

Saturday 20th April



A Surprise Meal

I wonder how many of you have ever had a surprise party, or been taken somewhere that was a secret – when you didn't know what was going to happen or where you would be. Can you remember the emotion: the nervousness, the anxiety and maybe even fear, as well as the anticipation and building excitement?

This week as we celebrate the resurrection, we remember the meal that Jesus shared with his friends that they weren't expecting. Jesus had died and been buried, yet they had heard rumours that he was alive. Not sure what to do with themselves, they go fishing – after all many of them are fishermen, and the activity is comforting to them in their fear and grief.

Suddenly they see a man on the shore who tells them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. When they do so their nets are full to bursting. They know only one man who could do this, yet they are afraid to believe, living with anxiety and excitement at the same time. They eat with Jesus on the beach, all their feelings within them at this unexpected meal.

Several hymns remind us of this meal on the beach, including the traditional 'Break thou the bread of life' by Mary Lathbury and Alexander Groves (*Singing the Faith* 153). A more contemporary hymn that focuses on meeting Jesus on the beach is the beautiful 'Lord, you have come to the seashore' by Cesario Gabarain (*Singing the Faith* 558).

Surprising God,
you are more wonderful than we can ever imagine;
you do more for us than we ever dare ask or even think of.
We praise you for the surprises that lead us back to you,
for the excitement and joy of being in your presence.
We thank you for the sacrifice you made for us,
and for the joyful surprise your resurrection brings to us.
Help us, in times of sadness and darkness,
to seek the surprising joy of your presence
Amen.

Prayers for April 2019 by Revd Claire Rawlinson
Image: beach – photo by [frank mckenna](#) on [Unsplash](#)