

Additional worship resources from Scotland

Holy Spirit of Freedom

as the poor long
for abundance shared
and injustice ended,
and the Church longs for unity;
Challenge us to see these two visions
as vital threads in a single tapestry;
Sharpen our wit and imagination
to weave the two together
in the footsteps of Jesus
for the life of the world
to the glory of God!
(Carolyn Smyth)

Risen Christ,

As you journeyed with the two who travelled the Emmaus Road
travel with us on our journey of faith.
In our encounters on the way
give us compassion to listen to the other's story,
patience to explain what may seem obvious to ourselves,
and courage to make ourselves vulnerable,
so that others may encounter you through us
and we may rediscover you through them.
Amen.
(Lindsey Sanderson)

Prayer/Meditation of Witness

This reflective piece uses symbols and movement to support universal understanding in worship gatherings where there is more than one native language/tongue spoken and/or where there is desire to include those with learning difficulties. It may be experienced as a whole or broken up into sections throughout a service of worship.

The symbols: Large stone, story book with pictures/photographs, globe, creed or other statement of faith, cross/crucifix, Bible, large question mark on card, loaf of bread.

The symbols are brought forward at the appropriate section of prayer and placed in a prominent position where all can see – this may be on table/altar placed at front or centre of gathering. Symbols could also be projected on to screen/wall using PowerPoint presentation.

Action 1

A large stone is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?'

Voice 2 I know what it is to lose someone.

I have been in the place of weeping and despair.

I have felt the weight of the stone that crushes all hope
and blocks me from God.

Voice 1 But it is we, and not God, who place stones.

Little by little the light will come again.

Christ will reveal Himself in the love of a friend,
in the hospitality of a neighbour,
in the kindness of a stranger.

Voice 2 There must be death before there can be resurrection.

I have seen the dead come to life:

(list or personal testimonies are heard)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for all who need the stone rolled away.

We give thanks for all who have experienced resurrection in this life.

We praise God, for the glory of the risen Christ
who gives us the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

Action 2

A large storybook with pictures or appropriate photographs is/are carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?'

Voice 2 I enjoy real conversation. I have outgrown small talk.

I am a true storyteller.

I am a listener even when it is painful.

I play a part in my neighbour's story.

Voice 1 Thank God for the gifts of communication -
for face to face talking, for the telephone,
for radio, television and the world wide web.

Thank God for all that connects us and enables us to keep in touch.

Thank God for the Holy Spirit.

Voice 2 We are our stories.

I have heard stories that have changed lives.

(list or personal testimonies are heard)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for all who talk of things that don't matter.

We give thanks for all who have shared experiences
of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We praise God, for the transforming power of His love
and pray that one day Christ's story and ours are one.

Action 3

*A large globe (perhaps one that lights up) is carried to the place of display.
Music may be played during this.*

Voice 1 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that
have taken place there in these days?'

Voice 2 These days I am aware of natural disasters
that occur on the other side of the world.

Yet I fail to notice when my neighbour suffers loss
and I do not know what they celebrate next door.

I feel like a stranger in my own land.

Voice 1 Sometimes we are called to be still.

If we look and listen, we will find the Christ in the other.

If we look inwards, we will find the Christ in ourselves.

And if we are open to challenge and vulnerability
then the Holy Spirit will show us where God wants us.

Voice 2 God is in every situation. No one is a stranger to God.

I have seen God at work in the large and the small.

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for all who are in tragic circumstances.

We give thanks for international relief agencies,
for emergency services and for individuals who
make personal sacrifices to help their neighbours.

Praise God, for the gift and power of prayer –
for there is always something we can do –
we can pray.

Action 4

*A creed or other statement of faith (could be a banner or other visual
representation) is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.*

Voice 1 'What things?'

Voice 2 My faith is precious.

I have clung to it in my times of greatest trial.

I cannot imagine life without it.

I want this faith for my children.

Voice 1 We cannot leave the responsibility to others.

We are called to witness to our faith.

Throughout the ages, men and women
have spread the Word of God and dark places have become light.

Voice 2 In this place we remember those who who have inspired our faith today:

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for those who defend the faith of Christ
even when they face ridicule, persecution or death.

We give thanks for those who have influenced us.+

And in the silence, we give thanks for the things of faith
that matter most to each of us. *(silence)*

We praise God for His faithfulness that endures forever. (Amen)

Action 5

A large cross or crucifix is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this

Voice 1 'Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?'

Voice 2 I have seen the inhumanity of man to man –
in men, in women and in those little more than children.

I have watched the suffering of someone I love and been unable to lift them from their cross.
Sometimes I cry, why O God, why?

Voice 1 There are many kinds of suffering.

War, terrorism and human cruelty remind us that we have the power to make any word incarnate:
for Christ's sake, we must make sure it is love.

We cannot stop the sufferings of illness or loss but we can enter the pain and share it, in love.

Voice 2 From the blood stained Cross of Christ, flowed the harvest of faithfulness, forgiveness and love.

I have known this harvest.

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for all who suffer at the hands of others.

And we pray for those who inflict suffering.

We give thanks for those who embody love in action and go where even angels fear to tread.

We pray for those who are ill, those who care for them, and those who are approaching death.

We praise God for his promise that there is nothing in life or in death
that can ever separate us from the love of God. (Amen)

Action 6 A Bible is carried to the place of display. Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?'

Voice 2 I do not read my Bible as often as I should.

But there are treasured verses and sayings that live deep within me:

And in unexpected moments, alone or in company,

something real happens - now - and I understand the words as never before -

Is this what is meant by revelation?

Voice 1 God reveals His Word in many ways.

We do not need to strive for revelation –

the Holy Spirit will open our eyes and minds when the time is right.

And those God raises to be prophets make sense of today

in the light of yesterday and point us towards the future.

Voice 2 Love is at the centre of revelation.

I have felt my heart burn with passion.

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for all whose hearts are cold.

We pray for those who think they have seen it all.

We give thanks for past and present prophets who have shared what God has revealed to them.
We give thanks for those whose passion for Christ has brought justice and freedom to the oppressed.
We praise God for all the ordinary people who are living revelations of His Word. (Amen)

Action 7

A large question mark on card is carried to the place of display.

Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'

Voice 2 I envy those who have never doubted.

I would like to have such certainty.

But things happen to me and to other people

that make me question Your power O God.

And every funeral I attend invites me to travel the Emmaus road once more.

Voice 1 It takes courage and trust to befriend doubt.

You need to be prepared to journey.

Apathy, inaction, complacency and self-centredness

are the opposites of faith - not doubt.

Follow the way of Christ.

Pray, praise God and love Your neighbour as yourself.

For it is in the acting out that we find the answers.

Voice 2 Only by faith can we live the questions.

I have experienced incredible breakthroughs in faith.

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for those who live in perpetual fear.

We pray for those who are crippled by their insecurities.

We give thanks for those whose strength of faith

upholds and encourages others in the face of adversity.

We praise God for the reassurance of Jesus,

that when we reach out and touch our ghosts

we too will discover that Christ is alive. Amen

Action 8 A large loaf of bread is carried to the place of display.

Music may be played during this.

Voice 1 'Have you anything here to eat?'

Voice 2 I have been hungry. I have been fed.

I cannot live by bread alone. But I cannot live without it.

Voice 1 We are stewards of God's world. We share a common loaf.

There is plenty for everyone. It is just hospitality that is needed.

For everyone born there is a place at the table.

Voice 2 Hospitality creates a space where the needs of the other are fed.

I have known life-changing acts of hospitality.

(list or testimonies)

Both We are witnesses of these things.

ALL We pray for those living in inhospitable places.

We give thanks for those who give of their time,

their talents, their resources, their very selves to affirm the Christ in the other.

We praise God for the glory of Christ's cross

inviting all who come to Jesus to be united in His feast of life. (Amen)

Blessing

Be the great God between your shoulders

To protect you in your going and your coming

Be the Son of Mary near your heart and be the perfect Spirit upon you pouring.

Amen.

(Carol Ford)