

Our Sunday Service Together

Easter April 17th 2022



An Easter Acclamation

Praise be to God in the highest. It is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal Father, and especially in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts the memory of your wonderful works.

For by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son, has conquered the powers of death and hell and restored in men and women the image of your glory. He has placed them once more in paradise and opened to them the gate of life eternal.

And so earth and heaven resound with gladness, while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody Psalm 118.1-2 and 14-24 *We say the psalm aloud*

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.
Let Israel now proclaim, 'His mercy endures for ever.'

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

'The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted;
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.'

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.

The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading Acts 10.34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how 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. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not 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. ⁴²He 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. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel John 20.1-18

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. ² 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.' ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹² 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. ¹³ 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.' ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ 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.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ 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."' ¹⁸ 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.

at the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

No one had expected the events of Easter!

We see this, from the moment of the transfiguration, as Jesus begins to tell the disciples that he will die and be raised. These are dark and foreboding words that leave much perplexity, confusion, and concern about the words Jesus uses.

Even with these words no one had really expected Jesus to be arrested, to have been convicted and then crucified. And now, early in the morning there is more to be perplexed about – for no one expected the resurrection; not like this at least. Judaism did look forward with hope for the 'day of days' and the end of all

time when Israel would be raised by God en-masse to share the new heavens and earth. When they read the prophets' words they did not think for a moment of a single dead and buried person being transformed or re-embodied. But here it is, the future promise come crashing into the present.

This makes nonsense of claims that the story was little more than imagination at work, or grief giving rise to a story that would give hope rather than face the disappointment. Many folks in first century Judaism had hopes in God which were again and again dashed. None are recorded as having gone about saying their dream had come true, just differently than they expected it too. Except for those who followed Jesus of Nazareth; the one they were calling Messiah, the Christ.

That first morning of the week is not filled with instant faith and things clicking into place, but with ongoing perplexity at what is seen – angels, empty tomb, soldiers sleeping, grave clothes neatly folded, and a gardener. There are questions amidst the grief poured out; 'where have you taken my Lord?', says Mary as she looks through tear soaked eyes. If the tears blinded Mary to a recognition of who was before her, words seemed to work.

'Mary', is all that is needed and she replies to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!'. Why not in her, and Jesus' native language of Aramaic we may wonder? Might it be because she still does not recognise Jesus and think this is someone else. Probably not, for Jesus continues with words only he could say, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father.'

'Do not hold on to me' is better translated as 'do not keep clinging to me'. Mary has to let go of her personal relationship with the physical Jesus she knew and begin the task of embracing a new relationship, via the Spirit that would come after Jesus had ascended. For Mary, and for all following, there is a relationship with Jesus to be entered into, for whilst he is absent in body he is present by the power of His Spirit.

There is always a temptation to cling to what we have known in the past of God with us. Jesus calls Mary, he calls all of us instead to step forward and embrace the life that is come through him and is coming to us by the Power of the same Spirit that raised him from the dead. If we find ourselves unsure about the how of it all, or find we are struggling to get a clear picture of Christ before us, we are in good company.

Mary does let go and I wonder if this Easter morn we might also let go. Let go of the things of God past we cling to and venture forth in faith, and by the power of the Spirit, into the life of Kingdom that is both coming and already here, forwards into the resurrection life that will be ours in Christ, and by the seal of the Spirit already is a power at work within.

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers

We make our intercessions

We pray to Jesus who is present with us to eternity.

Jesus, light of the world, bring the light and peace of your gospel to the nations ...
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jesus, bread of life, give food to the hungry ... and nourish us all with your word.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jesus, our way, our truth, our life, be with us and all who follow you in the way ...
Deepen our appreciation of your truth and fill us with your life.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jesus, Good Shepherd who gave your life for the sheep, recover the straggler, bind up the injured, strengthen the sick and lead the healthy and strong to new pastures.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jesus, the resurrection and the life, we give you thanks for all who have lived and believed in you ...
Raise us with them to eternal life.
Merciful Father accept our prayers, for the sake of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Collect

All: 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. **Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.