

YOU ARE WITNESSES

A service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with all ages together

Planning

Context

Each year, Christian denominations all over the world keep the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, praying that the unity which Christ willed for his Church might one day be restored.

This service is based on the liturgy published in the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) leaflets and on their website. It is for use by anyone, at any time, in any place and on any occasion in relation to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 18-25 January 2010.

You can find copies of other services, of prayers and a meditation on the CTBI website www.ctbi.org.uk/CGLA/415.

Preparation

You may be using this service just for your own congregation, or you may be using it at a service where people of different traditions gather. It is drawn from Service A on the CTBI website, with some cuts and some additions to make it suitable for all ages together. Do look through it before you use it, you may plan and adapt it to suit your circumstances.

Websites: You can find the meditation suggested in *Respond to the Word* as a Word™ file, a pdf or a PowerPoint™ presentation to download from the CTBI website.

The two Rembrandt pictures mentioned in *Respond to the Word* are available from the Art and the Bible website as follows: Journey to Emmaus www.artbible.info/art/large/343.html; Rembrandt Supper at Emmaus www.artbible.info/art/large/344.html

You will need: a Bible; pencils and cards for everyone with the words 'What are you hoping for?' on each;
for the Meditation: a large stone, a story book with pictures/photographs, a globe, the Creed or another statement of faith, a cross or crucifix, a Bible, a large question mark on a card, a loaf of bread;
for the role play: good crusty bread to share;
for Draw: a variety of art materials and copies of the pictures;
for Meet and Eat, either bread and cheese or coffee/tea/juice and biscuits, laid out on small tables with table cloths.

Hymns and songs

Come all you people (in *Come all you people* (WGWG), *Church Hymnary 4*, *Common Ground*, *Sing Glory*, *Songs of Fellowship 3*)

Will you come and follow me (WGWG, widely available in many books)

Bring your best to their worst (in *There is One Among Us*, Wild Goose Publications)

The going out song (This is printed at the end of the service. It is offered specially for this service by John Bradley and is very easy to sing. You may need to take a very few minutes to learn it together before the service begins.)

Gathering

Prepare the space

As people arrive they are given a pencil and a card with the question 'What are you hoping for?' on it. They are invited to fill in their responses and keep the cards until the Prayers of intercession are said.

Opening song

Come all you people

Call to worship

My eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared
in the presence of all peoples.

**A light for revelation to the nations
and for the glory of your people.**

Gathering Gospel

The news at the empty tomb (Luke 24.1-5)

This is read by different voices, each saying one sentence, from within the congregation.

The last reader then places a Bible before the congregation saying,

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise for the dawning of your truth.

Welcome

It is good for Christian people everywhere, whatever their age or interest or denomination to share together in worship sometimes. It has been traditional for churches to gather at this time and worship together. This year we are thinking together about being witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. People in Scotland created this service and so we begin with a prayer about the call of St Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland and the first Christian missionary.

Almighty God,
who gave such grace
to your apostle Saint Andrew
that he readily obeyed
the call of your Son Jesus Christ
and brought his brother with him:
call us by your holy word,
and give us grace to follow you without delay
and tell the good news of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Word

The story on the road to Emmaus Luke 24.13-35

This could be read out by different voices from whichever translation of the Bible you think is most appropriate, or read from *The Dramatised Bible* or told as a story. At the end a reader says,

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise for the dawning of your truth.

Song: Will you come and follow me?

Respond to the Word

You may like to choose some ways of responding to the Word from the possibilities below. Don't do them all. You could offer a choice so that people can do something which is helpful for them. After a time, gather everyone together to say the Statement of belief.

Meditate: The website offers a reflective piece which uses symbols and movement to help people think about hospitality, proclamation and faith. It may be experienced as a whole or broken up into sections which are used in different parts of the meeting place. People could choose which places to visit. There may be time to move to two or three places. The full text can be found on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website (see *Planning*).
The symbols: a large stone, a story book with pictures/photographs, a globe, the Creed or another statement of faith, a cross or crucifix, a Bible, a large question mark on card, a loaf of bread.

The symbols are placed in a prominent position where all can see or they could be projected onto a screen/wall using our PowerPoint™ presentation (available for download from the CTBI website).

Discuss: When and in what ways are you aware of God's presence? Are you aware of today's global celebrations and tragedies, and how do you respond to these in your daily life? Is there something more that you or your church could do to respond to these situations?

Role play: Invite people to work in small groups. Give each group a piece of nice crusty bread to share. Invite them to imagine they are the two people at the meal table in the house at Emmaus and to discuss their feelings and plans just after Jesus has broken the bread and vanished.

Draw: The Dutch artist Rembrandt created pen and paint wash pictures of the journey to Emmaus and of the supper, showing the moment the two travellers could no longer see Jesus. You can find them on the *Art and the Bible* website (see *Planning*). Download and print copies and offer them to people to add to or build on. They are simple pictures so people may like to add details, colour them in, copy them or add a description. Make available art materials so people can choose what they do.

Meet and eat: Invite people to sit at tables in groups with a simple meal (perhaps bread and cheese or some coffee and biscuits) to share. Invite them to get to know each other a bit by introducing themselves and then to discuss these questions from the main CTBI pamphlet: Whose hospitality has touched you deeply? What, if anything, hinders your own hospitality? Is the place where you live hospitable to strangers? What difference does the church make?

If it is necessary, you could substitute the word 'welcome' for 'hospitality'.

Statement of belief

**We believe that the Messiah suffered
and rose from the dead on the third day,
and that repentance and forgiveness of sins
is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations.**

Prayers

Prayers of Intercession

Invite people to turn their response to the question 'What are you hoping for?' into a little prayer and write this on the other side of the card. Give some time for this and then collect in the cards as the song 'Bring your best to their worst' (see *Planning*) is sung. The cards may be placed in baskets, hung up or laid out on a table.

The Lord's Prayer

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood amongst his disciples and said 'Peace be with you'. They were glad when they saw the Lord.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Song: *Choose your own song here.*

Invitation to Commitment

Where do we commit ourselves to be?

**Take us from where we are,
to where you want us to be;
make us not merely guardians of a heritage,
but living signs of your coming Kingdom;
fire us with passion for justice and peace between all people;
fill us with that faith, hope and love which embody the Gospel;
and through the power of the Holy Spirit make us one.
That the world may believe,
that your name may be enthroned in our nation,
that your church may more effectively be your body,
we commit ourselves to love you, serve you,
and follow you as pilgrims not strangers.**

Amen.

(Taken from the commitment used at the inaugural service of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.)

Dismissal

God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead
give you confidence to trust in the kingdom to come.

Amen.

Christ who broke bread and walks with his friends
feed you with his Word and lead you in truth.

Amen.

The Spirit who empowers the Church for all time
give you unity to witness in the power of his name.

Amen.

And the blessing ...

Amen.

Sending out song

He is Lord

John Bradley

He is Lord, Lord of all; Je sus Christ: Lord of all. He is Lord, Lord of all; Je sus Christ: Lord of all.

Though they

The first system of musical notation for the song 'He is Lord'. It consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in common time (C). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

He is Lord, Lord of all; Je sus Christ: Lord of all. He is

nailed him to the tree He has won the vic tor y!

The second system of musical notation. It starts with a measure rest in the treble clef, followed by the melody. The bass line continues from the first system. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Lord, Lord of all; Je sus Christ: Lord of all. He is Lord, Lord of all; Je sus

Love is strong er than the grave

The third system of musical notation. It starts with a measure rest in the treble clef, followed by the melody. The bass line continues from the second system. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Christ: Lord of all. He is Lord, Lord of all; Je sus Christ: Lord of all.

He has all the power to save!

The fourth system of musical notation. It starts with a measure rest in the treble clef, followed by the melody. The bass line continues from the third system. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.