

Our Sunday Service Together

Easter March 31st 2024



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 Mark 16.1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' ⁴ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' ⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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 *Revd John Webb writes*

The Gospel story is a developing drama with the climax coming to-day with the miracle of the resurrection. The whole of the gospel narrative and particularly Holy Week have been building up to this great climax. For the disciples Holy Week would have been an emotional roller-coaster like no other. Last Sunday, Palm Sunday, marked Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but that wasn't an isolated incident. For some time, Jesus and the disciples had been travelling from Gallilee. Jesus seems to have been determined to go to Jerusalem and confront the Jewish establishment in spite of his disciples trying to dissuade him. The Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem seemed to go well and he was welcomed by the crowd, although there was some confusion when he arrived on a humble donkey rather than the warlike stallion which would have been the mount for the expected messiah.

The disciples must have been relieved at that positive reception and the enthusiasm of the crowd. But they would have been worried the next day when he rampaged through the courtyard of the temple scattering the traders crying it is written 'My house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a Den of Thieves'. The very place where anybody should have expected to find God had been corrupted by the church leaders themselves. From now on the Chief Priests and scribes would spare no efforts in their determination to eliminate Jesus. But they didn't know how they could do it because he was popular with the crowds who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. This was solved when Judas offered to betray him quietly. Why Judas betrayed Jesus is one of the great unknowns of this story and the only consolation is that he did deeply regret it.

The next step in the unfolding drama is the very moving account of the Last Supper. Jesus gathers his

disciples around him for the Passover meal which was, and still is, the most important festival in the Jewish year. It must have been a very emotional time because they would all have known that the crisis would be soon. Jesus used it as an opportunity to encourage the disciples and prepare them for the future without him being with them as he had been for the last few years. In a dramatic demonstration of humility, he washed the disciples' feet. The Last Supper is valued by us because it is seen as the origin of the holy communion which has become our central act of worship.

After that events move fast with Jesus going to the Garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal, arrest and trial. The account of the trail/trails is confusing but there are two leading characters. Caiaphas, the high priest comes over as vindictive. Pilate is a tragic figure – he obviously respected Jesus and would like to have released him, but his own reputation was at stake so he gave in.

The account of the crucifixion is surprisingly low key considering how horrific it must have been. Jesus who had been so popular just a few days before was alone except for a very few of his closest friends and he even felt deserted by God. It was left to Joseph of Arimathea, about whom we know very little, to claim Jesus body and place in a tomb and seal it with the stone. To all concerned it looked like the end of the story – they went away totally dejected all their hopes and expectations dashed.

That was why the events of Easter Day was such a surprise. At first the mystery of an empty tomb then the gradual realisation that something very special and unique had happened. The forces of evil had done their worst, but Jesus, and all that he stood for, was not dead but had been released from the limitations of time and space. His Spirit would come upon the church. Two thousand years on we can look back to that event and give thanks for all those who have served him faithfully and live in hope that the love of God will prevail. He faced and overcame the forces of evil in his day. In his strength we can do the same to-day.

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*

O God of peace, who has taught us that in quietness and confidence shall be our strength; help us, as we come into your presence, to be still and know that you are God.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

On this Easter Sunday let us give thanks for the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus and pray that our faith will grow and develop. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Strengthen Michael our Bishop and all laity and clergy who seek to serve us in this diocese May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for Our King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through this difficult time. We pray for all the experts and scientists who have the difficult task of giving simple advice on complex issues. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food may be used for the benefit of all.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our schools, the children, teachers, and support staff. We pray for all those responsible for religious education that they may inspire those they teach. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill and risk their lives to care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. 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.