



Welcoming

# Easter

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting



Grace Chapel  
CHURCH OF CHRIST





# Welcoming Easter Introduction

Welcome to our 2026 Journey to Easter, a 40-day season (excluding Sundays) that leads us toward Easter through repentance, renewal, prayer, and fasting. This year our theme is Welcoming Easter, and we'll focus on the incredible hospitality Jesus has shown us through His life, death, resurrection, and ongoing work in our lives.

You're invited to join in by choosing something to fast from or abstain from, by slowly reading through one of the Gospels, by watching the daily testimony videos we'll be sending out, and by celebrating Jesus each week through Sabbath and community. Our hope is that you'll prayerfully consider how you want to participate and jump in with us as we begin the journey together!



# Welcoming Easter Day One

## Read

*God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble...*  
—Psalm 46:1-11 NLT

## Reflect

When Clay faced his health crisis, uncertainty threatened to overwhelm him. Yet God showed up—not always in miraculous healings, but through the faithful presence of His people. The psalmist reminds us that God is not distant during our storms; He is present, near, and actively working. Like a coach calling after thirty years or a young man sending a timely text, God orchestrates divine appointments to remind us we're not alone.

Where are you experiencing uncertainty today? Look for God's presence in unexpected places—a phone call, a message, a friend's prayer. His presence transforms anxiety into peace, not by removing our circumstances, but by walking through them with us.

## Questions

1. Where do you most need God to be your refuge and strength right now?
2. Who could you encourage today with a simple act of care or prayer?

## Pray

Father, our refuge and strength, thank You that You are near in every trouble. When uncertainty feels heavy, help us notice Your presence—in a friend's prayer, a simple message, or a quiet moment of peace. Calm our anxious hearts and remind us that we are never alone. Show us someone who needs Your comfort today, and use our words and actions to reflect Your love. Walk with us through what we cannot change, and fill us with Your peace that passes understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Two

## Read

*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*  
— Romans 15:7

## Reflect

Emma's story begins in a very ordinary place: a middle school bus. A seatmate simply invited her to Grace Chapel. It didn't feel dramatic—just a small, simple welcome. But looking back, she can see that through that one invitation:

- She found a church where she felt there was a place for her.
- She discovered a place in Jesus' family.
- Years later, in that same church, she met her future husband.

Her faith wasn't built on one big moment, but on Jesus' steady, gentle invitation over time—through people, community, and ordinary Sundays. What started as a small act of welcome became the foundation for her faith, her community, and her family.

All of this is possible because of Easter. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has welcomed us into new life with God. Now He calls us to do the same for others: "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you." Your simple invitation—to church, to coffee, to sit with you—might be the beginning of someone else's story with Jesus.

## Questions

1. Where do you most need God to be your refuge and strength right now?
2. Who could you encourage today with a simple act of care or prayer?

## Pray

Jesus, thank You for welcoming me—often through the simple kindness of others. Thank You for the people and the church communities that have given me a place to belong and grow. Help me to welcome others as You have welcomed me. Show me one person I can reach out to this week. We praise You for Your death and resurrection, and for the new life we have in You. Amen.



## Welcoming Easter Day Three

### Read

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*  
— 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

### Reflect

Jaden grew up convinced he could never lead. The idea of standing on a stage was daunting. So he stayed far away from leadership, believing it was safer not to try. But this past year, God started nudging him. Through his youth group, Jaden sensed Jesus inviting him into a leadership role he never would have chosen on his own. As he said yes, he discovered something important: in Jesus' kingdom, leadership isn't about being flawless—it's about trusting a faithful Savior.

Jaden put it this way: Jesus has welcomed him “into his world of leadership,” and even if he fails or messes up, Jesus will love him anyway. That's the heart of the gospel: we are not welcomed because we perform well; we are welcomed because we are loved.

Maybe your “stage” looks different—leading a small group, serving in a ministry, praying out loud, having an honest conversation, or sharing your faith with a friend. Underneath the fear is often the same question: “What if I fail—and what will people think of me?”

Easter answers that fear. Jesus went to the cross knowing every failure in advance and chose you anyway. His resurrection means your identity is secure. Your value is not defined by how smoothly you perform, but by His unchanging love.

### Questions

1. Where might God be nudging you into something that feels scary or stretching right now?
2. How does knowing Jesus loves you even when you “fumble” change your willingness to step out?

### Pray

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for not giving me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Thank You for welcoming me into Your presence, even when I feel afraid or unsure. Help me trust that Your love for me does not change when I stumble. Give me courage to say yes to what You're calling me to, and use even my weaknesses for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Four

## Read

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

— Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV)

## Reflect

In 2020, Chaela’s life felt like it shut down twice—first with a torn ACL, then with a global pandemic. She couldn’t go anywhere, and she couldn’t move well even if she could. But in that season of limitation, Jesus quietly welcomed her into something deeper.

Stuck at home, she turned to Scripture—reading her Bible every day, asking God why this happened and what His plan was. While her body was healing, God was strengthening her faith, her perspective, and her trust in Him.

A year later, she shared her story on Facebook—how God had met her and used a painful season for good. The next day, DJ messaged her to talk about faith and what God had done in her life. What felt like a setback became the pathway to one of the greatest blessings of her life.

This is often how God welcomes us into His plan—not by explaining everything, but by inviting us to trust Him in the middle of what we don’t understand. As we approach Easter, we remember that the cross looked like a dead end—but it was actually the center of God’s rescue plan. If God can bring resurrection out of a tomb, He can bring purpose out of your pain too.

## Questions

1. Where do you feel “stuck” or confused right now?
2. How might God be quietly welcoming you to trust Him more deeply in that area?

## Pray

Lord, thank You for welcoming me into Your plan, even when I don’t understand it. Thank You for the way You met Chaela in her injury and turned a painful season into a story of faith and blessing. Take the confusing and disappointing parts of my life and use them for Your purposes. Help me trust You with all my heart and not lean on my own understanding. Show me even a small glimpse of how You’re at work, and draw me closer to You this Easter. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Five

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus,

As we begin this Journey to Easter, we pause to welcome You, the One who has first welcomed us.

Thank You for being our refuge and strength when life feels uncertain. Thank You for drawing near through Your people, through simple encouragements, and through the quiet work of Your Spirit in our hearts.

Thank You for the ordinary invitations that change our lives—an open seat, a kind word, a church that feels like home. Teach us to welcome others as You have welcomed us, with patience, humility, and love.

Thank You for calling us beyond our fears. Where we feel inadequate or afraid to step out, remind us that You have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Help us trust that we are loved, not for how well we perform, but because of who You are.

Thank You that even our limitations and painful seasons are not wasted in Your hands. When we feel stuck or confused, help us to trust You with all our hearts and not lean on our own understanding. Use what we don't choose and don't understand to draw us deeper into Your presence and Your purposes.

As we walk these forty days, make us more attentive to Your welcome:

more aware of Your presence in our troubles,  
more ready to invite others into Your family,  
more courageous to follow where You lead,  
more willing to trust You in the dark and in the waiting.

Prepare our hearts for Easter. Let the cross and the empty tomb reshape how we see our fears, our pain, and our future. Root us in Your unchanging love, and by Your Spirit, form us into a people who reflect Your hospitality to the world.

We surrender this season to You. Lead us, teach us, and meet us in ways we could not have planned.

In Your strong and welcoming name we pray,  
Amen.





## Welcoming Easter Day Six

### Read

*The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”*

— Genesis 12:1 (NIV)

### Reflect

When God called Abram to leave everything familiar, He didn’t hand him a detailed map—He simply promised, “I will show you.” That kind of calling can feel disorienting, lonely, and uncertain.

Marcus and his wife, Brandi, have moved eight times. In every move, God surrounded them with family and friends—until they came to the Atlanta area. For the first time, they had no built-in support system. New city. No relatives. No familiar faces.

But in that vulnerable space, God provided in a very specific way: He led them to Grace Chapel and into a small group. Through that group, God gave them friends, support, prayer, and a sense of home in a place that wasn’t yet home. It was God’s hospitality, expressed through His people.

Their story reminds us: when God leads us somewhere new, He also prepares people to welcome us there.

### Questions

1. Are you in a “new place” right now—geographically, emotionally, or spiritually—where you feel alone or unsettled?
2. Who has God used to make you feel welcomed and supported in past seasons?
3. Is there someone around you now—a newcomer, a neighbor, a coworker—who might need the kind of welcome you’ve received?

### Pray

Lord, thank You that when You call us into something new, You do not leave us alone. Thank You for the way You provided community for Marcus and Brandi through Grace Chapel and their small group. For those who feel far from home, please lead them to the right people and Christ-centered community. For those of us already rooted, open our eyes to those who need a friend, a small group, or a church family. May our lives reflect Your welcome wherever You send us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Seven

## Read

*So encourage each another and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*  
— 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

## Reflect

Kayla and her husband, Jon, arrived in Georgia looking for jobs and a church. A simple Google search led them to Grace Chapel—and what felt like a small step turned out to be a God moment.

They were greeted with kindness from the moment they entered the parking lot—welcomed, guided, and helped into connection. What began as a single encounter became the start of a small group, lasting friendships, and a faith that continues to shape their family and their son's foundation.

Kayla's story reminds us that God often works through ordinary moments and simple acts of hospitality. A smile, a conversation, an introduction, or an invitation might feel small to us, but God can use it to draw someone closer to Jesus and into true community.

Community isn't accidental. It's built through intentional invitations, genuine warmth, and a willingness to walk with others as they grow in faith. Just as Kayla and her family experienced, a single act of welcome can open the door to deep spiritual transformation. Every interaction is an opportunity to reflect the welcome of Christ.

## Questions

1. Who has God used in your life to help you feel welcomed and connected in Christian community?
2. Is there someone new, lonely, or on the margins that you can intentionally welcome or invite in this week?

## Pray

Lord, Thank You for welcoming us through Christ and placing people in our lives who point us to You. Open my eyes to those around me who may be new, uncertain, or alone. Give me the courage and compassion to reach out, to include, and to show Your love in simple, practical ways. Use my words and actions to help others take a step closer to Jesus. In His name I pray, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Eight

## Read

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*  
— Hebrews 13:8

## Reflect

Evan's story highlights two powerful truths about the way Jesus welcomes us:

With His **consistency**  
Into His **family**, the church

Jesus is steady when everything else is shifting. In seasons when we feel seen and successful, and in seasons when we feel forgotten or alone, His invitation doesn't change. He continues to call us into a deeper, sweeter relationship with Himself—patiently, faithfully, without giving up on us.

Jesus also welcomes us into something bigger than ourselves: His family. It's a family of broken, imperfect people, yet it is one of God's greatest gifts to us. In that family:

Others help us grow, challenge us, and encourage us in our faith.  
We, in turn, are invited to support, pray for, and walk alongside others.

Following Jesus was never meant to be a solo journey. As we “link arms” with other believers, we learn to love, forgive, serve, and make disciples together. This beautifully messy community is one way Jesus shows His presence and care in our everyday lives.

## Questions

1. Where have you experienced the steady, consistent welcome of Jesus in your life?
2. How is Jesus inviting you to participate in His family—either by receiving support or offering it to someone else?

## Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for welcoming us with unfailing consistency and for never giving up on us. Thank You for bringing us into Your family, where we can grow, encourage others, and be encouraged ourselves. Help us reflect Your steady love and open arms to everyone around us. In Your name we pray, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Nine

## Read

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

— John 11:25–26

## Reflect

In his video, Larry shares how Jesus welcomed him into God's family—not because he grew up in a Christian home, but because he personally believed in Jesus. He realized that salvation doesn't come by inheritance or family background. God's Word says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Salvation is a gift received through repentance and faith in Christ alone. Larry describes mercy "coming running" to him—when he couldn't reach God by his own efforts, God reached out to him through the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit. Opening his life to Jesus meant his sin was covered and he received forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus still asks, "Do you believe this?" Each of us is invited to answer that question personally.

## Questions

1. Have you ever assumed that being around church, Christians, or a Christian family automatically made you right with God?
2. How would you answer Jesus' question today: "Do you believe this?"—that He is the resurrection and the life, and that eternal life is found in Him alone?
3. Where have you seen God's mercy "come running" to you—pursuing you through His Word, people, or circumstances?

## Pray

Heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Jesus, the resurrection and the life. Thank You that eternal life is a free gift, not something I can earn or inherit. Lord, I confess that I fall short of Your standard and need Your mercy. Thank You that, through Jesus' death and resurrection, mercy came running toward me. Help me to trust not in my background, my goodness, or my efforts, but in Christ alone. As we move toward Easter, deepen my faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross and fill me with gratitude for the welcome You offer into Your family. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Ten

## Read

*God places the lonely in families.*  
— Psalm 68:6a (NLT)

## Reflect

In a season of feeling alone and even upset with God, Jesus welcomed Sophia in a very personal way. She felt like she had no one to talk to and struggled to see any good in what was happening. Many of us know what that feels like—confused, isolated, and wondering what God is doing.

As time went on, she began to lean into God instead of pulling away: reading her Bible, praying, and choosing to trust that He has a purpose in everything He allows. In that place of drawing near to Him, God met her in a surprising way—by giving her two new friends.

These friends listened, helped her talk through hard things, and reminded her of how God was still at work for her good. Through them, God showed her: “You’re not alone. I am with you, and I’m giving you people who will walk with you too.” Jesus welcomed her not only into closer relationship with Himself, but also into supportive relationships with others who could point her back to Him.

This is often how God works. He meets us in our loneliness and discouragement, and then places us in relationships where we can be encouraged, strengthened, and reminded of His love. And He invites us to be that kind of friend to others as well.

## Questions

1. Can you think of a time when you felt alone or upset with God, but later saw how He was working for your good?
2. How might God be inviting you to be a friend who helps someone else see His goodness?

## Pray

Dear God, Thank You for seeing us when we feel alone and misunderstood. Thank You for using Your Word, prayer, and other people to remind us that You are working for our good. Help me to trust that You have a purpose in what I’m going through, even when I don’t understand it. Thank You for the friends and relationships You’ve given me, and for the way You use them to draw me closer to You. Please make me the kind of friend who listens, encourages, and points others to Jesus. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Eleven

## Read

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*  
— 1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV)

## Reflect

When Danny looks back on his unexpected triple bypass surgery, what stands out most isn't just the doctors or the hospital—it's the people who showed up.

Friends sat with his wife so she wouldn't be alone. Others texted, called, visited, brought meals, and even mowed the lawn. Individually, none of these actions were spectacular. But together, they became a beautiful picture of how Jesus welcomes us in our time of need.

Paul says we are the body of Christ. That means Jesus often chooses to love, comfort, and welcome people through ordinary believers doing ordinary things with extraordinary love. A phone call, a meal, a ride, a simple "I'm praying for you" can become the very way Jesus puts His arms around someone.

As we move toward Easter—the ultimate display of God's welcome to us in Christ—we're invited not just to remember that welcome, but to extend it. We are Jesus' hands and feet. Our lives can quietly say, "You are not alone. You are seen. You are loved."

Who around you might need that reminder today?

## Questions

1. When have you personally experienced Jesus' love and welcome through the actions of other people?
2. Who in your life right now might need a simple act of care—big or small—that could help them feel the welcome of Jesus?

## Pray

Father, thank You for welcoming us through Jesus—again and again—with grace, mercy, and patience. Thank You for the people You've used to show us Your love in tangible ways. Make us attentive to those around us who are hurting or lonely. Show us specific ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to put out a "welcome mat" of kindness in our everyday lives. Use our small acts of service to point others to the hope we have in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Twelve

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus,

As we enter this new week of our Journey to Easter, we remember how faithfully You welcome us in every season of life. Thank You for the way You meet us in our anxiety and uncertainty—through Your Spirit, through Your Word, and through the quiet kindness of Your people. Thank You for church communities, small groups, and friendships where we don't have to walk alone.

We praise You that when we are new to a place, unsure of where we belong, or longing for connection, You go ahead of us. You lead us to churches, groups, and relationships where we can be known, encouraged, and rooted in Your truth. Thank You for those who greet, invite, include, and walk alongside us as spiritual family.

Thank You for the ordinary acts of love that become holy in Your hands—an invitation to sit together, a warm welcome in the parking lot, a text at just the right time, a visit, a meal, a prayer. Through these simple gifts, You remind us that we are seen and loved.

For those who feel lonely, overlooked, or far from home, draw near in a special way. Place them in communities where they can grow in faith and experience genuine belonging. For those who already have community, open our eyes to see who is on the margins and give us courage to reach out.

Make us a church that reflects Your heart:  
quick to notice those who are alone,  
ready to welcome those who are new,  
willing to bear one another's burdens,  
eager to point each other back to You.

As we move closer to Easter, let the cross and the empty tomb shape how we see ourselves and others. Remind us that we have been welcomed at great cost, and teach us to extend that same welcome freely.

We entrust this week to You. Lead us by Your Spirit, deepen our love for one another, and use us to make Your hospitality visible in our homes, our church, and our community.

In Your strong and gracious name we pray,  
Amen.





# Welcoming Easter Day Thirteen

## Read

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.*

— Ephesians 2:19 (ESV)

## Reflect

“Where are you from?” can sound like a simple question, but for many it quietly says, “You don’t fully belong.” Rita’s story reflects the ache of feeling foreign—caught between cultures, accents, or legal statuses. Yet into that ache, the Gospel speaks a different word: home.

Jesus consistently moved toward those labeled as outsiders—Samaritans, foreigners, the poor, the shamed. He didn’t demand that they fit in or prove their worth. He crossed every barrier to welcome them. His invitation was, “Come as you are.” Ephesians 2:19 grounds that welcome in a powerful truth: in Christ, we are no longer strangers, but members of God’s household. Not guests. Not temporary. Family. Our deepest belonging is not defined by nationality, language, or paperwork, but by union with Christ.

Rita’s comfort—and ours—is knowing that Jesus’ welcome is rooted in His love and grace alone. And her prayer challenges us: will we reflect that same welcome? As Christians, we’re called to tear down man-made barriers and practice real hospitality, especially toward those who feel “other.” In Christ, we live from our belonging—and we invite others into it.

## Questions

1. When have you felt like an outsider in your life or faith? How does Ephesians 2:19 speak into that experience?
2. Who around you might feel like they don’t belong, and what is one concrete way you can extend hospitality to them this week?

## Pray

Father, thank You that in Christ I am no longer a stranger, but a member of Your household. When I feel like I don’t belong, remind me that my true home is in You. Lord Jesus, You moved toward outsiders with compassion. Show me where I’ve allowed barriers—seen or unseen—to stand between me and others. Give me courage to welcome as You welcome. Holy Spirit, help me notice those who feel on the margins and offer them genuine hospitality. May my life reflect the borderless, unconditional love of Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



## Welcoming Easter Day Fourteen

### Read

*Do not worry about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

— Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV)

### Reflect

Starting a new chapter in life can feel uncertain—a new school, a new town, new people, new rhythms. When Camp arrived at college, he wasn't sure what his faith journey would look like. He felt the familiar weight of anxiety and the questions that come with it: *Where will I belong? Who will pour into me? Will my faith grow here?*

But as he discovered, Jesus had already gone ahead of him. Through a campus ministry and new friendships, Jesus welcomed him with exactly what he needed—community, encouragement, and people who drew him closer to Christ.

Camp's story reminds us of something important:

We shouldn't be surprised when God comes through.

He has always been faithful. He is faithful now. He will be faithful tomorrow.

And when we bring our worries to Him—honestly, consistently, prayerfully — He gives us a peace we cannot explain. A peace that settles our hearts even when circumstances feel uncertain. A peace that reminds us He is already working, already leading, already providing. Jesus welcomes us by placing the right people in our lives and by filling our ordinary days with reminders of His goodness.

### Questions

1. When have you personally experienced Jesus' love and welcome through the actions of other people?
2. Who in your life right now might need a simple act of care—big or small—that could help them feel the welcome of Jesus?

### Pray

Father, thank You for welcoming us through Jesus—again and again—with grace, mercy, and patience. Thank You for the people You've used to show us Your love in tangible ways. Make us attentive to those around us who are hurting or lonely. Show us specific ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to put out a “welcome mat” of kindness in our everyday lives. Use our small acts of service to point others to the hope we have in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Fifteen

## Read

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*  
— Luke 19:10 (NIV)

## Reflect

When Carole and her husband, Bill, sent their daughters to a nearby VBS, they weren't searching for a church or expecting anything spiritual to happen. But Jesus was already writing a story they couldn't see yet—a story of pursuit, hospitality, and grace.

What began with a simple VBS slideshow and homemade ice cream became a turning point. The warmth of the Chestnut Drive church family, and especially Don and Malia Huff, made something in Carole and Bill pause. It felt different—genuine, loving, sincere.

Over the next six months, the Huffs kept inviting them and showing up with steady kindness. Every “no” was met with continued love. And on a February evening, one dinner led to conversation, then questions, then confession and baptism after midnight. What looked like coincidence was really Jesus pursuing them through His people.

Carole's story reminds us that Jesus still seeks us, still shows up, still uses ordinary believers to draw hearts to Himself. His welcome is patient, persistent, and full of grace.

## Questions

1. When have you recognized Jesus pursuing you through people or circumstances?
2. Who might God be asking you to love with patient, persistent hospitality?

## Pray

Lord, thank You for pursuing us with a love that doesn't give up. Thank You for the people You place in our lives who gently lead us toward You. Make us faithful and patient, willing to show hospitality again and again. Help us recognize the ways You are writing Your story in our lives, and teach us to welcome others with the same grace You've shown us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Sixteen

## Read

*“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*  
— Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

## Reflect

Nels didn’t begin his journey expecting to follow Jesus. At fourteen, he saw the Bible as legends and fairy tales and decided to investigate Christianity with the expectation that he would eventually reject it.

Instead, as he examined the historical evidence for Jesus’ death and resurrection, the accuracy of biblical prophecy, and the complexity of creation, something unexpected happened: he became convinced that Christianity is true. More than that, he encountered a God who welcomed him—personally, deeply, and lovingly.

God is not afraid of our questions or our doubts. In Isaiah 1:18, God invites us to “reason together” with Him. That means we don’t have to pretend we never struggle to believe. We can bring our honest questions to the God who made our minds as well as our hearts.

For Nels, the turning point wasn’t just intellectual conviction; it was realizing there is an all-powerful God who created him and loved him. Truth led to relationship. Evidence opened the door, but Jesus’ welcome is what changed his life.

As we approach Easter, we remember that the cross and the empty tomb are God’s ultimate “welcome” to us. Jesus doesn’t wait for perfect faith. He meets us in our searching, our skepticism, and our uncertainty—and invites us to come closer.

## Questions

1. What questions or doubts about God or faith are you carrying right now but maybe haven’t voiced to Him?
2. How might honestly investigating those questions (through Scripture, prayer, wise counsel, or good resources) actually draw you closer to Jesus instead of farther away?

## Pray

Father, thank You for welcoming us even in our doubts. Thank You for meeting us when we seek You with honest questions. Give me courage to bring my uncertainties to You and to trust that You can use them to strengthen my faith. Help me love others with the same patience and grace You show me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Seventeen

## Read

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*  
— Matthew 7:7 (ESV)

## Reflect

Many of us have unspoken fears or misunderstandings about heaven. Maybe it seems distant, vague, or even boring. Maybe, deep down, the only reason it sounds “good” is because it’s not hell. Those quiet fears often come not from Scripture, but from cultural pictures, cartoons, or even well-meaning but incomplete teaching.

Yet Jesus doesn’t push us away when we feel this way. He welcomes us to bring those doubts into His presence. In fact, He invites us to ask for wisdom. When we’re honest about our questions and open His Word, He gently exposes the lies that Satan has planted and replaces them with His truth.

The Bible doesn’t describe heaven as a dull, endless church service, but as a renewed creation—“a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1)—where God dwells with His people, where there is deep joy, meaningful life, and the beauty of His presence. As we dig into Scripture, our picture of eternity becomes clearer and richer. Fear gives way to hope. Dread turns into longing.

God is not offended by sincere questions. He uses them as a doorway to deeper trust, deeper joy, and deeper anticipation of all He has prepared for us. When we ask for wisdom about our doubts, He promises to give it generously. When you knock, He opens.

## Questions

1. What have you believed about heaven that might be shaped more by culture than by Scripture?
2. How could you invite Jesus into those doubts this week—through prayer, reading specific passages (like Revelation 21–22), or talking with a mature believer?

## Pray

Lord, thank You that when I lack wisdom, I can come to You without fear. Expose the lies I’ve believed about heaven, about You, and about Your plans for me. Replace my doubts and fears with the truth of Your Word and the hope of Your promises. Teach me to bring every question to You, trusting that You will meet me with love, clarity, and peace. Grow in me a genuine longing for the new heaven and new earth You are preparing. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Eighteen

## Read

*There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.*  
— Galatians 3:28 (NLT)

## Reflect

Juliana's story reminds us that Jesus' welcome is both personal and communal. He welcomed her first by placing her in a Christ-centered family, even in a context where following Jesus was costly. Then, throughout her life and across different countries, she continued to experience that same welcome through believers who barely knew her—but loved her because she belonged to Christ.

This is what the family of God looks like at its best: people who may have little in common outwardly, but are deeply united in Jesus. Their welcome goes beyond polite smiles or Sunday handshakes. It looks like open hearts, open homes, and open lives—real acceptance, compassion, and a willingness to walk with one another.

Juliana also points out the difference between a shallow friendliness and the deep welcome of Christ. One says, “You’re allowed to be here.” The other says, “You belong here, and we’re making room in our lives for you.” That’s the kind of welcome Jesus extended to us—at the cost of His own life—and the kind He now calls us to extend to others.

As we move toward Easter and remember the cross and resurrection, we remember this: we were once strangers, and God made us family. Now we are sent to mirror that same gospel welcome to the world.

## Questions

1. Where have you experienced this deeper kind of Christlike welcome in your own life? How did it shape your faith?
2. What would it look like for you to welcome someone not just kindly but with genuine Christlike love?

## Pray

Thank You for welcoming us into Your family at great cost to Yourself. Thank You for the people and communities through whom You have made Your love and acceptance real in our lives. Teach us to welcome others as You have welcomed us—not with surface-level friendliness, but with deep compassion, genuine acceptance, and open hearts. Show us the people around us who feel like outsiders, and give us the courage and love to draw them in. May our churches, our homes, and our daily lives reflect the truth of Your gospel: that all who come to You are loved, received, and made part of Your family. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Nineteen

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus,

As we come to the end of another week in our Welcoming Easter journey, we pause to rest in the steady welcome You extend to us — patient, wise, and full of grace.

Thank You for meeting us in our doubts, just as You did for Nels and Vance. You do not shame our questions or push us away when we wrestle with truth. Instead, You invite us to seek, examine, and discover again that Your Word is trustworthy and Your promises are sure. Give us the courage to bring our uncertainty into the light, knowing that You meet honest searching with patient love.

Thank You for pursuing us long before we ever knew how to pursue You. Many of us can look back and see how You wrote our stories through people who welcomed us, prayed for us, and stayed faithful even when we weren't sure what we believed. Help us recognize the quiet ways You've been shaping our hearts and leading us home.

Thank You for the gift of Your people. Through Christian families, spiritual friendships, and communities around the world, You continue to welcome us. Teach us to offer not just polite friendliness, but the deep, compassionate welcome that reflects Your heart: a welcome marked by acceptance, understanding, and sincere love.

As we continue toward Easter, shape us into a people who:  
seek You with honest hearts,  
pursue others with patient love,  
speak truth with kindness,  
and welcome others as You have welcomed us.

Let this Sabbath steady our souls. Quiet our fears. Deepen our joy. And remind us again that in You we have a home—now and forever.

We surrender this week and the week ahead to Your care.  
Lead us, teach us, and draw us closer to Your heart.

In Your faithful and welcoming name we pray,  
Amen.





# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty

## Read

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...*  
— James 1:17 (NIV)

## Reflect

Steven's story of Bennett's CDH (congenital diaphragmatic hernia) diagnosis and surgery highlights how God often works through ordinary people and practical means: skilled doctors, medical advances, and a supportive church family. What once would have been nearly hopeless is now a story of survival and thriving, because God chose to bless through science, medicine, and community.

It's easy to look for God only in the overtly "miraculous" moments and miss His kindness in answered prayers that come through hospital rooms, long relocations, and text messages from friends. Yet every breath Bennett takes, every step of his growth, is a quiet testimony that God is near in the hardest seasons, welcoming us through fear into deeper trust.

God's welcome isn't just spiritual and far-off; it is tangible—meals brought, prayers whispered, doctors trained, and families held together when they feel like they might fall apart. In all of it, Jesus is present, turning what could have been only sorrow into a story of gratitude and praise.

## Questions

1. Where have you seen God's goodness show up through "ordinary" means like doctors, friends, or church community?
2. How might God be inviting you to be part of His welcome to someone walking through a medical or family crisis right now?

## Pray

Lord, thank You that every good and perfect gift comes from You. Thank You for the gift of life, for medical wisdom, and for the communities that surround us when we are afraid. Help me to recognize Your presence in both the dramatic and the ordinary moments. Use me to be a source of comfort and welcome to others who are facing uncertainty or suffering. Strengthen those in hospitals today, and bless the hands that care for them. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty-One

## Read

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.*

— Matthew 25:35 (NIV)

## Reflect

Suellen remembers the moment God made her calling unmistakably clear. During a 2010 service day, she sensed Jesus inviting her into something bigger than she had ever imagined—a ministry that would welcome others with the same love He had poured into her life.

That moment became Meals by Grace, a ministry born from compassion and a desire to feed families in need. What began with food has grown into holistic care: social services, education, job training, and practical support through Ministries of Grace. Each part reflects Jesus’ welcome—meeting people where they are and lifting them toward hope.

Suellen’s story shows how a simple step of obedience can grow into a ministry that reflects Christ’s heart. What started with providing food has expanded into holistic care, job training, and ongoing support for thousands of children and families. That’s what happens when hospitality moves “on steroids”—when God takes our small yes and multiplies it.

The same Jesus who welcomed us when we were spiritually hungry now invites us to welcome others into His love. We may not start a ministry, but we can offer a meal, a ride, a listening ear, or a helping hand. Every small act of hospitality becomes a way to say to someone, “You are seen. You are loved. Jesus welcomes you here.”

## Questions

1. How has God used a moment of service or compassion to reveal a purpose in your life?
2. What “small yes” can you offer this week to help someone experience the welcoming love of Jesus?

## Pray

Father, thank You for welcoming me when I was spiritually hungry and far from You. Thank You for examples like Meals by Grace that show what Your love can do when we say yes. Open my eyes to see those around me who are in need—physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Give me courage to respond with practical, generous hospitality. Use my small acts of service to reflect the welcome of Jesus and to draw others closer to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



## Welcoming Easter

# Day Twenty-Two

### Read

*And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*  
— Philippians 4:19 (NIV)

### Reflect

Tyler's year has been marked by pressure and provision. When his wife had to leave her job, the security of a dual income vanished. As a husband and father, he felt the weight of responsibility shift suddenly onto his shoulders. Yet in that pressure, God quietly provided; bills were paid, work came in, and daily needs were met.

This wasn't new for Tyler. Earlier in life, when he didn't know where his next meal or bed would come from, God still made a way. Those past experiences of God's care prepared him for this season. Remembered faithfulness fuels present trust.

Then came another scare—a serious heart concern discovered at work. What looked alarming at first simply disappeared by the time further tests and a procedure were done. Tyler sees this as the fruit of prayer—from his church, his family, and his friends.

In finances and in health, Jesus welcomed Tyler by meeting him in his fear and showing that He is still Provider and Healer. As we approach Easter, we remember that the God who did not spare His own Son will not abandon us in our needs. The cross and the empty tomb remind us: we are seen, loved, and cared for.

### Questions

1. When you look back, where do you see God's quiet provision in your finances, health, or daily life?
2. What current burden—financial, physical, or emotional—do you need to entrust to God's care today?

### Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You that You see my needs even before I speak them. Thank You for the ways You have provided for me in the past—through work, shelter, food, healing, and the support of others. As I remember Your death and resurrection this Easter season, help me trust that You will continue to care for me. Strengthen my faith where I feel pressure or fear. Provide in the ways You know are best, and use my story to encourage others who are struggling. I place my needs and my future in Your hands. In Your name I pray, Amen.



## Welcoming Easter

# Day Twenty-Three

### Read

*His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*  
— Lamentations 3:22–23 (NIV)

### Reflect

Mary Jane began her video ready to share her testimony, but as everything seemed to go wrong—noise, lighting, sickness, uncertainty—God gently shifted her focus. Instead of looking back, He invited her to notice what He was doing right now. In the middle of frustration and distraction, she sensed Jesus reminding her that He welcomes her every single day.

This past week, she let school and stress crowd out time with God. She leaned on her own strength, like we all do. Yet what she discovered is deeply comforting: Jesus doesn't stop welcoming us because we've been distracted. He stands with open arms, inviting us to start again—this morning, this hour, this moment.

Our most powerful testimony isn't just what God did years ago; it's what He's doing in us today. Jesus doesn't only meet us in our polished stories; He meets us in our imperfect weeks, our mental breakdowns, our rushed schedules, and our "I meant to pray but didn't" days.

He keeps saying, "Come to me." Not once, but continually. His welcome is new every morning.

### Questions

1. Where have you been trying to get through this week on your own strength instead of coming to Jesus?
2. What would it look like to return to Him with "Monday morning faith" tomorrow?

### Pray

Jesus, thank You that You welcome me not only once, but every day. When I let school, work, or life crowd You out, You still stand with open arms, inviting me back into Your presence. Forgive me for relying on my own strength. Teach me to start my day with You and to walk with You through the chaos, not just after it's over. Help me to hear Your gentle "Come to me" and to respond with trust and honesty. May my everyday life become an ongoing testimony of Your patience, love, and welcome. In Your name I pray, amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty-Four

## Read

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.*  
— Matthew 11:28–29 (NIV)

## Reflect

Randy's story is one of being welcomed by Jesus through people. Long before he made a personal decision to follow Christ at fifteen, he was surrounded by a family who quietly lived out their faith—teaching, serving, cooking meals, caring for the sick, and leading the church. Through them, Christ's open arms became visible and tangible.

Even when Randy drifted and felt distant from God, he found that Jesus had not moved. When Randy turned back, Christ was there—ready to welcome him again. That is the heart of Matthew 11: a Savior who doesn't pile on more burdens, but invites us to come with the ones we already carry.

As we move toward Easter, we remember that the ultimate welcome happened at the cross. Jesus gave His life so we could have hope beyond death and real hope in this life—strength for today, rest for our souls, and a new way to live. He not only promises heaven; He shows us how to love, serve, and influence others for good.

Jesus' invitation stands: if you are weary, come. If you feel far away, return. If you're unsure how to live, learn from Him. His welcome is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing invitation to walk closely with Him.

## Questions

1. Where in your life do you feel “weary and burdened,” and what would it mean to bring that honestly to Jesus?
2. Who has been Christ's welcome to you, and how might God be calling you to be that welcome for someone else?

## Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for welcoming us when we are tired, burdened, and even when we have wandered far from You. Thank You for the people You have used in our lives—family, friends, and church family—to show us Your love in real and practical ways. As we approach Easter, help us to stand again at the foot of the cross with gratitude for Your sacrifice and the hope You give us now and forever. Teach us to learn from You, to love as You love, and to be a gentle, welcoming presence to others. Give rest to our weary hearts today. In Your name we pray, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty-Five

## Read

*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*  
— Romans 5:8 (NIV)

## Reflect

So often we feel pressure to fix ourselves before coming to God—to overcome our fears, habits, or failures first. But the gospel tells a different story. Jesus doesn't wait for us to be polished, cleaned up, and “over” our struggles before he invites us close. He moves toward us in love, offering mercy, healing, and peace right where we stand. His invitation isn't: “Fix yourself, then come.” His invitation is: “Come to me, and I will give you rest.”

The prayer Marquette read longs for freedom—from resentment, conflict, physical and mental suffering, and danger—for ourselves and for all people. That longing is a glimpse of God's own heart. Jesus meets us right in the middle of our burdens and begins his healing work there. We don't deny our brokenness; we bring it to him.

When we truly believe we are welcomed as we are, we can extend that same welcome to others: no filters, no pretense, just open arms pointing to the open arms of Christ.

## Questions

1. Where do you feel tempted to “clean yourself up” before coming honestly to Jesus?
2. How does knowing Jesus welcomes you as you are shape your trust in Him?

## Pray

Jesus, thank you for welcoming me just as I am—unfiltered, unaltered, and still in process. You see my sin, my pain, my fears, and yet you invite me to come and find rest in you. Free me from resentment, conflict, and the burdens I carry in my body and mind. As you bring peace to my heart, help me pray and work for the peace and freedom of others. Use my life to reflect your open-armed welcome. In your name I pray, Amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty-Six

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord God,

As we pause on this Sabbath in our Welcoming Easter journey, we rest again in the truth that You welcome us—not because we are strong, settled, or complete, but because You are gracious and faithful.

Thank You for welcoming us through seasons of uncertainty and pressure. When provision feels fragile and responsibility feels heavy, You remind us that You are our provider. You meet our needs day by day, just as You have before, and You surround us with people who pray, encourage, and walk beside us.

Thank You for welcoming us even when we drift. When busyness, worry, or self-reliance pull us away, You do not turn us aside. You wait with open arms, inviting us back into daily dependence, renewed trust, and steady faith. Your mercies truly are new every morning.

Thank You for the generations of faith that have gone before us and for the quiet faithfulness of those who showed us what it looks like to love You in everyday life. And thank You that whether our roots feel strong or shaky, Your welcome does not change.

Above all, thank You for welcoming us just as we are — unfiltered, imperfect, and in need of grace. You do not ask us to earn Your love or fix ourselves first. You meet us in our brokenness, offer forgiveness, and begin the work of healing and transformation by Your Spirit.

As we continue toward Easter, shape us into a people who trust You when outcomes feel uncertain, return to You quickly when we drift, rest in Your grace instead of our effort, and extend Your welcome freely to others.

Let this Sabbath restore our hearts and steady our faith.  
Remind us again that in You, we are safe, known, and deeply loved.

We place our lives, our families, and our church in Your care.

In Your gracious and welcoming name we pray, amen.





# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty–Seven

## Read

*Come near to God and He will come near to you.*  
— James 4:8 (NIV)

## Reflect

Andrew describes coming into his prayer room with a heavy heart, sometimes without words, and simply laying on the floor before God. He comes empty-handed—like a guest bringing nothing to the feast—yet he finds that Jesus has already prepared a table of comfort, peace, and joy for him.

In that posture, Andrew experiences the hospitality of Jesus. Not a guarded welcome or reluctant mercy, but a generous invitation. In those moments, Andrew encounters comfort that can't be explained, Scripture that rises gently to the surface, and peace that settles anxious thoughts and weary emotions.

This is the heart of Jesus' hospitality: he invites the weary and burdened, not the impressive and put-together. When we come honestly with our sin, worries, and confusion, he doesn't welcome us reluctantly. He delights to receive us, to remind us of his promises, to quiet our anxieties, and to give rest to our souls. In that place of receiving, God doesn't just comfort us; he changes us. As we lay everything at his feet, he forms in us a new boldness to invite others to know the same Jesus who has welcomed us so graciously.

And from those quiet moments on the floor, something grows—strength, boldness, and a desire to invite others into the same grace. When we receive the welcome of Jesus, we are changed. When we are changed, we begin to extend His welcome to the world.

## Questions

1. Where do you most honestly encounter God when your heart feels heavy?
2. How might receiving Jesus' hospitality more deeply move you to extend an invitation for others to know him?

## Pray

Lord, thank You for welcoming us with gentleness and joy. When words fail and burdens feel heavy, teach us to come to You honestly and empty-handed. Meet us with Your peace, remind us of Your promises, and renew our hearts. As You welcome us, shape us into people who extend that same grace to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty-Eight

## Read

*“For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?”*  
— Isaiah 43:19 (NLT)

## Reflect

As Cammie approached the end of high school, she was already grieving what she thought she was losing—her final summer in youth group and a chapter of life she deeply loved. When changes were announced for the summer, she felt uncertain and skeptical, hoping nothing would take away from what she hoped would be “the best summer yet.”

Instead, God used the change to welcome her deeper into community and deeper into Him. Through leading Bible studies, investing in younger students, and sharing honestly with other leaders, she began to build a faith that was truly her own. That growth didn’t stop when summer ended—it followed her into college, calming her anxieties and helping her trust that Jesus has a plan for her.

God often meets us most powerfully in the very seasons we wish would stay the same. Change in school, church, friendships, or life plans can feel threatening. But when we welcome Jesus into those changes—acknowledging Him “in all [our] ways”—He uses them to straighten paths we didn’t even know were crooked. He replaces doubt with dependence, fear with faith, and surface-level community with deep, Christ-centered relationships.

The invitation is the same for you: welcome Jesus into every moment—especially the ones that don’t look like you expected. He is already present. Trust Him to work through the changes.

## Questions

1. Where in your life right now are you feeling anxious or skeptical about change ?
2. How might Jesus be using a season of transition to deepen your trust in Him?

## Pray

Jesus, thank You for welcoming us even when change feels uncomfortable. Forgive me for the times I resist change instead of trusting You in the middle of it. Help me to welcome You into every moment, every decision, and every transition. Teach us to depend on You daily and grow a faith that is rooted in Your love. Lead me closer to You through every change I face. In Your name I pray, amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Twenty-Nine

## Read

*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*  
— Psalm 34:18 (ESV)

## Reflect

In Ukraine, Stas has watched people walk through war, loss, fear, and deep uncertainty. Yet in the middle of sirens, separation, and sorrow, he has also seen something unexpected: hearts opening to God.

When life feels fragile, our illusions of control fall away. In that vulnerable space, the invitation of Jesus becomes clearer: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened” (Matthew 11:28). Stas’s own story began with a teenage desire to know God and to take Scripture seriously. Through that, Jesus welcomed him into new life—not because he earned it, but because of grace.

Now, in a country scarred by conflict, the same Jesus is still welcoming people: the displaced, the grieving, the anxious, the questioning. The message of Easter declares that darkness does not get the final word. The cross shows us that God enters our suffering; the empty tomb shows us that he overcomes it.

Jesus does not turn away the broken or the wounded. He meets them—and us—with forgiveness, presence, and a hope that even war cannot cancel. Wherever you are, whatever you carry, the risen Christ is still saying: “You are welcome. Come.”

## Questions

1. Where in your life do you most feel the “fragility” of things—and how might Jesus be inviting you to come to Him there?
2. How does the hope of resurrection shape the way you pray for a hurting world?

## Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for welcoming us by grace and for offering hope that reaches beyond suffering. We lift up those living amid war, fear, and loss, and we ask that Your presence would bring comfort, strength, and peace. Thank You that the power of the resurrection is still changing lives today. Help us live as people of hope and extend Your welcome wherever we are. In Jesus’ name, amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty

## Read

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault.*  
— James 1:5 (NIV)

## Reflect

Life is full of questions:  
Why does the Bible say this?  
Should I stay close to this friend or create distance?  
Is this habit helping me or hurting me spiritually?

Robert's story is a reminder that followers of Jesus are not expected to carry these questions alone or solve them by sheer willpower. God doesn't shame us for our confusion; He invites us to bring it to Him repeatedly, throughout the day, in honest prayer.

Sometimes God's answers come quickly. Other times, as Robert experienced, they unfold slowly over days as we keep asking, listening, and paying attention. Often God's guidance includes a "no": no to relationships that pull us away from Him, no to patterns that drain our soul. But His "no" is never the end of the story. When He closes a door, it is to open a better one—to new friendships that build us up, to healthier habits, to a deeper sense of His presence.

Leaning on our own understanding leaves us frustrated and stuck. Trusting God with our questions—again and again—positions us to receive His wisdom and to experience His welcome: "I am with you in this. Let Me lead."

## Questions

1. What questions—big or small—have you been trying to answer on your own lately?
2. Where might God be saying "no" or "not this" in your life right now—and what new door might He be opening?

## Pray

Lord Jesus, Thank You that You welcome my questions and do not turn me away when I am confused or unsure. Forgive me for trying to solve everything in my own strength. Today I bring my questions to You—big and small—trusting You see what I cannot. Where You say "no," give me courage to obey. Where You open new doors, help me walk through them. Surround me with people who draw me closer to You, and guide my steps as I learn to live in constant conversation with You. In Your name, Jesus, amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty-One

## Read

*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*  
— Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

## Reflect

Donna's story is a picture of what Galatians 6:2 looks like in real life. A smiling greeter at the door, a widow who keeps giving and encouraging, a Bible teacher who faithfully shares God's Word, a church that fills a hospital waiting room during a long, fearful day—these are not dramatic miracles, but they are powerful expressions of Jesus' heart.

To “carry each other's burdens” doesn't always mean solving someone's problem. Often it simply means showing up: a handshake and a smile, a kind question, a card in the mail, a thoughtful gift, a room full of people who choose to sit with you in your pain. Sometimes helping others is, as Donna said, “simply sharing the weight.”

This is how Christ's love becomes visible. When we patiently listen, when we make time for others, when we use our gifts and vocations to strengthen someone's faith, we are quietly preaching the gospel with our lives.

Donna's testimony invites us to notice the ways Christ has welcomed us through others—and to become those kinds of people ourselves. When we show up with patience, kindness, and compassion, we help make Jesus' welcome visible to the world.

## Questions

1. Who has “carried your burdens” in a season of need, and how did God's love become more real to you through them?
2. Whose burden can you help carry this week—through a visit, a text, a card, a prayer, or simply being present?

## Pray

Father, thank You for the people You place in our lives who show us Jesus through their kindness, presence, and love. Help me to be someone who shows up—who listens, encourages, and shares the weight others are carrying. Give me eyes to see needs around me, a heart that is patient and compassionate, and words that bring healing and comfort. Teach me to reflect Christ by bearing burdens with others, just as He has borne mine. In Jesus' name, amen.



## Welcoming Easter Day Thirty-Two

### Read

*All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*  
— John 6:37 (NIV)

### Reflect

Jim remembers the exact day and even the exact minute he was baptized in 1973, because that moment marked more than a ritual—it marked being welcomed into a relationship. As he went under the water, he imagined Jesus meeting him with open arms, saying, “I want you as my child. Come into my family.”

That picture echoes Jesus’ own words: “Come to me.” He doesn’t negotiate the invitation; He simply invites the weary and burdened to come. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus is pictured standing at the door, knocking, promising to come in and share a meal—a symbol of friendship, acceptance, and hospitality—with anyone who will open the door.

Jim’s story is a reminder that Jesus’ hospitality is not polite distance; it is wholehearted welcome. Jesus knows where we’ve been, what we’ve done, and what we’re ashamed of—and He still opens His arms. He washes, forgives, and brings us into His body, the church, where we can both encourage others and be encouraged.

To be “in Christ” is to live daily in that welcome: forgiven, cleansed, and invited to grow in mercy and grace. And the hospitality of Jesus doesn’t end at the moment we first believe. That welcome doesn’t fade with time. It becomes the rhythm of a life lived in Christ.

### Questions

1. When you imagine Jesus’ posture toward you right now, do you see open arms or something else? Why?
2. Where in your life do you need to respond to Jesus’ invitation to “come to me” with your weariness and burdens?

### Pray

Lord Jesus, Thank You for inviting me to come to You just as I am. Thank You for standing at the door of my life and knocking, for welcoming me into Your family, washing me clean, and giving me the hope of eternal life with You. Help me to believe that Your arms are truly open to me today—past forgiven, burdens known, and heart fully loved. Teach me to rest in Your hospitality and to extend that same gracious welcome to others. Use my life and my gifts to serve You and Your people until the day I stand before Your throne. In Your name I pray, amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty–Three

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus,

As we pause on this Sabbath in our Welcoming Easter journey, we rest in the truth that You are a Savior who invites us close—patiently, personally, and with open hands.

Thank You for welcoming our questions and our searching hearts. When we do not understand Your Word, our relationships, or the paths before us, You invite us to ask, to seek, and to knock. Teach us to trust that You are not threatened by our uncertainty, and that wisdom grows as we bring our questions to You again and again.

Thank You for welcoming us into Your family. Long ago or just recently, You met us with grace, called us Your children, washed us clean, and gave us new life. You did not hold our past against us. You forgave, received, and claimed us as Your own.

Thank You that Your welcome does not fade with time. You continue to knock at the doors of our hearts, inviting us into deeper trust, deeper rest, and deeper faithfulness. You meet us not only at the beginning of belief, but in every season that follows — shaping us, teaching us, and walking with us day by day.

As we move closer to Easter, help us live as people who have been welcomed at great cost. Shape us into a community that shares wisdom generously, carries burdens faithfully, and reflects Your hospitality to the world.

Let this Sabbath renew our trust in You.

Quiet our striving.

Open our hearts.

And teach us to walk together in the joy of belonging to You.

In Your gracious and welcoming name we pray,

Amen.





# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty-Four

## Read

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.*  
— 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)

## Reflect

Paul describes one of the most powerful ways Jesus has welcomed him: by inviting him into His mission. Jesus doesn't just forgive us and leave us on the sidelines; He calls us onto the field. He welcomes us as co-workers in what He is doing in the world.

In Luke 10:2, Jesus says the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. That means there are people all around us ready to experience God's love, but not enough people willing to go. Instead of leaving this to a select few, Jesus welcomes every follower into that work.

Paul also reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5 that we are "Christ's ambassadors." An ambassador carries the authority and message of their king. In the same way, God chooses to make His appeal through ordinary people—through our words, our kindness, our presence, our everyday lives. Wherever we go—our homes, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods—we represent Jesus' kingdom.

Being welcomed into Jesus' mission is both a responsibility and an honor. The God of the universe entrusts His message of reconciliation to us. He invites us to live in such a way that people get a glimpse of what Jesus would be like if He were living our exact life, in our exact situation.

## Questions

1. How have you experienced Jesus inviting you to live with greater purpose or intention?
2. Where might God be asking you to represent Christ through your words, actions, or relationships right now?

## Pray

Father, thank You for welcoming us into Your family and trusting us with Your mission. Thank You for calling us to represent Christ in the world and to reflect Your love through the way we live and serve. Help us follow You with faithfulness and humility, knowing that You work through us to reach others. May our lives point people toward You and make Your welcome visible wherever we go. In Jesus' name, amen.



## Welcoming Easter Day Thirty–Five

### Read

*I no longer call you servants... Instead, I have called you friends.*  
— John 15:15 (NIV)

### Reflect

Being raised in a Christian home gave Carisse a foundation filled with love, Scripture, and faith. But as she shares, even a strong foundation cannot replace a personal calling. Faith, at some point, must become our own.

She remembers moments from childhood when Jesus first felt near—quiet times of prayer, laughter, and tears, simply “hanging out” with God. But it was years later, in an ordinary moment, that something shifted. A simple poem about Jesus as a friend awakened a deeper truth in her heart: Jesus was not just someone to learn about—He was someone inviting her into friendship.

That invitation changed everything. Responding to Jesus’ call led her into a personal faith journey, not inherited or borrowed, but chosen. She discovered a new family gathered around the same table—people from every background, welcomed not because of their past, but because of grace.

Her story reminds us that Jesus’ welcome is deeply personal. He calls each of us by name, inviting us into relationship, into friendship, and into a faith that grows through connection rather than obligation. When we respond to that tug on our hearts, we find ourselves welcomed into a life shared with Him and with His people.

### Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a moment when your faith felt like it shifted from “inherited” to truly personal? What happened?
2. Where might God be asking you to represent Christ through your words, actions, or relationships right now?

### Pray

Jesus, thank You for calling us not only to follow You, but to know You as a friend. Thank You for welcoming us into relationship, meeting us personally, and inviting us to grow in faith with You. Help us recognize Your call and respond with open hearts. Draw us closer, guide us gently, and teach us to live connected to You and to one another. In Your name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty–Six

## Read

*“Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty.*  
— Malachi 3:7 (NIV)

## Reflect

As Gavin reached the end of high school, he found himself in a season of transition—unsure of what came next and uncertain about where he belonged. College, work, the future, and even church all felt unclear. In that unsettled space, he sensed a quiet nudge from God, leading him back to Grace Chapel.

Gavin admits that part of what held him back was the belief that he wasn’t “good enough” to return to God or to church. Those doubts made distance feel safer. But when he walked through the doors, he discovered something different: Jesus was not waiting with judgment, but with welcome. Through smiling faces, gracious conversations, and genuine care, Christ met him where he was.

God’s welcome did not ignore Gavin’s doubts or struggles—it overcame them. Through community, hospitality, and grace, Jesus reminded him that worthiness is not earned. It is given. Not because of our strength, but because of the cross.

Gavin’s story reflects a promise God has always kept: when we turn back toward Him, He faithfully comes near. No matter how distant we feel or how inadequate we believe ourselves to be, Jesus welcomes us home and invites us to grow again in faith, hope, and belonging.

## Questions

1. When have you felt “not good enough” to come to God, and how might Jesus be inviting you to “come” anyway?
2. How could you be part of Jesus’ welcome to someone who walks into your church or your life this Easter season?

## Pray

Heavenly Father, thank You for meeting us with grace when we feel distant or unworthy. Thank You for welcoming us not because of what we’ve done, but because of what Jesus has done for us. Help us recognize Your invitation to return and trust Your mercy more than the lies that hold us back. Use us to reflect that same welcome to others, so that all who walk through our doors might see the love of Christ. In Jesus’ name, amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty–Seven

## Read

*See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.*  
— Revelation 3:8 (NIV)

## Reflect

Change often feels like loss before it feels like blessing. Moving churches, switching schools, starting college—each can make us feel unsteady and reluctant to leave what’s familiar. Yet, like Kinley’s story shows, our uncertainty doesn’t cancel God’s faithfulness.

She didn’t want to leave her church and youth group, but God was already ahead of her—opening doors at Grace Chapel, preparing friendships that would shape her faith. Later, at the honor symposium, God did it again: new people, new community, even a future college roommate. His welcome wasn’t a one-time moment; it was an ongoing pattern.

God often welcomes us through people and places He prepares in advance. When He leads us into something new, He also provides what we need there. You may be standing on the edge of your own transition—a move, a new school, a change you didn’t ask for. You might not see the plan, but God does. The same God who welcomed you before will welcome you again.

## Questions

1. Where in your life right now are you facing change or uncertainty, and how might God be opening doors you can’t yet see?
2. Who has God used in past seasons to help you feel welcomed and held—and how might He be calling you to be that welcome for someone else?

## Pray

Lord God, Thank You for being the God who goes before me into every new season. When change feels overwhelming and I can’t see the plan, teach me to trust Your heart and Your timing. Thank You for the people and places where I have already experienced Your welcome. Open my eyes to the doors You are preparing now, and give me courage to walk through them with confidence in You. Use me to extend Your welcome to others who feel afraid, alone, or uncertain. I trust that You will provide, You will guide, and You will never stop inviting me closer to You. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty–Eight

## Read

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

— 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 (NIV)

## Reflect

Mark’s story is a tapestry of God “being there”: In the quiet, aching moments of hospice with his father. In the panic of a nearly empty bank account. In the regret of moments that needed forgiveness. In seasons of relational, professional, and spiritual crisis.

Through every kind of hardship, he describes a consistent theme: God’s presence shows up as a warm embrace—and often through other people. Mentors with the right words at the right time, friends who provide financial help, companions in grief and illness. It’s not coincidence; it’s hospitality from a God who sees our need before we feel it.

Paul says God doesn’t comfort us just to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters. The hospitality we receive from God is meant to flow through us to others: a listening ear, a kind question, a timely text, eye contact that says, “I see you,” a conversation that lets someone share what’s really on their heart.

You don’t have to have all the answers. You don’t have to fix anyone’s life. You simply need to be available—to “be there” the way God has been there for you. Your past experiences, even the painful ones, can become a gift God uses in someone else’s present struggle.

## Questions

1. When was a time you felt God “being there” for you—through His Spirit or through another person?
2. Who might God be calling you to “be there” for this week, and what simple step of hospitality could you take?

## Pray

Father of mercy and God of all comfort, thank You for drawing near in my hardest moments and surrounding me with Your presence and Your people. Help me remember how You have been there for me, and show me who You’re calling me to be there for now. Give me courage to listen well, speak kindly, and share my story in a way that points to You. In Jesus’ name, amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Thirty–Nine

## Read

*While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples.*  
— Matthew 26:26 (NIV)

## Reflect

When Marjorie thinks about hospitality, her mind goes to the table. She has spent much of her life welcoming others into her home—family, friends, friends of friends, and even those who felt unseen or alone. Her goal was always the same: to help people know they were loved, valued, and invited to belong.

As she reflected more deeply, her thoughts turned to Jesus at the Last Supper. There, He welcomed His disciples to the table, knowing their doubts, their failures, and even their coming betrayal. They were far from perfect guests. Yet Jesus did not turn them away. Instead, He welcomed them with reassurance, forgiveness, and unchanging love.

At the end of the meal, Jesus gave His guests a gift—not to remember Him by sentiment, but by sacrifice. The bread and the cup were signs of the greatest gift ever given: His own body and blood. At that table, Jesus was not simply hosting a meal; He was offering Himself.

Marjorie’s story reminds us that Jesus’ hospitality goes far beyond politeness or tradition. He welcomes us as we are, invites us to remember Him, and promises that even death will not separate us from His love. As we move through this Easter season, we are invited again to His table—remembering His life, His death, and rejoicing in His resurrection.

## Questions

1. How does knowing Jesus welcomed imperfect disciples at His table shape how you see His invitation to you?
2. Who might God be calling you to welcome—not just into your home, but into love and belonging?

## Pray

Heavenly Father, thank You for welcoming us to Your table with grace and mercy. Thank You for the gift of Your Son, who gave Himself so we could be forgiven, restored, and made new. As we remember His sacrifice and celebrate His resurrection, teach us to reflect that same hospitality to others. Help us welcome with open hearts, generous love, and the assurance that all are seen and valued in You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Forty

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus, As we enter the days ahead, teach us to walk slowly, attentively, and faithfully toward the cross and the promise beyond it.

Thank You for welcoming us when we felt uncertain, unworthy, or far away. Thank You for seeking us, calling us home, and meeting us with grace instead of judgment. Again and again, You have shown that Your welcome is not earned by our strength, but given freely through Your love.

Thank You for being present with us in every season—in grief and waiting rooms, in moments of fear and transition, in ordinary days and holy gatherings. Thank You for the people You place alongside us, who carry burdens with us, sit at the table with us, and reflect Your care in tangible ways.

Thank You for inviting us not only into relationship, but into Your work. You prepare us, equip us, and trust us to represent Your kingdom in the world. Give us eyes to see the doors You open and courage to walk through them with humility and faith.

As Easter draws near, shape our hearts around Your table and Your cross. Help us remember the gift of Your body and blood, the promise of forgiveness, and the hope of resurrection. Teach us to welcome others as You have welcomed us—with patience, compassion, and open hearts.

Let this Sabbath quiet our striving, renew our trust, and prepare us for the joy that is coming. May we walk forward together as people who belong to You and who live as signs of Your grace.

In Your gracious and welcoming name we pray,

Amen.





# Welcoming Easter Day Forty-One

## Read

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*  
— Mark 10:45 (NIV)

## Reflect

One of the clearest ways Jesus has welcomed Shepherd is by inviting him into a life of *servant leadership*. Rather than pushing him toward recognition or status, Jesus has drawn him closer through opportunities to serve others with humility and faith.

Through FCA at school, Shepherd has experienced what it looks like to lead by example—creating space for worship, Scripture, and encouragement among students and teachers. Being part of the leadership team has helped him grow, not by elevating himself, but by learning how to represent Christ well to others.

That same calling has continued through the youth group at Grace Chapel. Leading small groups, mentoring younger students, and walking alongside friends have shown Shepherd that leadership in God's kingdom is never about control or position. It is about caring for others, listening well, and pointing people back to Jesus.

Jesus Himself set the example. He welcomed His disciples—imperfect and still learning—and taught them that greatness is found in service. Shepherd's story reminds us that when Jesus welcomes us, He also shapes us, calling us to lead the way He did: with love, sacrifice, and a heart for others.

## Questions

1. Where might Jesus be inviting you to lead through service rather than recognition?
2. Who around you could benefit from your encouragement, mentoring, or quiet leadership?

## Pray

Jesus, thank You for welcoming us and showing us what true leadership looks like. Thank You for leading with humility, service, and love. Help us follow Your example by serving others faithfully and pointing them toward You. Shape our hearts to lead not for ourselves, but for Your glory. Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Forty-Two

## Read

*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*  
— Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

## Reflect

When Lisa was asked to lead a study on the Book of Revelation, her first response was hesitation. I'm not qualified. I don't want to do this. Yet instead of closing the door, Jesus kept gently knocking—through prayer, through Scripture, and through the people around her.

What followed was a beautiful cascade of “coincidences.” A sermon series already underway. Friends with shared experiences and helpful resources. A study guide that appeared exactly when she asked God for confirmation. Each step revealed something important: Jesus does not merely call us into His work—He prepares us for it.

Lisa's story reminds us that obedience often begins with uncertainty, but God's faithfulness meets us there. The same Jesus who welcomes us into relationship welcomes us into purpose. Through His Word, His Spirit, and His people, He equips us for the good works He has already planned.

Ephesians tells us that we are God's workmanship—His handiwork. That means our gifts, experiences, friendships, and even our reluctance can all be shaped for His glory. When we listen closely and respond with trust, we often discover that the door we feared walking through was one God had already prepared for us to enter.

## Questions

1. Where have you felt hesitant or unqualified to step into something God might be inviting you to do?
2. How might God be preparing you—even now—for work He has already planned?

## Pray

Holy God, thank You for going before us and preparing the way. Help us listen more closely to Your invitations and trust that You equip those You call. Open our hearts to see how You use Your Word, Your Spirit, and one another to guide us into Your good work. Give us courage to step through the doors You open and gratitude for the ways You prepare us along the journey. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Forty-Three

## Read

*So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*  
— Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

## Reflect

For a long time, Chris believed following Jesus meant striving harder—working tirelessly to be better, stronger, more faithful. His Christian life felt like effort, discipline, and determination carried mostly on his own shoulders. And beneath it all was a quiet exhaustion.

During a retreat, Jesus met him with a gentle but powerful invitation: stop striving. Chris realized that transformation was never meant to come through sheer willpower. Jesus had already done the work. The invitation was not to try harder, but to rest, trust, and allow the Holy Spirit to transform his heart from the inside out.

Chris's story reminds us that Jesus welcomes us not because we've mastered holiness, but because He has already paid the cost. Growth into Christlikeness doesn't come from pressure, but from surrender — allowing God to reshape our desires, heal our wounds, and redirect our hearts.

In this season leading to Easter, Chris invites us to lay down the burden of self-effort and receive the grace that Jesus offers freely. The One who gave His life for us does not ask us to prove ourselves. He asks us to come, rest, and be changed by His love.

## Questions

1. Where have you been trying to grow or change through your own strength instead of surrendering to God?
2. What might it look like this week to stop striving and invite the Holy Spirit to shape your heart?

## Pray

Jesus, thank You for welcoming us with grace and not with demands. Forgive us for trying to transform ourselves through effort alone. Help us surrender our striving and rest in what You have already done. Teach us to trust the work of Your Spirit in our hearts — to heal, restore, and reshape us according to Your love. As we move through this Easter season, draw us closer to You and form us more into Your likeness. Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Forty-Four

## Read

*My Father's house has many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you.*  
— John 14:2 (NIV)

## Reflect

Claire's transition to college came with excitement—but also loneliness. Moving hours away from home meant starting fresh without familiar faces, routines, or support. In that vulnerable season, Jesus welcomed her through people. Professors opened their homes. Friends extended hospitality. Ordinary acts of kindness created places where she could rest, belong, and feel known.

What Claire discovered is something many of us experience during life's transitions: the welcome of Jesus often comes through community. New spaces can become “home” not because they are permanent, but because God places people there who reflect His care and love.

Claire is quick to say it wasn't something she built on her own. God went ahead of her—creating connections, providing friendships, and forming safe places during a season of change. Those moments of belonging became reminders that while life often moves us from place to place, God never leaves us without welcome.

Her story points us toward an even greater promise. Every temporary home we find on earth is a glimpse of the eternal home Jesus is preparing for us. Until then, He continues welcoming us—through open doors, open tables, and open hearts—reminding us that we are never truly alone.

## Questions

1. When have you experienced Jesus' welcome through people during a season of transition?
2. How might you help create a “home away from home” for someone who feels new or alone?

## Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for preparing places of belonging for us in every season of life. Thank You for the people You place around us who reflect Your welcome and help us feel at home. As we walk through transitions, remind us that You go before us and provide what we need. Help us become people who open our lives and our hearts to others, pointing them toward the true home we have in You. In Your name, Amen.



# Welcoming Easter Day Forty-Five

## Read

*I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother... and in your mother...*  
— 2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV)

## Reflect

Some stories of faith unfold quietly and steadily, shaped by love passed down through generations. For John, Jesus' welcome was made tangible through parents who modeled mercy, grace, and devotion, creating a foundation that would influence a lifetime. Long before many choices were consciously made, faith was already being gently formed by those who lived it daily and shared it faithfully.

As the years passed, Jesus continued to show His welcome through other people—most memorably through the family John married into. Their faith, devotion, and love modeled what it looked like to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Even through seasons of deep loss and heartbreak, God's presence never disappeared. Instead, those moments pressed John to seek Jesus more fully and make Him a central priority.

What stands out most in John's testimony is the faithfulness of God over time. Through parents and in-laws, through church and community, through tragedy and joy, Jesus kept welcoming, guiding, and shaping his life. That same welcome has now extended to children and grandchildren—new lives being drawn into the same story of grace.

John's story reminds us that Easter is not just a single moment—it's a living story of resurrection, passed from one heart to another. The welcoming love of Jesus transforms families, spans generations, and calls each of us to share that grace with someone who does not yet know it.

## Questions

1. Who has God used to welcome you into faith or deepen your walk with Jesus?
2. How might God be inviting you to share His welcome with the next generation—or with someone new?

## Pray

Father God, thank You for Your faithfulness across generations. Thank You for the people You place in our lives to introduce us to Jesus and walk with us through every season. Help us trust You with the stories still being written in our families and communities. Give us courage to share Your welcoming love with others, pointing them to the hope we have because of the cross and resurrection. In Jesus' name, Amen.



## Welcoming Easter Day Forty-Six

### Read

*Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine to go after the lost sheep until he finds it?*

— Luke 15:4 (NIV)

### Reflect

Andres reflects on the many ways Jesus has welcomed him at different stages of life. As a teenager, that welcome looked like steady patience. Week after week, a preacher showed up to his home—met with resistance, impatience, and indifference—but never gave up. Through consistent presence and faithful love, Jesus kept extending His invitation until Andres and his mother were ready to respond.

Later, that welcome appeared again in a new country and a new church. Sitting on the back row, unsure and alone, Andres experienced Jesus' care through people who noticed him, invited him into their lives, and helped him grow in love for Scripture. What could have been an isolating season became one of belonging and spiritual formation.

Still later, at Grace Chapel, Jesus' welcome came through challenge and growth. Learning new ways of ministry and deeper relationship didn't always feel comfortable—but each step was guided by people God placed along the way. Through encouragement, instruction, and grace, Jesus continued drawing Andres closer.

His story reminds us that Jesus never stops seeking. Even when we look away, grow distracted, or resist change, He continues pursuing us with patience and love. The welcome of Jesus is not a single moment—it's an ongoing invitation to turn toward Him again and again, trusting that He is always ready to receive us.

### Questions

1. How have you seen Jesus pursuing you through people or circumstances across different seasons of your life?
2. Where might Jesus be inviting you to turn toward Him again today?

### Pray

Father, thank You for never giving up on us. Thank You for the people You place in our lives who lead us closer to You again and again. Help us recognize Your pursuit, trust Your patience, and respond to Your welcome with open hearts. Shape us into people who reflect that same faithfulness and grace to others. Guide us by Your Spirit as we seek to follow You more fully every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Welcoming Easter Day Forty–Seven

## Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Today we rejoice.

The stone is rolled away.  
The tomb is empty.  
Death has been defeated, and love has triumphed.

We praise You, risen Savior, for welcoming us through Your victory. The cross was not the end of the story — it was the doorway to new life. Because You live, hope lives. Because You rose, we are forgiven, restored, and welcomed into the family of God.

Thank You for walking the long road to the cross, for bearing our sin, our shame, and our brokenness. Thank You for rising in power and glory, proving once and for all that nothing — not sin, not fear, not even death — can separate us from Your love.

Today we celebrate that we are welcomed not into despair, but into hope. Not into fear, but into freedom. Not into silence, but into joy. You have called us by name, claimed us as Your own, and invited us to live as resurrection people.

As we leave this season of reflection and step fully into Easter joy, send us out as witnesses of what You have done. Teach us to live with courage, generosity, and love. Help us welcome others as You have welcomed us — with open arms, patient grace, and resurrection hope.

We praise You, Jesus — our Savior, our King, our risen Lord.  
You were crucified.  
You were buried.  
You are risen.

And because You live, we live also.

In the victorious name of Jesus Christ we pray,  
Amen.









