

N. T. Wright “Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about.”

Loving, Powerful, Eternal God of resurrection and life, thank you for this day, and for the celebration that Jesus Christ has indeed risen! Thank you for the hope and assurance the resurrection gives us. Because the resurrection proves what we so badly want to believe – that love can overcome hate, that light can break through the darkness, that what is good and right can triumph over what is evil and unjust. Because, Lord, our country, our world is in desperate need of goodness, rightness, understanding and peace. We need to know your resurrection power that changes people and situations, that power that enables us to be people of love, of truth, of hope, of community with one another, regardless of our color, our ethnicity, our political persuasion, our economic status, our sexuality, our religion, our place in this world. Yes, Lord, we pray that you will begin even now to colonize earth with the life of heaven. And may it begin with us, gathered here today, to celebrate the One who came to show us heaven on earth – Jesus Christ. The One who loved the unlovable, forgave the unforgiveable, touched the untouchable, and challenged us to, “Go and do the same.” And so give us strength, wisdom, courage, and a heart that looks beyond ourselves, to see the world, not just as it is, but as it can be, when we let you work through us to offer help, love, hope and acceptance to all those around us. May this Easter season give us new life, new enthusiasm, a new commitment to be better people, better disciples, better representatives of the kingdom of God here on earth, as it is in heaven.

And Lord, we pray this day for individuals who also need the power of resurrection in their lives. Those who need healing or comfort, who are lonely or fearful. Those who cannot be with family, those whose family members are serving our country, those who have lost a family member or friend, and there is an empty place not only at the dinner table, but in hurting hearts. The needs are many, and you have heard those on our prayer list, but there are others. So hear us now as people in this congregation lift aloud the names for whom we ask your blessing.

And now, O Lord, with the joy and confidence of those who follow a risen Savior, those who strive to live lives worthy of bearing his name, let us stand and sing together the prayer he taught us...