



## Worship at Home – Easter Sunday – 4<sup>th</sup> April

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

**Amen**

### 348 Jesus Christ is risen today

#### Welcome

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you**

#### Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.  
Amen**

#### Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Christ have mercy

## **Christ have mercy**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

## **Collect**

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity.

## **New Testament Reading: Acts 10:34 - 43**

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

## **680 This Joyful Eastertide**

### **Gospel Reading:**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**Glory to you, O Lord**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup>and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They

have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## Sermon: Petra

(Just to explain ... this is a sermon prepared for an all-age service.)

There are three pairs of pictures associated with Easter.

- Daffodil bulb, Daffodils
- Chrysalis      Butterfly
- Egg              Chick

They are all, in different ways, symbols of Easter, of resurrection, if you like.

If you didn't know, if say, you came from Mars,

you'd have no idea that this – strange, quite ugly bulb might turn into these lovely spring flowers,

or that this chrysalis might turn into a beautiful butterfly,

or the egg would crack open and reveal a fluffy chick.

Flower, butterfly, chick, all full of life and beauty.

A bulb lies in the dark soil underground through the winter months

then, as soon as it feels the warmth of the spring sunshine it begins to spring to life.

A chick starts as no more than a speck on the yolk of an egg

and deep inside the secret darkness of the eggshell,

it grows and develops and then, CRACK!

The chick bursts through the shell.

In Christian art, a butterfly symbolises resurrection –

the caterpillar builds a chrysalis around it and, inside, in secret, something amazing happens, quietly, quietly, the caterpillar is no more.

Then one day, the chrysalis starts to break open and a butterfly emerges stretching its wings and fluttering away in the sunshine.

If you didn't know, how could you guess that this beautiful butterfly had anything to do with a caterpillar or the chrysalis?

But what about this image?

- Crucifixion

This is a Good Friday picture of Jesus, dead on the cross.

He is taken down and laid in the stone tomb and then ... Easter Sunday happened.

Empty tomb and ...

- Empty Cross

How strange that this empty cross, an instrument of death and torture, should be the ultimate symbol of resurrection.

So if we look at this empty cross,

and if we think about resurrection, we might wonder – where is Jesus?

He's not there. Where is he? Where is Jesus?

And so that brings us to the gospel story this morning,

and we see Mary, very early in the morning, walking through the garden towards the tomb.

Her feet are wet and the hem of her dress, too – dew-soaked

and her face, tear-soaked and swollen with grief.

What must she have felt like this morning?

Still reeling, still raw, still hollowed out with grief;

still traumatised by the turn of events just a few days before.

The first person to show her love and companionship,

the first person not to scorn her, reject her,

the first person to show her forgiveness and call her friend,

her teacher, her healer, giver of meaning and value, Dead. On a cross.

Now, sealed in a stone-cold sepulchre.

And there he has lain for three days and Mary's world has emptied out,

hope shattered, her love is loveless and she, unlovely.

All her love is behind the stone across the entrance to the tomb.

Except – the tomb is no longer sealed.

The stone has been rolled away and, horror of horrors, the body has gone.

She turns and sees someone and thinking he must be the gardener,

for who else would be there at this time of day –

she blurts out

*Someone has taken my Lord away!*

*If it is you, tell me where you have laid him!*

She is distraught, sickened with shock and grief laid on grief.

Like all those who have lost someone they love,  
she feels as though she has lost part of herself.  
She is no longer who she thought she was.

But then,

One word.

*Mary*

is all it takes.

*Rabbouni*

The familiarity of her name spoken in love  
restores something to herself, of herself.

She is made whole again.

That life diminished in her by his death has sprung to life again.

It is a source of wonder and mystery that a seed or bulb  
can lie dormant in the ground and spring to life;  
that a caterpillar can metamorphose into a butterfly,  
and that a chick can emerge from an egg.

Life is a miracle and a mystery.

We can understand the biological process,  
we can scientifically create, environments to encourage new life,  
but that moment of birth; that moment a seed becomes a plant, a speck an embryo,  
is a miracle and mystery and whatever else we human beings think we can do,  
we cannot give life or make life.

The empty tomb is a mystery and a miracle.

I can't tell you what happened that first Easter morning,

but that Mary heard her name, spoken in love

and realised that love was not dead after all;

that part of her which had died, had sprung to new life, new realisation.

We need symbols like Easter eggs, flowers, butterflies and crosses  
because they are physical, material things, as are we, physical, material creatures  
who inhabit a physical, material world.

They help us to grapple with spiritual mystery that can't be pinned down.

You can't pin God to a cross, at least not for long,

You can't seal him up in a rock-hewn tomb.

Mary didn't recognise Jesus because he was dead. She'd seen him die, hadn't she?

But now, she hears him speak her name,

it's like him and yet, different.

Mary springs to new life too, because she realises

the part of her she thought she had left with Jesus on the cross, dead as he was dead, is alive.

A daffodil bulb *has* to be a bulb before its flower can blossom.

A butterfly can only become a butterfly because it was once a caterpillar,  
the potential to be a caterpillar was always there, so there *is* a continuum.

Resurrection is not metamorphosis or a seed or an egg.

Resurrection is new life, victorious over death, because love never dies.

It's only by immersing ourselves in the events of Good Friday;

weighing the love given even to death,

that we discover the new life that bursts out of the tomb on Easter Sunday

## Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Prayers

## The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

## 475 Now the green blade riseth

### Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.  
Now and for ever.  
Amen.**

### Remembering the Lord's Supper

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

## 672 Thine be the glory

### Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**