



# INSPIRE

Helping and Encouraging



Christ's resurrection is your resurrection too. This is why we are to yearn for all that is above, for that's where Christ sits enthroned at the place of all power, honour, and authority!

(Col. 3:1 TPT)

# Easter Compass in a Corona Landscape

If you are anything like me - you are finding it hard to remember what day it is! One day seems very much like another when you spend so much time at home. Of course you may be one of the key workers who are still called upon to go to out to work, and all of us with less active roles are very grateful for your daily courage and dedication. For others, staying at home takes some resolve and we will all be learning lessons in patience and perseverance over the weeks ahead.

The calendar says it's Holy Week, but we find ourselves almost in another paradigm, in a world thrown off course, and this Easter will be like no other we have experienced before. Our usual routines have been replaced by strange new norms, our ordinary freedoms curtailed, future plans put on hold. We seem to be collectively holding our breath as we wait and watch and work to navigate a way through this unfamiliar and threatening landscape.

The Easter story remains, however, unchanged and somehow relevant in every age and circumstance, and we are forced to read it in new ways as we struggle to understand what is happening in our world today. I believe that Easter truths can become our compass for the journey in all the uncertainty. Even if we don't know the way, or what day it is(!), in Christ we find our 'true north'. Here are two timeless truths that Easter proclaims, and I want to share:

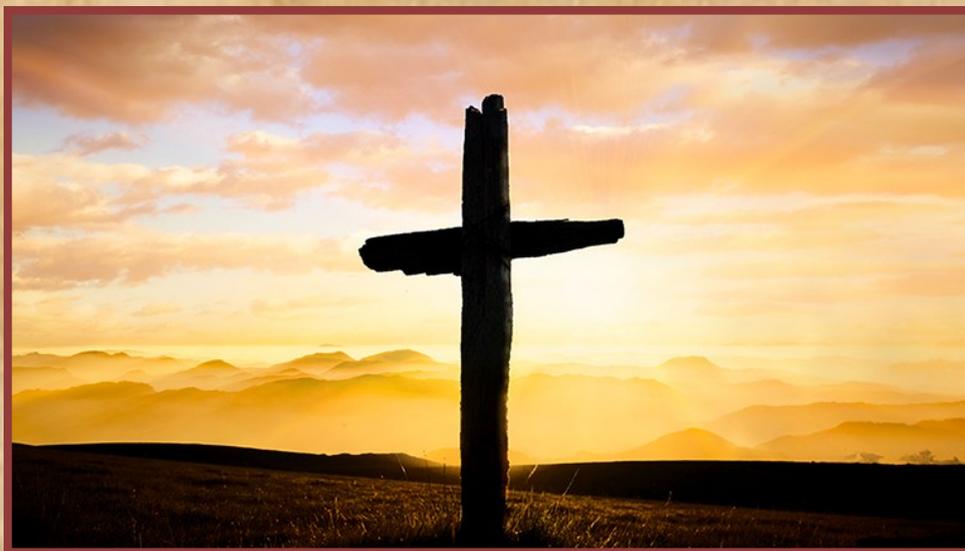
**God with us in suffering**  
**God within us in hope**

# Easter Compass in a Corona Landscape

## God with us in suffering

There is no escaping that the Easter road leads us down a path of suffering. There is no by-passing Good Friday on the way to resurrection. And we must wait a while with the suffering, stop and contemplate the cross from our new corona reality.

The uncomfortable truth is that people are suffering, people are dying and people are afraid. The daily updates from the Government underline the seriousness of the fight against the disease; and daily pictures from around the world remind us that it is a global threat. You yourself may have been touched already by the tragedy of loss; you yourself may be suffering the effects of isolation. We look to God for our consolation, and to the cross for answers in the wilderness.



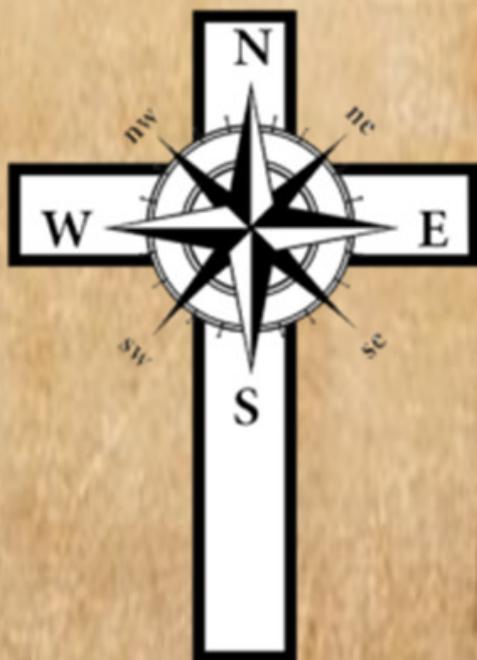
There are three types of suffering according to Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martin in the Fields: the first we bring upon ourselves, through our own sin, folly or ignorance; the second is the result of the actions of others; and the third – the most complicated – is bad stuff that ‘just happens’. Natural disasters and diseases fall more or less into this category, and in the suffering that ensues, we are left bewildered. Why is it happening? Where is God?

# Easter Compass in a Corona Landscape

Sam Wells also describes three responses to suffering – the ways we find to deal with it: first we try to fix it, we want to do something to make it better; second, we try to make sense of it – we want to find the story in it; and the third we see demonstrated every time a nurse stays with their patient until the end, in place of their loved one, with no solution for the illness or even words to say. This response is simply – ‘being with’. It’s the response we see on the cross – God with us.

‘This is how Christ shows God’s love for us - ...not just setting things right, but being with us and suffering with us as long as things hurt and until things come out right – even if things never come out right. That is the God Christians worship on the cross.’ (‘A Nazareth Manifesto’ p.292)

There is an ancient truth that is ever new – the life and death of Jesus demonstrate at the deepest level: God with us. Even when there are no words for the suffering.



# Easter Compass in a Corona Landscape

## God within us in hope

We may live in a Good Friday world – but Easter Sunday will surely come. And the shout will ring out: he is risen! Just as God is with us in suffering, the resurrection proclaims – he is within us in hope.

*'Living within you is the Christ who floods you with the expectation of glory! This mystery of Christ, embedded within us, becomes a heavenly treasure chest of hope filled with the riches of glory for his people, and God wants everyone to know it! (Col. 1:27 TPT)*

Signs of hope can be seen everywhere – of course in the miracle of Spring, breaking out of the grave of winter, but also in the rainbows brightening up the windows, strangers greeting each other in the streets, people looking out for one another in ways they haven't done before. Kindness is back in fashion! And the truth of Easter is that we too are raised with Christ, and the source of all hope is at home within us, by God's spirit.

God has given us the resources we need for these unusual days – a compass so that we can navigate our way. It won't be easy but we are Easter people, with Easter truths to live out – God with us and within us.



## Jesus Lives

In light defeating darkness  
In wisdom conquering foolishness  
In trust overcoming fearfulness  
Jesus lives

In strength coming to weakness  
In health rescuing from sickness  
In hope saving from despair  
Jesus lives

In love victorious over hatred  
In forgiveness dispelling despair  
In glory dispersing drabness  
Jesus lives

In joy growing from sorrow  
In life rising from death  
In God giving the victory  
Jesus lives



## Prayers for our time

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
Remember those who must choose between preserving their  
health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their  
schools close  
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
Remember those that have no place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the  
economic market  
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home  
Remember those who have no home.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around  
each other,  
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our  
neighbours.

Amen.

(A Facebook post by Commissioner Hannelise Tvelt: Prayer for a  
Pandemic - from Andrew Timothy Gray)

## **World Vision, A prayer for people infected with COVID-19**

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments.

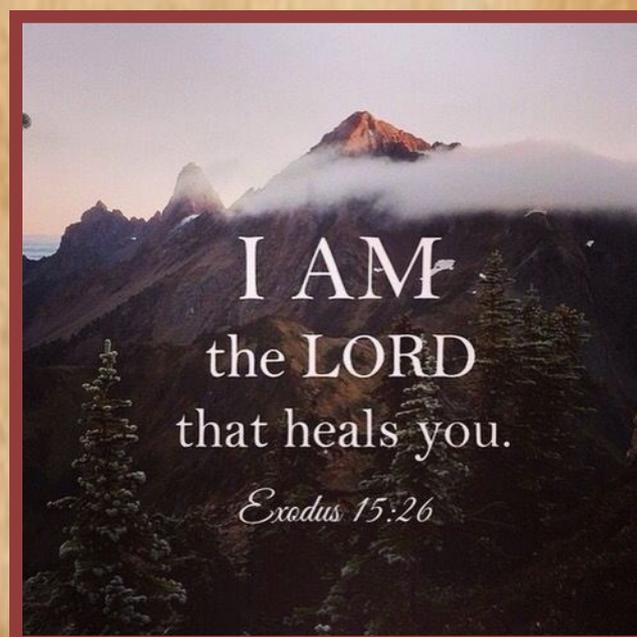
Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19.

May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine.

Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease.

Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.





However you are able to  
celebrate Easter this  
coming weekend,  
all at Herts and Essex  
SA DHQ send warmest  
greetings,  
and may God bless  
you and fill you with  
resurrection hope and  
courage for these days.