

**Homelessness and Resurrection**  
**Ideas for sermons, discussion**  
**or personal reflection**  
**Easteride 2024**



**Our theme this year is how people who are homeless experience resurrection and new life.**

Everyday people who are homeless apply to us for a grant to help them rebuild their lives. Everyone who comes to us has their own unique story; all have faced difficulties, and many have faced barriers when trying to access help.

For some, life has been a struggle from their earliest memories, having grown up in poverty or in care. Others lived happy lives until they lost their job, became ill, or a loved-one died or a relationship fell apart.

All of those who apply for our grants believe that things can be better; that they can find somewhere to settle and belong, where they can be safe, and have the support system they need.

This is the message of Easter - however bleak and difficult life may be, there is always hope and the possibility of new beginnings - for resurrection.

## **Ideas for sermons, discussion or personal reflection**

### **Second Sunday of Easter**

#### **John 20.19 – end: Jesus appears to the disciples in a locked room**

- The world of Jesus' disciples has fallen apart. Jesus their lord and their leader has been condemned to death and crucified.
- Now his followers gather together in fear, loneliness and isolation. They are locked in the room afraid and invisible to the outside world.
- There are many reasons why a person's world may fall apart, and sometimes this leads them to lose everything, including their home.
- They may be bereaved and cannot cope. They may lose their job and cannot afford to live. They may suffer from physical or mental illness. They may be thrown out by their family. They may become dependent on drink or drugs.

However it happens, many of these reasons we can recognise as things that have happened to us too – but with perhaps not the same consequences.

- Just like the disciples those who are homeless find their world has fallen apart and they live in fear, loneliness and isolation. They may not be in a locked house but living in a hostel or sleeping on someone's sofa is just as invisible to the wider world.
- Walls and locked doors are no barrier to Jesus as he seeks out his friends to re-assure them. He shows them his hands and his side: what has happened to him is real and horrible enough, but these marks are also the signs of the depth of God's love and symbols of new hope and new beginnings.
- Offering a helping hand to those who are homeless and trying to start again is also a sign of new hope and new beginnings. This is resurrection lived out in lives that are broken and hopeless. The help that we give should not be put off by the barriers of invisibility that society sets around the homeless and those on the edge.
- The grants that the Church Homeless Charity may seem small, but they can be a vital helping hand to settle into a flat, reconnect with the world, re-ignite a forgotten skill, find and hold down a job, or reconnect with family and friends.
- You can find out more about more about these small acts of resurrection hope in examples of people we have helped below. And you too can become part of this Easter joy.

## **Third Sunday of Easter**

### **Luke 24.13-49 (This is an extended passage from the one set in the lectionary)**

- In this passage from Luke there are two moments when the risen Christ is revealed in the act of sharing food together. These are two moments of hospitality.
- The disciples, on their way to Emmaus, urge the person who travels with them to stay over and share a meal. In the very act of breaking bread, they recognise Jesus.
- When Jesus appears to all the disciples, just as the disciples were telling their story, he asks them if they have any food. He eats the offered fish to show he is indeed alive and no ghost. Again, this is a moment of hospitality and echoes so many meals and acts of hospitality that Jesus shared with his disciples, among them the Last Supper.
- Hospitality and sharing food play a significant part in all our lives. There are moments of celebration, simple acts of sharing, moments of remembrance and welcome and through them we build and hold fast our friendships and family

relationships. More than that, in sharing food and hospitality those who are strangers to us can become close.

- In sharing food again, Jesus and his disciples begin a new stage in their relationship. This is a resurrection moment and things will be different from now on.
- Because hospitality is so important to us, imagine what it would be like if you were unable to do that. If you have no home or the home that you sofa surf in is not your own, where can you invite people? Where can you prepare food to share? How can you welcome others if there is nowhere you feel welcome?
- Keeping friendships and family relationships alive is hard when you have nowhere to call your own. Being able to share food with others in a place of safety is a sign of hope for a new life and new relationships. Sharing food is an Easter moment.
- Church Homeless Charity makes grants to those who are hoping to start a new life in a new home. But without kitchen equipment how can they make food and share it. A house or a flat is not really a home without this possibility. The grants that we give can help fit out a kitchen, provide the means of cooking and means of sharing and the hope and possibility of new relationships and new life.
- You can find out more about more about these small acts of resurrection hope in the examples of people we have helped below. And you too can become part of this Easter joy.

## Homelessness and Resurrection

Examples of people we have helped  
Eastertide 2024



**Church Homeless Charity is now one of very few organisations that give personalised grants to people who are homeless for items such as clothing, rent deposits, training, furniture, or whatever they need to rebuild their lives.**

The following are anonymised extracts from some of the grant applications we received in January 2024

### **Mother and two children in a refuge:**

*“I fled my home with my children due to the abuse we were subject to by my husband. I had no choice than to leave our home for the safety of us all.*

*“The grant will be used for purchasing curtains and blinds for our new home as we have very little money and the windows are bare. I am grateful for support starting to rebuild my new life and the lives of my children.”*

**We gave them £175 for four pairs of curtains and one blind.**

### **Male living in a hostel:**

*“My mental health declined due to the death of my mother, and I started to take class A drugs and this led to me being homeless and rough sleeping.*

*“I help a friend at his allotment to calm my mental health which is up/down and need a bus pass to get there. I try to lead a normal life, but my financial hardship gets me down. I do try to better myself and I find going to the allotment helps me. Being given the opportunity to support myself and lift my spirits to get me back on my feet is appreciated. I will find a better way of living.”*

**We gave him £50 for gas, £40 for electricity, £40 for travel and £40 for food.**

### **Older male living in a hostel:**

*“I’ve recently been attacked by someone and have had concussion and also an operation on shoulder with more to come. Having regular hospital appointments a distance away from where I live has added pressure of the travel costs and this is going to happen for at least next few months.*

*“I also need to sort my guitar out as this is like therapy to me. I love my music and also the hospital has said it will help recovery due to nerve damage in my hand it would be a good form of exercise.”*

**We gave him £100 for guitar and £70 for travel costs**

### **An army veteran living in specialist supported accommodation:**

*"I have just unexpectedly lost my mum and am worried about the cost of a shirt for her funeral due to having little funds. I currently have £26 left from my benefits.*

*"I have priced up a suit/shirt/shoes in Primark. Any help would be greatly appreciated."*

**We gave him £96 for a suit, shirt and shoes**

### **Older male in supported housing:**

*"I used to work full time and go on 2 holidays a year but since my illnesses and being unable to work this has stopped and has had a massive effect on my mental health as I am not used to this way of life.*

*"I struggle to eat well as don't have the household essentials to cook with as my previous landlord threw away all my belongings when I was in hospital long-term, which is how I became homeless."*

**We gave him £75 for kitchen utensils**

### **Female in a young person's hostel:**

*"Mum died when I was 6yrs old which left me living with Dad. He was very controlling, and at 16 – 17yrs old he would not allow me to visit the GP or dentist. He would control who and when I could see people. So I had to leave home and sofa surf before coming to the temporary Hostel.*

*"I'm starting a part time job in hospitality, but I don't have clothes to wear. New clothes will help my self-esteem and confidence and help me to take on more challenges and communicate my personality, style, and individuality."*

**We gave her £150 clothes and £25 for toiletries**

### **Female in temporary accommodation:**

*"I have got in debt and loan sharks are now taking all my benefits. If this application is able to be awarded, it would give me enough space to be able to clear the loan sharks without having to go without the basics.*

*"I also need passport photos to help apply for a disability bus pass to enable me to travel to my volunteering, as I can't even afford a bus ticket at present."*

**We gave her £150 for food shopping and £5 for passport photos**

### **Young male in church night shelter:**

*"I was living with my sister but after an argument she wanted me to leave. I was then living in a tent on the streets. I was seen by street outreach team and referred to a winter night shelter where I have been staying since November last year.*

*"I have now found a room in a shared house but it is empty and I need to purchase a mattress, some curtains and a chest of drawers for my room. I hope that I will*

*settle into my new accommodation and can then look for employment and start rebuilding my life.”*

**We gave him £100 for a mattress, £50 for drawers and £25 for curtains**

**Older male staying in a hostel:**

*“I was sleeping rough for more than twenty years after being bereaved of my wife and daughter. I didn’t want to come into a hostel, but I got very ill due to sleeping rough for so long.*

*“I do 3-8 drawings a day, which helps my mental health. I have sketch paper and pens currently, but I would like to do some acrylic painting to get me through my time in the hostel.”*

**We gave hm £160 for art materials**

**I will add one of our migrant destitution case studies here**

We are experiencing very high demand for our grants at the moment.  
Please give a donation if you are able.

**Church Homeless Charity  
gives personal grants to  
people who are homeless,  
to help them to rebuild their lives.**

