



Sunday 26th April 2020

Third Sunday of Easter

Gather to worship God

Let us worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

This is the day the Lord has made.

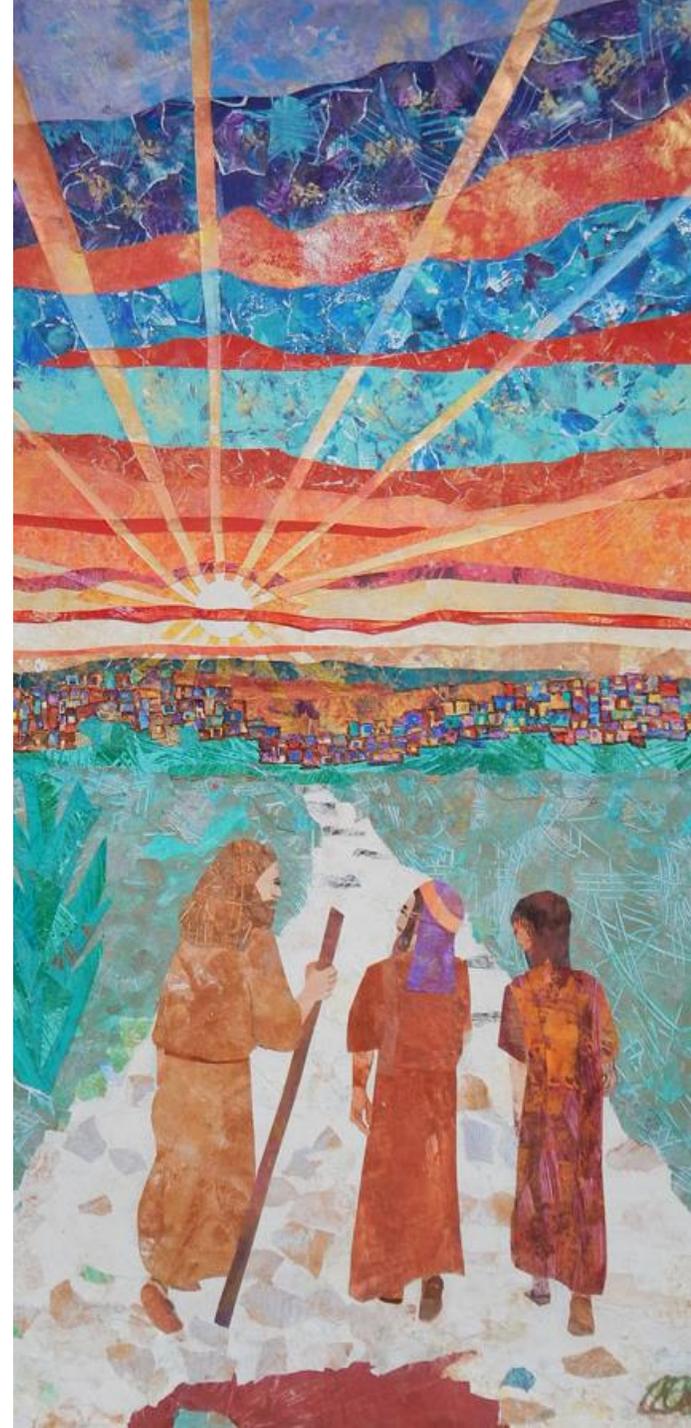
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Lord, direct our thoughts and teach us to pray,

Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and truth,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

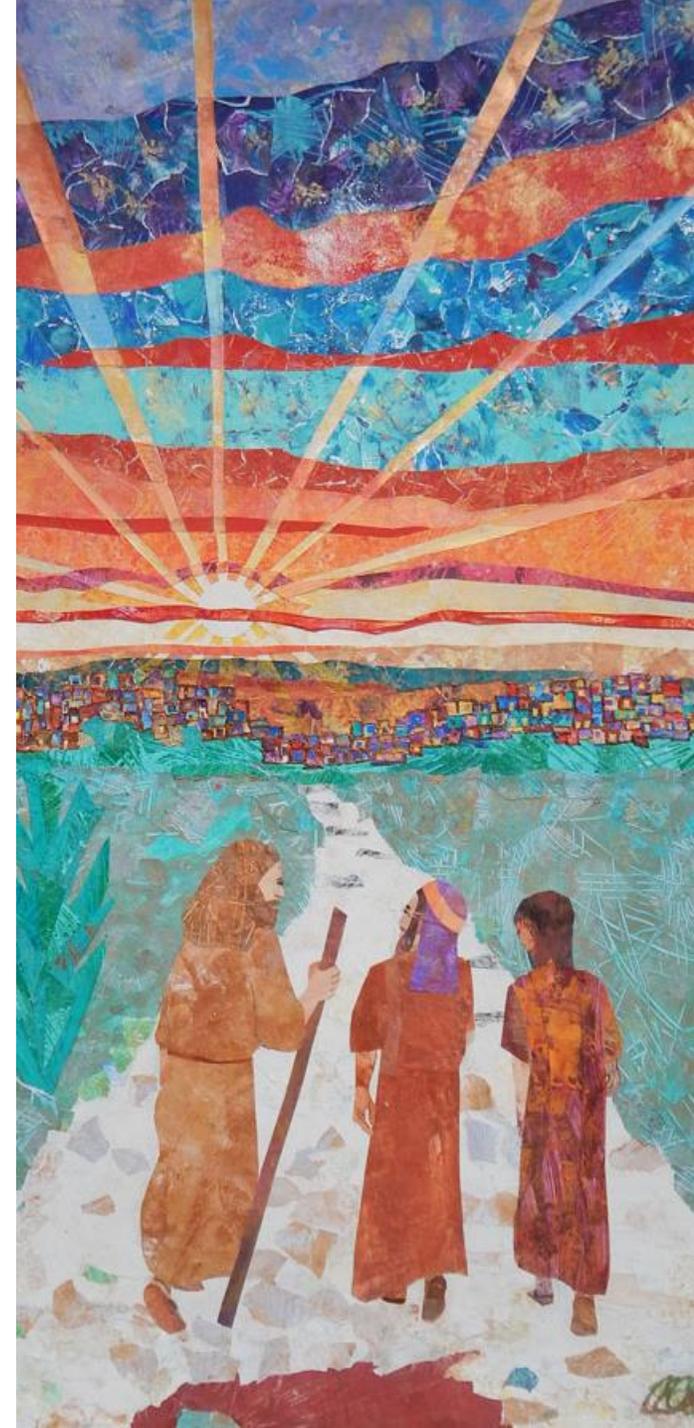


Saying sorry to God

God our Father,
We come to you in sorrow for our sins.
For turning away from you,
And ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us:
Save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,
Without thinking of you and others;
Father, forgive us:
Save us and help us.

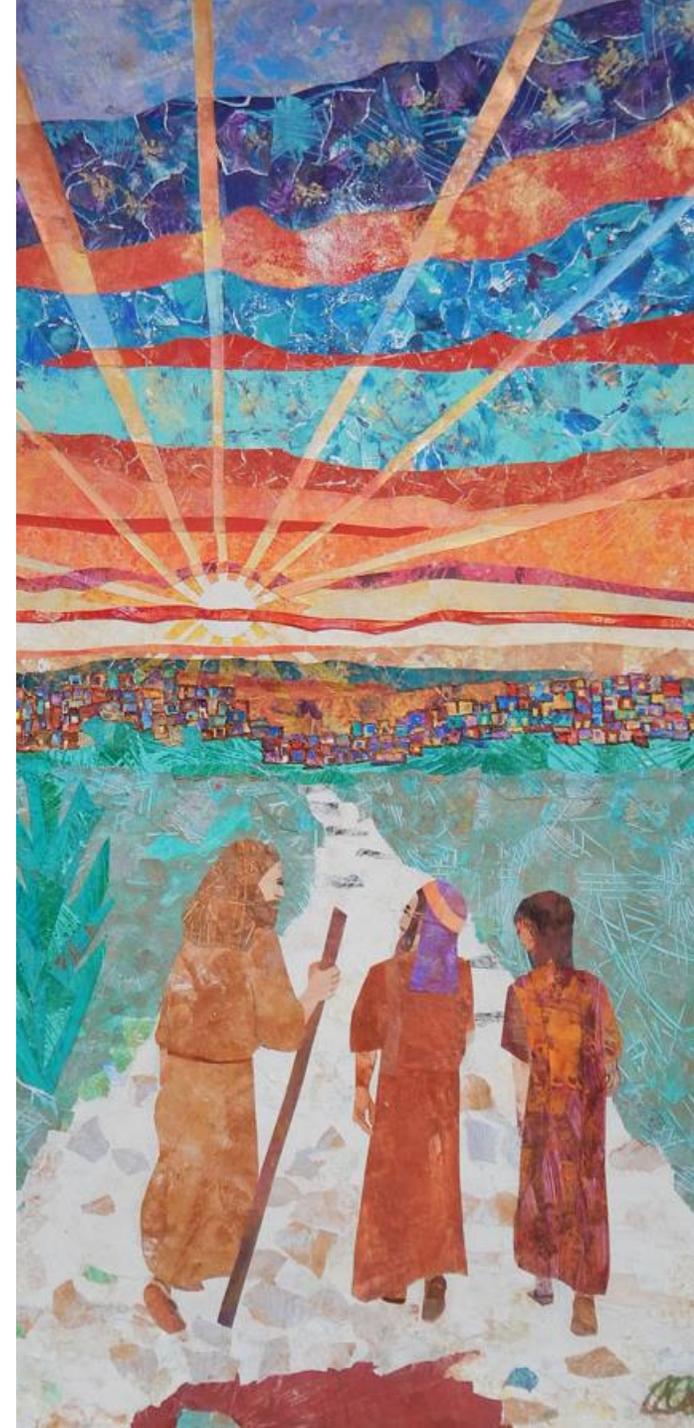
For failing you by what we think and do and say;
Father, forgive us:
Save us and help us.



For letting ourselves be drawn away from you,
By temptations in the world about us;
Father, forgive us:
Save us and help us.

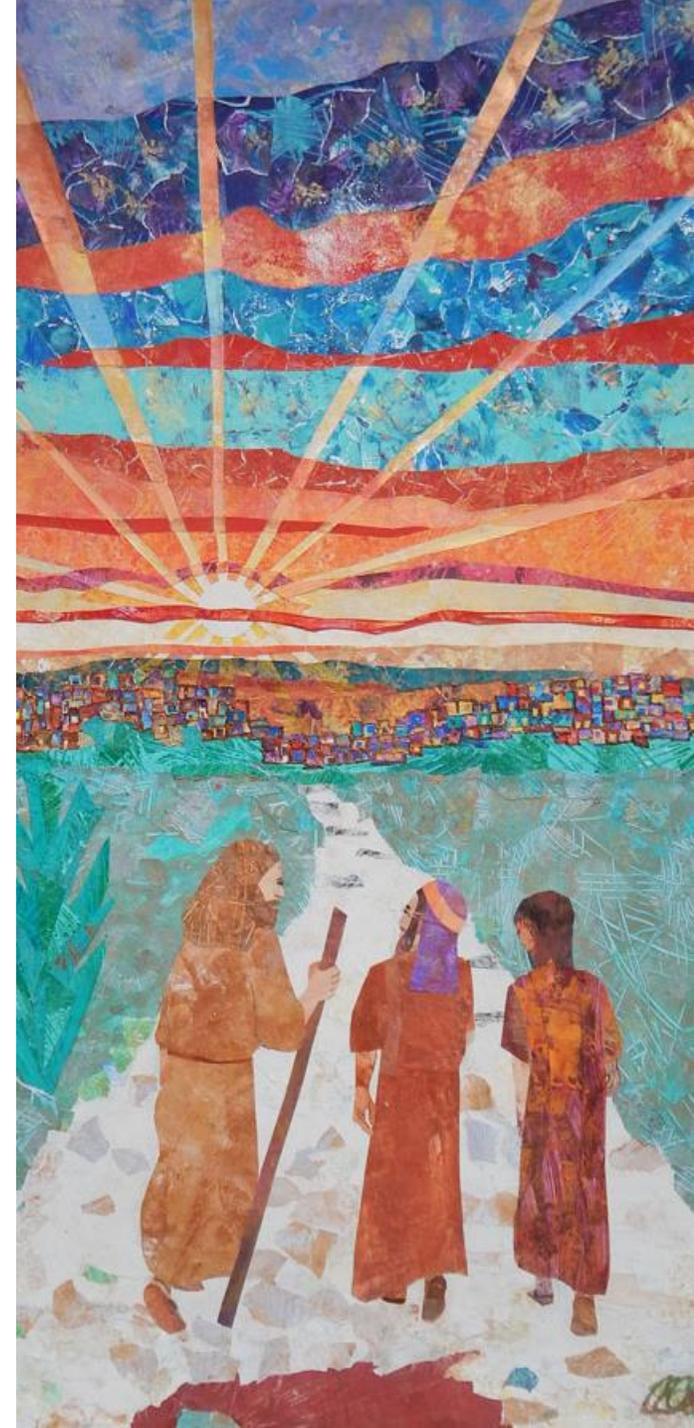
For living as if we were ashamed of your Son;
Father, forgive us:
Save us and help us.

May the God of love and power
Forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord
Amen



Blessed is the Lord
For he has heard the voice of our prayer;

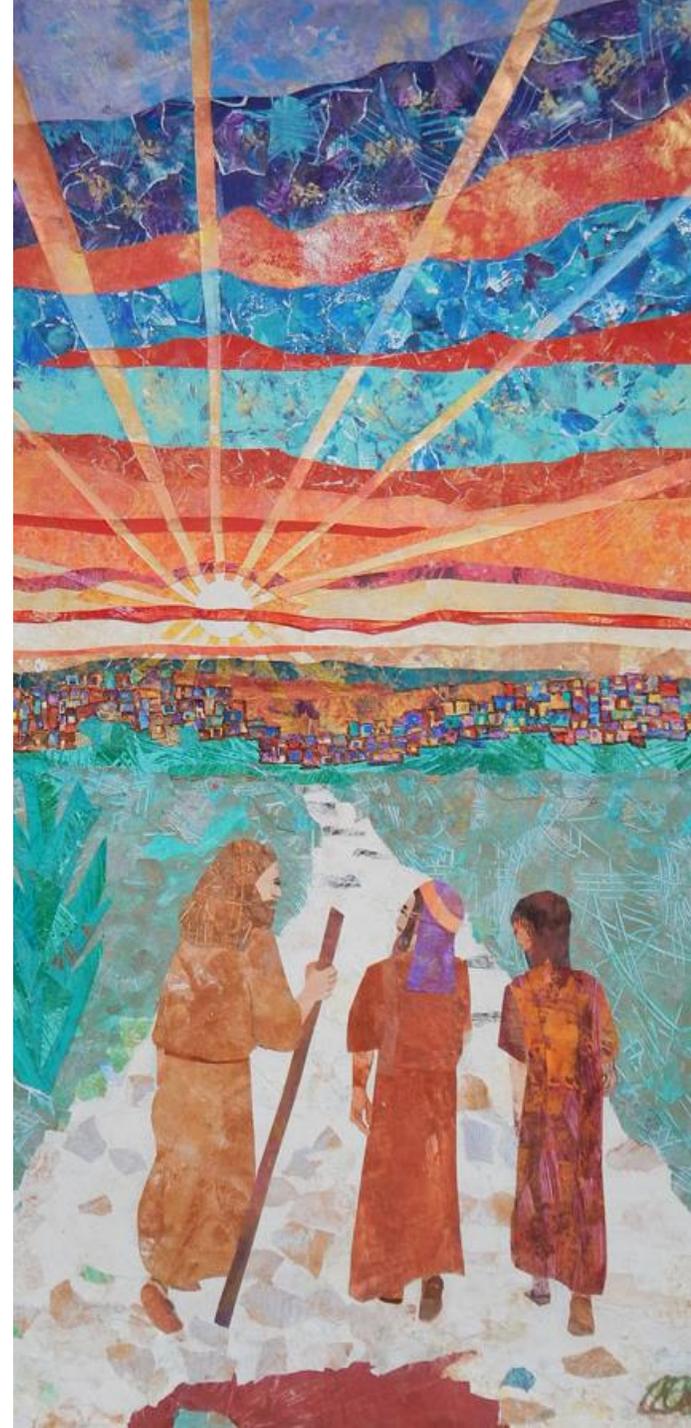
Therefore shall our heart dance for joy
And in our song we will praise our God.



Luke 24:13-35

The Walk to Emmaus

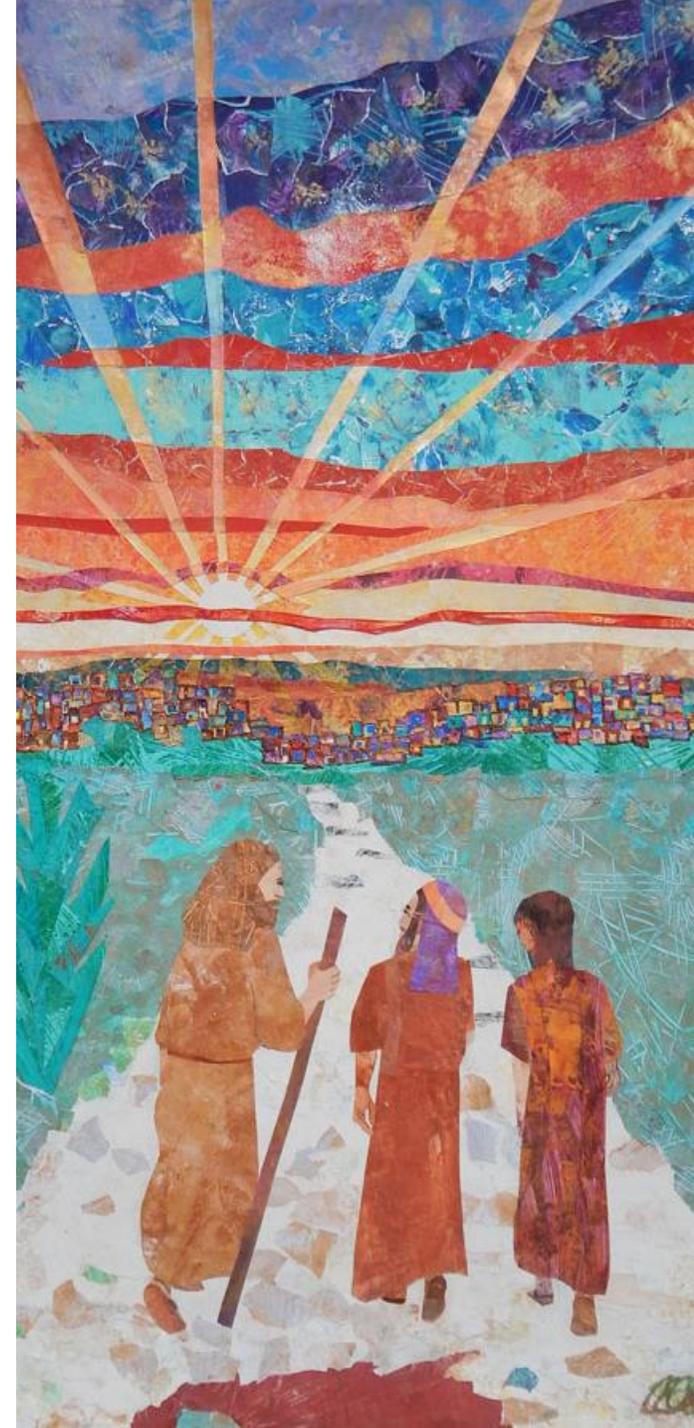
¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” ¹⁹ He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,



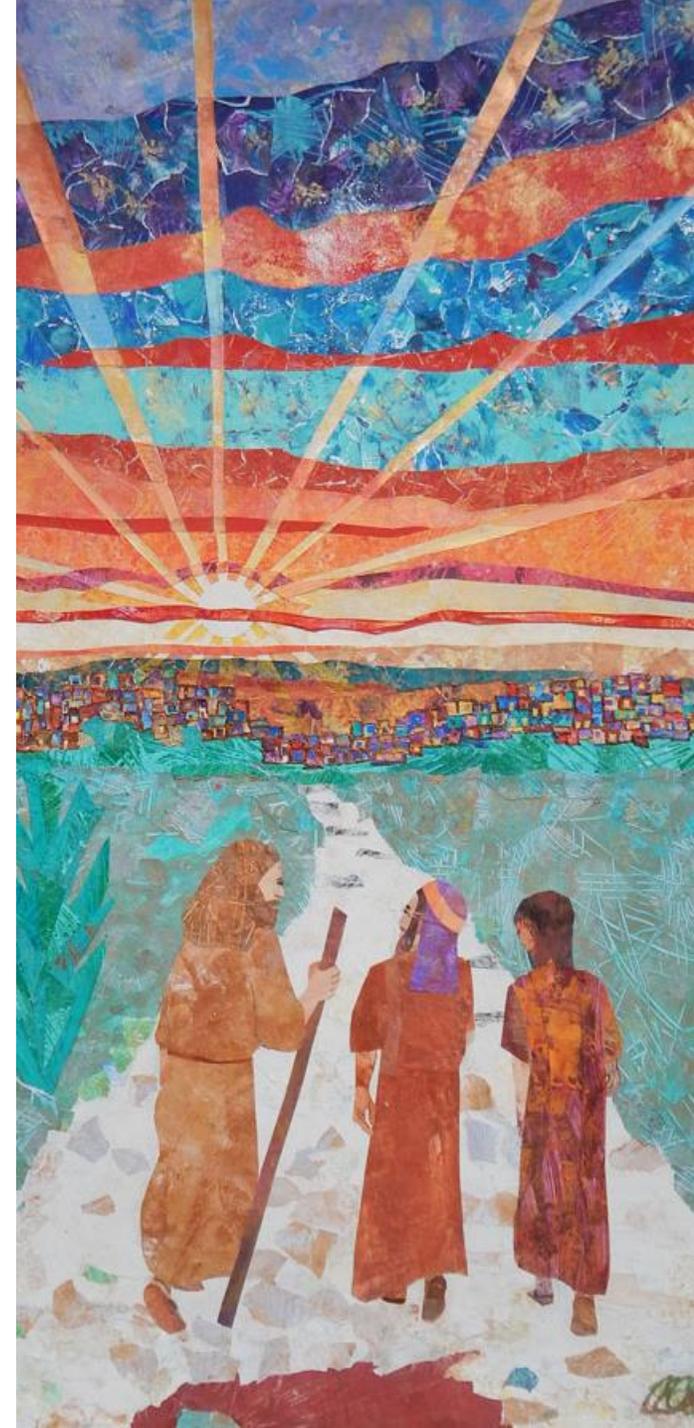
²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

²⁵ Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.



²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.



Reflection on the reading

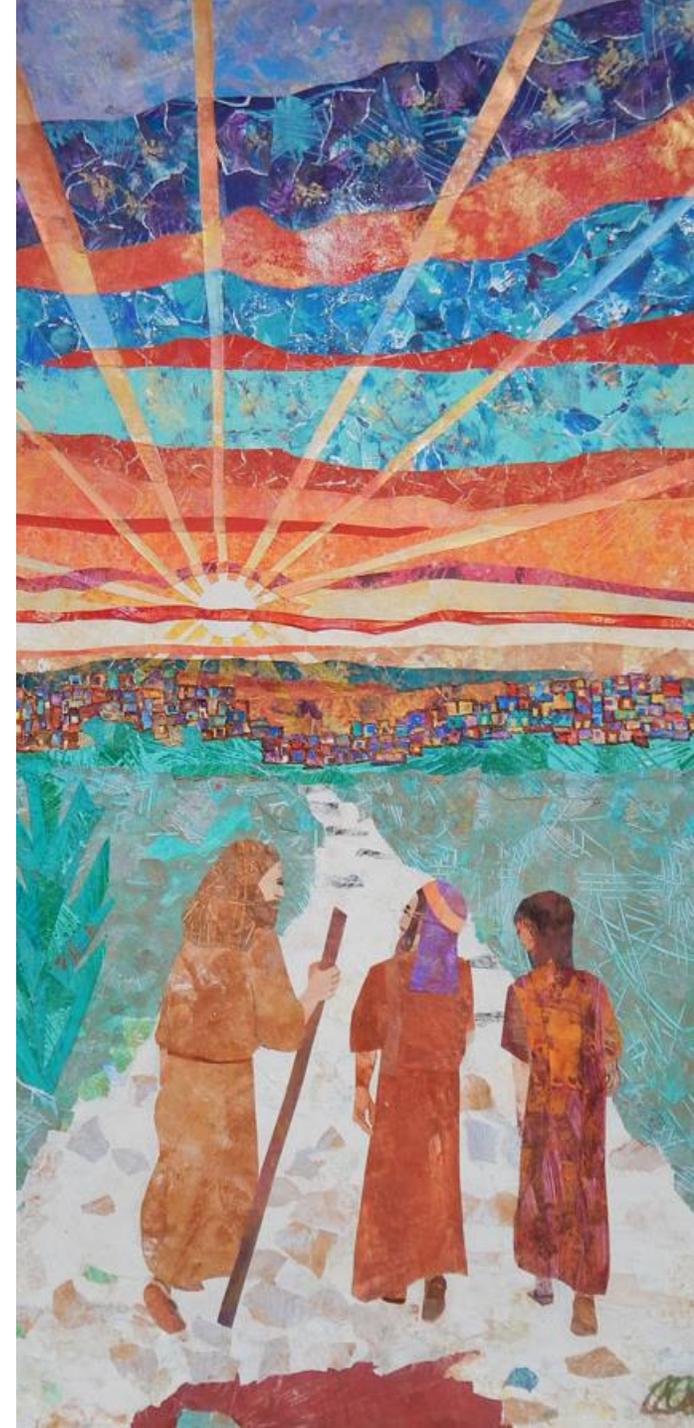
Today's gospel reading, the story of Cleopas and his companion on the Emmaus Road, is one of encounter.

The two disciples, fleeing all that was agonising and painful about the events in Jerusalem, including Jesus' death...they meet a stranger on the road. A stranger who seems oblivious to what has gone on, but seems incredibly well-versed in the scriptures and to have a particularly interesting (and possibly quite radical?) take on how they can be interpreted. He talks to them all the way to the house, and is eventually invited in as a guest.

It is only then, as they break bread together, that the recognition dawns.

This is the Christ.

Jesus, somehow, miraculously, back from the dead.



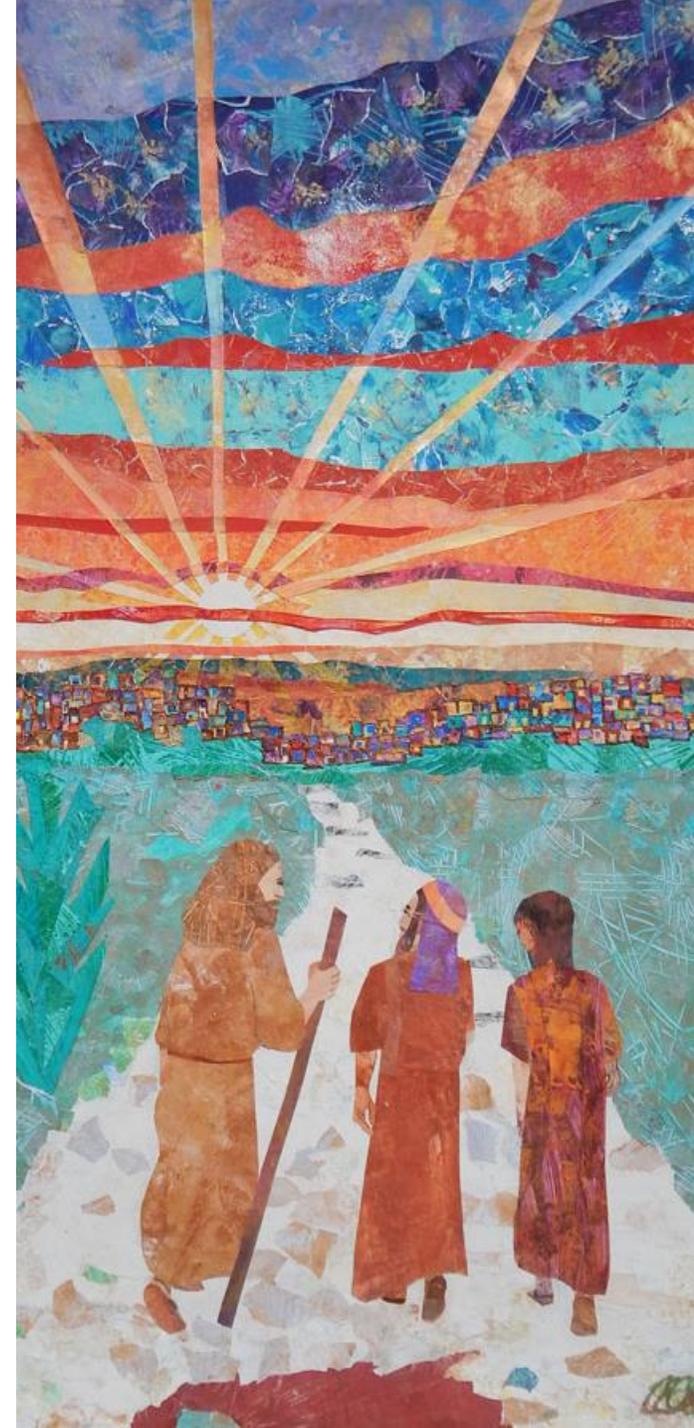
And as they grasp this truth, he is gone...

Wow – it's quite a story! We go on this roller-coaster of emotions. The premise of the story – meeting someone on the road and inviting them back to your house – is not something we can do at the moment, in the midst of the Coronavirus lockdown. However, the story has lots of encouragement for us as we reflect on what it means to be disciples of Jesus in this strangest of all Easter seasons...

Firstly, in verse 21, where Cleopas reflects on the sadness of Jesus' death – 'we had hoped that he was the one'.

We had hoped.

That seems like a powerful phrase to summarise how lockdown and the affects of Coronavirus have affected many of us.



Perhaps we have already lost loved ones to the virus, and ‘had hoped’ for so much more – for longer with them, to be able to be with them at the end, to be able to attend their funeral and throw a party at the end.

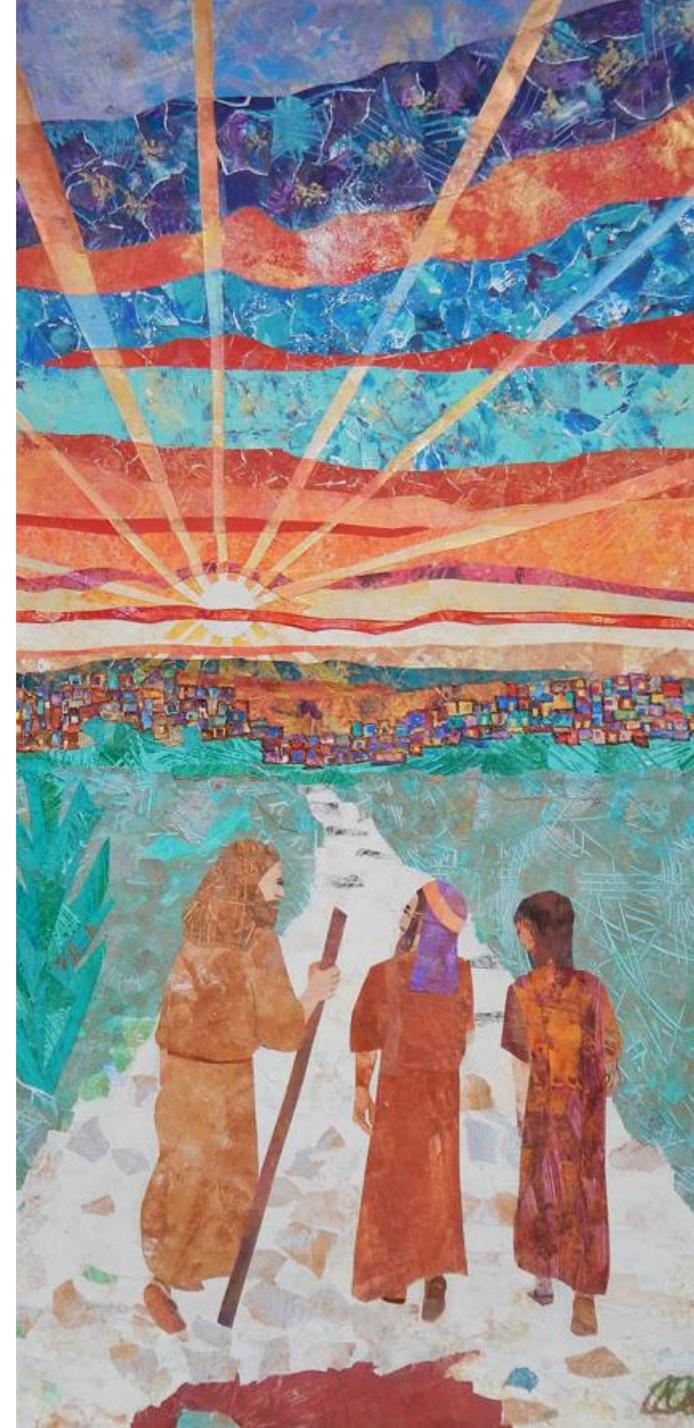
We are dealing with the grief of ‘we had hoped’.

Perhaps we had made plans for April, or May, or for the summer, which have now been thrown into jeopardy by the virus. We were looking forward to an exciting moment or holiday, we were planning to see family and friends, we were attending events or festivals or gatherings that are usually a key part of our yearly rhythms.

We had hoped for so much more.

Perhaps we have found the change to our rhythms and patterns deeply disturbing and are struggling to balance the new demands on our time and energy.

We had hoped for so much more.



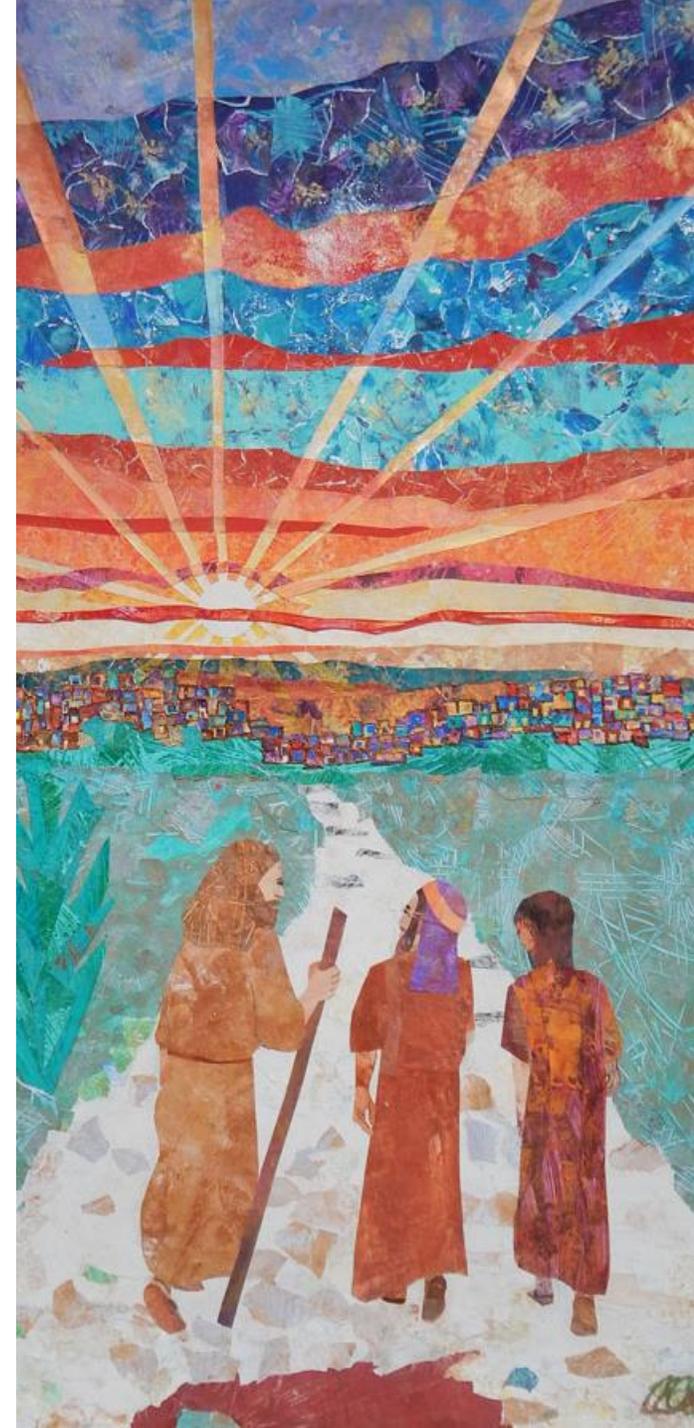
We know the pain of the grieving disciples as they walk the weary road.

And yet, Jesus comes into their midst.

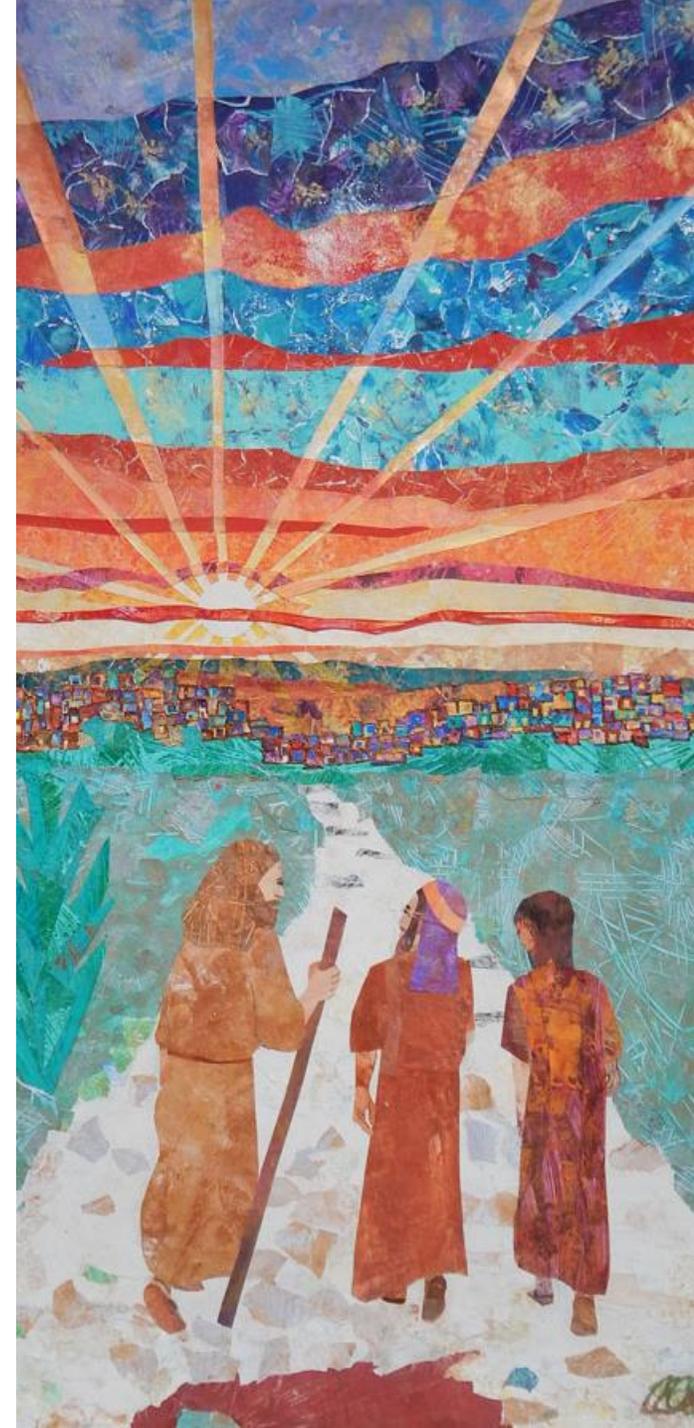
This is the great joy of the resurrection stories in the gospels – they all point us towards being a people of hope. We cannot always be happy, we cannot always rejoice, we may need to grieve...but we do not grieve as a people without hope.

Rather, we look for the encounter with Jesus, even in the midst of pain and anguish. Even amongst broken dreams and lost hopes, we look for the stranger who joins us on the road of life's journey.

He is there, beside us. Telling stories, breaking bread, sharing love and grace.

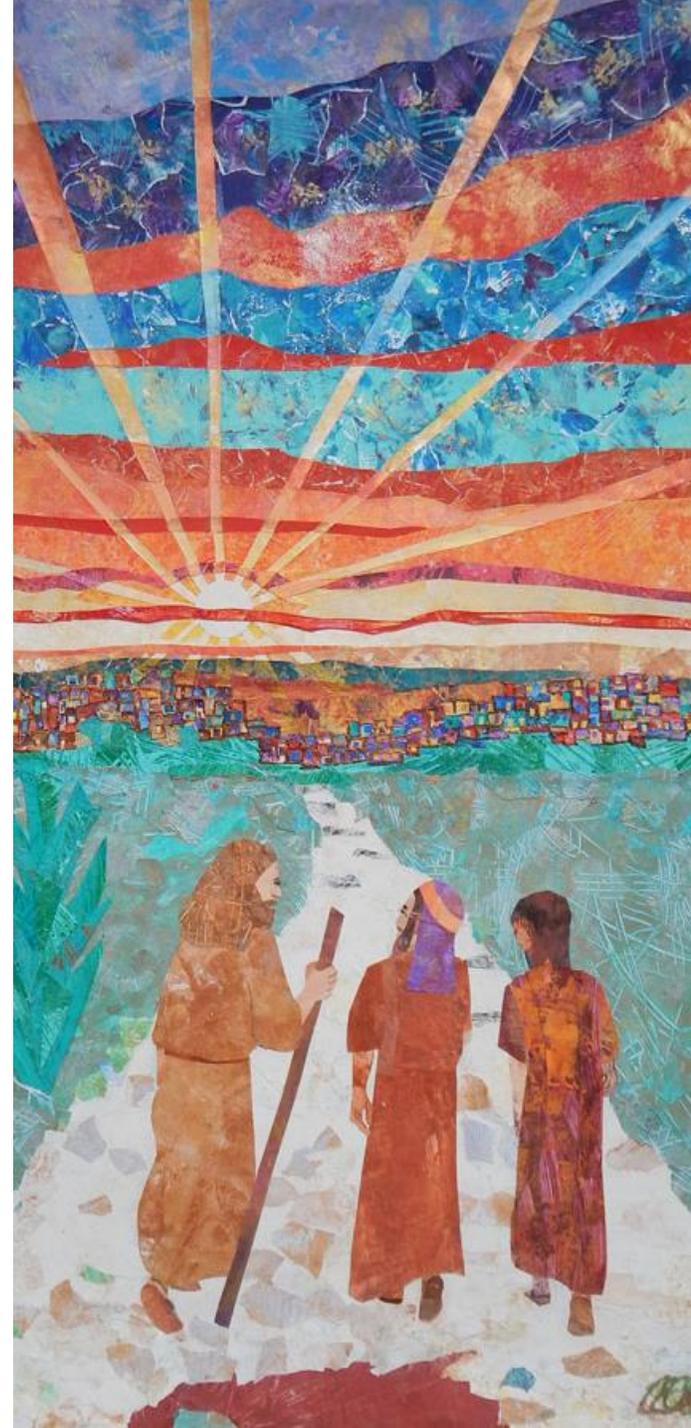


These dark and difficult times are the hardest ones in which to recognise the stranger. I often wonder if Cleopas and his companion even looked up to see Jesus whilst they were on the road with him. Perhaps they walked with the weight of grief, looking down, perhaps with their hoods up over their heads, not even looking at this man who walked with them.



Hymn – Blessed Assurance

Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5a0wBF4ok0>



Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
Source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
Who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

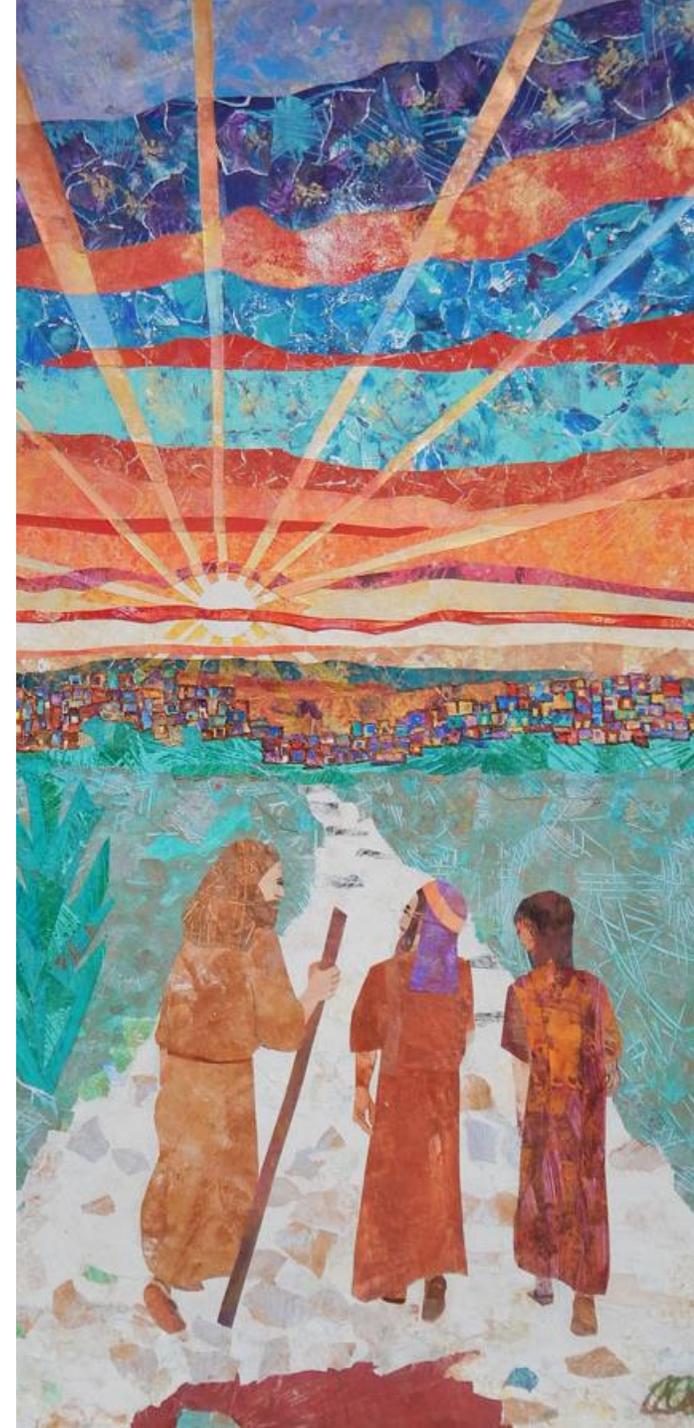
Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
Who gives life to people of God
And make Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

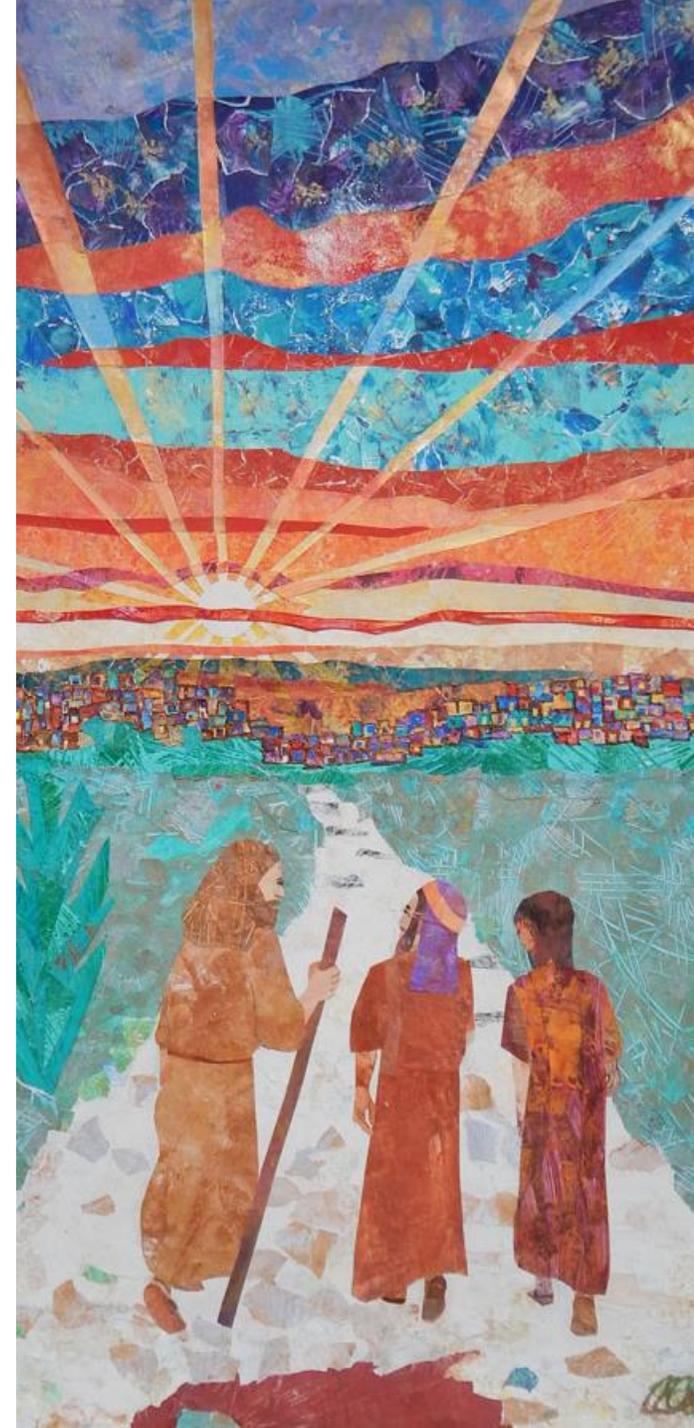


Prayers of intercession

As we gather together in worship we gather before the ultimate creator and in this moment of quiet we reflect on our world.

As we wonder at your creation we cannot help but see that through our actions and inactions, our desires and our greed we have caused our world to hurt, for that God, we are sorry. We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, **your love endures forever.**

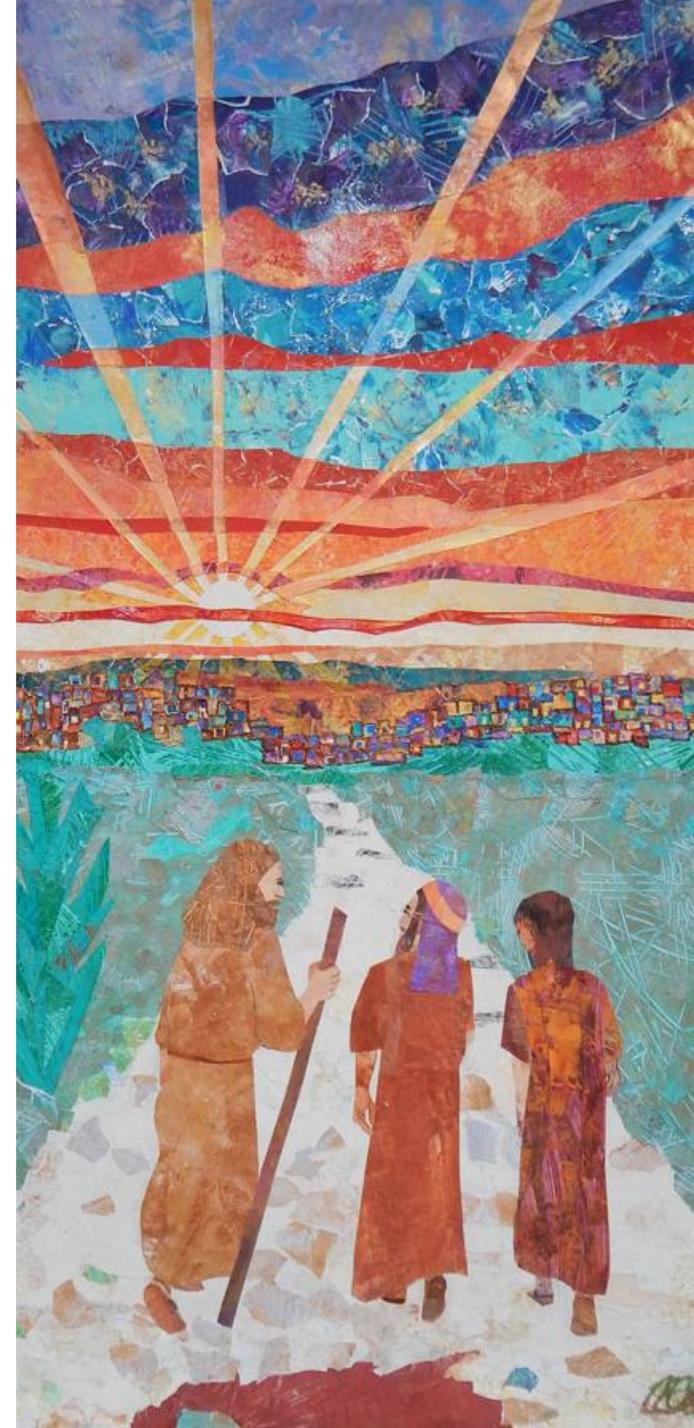
Forgive us for the times this week where we have not thought the things you would have us think, have not said the words you would have us say and have not acted in the way you would have us act. In our moments of humanity where we have fallen short we ask for your mercy. We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, **Your love endures forever.**



Help us to see the world the way you see it, to recognise your creative, loving hand amidst all the uncertainty, pain and grief and help us to walk this Earth in a way that shines your light in to the lives of all who we meet.

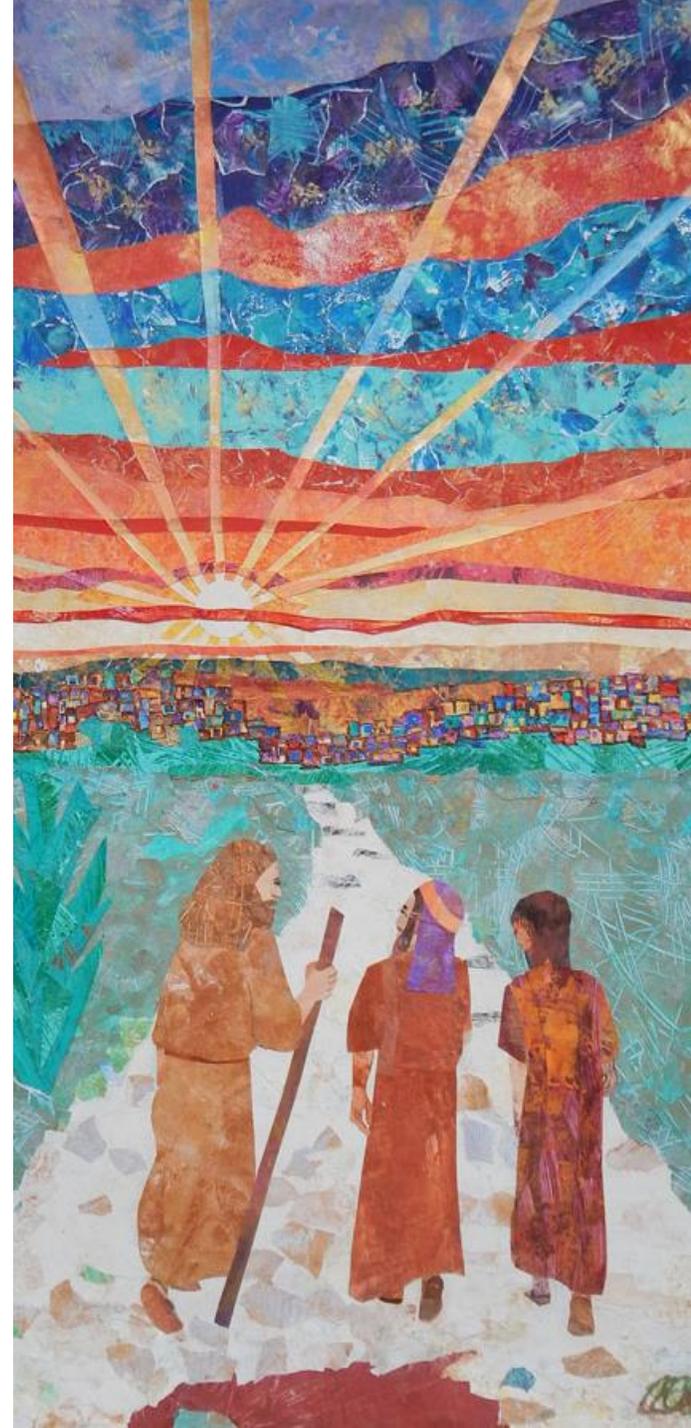
We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good,
your love endures forever.

Amen.



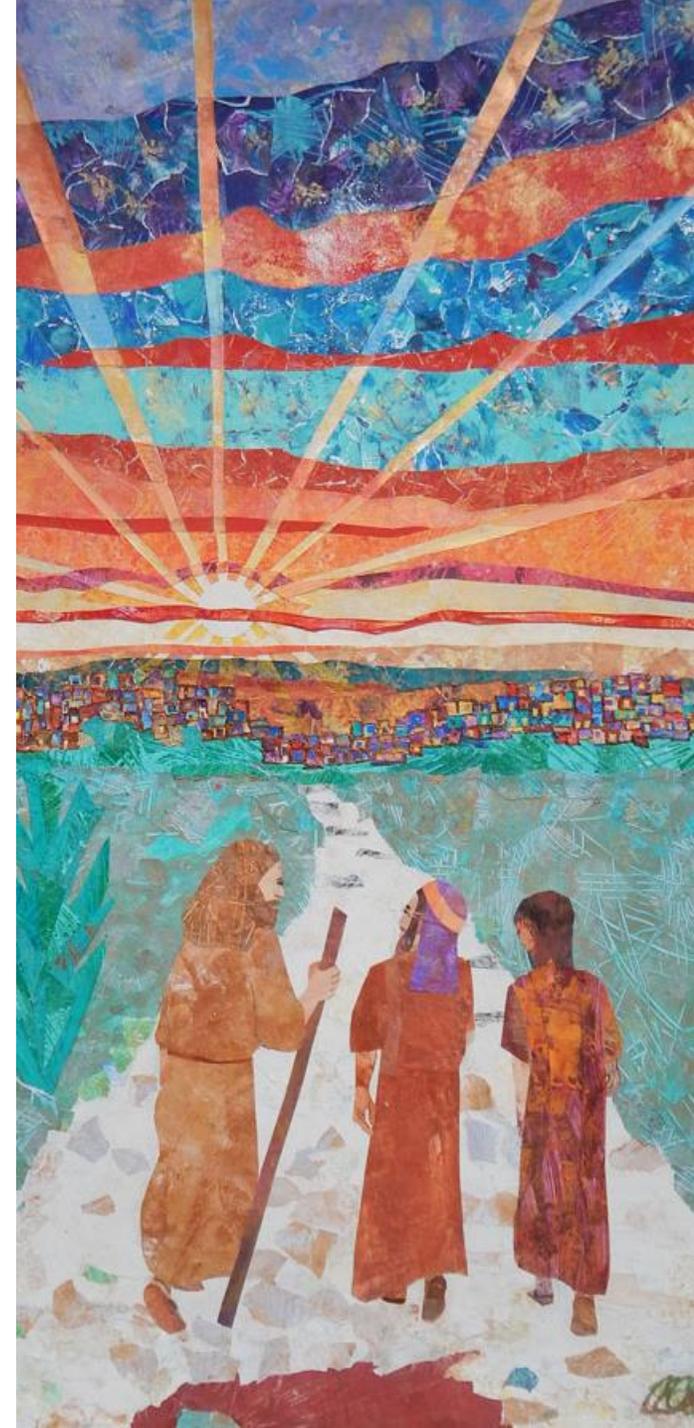
As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.**



Hymn – Be Thou My Vision

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34rc2WHKZ28&feature=youtu.be>



Going out to serve God

Go joyfully into the world.

Go with the peace of God in your heart.

Go strengthened by the love of God to bring comfort and healing to those in need.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God

Blessing and honour and glory be yours,

Here and everywhere,

Now and forever.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

