

Lord Jesus, we come to you today hearing that you are the resurrection and the life and yet so much of our world seems to be dying. We are surrounded by news of war. And so we pray for Ukraine; for the Middle East, especially Iran; and for many parts of Africa which don't often make the headlines. Lord, bring your peace.

We hear in the news about so many places where there is political unrest... Lord, bring your justice.

We know that much of your beautiful world has been spoiled by our actions. We cry out to you for a polluted world, where multi-nationals argue over the use of fossil fuels; where our supermarkets continue to use plastics; where floods and droughts cause endless problems and ruin livelihoods. Lord, bring your renewal.

Into our times of difficulty and sadness...**Breathe new life and hope**

Lord Jesus, you brought such joy to Mary and Martha as you raised Lazarus from the dead, but we know that people we know and love have died or are facing pain and illness right now. We remember all those in our community who have died recently, as well as those who are marking the anniversary of losing someone, especially naming... We pray for all those who are mourning their loss. Lord, come close to them in their sorrow, bring them the comfort of your love. Help us to know how to support them at this difficult time.

And Lord, we pray for all those who are sick, those awaiting a diagnosis or test results or a date for an operation... Lord, we pray that you will bring healing, wholeness and patience. We thank you for our health services and all who care and support those who are unwell. We pray for their families, that they will also know the support of friends and neighbours.

We pray for all those in the UK affected by the meningitis outbreak.

Into our times of difficulty and sadness...**Breathe new life and hope**

Lord Jesus, Mary and Martha were so lost in their grief when you first visited them. We pray for all those who are full of sadness, fear, anxiety or loneliness at this time. We pray for those who feel that no one cares for them. We remember those who face negativity at work or school, particularly those who are bullied. We pray for those for whom home is not a safe or happy place. Lord, so much trauma is hidden from us but known by you. We pray for relief and safe spaces where people can truly be heard and helped.

Into our times of difficulty and sadness...**Breathe new life and hope**

Lord Jesus, when you came to Mary and Martha, they asked you questions and came with accusations: 'Why weren't you here?', 'If you had been here all would have been well'. Sometimes we have so many questions about why bad and sad things are happening that we don't know where to begin. But, in the silence now, we have the time to bring our deepest, most heartfelt questions to you, knowing that you will hear us... Lord, we are aware that you didn't answer their questions but, instead, you wept. You wept because you saw and understood their pain. You wept because death was not what your Father had originally planned. You wept because you care deeply for all our hurts and sorrows. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you care. Even when you may feel miles away and distant, you are still caring, still weeping, still loving. Thank you, Lord.

Into our times of difficulty and sadness...**Breathe new life and hope**

Lord Jesus, at the tomb of Lazarus you did the unexpected, you brought him back to life. Thank you for your promise that you are the resurrection and the life. Help us to hold on tightly to this promise, especially when things are hard. Enable us to look around and see the signs of new life that you bring: in nature, as the flowers begin to bloom and the birds sing. In our community, in our church life, and in our families and

fellowship: Lord, we rejoice at births, successes in school (no matter how small), new jobs, healing, birthdays, weddings and engagements... Lord, forgive us that we are often so focussed on the difficulties of life that we forget to thank you for the joys. Help us this week to look for where you are at work in our lives, to close each day with gratitude for the good things you have done. Nothing is too small for us to be grateful for. Into our times of difficulty and sadness...**Breathe new life and hope**

Ultimately Lord, we thank you for the greatest gift of all: your resurrection. Lord, we know that you bring us new life. We are assured by your word that death is not the end and we have eternal life with you to look forward to. Send us out from here ready to take the good news into every place we go this week. And help us to live our earthly lives in the joy of what is to come.

Into our times of difficulty and sadness...**Breathe new life and hope**

Amen