

## Call to Worship

This is the good news which we proclaim to you.

**Jesus Christ is raised from the dead!**

Walk in the light of his love.

**Live in the light of his teachings and healing mercies.**

Come, let us worship the One who says to us

**Peace be with you.**

Adapted ~ written by Nancy C. Townley, and posted on **Ministry Matters**.  
<http://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/2528/worship-elements-april-12-2015>

## Hymn

*At the dawning of salvation*

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1. At the dawning of salvation,  
in the morning of the world,  
Christ is raised, a living banner  
by the love of God unfurled.  
Through the daylight, through the darkness,  
Christ leads on his great array:  
all the saints and all the sinners  
he has gathered on his way.
2. He is risen in the morning;  
he is risen from the dead;  
he is laughter after sadness;  
he is light when night has fled.  
He has suffered; he has triumphed;  
life is his alone to give:  
as he gave it once, he gives it  
evermore, that we may live.
3. For the glory of salvation  
in the dawn of Easter day  
we will praise you, loving Father;  
we rejoice to sing and pray  
with the Song and with the Spirit.  
Lead us on, your great array,  
saints and sinners celebrating  
your triumphant love today.

"At the dawning of salvation." Words by Jock Curle. © 1979 Josef Weinberger Ltd.  
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## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Lord Jesus Christ, the light of your love shines on,  
illuminating the places where you are present.

As the bewildered disciples pondered the stories of your appearance,  
you penetrated the darkness of their fear and doubt with your word of peace.  
You showed them the appalling marks of evil pierced on your hands and feet.  
You opened their minds to understand  
why you had to die to defeat such evil and death.

**Increase our understanding, we pray,  
and open our minds and hearts to receive you, Lord.  
Speak your word of peace to us  
and let your love shine on any dark areas in our lives.  
May this worship which we offer in your name  
be a worthy response to your love and your sacrifice for us. Amen.**

— written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on the [Liturgies Online](#) blog.

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

This is Good News:

God does not mock us when we fail to trust,  
but invites us into a deeper, more intimate relationship.

**Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand in my side. Trust me!**

God does not shame us when our faith waivers,  
but challenges us to be strengthened by God's promises.

**Happy are those who don't see...and yet trust!**

God's purpose is not to tear us down...but to build us up...  
forgiven...refreshed...and renewed!

Be at peace and give thanks to God!

~ written by Scott Cervas, and posted on [LiturgyLink](#). <https://www.liturgylink.net/2015/04/09/call-to-confession-declaration-of-grace/>

## **Prayer for Understanding**

Gracious God, as we listen to the Scripture, increase our understanding by the power of your Spirit. Shape our lives with your wisdom and inspire our love through Christ, your living Word. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter. April 12, 2026. Year A.

## **Scripture Reading John 20:19-31**

### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

<sup>19</sup> When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

### **Jesus and Thomas**

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said

to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

## **The Purpose of This Book**

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may continue<sup>[b]</sup> to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **Thanks be to God.**

## **Message** Put peace into each other’s hands

We do it every Sunday. That moment in the service when I share a little statement about peace and then invite you to turn and share a sign of peace with one another. But do we really consider what a profound exchange that is? Our experience of Covid and our continued awareness of how colds and flues are spread has many hesitant to shake hands or embrace, yet that should not, nor does it negate the intimacy that is available to us in looking one another in the eye as we share a sign of peace.

Many years back in my home congregation, we would share the sign of peace with one another early in the service. There was one member of the congregation would not come into worship until that was done. Though I really got along with the woman, she did not want to shake hands with people with whom she was not that crazy about and so chose not to participate in that part of the worship. Even then, I thought there was something amiss with that choice.

It reminded me of when I learned that my grandfather would not take communion because he thought he had to be completely right with the world, and the people he dealt with in it, to be able to take communion. In both cases, the woman and my grandfather had missed the point. They missed out on the peace that was offered to them through Christ. They erred on the side of judgement, the judgement of people and God’s judgement, rather than on the side of grace.

One of the key passages for me around grace is this one from the Gospel of John where Jesus greets his disciples in those first resurrection appearances. No less than three times he says to them, “Peace be with you.” Now remember, this is what Jesus chooses to say to those who are gathered in a place where the doors are locked because they

fear for their lives. They don't know whether or not the authorities who sought to end Jesus' life are now going to come after them as well and quash anyone connected with Jesus. In this group is Peter who denied Jesus three times and all those who scattered as the events unfolded, from the arrest, to the trial, to the crucifixion.

These were the people, both men and women, who had been with Jesus for his three years of ministry, some may have known him longer. None of them had expected the events of the last few days. They had thought that Jesus would truly be king of the Jews, but in the most worldly way they could imagine, a king coming in power and might to overthrow an oppressive government. They imagined Jesus on a mighty steed leading an army, not a leader who would die a shameful death on a cross.

One may be able to imagine how stunned they must have been, the shock, the horror, the disappointment, the grief over the loss of their beloved leader and teacher, and the loss of hope for a future hope of glory and freedom. They had invested their time and energy in this Jesus; they had allowed themselves to be hope filled and to love this man and now they were huddled and sequestered together in fear and in grief. That is all but Thomas.

We are not sure what Thomas was up to, but he was not with them. Who knows with Thomas. He was always one to say something. Earlier in John's gospel it was Thomas who was willing to go with Jesus to Judea when they had heard that Lazarus was ill and later had died. A trip to Judea was to travel dangerously as the this was a place where people had tried to stone Jesus to death and he got away. Now he was willing to head back into that scenario in order to be with his friends Mary and Martha and Thomas said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with [Jesus]."<sup>1</sup> And they did go.

Later on in John chapter 14 Jesus talked about going ahead of them and preparing dwelling places for them and says to them they will know the way to the place where he is going. Thomas, however, very plainly and practically said to him, Hello... "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

Thomas is the practical one, the straightforward one. And in this moment when everyone else is hiding in fear, he is nowhere in sight. One can only imagine what Thomas might have been up to. He was so practical that he might have gone out to search for Jesus as Mary Magdalene had already let them know that she had seen the Lord. He may have decided that fear be damned, it was not going to keep him from whatever else life had in store for him. We simply cannot know why Thomas was not there, but we do know that he missed the moment when Jesus came to the gathered group, stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." His first words to those who had deserted him, who had disappointed him, who had loved him but failed him, were "Peace be with you."

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture quotations taken from, *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

What a moment of grace! He then showed them his hands and his side. How interesting it is that Jesus' resurrected body was not a perfect body, it was a healed body, yet his body still had the scars that proved what he had endured and that it truly was him, not some apparition. The disciples rejoiced! It would take a while, likely their entire lifetimes to sort out everything they had experienced in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, but in this moment, it didn't matter how much they understood. They just knew that things were different and that the one they had put heart and soul into was alive. He was there with them.

Well, he was with all but Thomas. And though Thomas has been harshly nick-named doubting Thomas, maybe it was more than that. Maybe it was that Thomas was just that practical questioning guy who needed to have his questions answered and it was going to take more than his companion's word for it. Besides wouldn't any of us want the same amazing experience that the others had had. So, Thomas says, nope, I won't believe until I too "have seen the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in [Jesus'] side."

And Jesus does show up again. He doesn't say to Thomas, well don't you have high expectations, or chastise Thomas for saying what he said, or perhaps, for not having faith enough to believe his friends. Jesus, even though the doors are still shut, shows up a week later and stood among them. The first words he says, "Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side.'"

Jesus was not angry; he offered even more grace to Thomas. We are not told whether or not Thomas actually did touch the wounds, but I can't imagine that he would not have and even more, embraced Jesus.

Talk about moments of grace. Jesus kept meeting people where they were at, physically and emotionally. He met Mary in the garden where the tomb had lain open as she deeply grieved him. He met the disciples behind locked doors of fear, confusion, and grief, and he met Thomas with his questions and demands, even when everyone else had tried to convince him that they already seen Jesus.

Jesus did not condemn, did not say harsh words, did not put them in their place, he just came and said, "Peace be with you." This is why I think that the woman in my home church and my grandfather had it wrong. Christ offers peace, not judgement. It is the gift we have for one another. It is the gift we offer in that short statement where we share a sign of peace.

Sharing the sign of peace with one another in worship is not just another way to say hello to each other. I often think that is what we have reduced it to. To share a sign of Christ's peace with one another is to look at the person you are greeting, the person you are looking in the face and praying for the kind of peace that that person needs in their life where they are at in this time.

We cannot know what each other is going through, but in the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through each of us and the church, we can offer Christ's peace to one another. It may be the words one needs to hear knowing that Christ shows up for each and every one of us, where we are at physically, emotionally, and mentally. Jesus doesn't wait for us to be perfect people. Jesus comes to us where we are and uses us as we are.

Jesus uses us to respond to the needs of others, to restore people to wholeness. Jesus rejoices with us as we rejoice with one another as people who come together and share our lives as Christians in community, the community of the church and in the broadest sense of community.

This deep peace was something that Jesus promises before his death in Chapter 14 of the Gospel of John where he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (v27)

This peace was not a new thing, it just felt different now. Now they could understand more fully and to the core of their being what Jesus meant by his peace. It is a peace that, as it says in Philippians 4:7, "...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"

This is the peace that Jesus offers us and it is the peace that we offer each other at each service. It can be the peace that we offer each time we greet each other, here or elsewhere. It is the kind of peace that meets you where you are at, peace that sees you for who you are and loves you anyway. Peace that surpasses all understanding. Truly I say to you today, "Peace be with you."

In Christ, with Christ, and through Christ. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

God of new Life,  
the Risen Christ spoke words of peace to his friends.  
Thank you for strengthening our faith  
and offering us that peace as we live in you day by day.  
We are grateful that you give us courage to face our fears and struggles,  
patience to endure moments when the way ahead is not clear,  
and resilience to meet changing realities.  
Make us a source of peace and resilience for Christ's sake.

Loving God,  
we pray for the many places of brokenness in our world.  
We think especially of those weighed down by economic pressures,  
and those who have been trampled in the search for prosperity.  
We pray for people and communities at odds over policies and opinions,  
and those who feel their concerns are going unheard.

We pray for the earth itself under the impact of human activity  
and for those working to protect its future.  
Grant the earth and all its peoples your gifts of hope and healing.

Faithful God,  
we pray for those who struggle with their experience of the church.  
Open them to your love and grace so that any pain the church has caused will be  
healed.

Guide us with your Spirit of wisdom to know how to live out our faith  
in ways that create pathways for others to find you, not barriers.

We pray for our congregation,  
for The Presbyterian Church in Canada,  
and for the Church of Jesus Christ in every country and culture.

In these days of challenge,  
strengthen our trust in you and our concern for others.

Give us ears to hear the correction we need,  
with hearts opened by the grace of the Risen Christ.

We also pray for ourselves, our family and friends, our community and country.  
We lay before you in silence the people and concerns on our hearts and minds  
today.

We are grateful that we can place all our worries and our hopes into your hands,  
O God, knowing that you will hear us and respond.

Hear us now as we offer the words our Risen Lord taught us to say:

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter. April 12, 2026. Year A.

## Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen**

## Invitation to the Offering

Providing peace, hope, justice, and compassion in a world that feel to be in short supply comes at a cost. It cost Jesus his life. For us it means giving of time, energy, creativity, and yes, money. The gifts you offer help us to be a place of grace, a place that reaches out to others, and ministry that works to respond to the needs of our community and our congregation as we are able. This is an opportunity to provide the financial help that is needed for this church be a place of peace, joy, hope, and love.

You are invited and encouraged to financially support St. Andrew's ministry through our website, [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#)

1. Put peace into each other's hands,  
and like a treasure hold it;  
protect it like a candle-flame;  
with tenderness enfold it.
2. Put peace into each other's hands  
with loving expectation;  
be gentle with your words and ways  
in touch with God's creation.
3. Put peace into each other's hands  
like bread we break for sharing;  
look people warmly in the eye:  
our life is meant for caring.
4. As at communion, shape your hands  
into a waiting cradle;  
the gift of Christ receive, revere,  
united round the table.
5. Put Christ into each other's hands,  
he is love's deepest measure;  
in love make peace, give peace a chance,  
and share it like a treasure.

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**Benediction**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of love of God,  
and of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.