happened this time? This time, Jesus called to them from the shore and told them to throw their net out and again they almost couldn't handle the catch! This time, John was first to realise who this man was – the Lord. This time, Peter couldn't wait to be close to him and jumped out of the boat and swam to shore. This time, after some quizzing, Jesus would specifically tell Peter to follow him. Why do you think he had to do that this time where before Peter and his friends had simply done it off their own bat? The answer lies in the events that had unfolded in the lead up to Jesus' death. Peter had been his usual self; jumped in with both feet without realising what he was saying – "I'll die with you before I disown you" – just a short time later Jesus would be dead and Peter would be in pieces because he'd not only disowned him once but three times! Jesus, though, wasn't prepared to write Peter off as easily as Peter had let him down. In fact, it looks as if Jesus had planned this whole breakfast on the beach thing especially to give Peter a fresh start. He gives him a chance to break from the past; to make amends for his weaknesses and failures; to live for Jesus instead of himself. What a fantastic thing to happen! And do you know what's even more fantastic? The Lord has the same plan for us as he had for Peter – he wants to give us a fresh start; to break with the past; to enable us to live for him instead of simply for ourselves. You see, we're supposed to live our lives in light of the fact that Jesus is alive. From the very beginning of his coming to earth that has been God's plan, and it's being fulfilled to this very day. God wants to make something completely new out of our lives – to say bye-bye to our old way of life and to begin a whole new way of living by following Jesus – what Paul describes as becoming a Christian in 2 Cor 5:17 *"When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun"*. That's God's plan for all of us – but his plan gets very personal, too. Peter was the only person who'd done exactly what Peter'd done. Peter was the only person who needed what Jesus was going to do for him after they finished breakfast on the seashore. And the same is true for each of us – the Lord organises special times for each of us to get close to him; to meet with us on a one-to-one basis. It could be in the middle of a crowd of people yet we feel as if we're the only one there. It could be through a time of lockdown and isolation like we're experiencing these days, and he comes close to us in a personal way. Yet, although we aim to live with Jesus as our Lord there will be times when, like Peter, we fail – but that doesn't wipe out our relationship with God. But being a Christian changes our response to such failures – we no longer say "it doesn't matter" or try to justify our actions – at least we shouldn't. We recognise that what we've said or thought or done is grievous to God and as well as seeking to make amends, we regret it and resolve, with God's help, not to do the same thing again. Being a Christian makes us different from other people; different in lifestyle, behaviour, attitudes and motives. Even so, there'll be many times when the Lord will respond to us in the way he did to Peter on the shore that day – he'll give us an opportunity to make a fresh start. Paul describes this as an ongoing process in our lives: Rom 12:2 *"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould but let God remould your minds from within."* Many of us can't seem to let go of the past even when we want to move on to a new life but we just can't let go of the old way of thinking that tells us we aren't good enough to be a Christian or that it's just a matter of doing the best we can or of living a religious life – but that's not new life; that's just a continuation of the old! Jesus said in Lk 9:23-24 *"Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat – I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it... Follow me and I'll show you how. Self help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self."* (The Msg). We have to be willing to give up anything in our lives that we know is wrong and put things right, even making restitution where it's possible; where it's necessary. We have to be prepared to go God's way and not ours. The famous English cricketer CT Studd put it like this as he turned his back on a successful career to become a missionary for Christ: *"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to make for*

*him.*” No sacrifice too great – to break from the past? To make a new start? To live differently from the rest of the people around us? As we look at Jesus, God’s only Son who ‘endured the cross’, we see how much God loves us. And if God loves us this much, we can be sure he won’t deprive us of anything good. What a privilege it is to enjoy a relationship with God, to be loved by him and to live for him all our lives. It’s the best, most rewarding, meaningful, satisfying way to live – and he’ll be with us every step of the way to help us do it! What better a day than Easter Sunday to make this the beginning of the rest – and the best - of our lives? Give Jesus his rightful place in your life so that you will enjoy a relationship with him not just for time but for eternity.

**Song suggestion:** “All I once held dear” by Robin Mark – watch and sing along at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxpPIa-BskY> or use a track from one of your own CDs.

**Prayers** – you might want to ask each member of the family to pray or you might want to lead everyone in prayer, yourself, perhaps based on the thoughts shared in the introduction.

### Activity for Children:

Empty. It’s a word that usually brings about lots of disappointment. Maybe for your kids it’s when there’s none of their favourite sweets left in the empty packet. Maybe it is the empty Lego box, even though there’s still a piece missing to complete what they’re building. Maybe it is the empty paint bottle when they’re in the middle of creating their greatest masterpiece ever, or today maybe it’s the empty tin foil wrapper where an Easter Egg used to be.

Ask your kids:

- 1) what do you think of when you hear the word empty?

In our homes, a lot of us will have a treasure chest of emptiness- our recycling bins – full of plastic containers, toilet roll and kitchen roll cylinders, cardboard boxes etc. Usually once something has reached the recycling bin, it is empty and it is finished, but today we are going to think of emptiness differently, we are going to think of emptiness as exciting, amazing and beautiful. Your children can use whatever clean empty items you have to create something new and amazing. With your help, encourage your children to recreate the scene of the empty tomb using these items- but how they do that, is completely up to them.

This week when you have gathered up all of the empty things that you are going to use, I encourage you to sit together as a family and either watch ‘God’s Wonderful Surprise – Jesus Storybook Bible’ on YouTube, or if you have the Jesus Storybook bible at home, you could read it for yourselves.

Discuss with your children:

- 1) How do you think the women would have felt when they knew Jesus was alive?
- 2) How does this make you feel now?

It’s incredible, Jesus is alive, the tomb is empty!!! Jesus was on the cross and he did die, his body did lie in the tomb but he did rise again and he is alive. This emptiness wasn’t disappointing or sad, this emptiness didn’t mean the end, but this emptiness was amazing and beautiful. This emptiness shows us that Jesus is greater than anything and that through him and because of him we can live with him forever and that is something he wants more than anything.

Today our empty objects will also get another chance to be something, they will become something new and they will have an amazing job to do because they will help to tell the true story about Jesus rising again. Without Jesus, our lives are called 'empty' because they are only really full when we choose to follow him, to say sorry for all the wrong things we have done and to thank him for dying on the cross & rising again. When we give our lives to Jesus, he makes us new and he will use us for the most important role ever- to show and tell others that Jesus died and rose again for them because he loves them so much.

Please send through pictures of the empty tomb scenes to Hayley (07568567355) as we love seeing everyone's amazing creations on the Church Facebook page.