Prayer of praise and thanks

God of love,

When we were little and had failed catastrophically at something

– giving the dog a bath, or making a cake on our own, or mending the TV with the tools from the kitchen drawer, or painting the front room as a surprise –

and we were scared, and disappointed in ourselves, and thought we had ruined everything for ever, then Mum or Dad or someone we loved would turn up.

And while they might be a bit shocked at first, soon they would calm down and calm us down.

And though we wouldn’t know for a while how they were going to sort everything out, we knew they would. They would know what to do.

But first, they would stand there with us in the mess, and we would know that somehow everything was going to be all right. A lovely feeling.

Jesus comes and stands with us today.

We are scared, today. Lots is messed up. We meant well, but we are not particularly clever. We have made mistakes, we have let things get out of control. We can see only the things that have gone wrong and the many more things that may yet go wrong. And we feel bad.

But Jesus comes and stands with us, and he is not alarmed. He smiles and speaks of peace. He is so happy to be with us. Despite everything, we are the people he chooses to stand with. And we understand that, somehow, everything will be all right.

And somewhere, deep down in God’s belly perhaps, a laugh is beginning. We don’t think things are particularly funny, but we can tell this laugh is going to include us as well.

Thank you God for coming and telling us that all will be well.

Thank you for looking on us with kindness and love.

Thank you for bringing your peace.

Thank you for Easter in lockdown, hope amid fear, and a laugh when life is too serious for anything else.

Amen

Prayer of Confession

The sky is bluer than ever. No aircraft leave lines above us.

Birds sing, leaves unfurl, daisies cluster, dandelions shine back at the sun.

We praise you, God, for the unstoppable Spring. When everything is different, this is the same, reminding us that you also are the same. Great is your faithfulness. We thank you that the seasons still turn, reminding us that your sameness is not static. Death is still followed by resurrection, confession by forgiveness, despair by hope. There is movement.

Forgive us. Our minds do not magnify the Lord, but we magnify our worst fears.

Because one thing has gone wrong, we think everything will go wrong.

Because life has changed, we think people have changed.

Because one bad thing has happened, we think nothing now can come to any good.

Forgive us, and remind us how to wait and watch.

This is still your world. You are still at work in and with us. There is still vision and inspiration and love.

Why do we fill our futures with dread and our pasts with woe? Break into our gloomy minds like spring sunshine. Tell us again that the world turns, and so can we. Remind us that your kingdom is at hand. Say to us, ‘Follow me!’ and lead us, as always, from death to life,

in company with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen