

reflections
songs &
instrumentals
for
the seasons

David & Dale MacGregor



Ashes

an Ash Wednesday reflection

David MacGregor © 2023

*Create a clean heart for me, God;
 put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!
 Please don't throw me out of your presence;
 please don't take your holy spirit away from me.
 Return the joy of your salvation to me
 and sustain me with a willing spirit.*

David's cry of humiliation of long ago
 Become our words
 Words for this and every Lenten season
 Words of reality
 Our reality
 My reality

God have I loved
 as I could have loved?
 God have I lived
 as I could have lived?
 God have I supported
 As I could have supported ?
 Enriched as I could have enriched?
 God have I followed you
 as I could have followed?
 God have I walked your way
 As I could have walked?

The answer stares me
 In the face, O God
 Strikes me
 At the heart, O God

God like all around me
 I have strayed ... sinned
 I have fallen short
 of who you out of your great love
 have made me to be
 Way short
 Way Short of your glory
 Even short of any glory
 I might myself seek

So short I feel more
 like ashes
 ... dust and ashes
 smouldering nothingness
 embers



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A shadow
 A burnt-out shadow
 of who you made be to be

*Remember you are dust
 And to dust you shall return*

So, God have mercy on me
 ... a sinner
 God will you clean out my heart
 Renew it
 Replace it
 Reshape it
 Re – *everything* it?
 God I seek your Grace
 Your life through my veins
 Through ever sinew and bone
 God I seek your forgiveness
 Your restoration
 God, God I ... seek ... you!

God without you
 Creator God
 I'm no more
 than dust and ashes
 Yet from these ashes
 I find myself praying ...

God you formed me from nothingness
 Restore me to somethingness
 Not simply to anythingness
 But with a clean heart
 May I be created afresh in
 Your likeness O God
 Your holiness O God;
 A *right* Spirit within me

A spirit of holiness
 A spirit living, breathing,
 revealing your holiness
 A spirit of hopefulness
 A spirit embodying your loveliness

Dust ... ashes ...
 God of Grace ... and hope
 Stoke that flickering flame for life
 Your life
 In me.
 In me.

Renewing, healing, forgiving God
By the cross
By the passion of Jesus
Bring me
Bring us all to the joy
of resurrection in you, Jesus

But first
I need to be embers ... ashes ... dust
Yes ... embers ... ashes ... dust

*Create in me a clean heart
O God
Return to me the joy of saved life in you
And renew a right spirit
Within me*



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Instrumental: ASHEN

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/800365120>

Song: CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/673553879>

Lyrics: CCLI/SongSelect; <https://togethertocelebrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

♩ = 130

Create in me a clean heart

from Psalm 51
music: © David MacGregor 2010

REFLECTIVELY

F B^b B^b/F F F B^b

CHORUS
Cre- ate in me a clean heart. Cre-

Gm B^b C^{sus4} C F/A B^b B^bm/D^b

ate in me a clean heart. Cre- ate in me a clean heart and re-

F B^b C B^b/F F fine B^b F/A

new a right spi- rit in me. 1. Chase me not a- way from you, God you.
2. Help me Lord to speak, I'll praise you.

Gm A^{sus4} A A/C#

and take your Spi- rit ne- ver from me. Re- store to me the
Our off- rings, sac- ri- fice you don't de- sire. It plea- ses you: a

Dm C Dm Gm F/A E^b C D.S.al fine

joy of your sal- va- tion. Sus- tain a wil- ling spi- rit deep in me. CHORUS
heart that knows re- pen- tance- the kind of sac- ri- fice you, God re- quire. Cre-

Ride On, Jesus!

A Palm/Passion Sunday reflection

David MacGregor © 2020

Blessed?
 Blessed?
 Absolutely!
 Absolutely!
 Anyone who can draw in this sort of crowd
 This sort of adulation
 This sort of fervour
 Hey, they must be blessed!

A rock star welcome!
 Jesus, ride on!

Crowds out in their multitudes
 from every crevice in the Jerusalem woodwork
 ... stonework
 to meet you
 to greet you
 to praise you
 to worship you
 to check you out

to check out this oddity
 this living, breathing, polarising
 Captivating conundrum
 that is you
 the one who rides into town
 as Prince of Peace
 Not warrior of war and might ...
 as one who mounts a donkey
 as one I've heard Peter proclaims
 as the Christ, the Lord, the Messiah
 as the Son of the living God
 as the one ... as the one
 who soon will be mounted to a cross

as one who says
 turn the other cheek
 as one who offers
 a new commandment to love
 as one who rebuts the establishment's cries
 for the cheering to cease



Created by John August Swanson

as one who in the middle of this jubilant mayhem
cries out: "I tell you, if they keep quiet,
the stones under your feet will cry out!"

as one who says the last and the least and the lost
will come first
first at the table
first in your new kingdom
of grace, welcome,
hope and life
salvation

as one who not only talks about God
but who is God
who not only calls us to holiness
but is holiness
who not only calls us to repentance
but is repentance
who is forgiveness

Jesus, ride on!

Jesus, God
we've taken in your teaching
we've marvelled at your miracles
we've wowed at your wisdom
But how could all this be?

I'm waving my palm branches
My red cloak is laid out as you come by
Red cloaks, blue cloaks, green cloaks
They're all being waved.
Green – for life and peace
Blue – for something deep in the soul ... the heart
Red – well, raising a red flag means
Sit up and take notice
Something's happening here
Something unusual
maybe even not right
Yes, red flag for me.
This is no ordinary parade
No ordinary welcome.

Forget the soldiers, the scoffers, the skeptics
I've heard what they think of you ...
nothing but treachery
nothing but blasphemy
nothing but insurrection
nothing but elimination

Jesus
 I can only tell my own story
 We can only tell our own stories
 When it was all hopeless
 You offered my hope

When I was afraid
 You offered your presence
 When I felt forgotten
 You brought me in
 Offered welcome
 Life in abundance
 Life overflowing.

Is that what everyone around me
 hollers about?
 The latest Messiah
 to get us out of our deep mess?
 I've heard you'll be tried
 I've heard you'll be betrayed
 I've heard you'll be ridiculed something shocking
 I've heard - to be blunt
 – they want to get rid of you
 once and for all.

But that's not all I've heard
 I've heard there's more to you
 There always seems to be more to you.
 That you promise a response
 Like only God can offer
 There always seems to be more to you.
 You say the taints and torture
 A deathly torture, no less
 It won't be the end
 No way.
 will be just the beginning.

So Jesus
 Ride on
 You Prince of Peace
 Ride on
 You healer of hearts

Ride on
 You Son of God
 ... to your future
 Not for yourself



Created by John August Swanson

No!
To our future
The future of all creation
Forever

So Jesus
bring in your kingdom some more
Go to your cross
Go beyond
Save us
Love us
Free us!
Ride on, Jesus!

Ride on
Blessed
Obedient,
faithful one
Saviour
Befriender
Welcomer
Redeemer
Messiah
Christ
Lord

no ordinary

a Palm/Passion Sunday reflection

David MacGregor © 2010

This is no ordinary donkey.
 no ordinary beast of burden;
 no grand warhorse here:
 no ordinary donkey this one:
 this animal carries God's peace-message.
 God's life and hope message.
 God's freedom message.
 God's salvation message.
 God's justice message.
 God's living message
The message
The good news
 Christ - the prince of peace

This Christ-carrier;
 It journeys through adoring crowd:
 Coats, cloaks, palms
 laid out in royal carpet
 as royal tapestry.
 No pack-mule work for this donkey.
 This is no ordinary donkey.
 No.
 This is the one who sets the Christ forward;
 forward on a journey of destiny;
 a journey that ends - begins at a cross.
 This is no ordinary donkey

This is no ordinary crowd.
 No ordinary crowd, this one;
 this mass of Passover humanity.
 How they welcome the Nazarene.
 How they worship and adore him.
 This the Christ.
 This the Messiah.
 This the answer;
 the answer
 to the hopes and dreams of all the years.

No ordinary crowd,
 No holding back *this* crowd:
 palms, cloaks, branches, everything
 the red carpet treatment for this man.
 Adulation at fever pitch
 for the one who will set them free -
 free indeed!
 No ordinary crowd.



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No ordinary crowd this one.
 Blessed the one;
 blessed the King who comes
 in the name of the Lord.

No ordinary crowd.
 A fickle crowd.
 A crowd changeable like the seasons.
 Chameleon really.
 “Hosanna – God saves,” they cry.
 “Hosanna in the highest.”
 The cry of exuberant lips,
 Words of blessing.
 Words of betrayal.
 Chameleons really.
 Crucify him!
 “Crucify him!” they will soon sing out.
 No ordinary crowd.
 Week starts
 - Jesus high in praise.
 Week ends
 - Jesus high on a cross.

This is no ordinary Messiah.
 A most unlikely, far-from-ordinary welcome;
 no pomp or power from this royalty.
 No pomp or power.
 Just humble obedience.
 No ordinary Messiah,
 this Jesus of Nazareth.
 In obedience he travels the way,
 eats and drinks with sinners,
 faithful to God to the end.

Frees the captive,
 rescues the lost,
 welcomes the rejected,
 responsive to the Spirit.
 Humble obedience – that’s what it is,
 as Jesus sets his face to Jerusalem,
 as Jesus sets his course to a cross.

This is no ordinary Messiah
 this teaching, healing,
 miracle-working, rebuking
 affirming, carpenter’s son.
 This is no ordinary Messiah;
 this prophet not of power but of peace.

This Jesus who sets his face to a violence:
a violence so shocking,
a violence so scandalous,
a violence so plain wrong
that this God-bearer -
this Christ at week's end takes on
takes up
takes away
the sin of the world.

This is no ordinary Messiah
This is Christ who carries a cross
this is Christ:
Christ who calls:
lose your life
that you might find it.

This is no ordinary people.
We are no ordinary people.
Though separated by 2000 years of time
will we too run and hide like those disciples
when the going gets tough?
Will we sing our joyful Hosannas
when it all suits us, then
live our lies when no one's watching?

Or will we allow the Christ of the manger
to move in our lives
as the Christ of the cross;
Christ who is peace,
Christ who is sacrifice,
Christ who is love,
Christ who is salvation?

“Glory to God in the highest!
Peace on earth to all people.”
Is that our mantra:
the hallmark of our living?
Is that the flesh and blood, yes,
the lifeblood of all we are,
all we seek to be?

Will your life
 Will my life
 predicate itself on Christ's obedience:

consistent
 faithful
 focused
 faith-seeking
 faith-declaring
 God-dependent to the end.

Obedience beyond all obedience
 "Glory to God ... peace on earth" –
 the pulse
 the rhythm
 the drumbeat marking the steps
 along our pilgrim way:
 the pilgrim way.
 The way that knows not a cradle
 without a cross
 the way of Christ:
 Christ – the truth, the life -
the Way.

This is no ordinary Christ
 donkey-carried through Jerusalem.
 We are no ordinary people.
 We – followers of the Way:
 followers of the one who dies
 who dies for our sin -
 the sin of the world;
 we – we hear Christ's call:
 Tom, Joan, Bill,
 Jack, Mary, David,
 add your own name if you like.
 We carry;
 we bear
 we lift our own cross daily.

Carry that cross.
 That cross of obedience:
 obedience, faithfulness.
 One with Christ
 into all the complexities, challenges,
 diversities, peaks and troughs,
 death and life encounters
 that Christ suffers, dies and rises for.

We are no ordinary people.
 In our baptism
 we die with Christ;
 we rise with Christ.
 We live in the shadow of the cross;
 the hope of an empty tomb.

Christ journeys to the cross
 and so too must we journey;
 we must stumble forward toward Jerusalem.
 God's grace – it carries us;
 carries us every step of the way.
 this week
 this hour
 this moment
 we make way for Jesus.
 No ordinary Messiah
 We – no ordinary people
 belonging
 belonging to the world which Christ
 so loves, he offers his life for
 that we might know life -
 life forever.
 Life beyond measure

We make way for Jesus:
 a way no longer adorned
 with palms and praises.
 A way, a future
 in which Jesus is Lord.
 Jesus is Lord.
 Jesus is Redeemer of the world.

We are no ordinary people.
 This is no ordinary Jesus Christ.
 We journey on with Christ.
 Blessed is the one who comes
 in the name of the Lord.

Instrumental: RIDE ON, JESUS

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/809657163>

Song: WAVE THOSE BRANCHES HIGH

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/692486686>

Lyrics: CCLI/SongSelect; <https://togethertocelbrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

Wave those branches high

with movement

(C) David MacGregor 1999

F B^b C F B^b C F % LEADER / GROUP 1

Wave those

C F GROUP 2 C F LEAD/GP.1 B^b

branch- es high (Wave those branch- es high) Loud ho-

C F GP.2 B^b C F LEAD/GP.1

san- nas cry- (Loud ho- san- nas cry) "God, save us,"

C F GP.2 C A⁷ LEAD/GP.1 B^b

is our cry. ("God, save us," is our cry) Wave those

C⁷ F GP.2 B^b C⁷ F B^b

branch- es high. (Wave those branch- es high)

F [redacted] Dm B^b A⁷ Dm

Bles- sed: the one who comes

B^b C⁷ F Dm B^b

in the name of the Lord. Sov'- reign,

Am Dm B^b Dm C C⁷ D.S. al fine

ser- vant God. Je- sus: you're praised, a- dored. D.S. al fine

Why is this night different to all other nights?

... a Maundy Thursday reflection

David MacGregor © 2023

Why is this night different ...
different to all other nights?

feet-a-washing
bread a-breaking
wine a-pouring
love a-sharing
Christ betraying
The cross - anticipating

Why is this night different ...
different to all the others?
to all other nights?

The youthful one ponders
long ago ... and *this* season too.

We *too* ponder
As feet are washed
Bread is broken
Wine is poured
Christ is betrayed
Cross is anticipated
Love is shared
Deeply,
expansively
sacrificially,
scandalously,
astonishingly
beautifully

Why is this night different ...
different to all the others?
to all other nights?

Well, God's beloved
God's own soon
Gets down and dirty
Down to *our* level
Down with *our* dirty
The Christ of living water
Pours water
washes disciples' feet
washes *our* feet

Skin, bruised,
more than anything - dirty
real dirty
and our feet are clean



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Jesus makes *us* clean
 How come the Son of God
 should get so low
 as to clean *my* feet?
 Sets an example
 Jesus, God of power
 Well ... not here at least
 But Jesus, God
 God who serves
 God who loves
 God who puts others first
 All the way to a cross.

Yes, God who loves
 Who mandates
 Commands
 Calls us to something
 at God's heart
 The love mandate
 To love one another
 Neighbour, stranger, lovers, friends, foes
 With *Jesus'* brand of love
 Not only this *night* different
 To all other nights.
 This is *love* different
 To all other loves.
 All other loves.

Will you join me?
 Not my call, this is *Jesus'* call
 That the world will know, grow in,
 Be changed by, transformed *by*
 that love
 The *Jesus* mandate
 To wash
 To serve
 To humble
 To bless
 To love
 with love different to all other loves
 Love (Pause)
 Love (Pause)
 ... Love

Instrumental: MAUNDY

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/814849325>

Song: THE SONG OF THE SUPPER

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/807841029>

Lyrics: CCLI/SongSelect; <https://togethertocelbrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

The Song of the Supper

$\text{♩} = 105$

Words John L. Bell & Graham Maule © 1989**
music: David MacGregor © 2016 Willow Publishing

WITH PURPOSE

F G C F C F C F C

1. The time was ear-ly eve-ning. The place, a room up- stairs; the
2. The com- pa- ny of Je- sus had met to share a meal, but
3. "The bread and bo- dy bro- ken; the wine and blood out- poured; the
4. On both sides of the at- ble; on both sides of the grave, the
5. Lord Je- sus, now a- mong us, con- firm our faith's in- tent; as

9 E⁷ Am F Dm G^{sus 4} G C F

guests were the dis- ci- ples; few in num- ber and few in prayers. *Oh, the food comes from the*
 he who made them wel- come had much more - to re- veal.
 cross and kit- chen ta- ble are - one by my sign and word."
 Lord joins those who love him to - serve them - and to save.
 with your words and ac- tions we u- nite in this sac- ra- ment.

15 C F² C C⁷ F C/E Am F G

ba- ker, the drink comes from the vine, the words come from the Sav- iour: "I will meet you in bread and

22 C G C F C

wine."

** Words: John L. Bell & Graham Maule - copyright © 1988 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland, wildgoose.scot
 originally published in the collection Enemy of Apathy (Wild Goose Publications), set to the traditional Scots tune 'Afton Water'

Who Is It You Want?

(Spill the Beans, issue #38)

writer unknown

Who is it you want?

A gentle Jesus meek and mild?
 A radical Jesus running wild?
 A warrior Jesus armed and riled?
 A law filled Jesus to follow the rules?
 A teaching Jesus for your local schools?
 A fun filled Jesus king of the fools?

Who is it you want?

A Wonderful Counsellor, A Mighty God,
 An Everlasting Father, A Prince of Peace.
 Who is it you want?
 A Lord and Master to rule your life?
 A lamb of God to be sacrificed?
 A king of Jews to be glorified?

Who is it you want?

Emmanuel the God who is with us?
 Christ the anointed one?
 Jesus the Saviour of all?

Who is it you want?

It is the question that mattered
 to those seeking Jesus:
 the followers, the disciples,
 the people, the critics, the persecutors.
 the prosecutors.

Who is it you want?

A scapegoat for your sins?
 A speaker of truth?
 Or someone to blame?
 On this Good Friday
 Jesus asked the soldiers the question,
 "Who is it you want?"
 And they couldn't find the words.
 For it seemed they did not know,
 all they had
 was a name and a place:
 Jesus of Nazareth.
 Peter, his friend and ally,
 quickly forgot his name
 and denied that he ever knew him.
 Caiaphas, the High Priest,
 advised like a faceless bureaucrat
 that it was better
 if one man died for the people.



Photo by Leeloo The First: pexels.com

Pilate labelled him
'The king of the Jews'
in every language under the sun,
and could not work out
who was telling the truth!

The chief priests
did not want to name him
and denied he was ever a king.

And the soldiers
were only interested
in playing games of chance
with what little possessions he had.

And they nailed him to the cross,
and they watched him die
in wretched pain and agony,
giving him one last drink
of bitter wine
in the hope a miracle might come,
not for them,
but all the others
who dared not call his name.

Joseph of Arimathea,
lays his body in a family tomb,
a mark of dignity and respect.

And now we wait and wonder:
Who is it you want?
And what will you do now?



Part 2

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(note: the part 1 REFLECTION which inspires this appears in *Spill The Beans* Issue 38, 2021)

Who is it we want?

Who is it **we** want?

A doorstep to an easier religion?
 God we can picture frame on our hallway wall?
 Spiritual ointment when we're hurting?
 Someone with whom we can can bop along to in song?
 Someone with whom we can let out all our emotions:
 Joy, anger, bewilderment, confusion, frustration, pleasure?
 We could go on forever!

Who is it we want?
 A saviour there for us when it's convenient?
 A saviour we despatch right out of way if not!
 A saviour we'd love to have all-sorted?!
 Who is it that we want?
 Could it be?

Could it be
 A saviour to turn our world completely upside down
 To love us so agonisingly, mysteriously,
 Sacrificially ... forgivingly
 To forgive our sinfulness, our brokenness
 completely, thoroughly, totally,
 Loving us so profoundly
 As to cost you, Jesus everything?
 as to die a death of deepest pain and humiliation
 Yet heavenly,
 eternal, inexplicable glory
 To show us not only *what* Love is
 But show us *who* love is all about
 Yes who!
 For love is *you*, Jesus!
 Jesus, *your* love does change everything
 (way before Andrew Lloyd Webber
 Liked the idea)

Everything!

Who is it you want?
 Who is it **you** want, Jesus?
 Good question!

You see, Jesus
 To demand anything from us
 Would not be love
 Would not be love at all
 At least not love as *you* are love
 Not grace as *you* are grace.
 Sacrifice like *you* are sacrifice
 Sacrificial, all-giving
 Agape, wanting nothing
 Absolutely nothing in return kind of love
 Zero. Nothing.

Nothing, that is,
 Except your deepest longing
 Let's call it passion
 That we'd be restored in our relationship
 With you as your beloved.

Jesus
 on that cross
 For all humanity
 For all creation
 The insignificant
 The powerful
 The insider
 The outsider
 The weak
 The strong
 The lost
 The proud
 The poor
 The broken
 ... I'm in there somewhere!

For all humanity
 For absolutely everyone
 You gave absolutely everything
 You gave your forgiving love
God's love
 Free gift
 Pure gift
 G-I-F-T ... GIFT!
 Nothing less
 – nothing less, Jesus!



Photo by Leeloo The First: pexels.com

Your love
 So unrelentingly **for** us.
 Yes ... **for** us.
 To save us
 To free us
 Drawing near to us
 Forgiving us
 Redeeming us
 Inspiring us.
 In all your bloodstained vulnerability.
 In your suffering
 You meet us, Jesus,
 In *our* suffering right where we are.
 You will do everything Jesus
 To draw us back into that love relationship with God
 Everything

Your Love so amazing, so divine
 Despite our musing on a demanding love
 Seeking a return benefit
 ... Your love strangely, wonderfully, convincingly
does demand.
 I can't help but somehow **respond!**

Jesus – your love
 so amazing, so divine
 Demands our soul
My soul
 Our life
My life
 Our all
My all
 Now ...
 Forever ...

What do I want?
 L-O-V-E ... love
 Yours, Jesus
 Yours!

Instrumental: FOR US

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/808867073>

Song: YOU, ME, EVERYONE

Vimeo download: <https://vimeo.com/588212195>

Lyrics: CCLI/SongSelect; <https://togethertocelbrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

You, Me, Everyone

David MacGregor © 2018 Willow Publishing

♩ = 105

REFLECTIVELY

Am G Am Am G Am G

1. Je- sus died on a cross for
 2. Je- sus died on a cross for
 3. Je- sus died on a cross for

Am G F Am G Am

you. Je- sus died on a cross for me. Je- sus died on a cross for ev'- ry- one
 you. Je- sus died on a cross for me. Je- sus died on a cross for ev'- ry- one
 you. Je- sus died on a cross for me. Je- sus died on a cross for ev'- ry- one

F 1.2. 11 Am Am G Am 3. 11 Am Am G Am

be- cause he loves us. and there for- gives us. love you. and we will
 and we will

11 Am Am G Am 11 Am Am G Am

love you. and we will love *rit.* you.

Hand movements

YOU, ME EVERYONE

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[1] Jesus died on a cross

*Hand across chest, 90 degrees to each other
forming cross (fingers in each hand together)*

for you

Finger in each hand gently pointing outwards

Jesus died on a cross

(As earlier)

for me

Fingers clenched with thumb in each hand pointing towards self

Jesus died on a cross

(As earlier)

for everyone

Slowly sweep each arm outwards into a welcome/embrace position

... because he loves

hands across heart

us

Slowly sweep each arm outwards into a welcome/embrace position

[2] Jesus died on a cross for you

Jesus died on a cross for me

Jesus died on a cross for everyone

... and there forgives

hands across heart

us

Fingers clenched with thumb in each hand pointing towards self

[3] Jesus died on a cross for you

Jesus died on a cross for me

Jesus died on a cross for everyone

... and we will love

hands across heart

you

Lift hands upwards to head height in praise, face looking upwards

We will love you

We will love you

Risen

An Easter Day Reflection +

David MacGregor © 2023

Christ is risen
Risen indeed!
And has appeared to Peter
And ... And ...

Can you believe it?
Do you believe it?
Rise up ...- believe it!

Say we of faith
We of Easter faith
Easter faith that sings with
a thousand hallelujahs
that death has not the final word
That's right!
Life has the greatest,
The Most wonderful
Most transforming word
The forever Word
Life in Jesus Christ



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The Most transforming eternal word
Life in Jesus Christ

this Easter Day
Emphatically
Joyfully
Assuredly
Welling up in our hearts
Rising in our spirits
we proclaim "Yes!
Hope *is* stronger than despair.
Love and life *are* stronger than death."
Yes, we proclaim resurrection!
Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed!

This is the story of Mary Magdalene
Coming broken-hearted
at dawn to the tomb
Seeing the beginning of a transformed life.

This is the story of the risen Lord
Calling Mary by name

Transforming a broken heart
to a heart burning with fantastic news
a heart beating to news like no other
Jesus is alive!

And this is *our* story,
Surely our story
Your story
My story
The story of all who know
Story of all humankind
All creation
God's living hope and love
God's living, saving presence in our
lives.

This is our story as we,
as we tell the story
with those we love
As we proclaim as Mary did that
first Easter morning, “
“I have seen the Lord!”
I have experienced the risen Jesus!

As in words ancient and new ...

** Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and to those in the tombs, granting life.*

*** Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave*

Christ is risen
Risen indeed!
And has appeared to Peter
And ... and ...
(Optional: gently point to people in congregation)

Can you believe it?
Do you believe it?
Rise up ... believe it!
Say we of faith
We of Easter faith
Easter faith that sings with
a thousand hallelujahs
that death has not the final word



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No
Life has the greatest,
 Best
 Most wonderful
 Most transforming word
 The ultimate Word
 The forever Word.
 Life in Jesus Christ

** Christ is risen from the dead,
 trampling down death by death,
 and to those in the tombs, granting life.*

Do you believe it?
 Will you live it?
 Will you live it?!
 Will / live it
 Breathe it
 Share it
 Be changed by it?

We must decide.
 Will we allow our hearts to be changed
 Our hearts to be transformed
 Transformed by the promise
 and presence of the risen Jesus?
 Will we?
 Will you?
 Will I?

Will we trust
 in our own coming into life again
 Again and again.
 Will we live the life
 In Christ – of being Easter people?
 Will we?
 Will we?

So, this day, friends
 Step out of the darkness
 Step into the light
 The light that darkness
 Simply cannot put out!

Turn your hearts with hope
 to meet the risen Christ
 with us,
 For us
 within us

experienced between us ...
 Like Mary, decide
 hope *is* stronger than fear,
 life *is* stronger than hate,
 love really *is* stronger than death .

Join me
 says the risen Jesus
 Believe in me
 Be freed in me
 Be renewed in me
 Enlivened in me
 Live out the resurrection
 in the God-seeking
 Neighbour-loving
 Spirit-empowering
 Authentic, hope-bringing
 life you live in me

For the sake ...
 For the sake of a world
 A world craving *life*
 And *love*
 And *hope*
 And *transformation*
 And *renewal*
 And *light*
 And *love*
 Love in beautiful abundance
 as perhaps never before

Easter people
 Christ is risen!
 He is risen indeed!
 Come rise with him!

* The **Paschal troparion** or **Christos anesti** (Greek: Χριστός ἀνέστη) is the characteristic troparion for the celebration of Pascha (Easter) in the Byzantine Rite. 5th century C.E.

** from **Christ Is Risen From The Dead** - Matt Maher | Mia Fieldes © 2009

+ portions of this reflection are inspired by and use occasional phrasing from a sermon by Rev Todd Pick / Rev Jennifer Pick: UMC - USA
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship/lent-2019-worship-planning-series/april-21-easter-sunday-year-c/easter-sunday-2019-year-c-preaching-notes>

Instrumental: RISEN!

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/809648490>

Song: EASTER SONG

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/901739246>

Song: HE'S ALIVE, YES – HE IS!

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/682376906>

Lyrics: CCLI/SongSelect, <https://togethertocelbrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

Easter Song

David MacGregor © 2024 Willow Publishing
 inspired by the 6th C Paschal Troparian - Byzantine Rite

♩ = 125

WITH LIFE & 'MOVEMENT'

1 A D F#m E A D F#m E

5 A D A Bm⁷ E

Christ is ris - sen! Christ is ri - sen! Al - le - lu - ia. Je -sus reigns!

9 C# D A E A

Death has died. Life and love - win. Praise you, Je - sus Christ!

13 **CHOIR A**
CHOIR B

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

A D A Bm⁷ E

Christ is ri - sen! Christ is ri - sen! Al - le - lu - ia. Je - sus reigns!

17

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

C# D A E

Death has died. Life and love - win. Praise you, Je - sus Christ.

21

F#m E D A D

1. Now ri - sen from the dead, God; death has tramp - led death.
 2. Death has lost its pow - er. Je - sus, God, you reign,

25

E D C# F#m G

Those once dy- ing gif- ted and life; life in Je- sus Christ.
ri- sen, con- quering sin and death; reign, O Je- sus, reign!

29

CHOIR A

CHOIR B

Al- le- lu- ia!

E^{sus 4} E A D

Christ is ri - sen! Christ is ri - sen!

33

Al- le- lu- ia! Al- le- lu- ia! Al-

A Bm⁷ E C# D

Al- le- lu - ia. Je- sus reigns! Death has died. Life and love - win.

37

1. 2.

le- lu- ia! Al-

A E F#m E A D

Praise you, Je- sus Christ! Christ!

41

le- lu- ia!

A E A

Praise you, Je- sus Christ!

He's alive – yes, he is!

$\text{♩} = 135$

lively & rhythmic

D G A D G A $\%$ D G A *clap - clap*

He's a- live; yes, he is!

D G A D G $\text{D}/\text{F}\sharp$ G A^7 D G *clap - clap*

He's a- live; yes, he is! Christ is ris- en, reigns for- ev- er. He's a- live;

A D G A D G A **to Coda** Bm *clap-clap ... clap* \oplus

yes - he is! [You] died for us up-

A G D Bm A

on a cross. Love's for- giv- ing way. You rose vic- tor- ious from the tomb.

C A **Coda** *D.S. al Coda* \oplus

Death has had its day -.

The musical score is written for piano in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music. The first system starts with a tempo marking of quarter note = 135 and the instruction 'lively & rhythmic'. The second system includes the instruction 'clap - clap'. The third system includes 'clap-clap ... clap' and 'to Coda'. The fourth system includes 'D.S. al Coda' and 'Coda'. The score features various chords (D, G, A, D, G, A, D/F#, G, A7, Bm, C) and rhythmic patterns, including clapping. The lyrics are: 'He's a- live; yes, he is! Christ is ris- en, reigns for- ev- er. He's a- live; yes - he is! [You] died for us up- on a cross. Love's for- giv- ing way. You rose vic- tor- ious from the tomb. Death has had its day -.'

wind and fire

a Pentecost reflection

David MacGregor © 2024

Note: much adlibbing needed. Take time between words and each new line.

(Increasing in volume)

Wind

Fire

Wind

Fire

Wind

Fire!!

Rushing wind

Tongues of fire

Circling

Touching

Swirling

Around

Within

Everywhere

Powerful!

Beyond powerful!

Going right through you

Deep

Holy Spirit deep

Delving

Inspiring

Uplifting

Transforming

Enriching

Loving

Equipping

God!

God!

God - at - work!

In power

In wonder

In glory

In enfolding all



Everyone
No barriers
Enfolding all
Spirit at work

People
People in their thousands
Different faces
Different races
Different places
Each one here at Pentecost

Different faces
Different races
From different places
All touched by the Spirit's wind
All touched with the Spirit's flame
All hearing the Spirit's voice
In their own language
In their own voice

The call of the Spirit
The wind of the Spirit
The presence, the fire of the Spirit
Crossing boundaries
Going way, way beyond
Transcending creed
Transcending colour
Transcending race or place

Holy Spirit
Always
At creation
At baptism
At rebirth
Promised by Jesus
Pentecost Spirit.
Spirit, welcome!
Touch us new
Touch us brand new
May we be born anew
Now
Forever!



Fire
 Tongues of fire
 Alighting on each one
 Alighting each one
 Illuminating
 Warming
 Surprising
 Fire of love
 God's love
 Loving Spirit
 Cleansing Spirit
 Holy Spirit

Fire
 A-flaming
 For good!
 For empowering
 For enlightening
 For transforming
 For changing
 For world-changing
 For making a difference
 God's difference!

Fire
 Fire up our hearts, God
 Yes, fire us up!

Fire us up to be your Pentecost people
 Spirited people
 Christ-sent and saved people
 God-created people
 God-loving
 God-serving people

People of hand
 People of flame
 People of hand, heart and flame
 Blaze in our hearts, O Holy Spirit
 Blow us where you will, Holy Spirit
 Blaze us together, Spirit fire
 Blow us together, Spirit wind
 Together as your people



People of faith
 Community
 Community
 Of Hope
 Of love
 Of Christ

Community
 Of healing
 Of welcoming
 Of transforming
 Of enlivening
 Of "compassioning"
 Of gracing
 Of being
 ... of becoming your body on earth
 ... your church!
 Of seeing the face of Jesus
 In our neighbour
 Of being the face of Jesus
 To our neighbour

People saved,
 People alive in Jesus!
 Made new in Jesus!

God, doing your new thing
 In every age
 On every page
 On every stage

God, do your new thing
 In my mind, my soul, my heart,
 my life
 Our minds, our hearts, our souls,
 our life together
 In your church!

Your will be done on earth
 Yes earth
 As in heaven!



(Increasing in volume)

Wind

Fire

Wind

Fire!!

Rushing wind

Tongues of fire

Circling

Touching

Swirling

Around

Within

Everywhere

Powerful!

Beyond powerful!

Going right through you

Deep

Holy Spirit

Delving

Inspiring

Uplifting

Transforming

Enriching

Loving

Equipping

The church is born

Born of the Spirit!

God!

God!

God - at - work!

God be praised!

Amen!

Amen!



Instrumental: WIND AND FIRE

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/908068920>

Song: COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/831372477>

Song: HEARTS ON FIRE

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/639800059>

Lyrics: CCLI/SongSelect, <https://togethertocelebrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

Hearts on Fire

David MacGregor © 2015 Willow Publishing

♩ = 127

WITH PURPOSE

G/B C D^{sus4} D Em C D^{sus4} D G/B C

D^{sus4} D Em C D^{sus4} D G/B

1. God of life, you're the
2. We long to keep, Lord, your

C G G/B C D

light that shines;
flame a- light;

Love a- fire in these days,
speak for truth, set in- jus- tice times. right,

Em C G/B Am D^{sus4} D

Spi- rit kind- ling with- in our hearts fi- re of your love.
share com- pas- sion in Christ each one; reach- ing out with joy.

G G/B C D Em

Spi-rit of wel-come a-cross this land; diff-erent we are, yet as
Liv-ing the life - that Je-sus lives; liv-ing the love - that

C D G/B C Em⁷

one we stand with our hearts on fire, with our hearts on
Je-sus gives

D G/B C D G G/B C 1. D^{sus4} D

fire. Oh-oh, come, Ho-ly Spi-rit, set our hearts on fi-re

2. D^{sus4} D Em C D^{sus4} D G/B

3. Come: be walk-ing God's

C G G/B C D Em

ho-ly ground. Come: be shar-ing God's hope a-round. Stoke, O Spi-rit, our

C G/B Am D^{sus4} D G/B

burn- ing light 'cross this anc- ient land. So the op- pressed, the de- tained

C D Em C D G/B C

go free, Spi- rit bring- ing God's lib- er- ty. Set our hearts on fire. Set our

Em⁷ D G/B C D G/B

hearts on fire. Oh- oh, Come, Ho- - ly Spi- rit, set our hearts on fi- re.

C D G/B C D

Come, Ho- - ly Spi- rit, set our hearts on fi- re. Come, Ho- - ly Spi- rit, set our hearts on -

G/B C G

fire rit.

Willow Publishing

Come Holy Spirit

David MacGregor © 2023

adapted from Lectio365 prayer

♩ = 90

GENTLY BUT FIRMLY

1 **D** **D** **Em/G** **D**
 Come Ho-ly Spi-rit to my mind. I re-

9 **Bm** **A/C#** **D** **Bm** **Bm** **D**
 ceive your com-fort. Come Ho-ly Spi-rit to my heart. I re-ceive your peace. Come

17 **G** **D** **F#7** **Bm** **G** **Em** **F#m7** **G** **Bb**
 Ho-ly Spi-rit to my soul. I re-ceive the Fa-ther's love for

25 **D** **D**
 me.

Christmas Reflection - GOOP

Luke 2:1-20

David MacGregor @ 2023

My favourite Christmas word is that word EMMANUEL. It means God-with-us. God entering in human flesh, the world God made. God coming among us, as a helpless baby, just as we all did. Emmanuel. God with us.

I'm reminded of a word Scott Erickson uses in his wonderful devotional book: *Honest Advent*. It's a word that Gwyneth Paltrow has somewhat hijacked in recent years.

GOOP. You've got almost roll your mouth around to say it. Have a try ... Goop.

The redoubtable Oxford English Dictionary explains Goop like this: A viscous, semi-liquid substance or mixture, (now) often of an unpleasant or disgusting nature.

Wikipedia: A thick, slimy substance; goo

Emmanuel comes among us in all of life's messiness.

There's this irony that we of faith in a time of year when everything "Christmas" comes across as so sanitized and schmaltzy ... and there's nothing wrong with the odd bit of schmaltz, I say ... that God enters our world ... a world that amid all the schmaltz is just so messy, so contorted, so upside down, so topsy-turvy, so confused, often just plain ugly.

There's a recent Aussie Christmas movie out, briefly in the theatres and now streamed. Not your typical Christmas movie - nothing like *Elf*, *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* or *Love Actually*.

It's called *CHRISTMESS*, and according to its excellent reviews, it's the festive season story set in Sydney of three people with messy lives who come together to help each other as best they can. And hey – each of their lives are a mess in big ways. No this is not a family movie, it seems.



Scott Erickson recalls the whole process of birthing. He does so alongside the birth of Jesus. Hear this ...

The sanitized brand we've created to celebrate Christmas aesthetically suggests we can only experience God-with-Us by cleaning up all of life's messy details ... + But what we see through the details of the birthing process is that the Christ story is actually about a God who brings salvation into the world through all those messy details. The laboured breathing, groaning, shouting of a mother. The powerlessness of a writhing, crying newborn

As I read the scriptures, I sense that Jesus had this special affinity with all things messy ... with lives that were downright messy ... downright scorned ... downright abused or ignored.

- At a young age, hastily packaged up by his parents, hotfooting it all the way to Egypt to escape the child-cancelling tyranny of King Herod.
- Taking time in the midday sun with a woman from a different race whose private life ... umpteen husbands ... was such a mess ... she finds life, hope, colour ... bright, lovely colour in Jesus.

- Preaching a famous Matthew 5 passage how those who be as Christ to others, would be happy ... blessed.
 - Those people who are hopeless, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
 - Those who grieve, because they will be made glad.
 - those whose lives are harassed and insulted because they are righteous, - the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

In Erickson's words:

A saving way came into the world just like we did - in all of its goopy humanity... There is something overwhelmingly sacred about meditating on that reality during this time of year ... Christ partook in the powerless, vulnerability of coming into the world, naked and weak – like we often still feel.

It makes all the difference to me that God is actually interested in our goop ... our messiness ... the messiness ... the goop of your life and mine, that he would send Jesus. It makes a difference to me that living among the messiness of human existence, God through Jesus offers a way forward, through the Easter cross out of ... and beyond ... our goop.

This is Jesus ... Emmanuel ... hope for the world!

Let me lead you in prayer, through one of the loveliest of carols: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM. I invite you to make it yours, as once again, you, we celebrate the God of the universe coming to us, in all of life's messiness, all of life's goopiness ... in Jesus, Lord and Saviour ... so we might find our home ... our faith, our hope, our love ... in him.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Jesus tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem
 Descend to us we pray
 Cast out our sin and enter in
 Be born in us today
 We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell
 O come to us abide with us
 Our Lord Emmanuel

Christmas blessings.

Instrumental: HARK!

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/779832327>

Song: GOD, YOU MAKE ROOM

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/894729015>

Lyrics/SongSelect, <https://togethertocelbrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>

another new year a New Year / end-of-year reflection

David MacGregor © 2023

Another new year is dawning (has dawned now)
 We wave the old goodbye
 A year of life uncertain
 Of freedoms lost, denied
 Our minds, our spaces frazzled
 We're far from who we were
 Removed from family ... far from friends
 ... from once long-cherished joys
 We face uncertain futures
 What else must we all bear?

Another new year ...
 ... what's it bringing?
 We wave the old goodbye
 A year ... somehow ... in some way
 our solace has been bruised, even rocked
 Are we tired ... stir crazy ? forlorn?
 Where's our energy for the future;
 The new normal 'round the bend?
 That bend keeps twisting ... turning
 Bending – it never ends!

another new year
 ... finds me pondering again
 who ... what meets our yearnings?
 I wonder:
 ... could there
 ... should there
 ... might there
 ... must there be more
 ... more than stumbling in our twisting,
 our turning?

I hear again the ancient truth
 'bout clashing cymbals ... noisy gongs
 that without love we're nothing really
 ... we've got it all so wrong

Yes, I hear again the ancient truth
 'bout **Faith**
 ... in the faithfulness of the Creating One
 'bout **Hope**
 ... in presence and promise ever-old, ever-new
 'bout **Love**
 ... in Christ, the saving one
 ... for neighbour, in whom Christ comes
 ... yes ... Jesus!



So
 ...what will make yet another new year
 different to those before?
 What will match our yearnings
 and make our spirits soar?
 Seems faith and hope and love
 must find their home
 in darkened ... fragile souls

Souls finding greening
 Like shoots budding in the wastelands
 Souls finding blessing in community
 ... in seeking the greater good
 ... in God.

So, Holy One
 ... embrace us
 ... lift us
 ... comfort our restless souls
 May we find our rest in You
 Might we open up our hearts to You
 For our hearts long to be whole
 For our hearts, our spirits need be renewed
 ... with joy!
 ... yes – joy!

for ... another new year
is dawning (has dawned now)
 We wave the past goodbye

We rest in the Holy One's gifts
 Gifts worth embracing
 Gifts absolutely for sharing
 And sharing some more!
 ... of joy
 ... of peace

And yes – faith, hope and love
 Love
 Yes ... **Love**
 Love ... bless us
 Come on by!

Instrumental: THE OLD & THE NEW

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/908066630>

Song: AS THE OLD YEAR PASSES

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/660393773>

Lyrics/SongSelect, <https://togethertocelbrate.com.au/david-macgregors-songs>



As the Old Year Passes

Lyrics: David MacGregor © 2007 Willow Publishing tune: French trad.

♩ = 70
NOEL NOUVELET

1

Em F#m⁷ E Am B⁷ Em F#m⁷

1. As the old year pas- ses we look - back, re- flect: times of joy and
 2. as the old year pas- ses sor- row - wells with- in: loved ones no more
 3. As the old year pas- ses, we cry for our strug- gling world. Cli- mate e- ver
 4. As the new year dawn- s now we would - give you praise. Faith- ful God, come

6

Em Am B⁷ Em Em B Am⁷

pro- mise, times we'd - best for- get. God of the a- ges, hel- us walk your
 'round us, all that - could have been. God of com- pas- sion, heal each ail- ing
 chang- ing, fight- ing too of- ten heard. Je- sus, you call us to che- rish all you
 lead us on- ward - in new ways. We'll love and serve you in the faith of

12

B Em F#m⁷ Em Am B⁷ Em

way. Help us greet your fu- ture, seize to - mor- row's day.
 heart. Guide us to your fu- ture where new - life may start.
 give. Call us to your fu- ture, where all in - peace might live.
 Christ. In your Spi- rit's fu- ture; peo- ple - of new life.