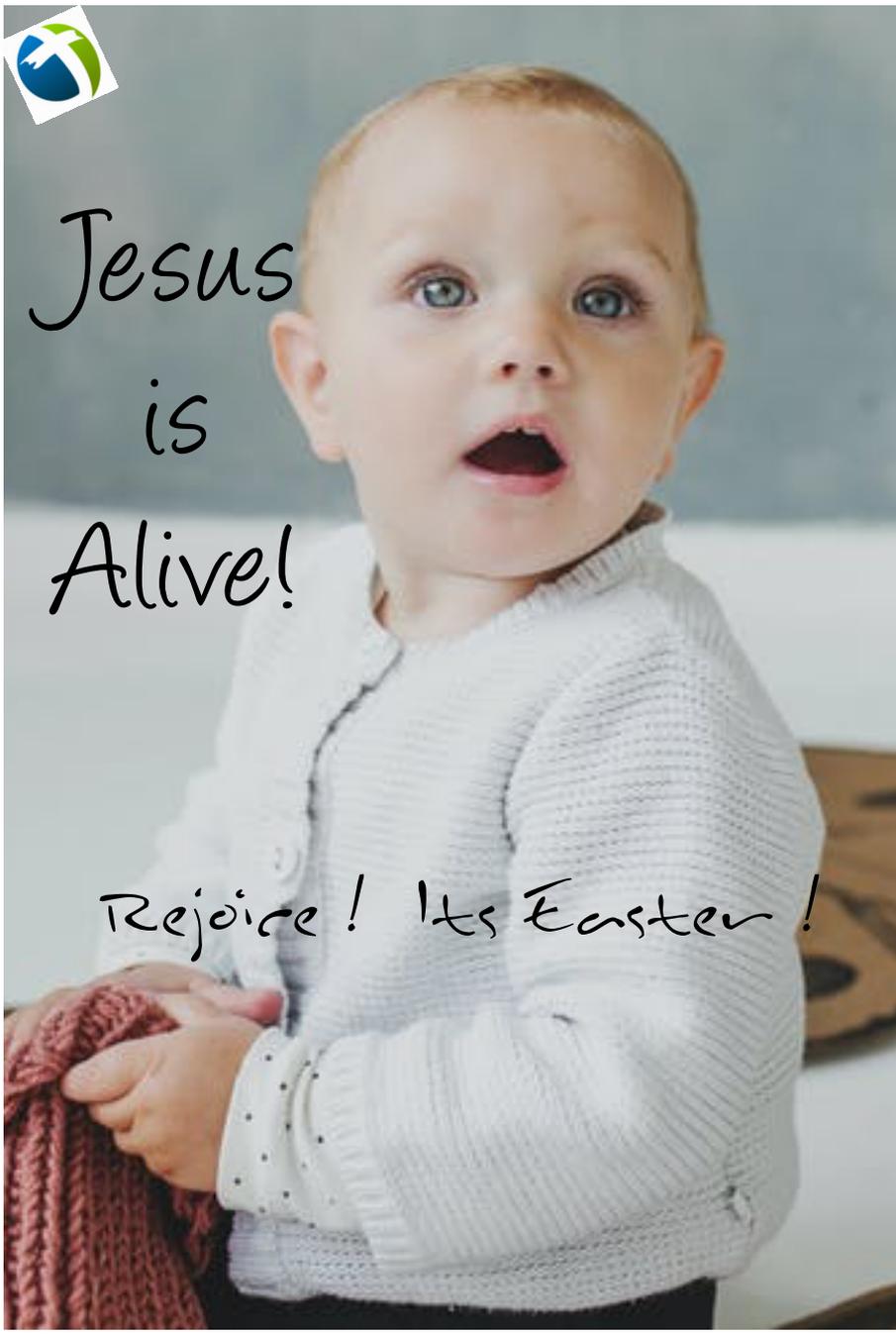




Jesus is Alive!

Rejoice! Its Easter!





Welcome to
Botley Baptist Church's
EASTER WORSHIP

12 April, 2020

We are not able to stream our worship service, but will try and make this time of worship special for you. Read it at your pace, sing along when you feel like it, pause when you feel the need to, and read the prayers as if they were your own.

Click on any text in **RED**. The music/hymn will open on YouTube. When it finishes, shut down YouTube and return to this. If this is not possible, please sing the hymns a cappella, or read it as poetry.

Our Great God enjoys our worship!

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I am the One who is, who always was, and who is to come - The Almighty One!”

Revelation 1:8

HYMN **Low in the Grave He lay**

*Please listen to this hymn as it is sung, as your opening meditation If you have Spotify, please click **HERE***

RECAP

Stop! Did you hear it?

The low rattle of the stone being rolled aside?

Did you hear it?

The shuffle of grave clothes being folded?

Did you see it?

The body rise from sleep?

Did you hear it?

The whispered gasp of “ALLELUIA!”, the voice of Angels in High Heaven?

They heard the stone rattle, the clothes shuffle and they saw Him walk out from the grave!

“HE HAS CONQUERED DEATH! ALLELUIA!”

PRAYER

Eternal and Majestic God! You are Lord of all our days! We come this morning with eager anticipation, to re-live the exciting moments when all Heaven rejoiced, that Jesus had conquered death. We re-live the moment Mary discovered the open tomb, empty! Impossible! That's what we say every day, when You surprise us Father, by drawing us to witness the impossible made possible.

Open our hearts this morning, and help us to say and believe, *There is nothing impossible with our LORD!* Open our minds and make us faithful witnesses of your resurrection, working in our lives, making us new. May we, join Angels' shouts of joy, proclaiming your death-liberating love!

AMEN.

SCRIPTURE READING

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone was rolled aside from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and

me and said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!" We ran to the tomb to see; I outran Peter and got there first, and stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but I didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went on inside. He also noticed the cloth lying there, while the swath that had covered Jesus' head was rolled up in a bundle and was lying at the side. Then I went in too, and saw, and believed that he had risen - for until then we hadn't realised the Scriptures said, He would come to life again!

The LORD's PRAYER

Listen reflectively as Andrea Bocelli sings the prayer. As he sings every proclamation, ask yourself, "Do I believe this Truth with all my heart, soul and mind?" If you do, praise God for giving you faith to do so.

SCRIPTURE READING

We went on home, and by that time Mary had returned to the tomb and was standing outside crying. And as she wept, she stooped and looked in and saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.

“Why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where they have put him!”

She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognise him!

“Why are you crying?” he asked her. “Whom are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener.

“Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

“Mary!” Jesus said. She turned toward him.

“Master!” she exclaimed

HYMN

HE LIVES! HE LIVES!

PRAYER

O Lord our God, we are blind! Open our eyes to see Your glory revealed through your Son Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to lead us into life eternal with the Father.

O Lord our God, we are deaf! Unplug our ears, to hear the power of your resurrection story.

O Lord our God, we are dumb! Set free our tongues to rejoice and sing with all the hosts of Heaven,

Holy, Holy, Holy is the One who transforms our world with the Holy Spirit:

Holy, Holy, Holy is the One who redeems and makes whole, all who respond:

Holy, Holy, Holy is the One in whose light we see all creation being made new. **AMEN**

SCRIPTURE READING

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message ("go find my brothers and tell them that I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.")

That evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors, in fear of the Jewish leaders, when suddenly Jesus was standing there among them! After greeting them, He showed them his hands and side. And how wonderful was their joy as they saw their Lord! He spoke to them again and said, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you refuse to forgive them, they remain unforgiven."

One of the disciples, Thomas, "The Twin," was not there at the time with the others. When they kept telling him, "We have seen the Lord," he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands—and put my fingers into them—and place my hand into his side."

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them and greeting them.

Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger into my hands. Put your hand into my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

“My Lord and my God!” Thomas said.

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. But blessed are those who haven’t seen me and believe anyway.”

Jesus’ disciples saw Him do many other miracles besides the ones told about in this book, but these are recorded so that you will believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing in him you will have life.

HYMN **Because He Lives**

MESSAGE

You must have heard it said, “The cross is the universal symbol of Christianity.” Those who created it, would have marvelled at its simplicity of design, which yielded *excruciating*¹ pain before eventual death. Strange don’t you think that an implement of torture the human race has ever

¹ from the late 16th century: Latin *excruciat*- ‘tormented’, from the verb *excruciare* (based on *crux*, *cruc*- ‘a cross’). i.e. **Tormented by the Cross**

devised², the Cross could be a symbol of hope?

God is sovereign over all things, including all that is evil. The simple design of the cross, one horizontal beam, the other vertical; together it conveys everything God wants to say to us, without a word being spoken:

The vertical beam is God's hand reaching down to us; we can never "reach" God, so He reaches down.

The horizontal beam is God's warm welcoming embrace.

The intersection of the horizontal and vertical beams is the CROSS, where God's Son, our Christ, stepped in, to rescue, validate and guarantee our relationship with the Father.

The horizontal beam reminds us of Christ's surrender of life unto death, because it was on either side of the horizontal beam, nails were driven into Jesus' hand. The vertical beam

² Probably originating with the Assyrians and Babylonians, it was used systematically by the Persians in the 6th century BC. Alexander the Great brought it from there to the eastern Mediterranean countries in the 4th century BC, and the Phoenicians introduced it to Rome in the 3rd century BC. (from website of *The National Centre for Biotechnology Information*)

reminds us of God's pain of separation from us, so He reaches down to us!

It is interesting that at the intersection of the cross, Christ looks up to the Father, looks down to draw us up in to the Father's presence, and looks across the horizontal beam, past the nails that hung Him there, across to the world, for whom He gave His life, knowing that His life was not lived in vain!

I have often felt that the open grave should be the symbol of our Christian faith as it symbolises victory of life over death, but I also believe the cross reminds us of God's love and Christ's suffering, the h-u-g-e emotional cost, the Father and the Son paid to free me from eternal death, to eternal life.

The world says, life ends with death. Our God says, only through death comes life!

Its your turn! Which will you believe and set as your standard for life?

AMEN

PRAYER

Lord our God, who lives in Eternity, for eternity! To you belongs ALL glory, for you have accomplished your desire of restoring us to you, through your Son, our Christ.

May we take from this Easter, lessons of Truth from the empty Cross, and joy from the empty tomb and build our lives on these. **AMEN**

HYMN **How Great Thou Art!**

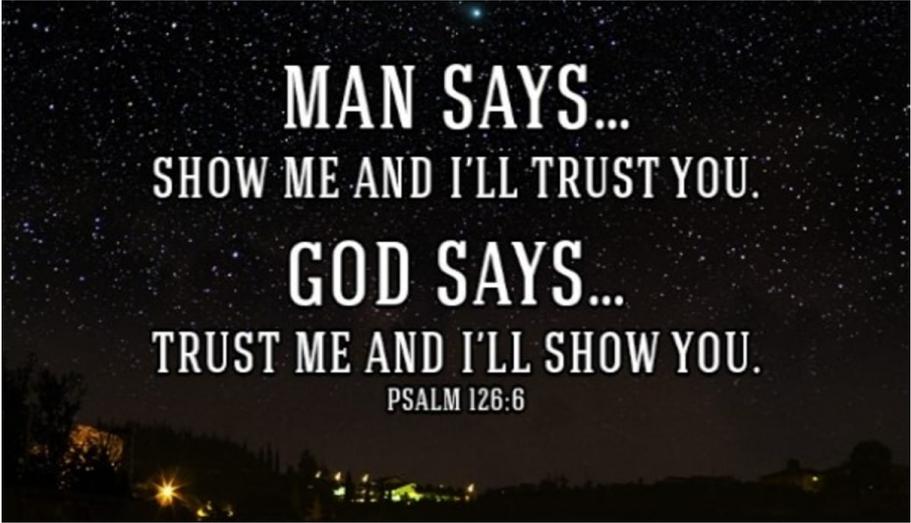
BENEDICTION

We were not eye-witnesses to the event, as were Mary and the disciples; we many not have run their distance, nor wept in the garden this morning because we could not find Him. **BUT** we attest to a story that has not lost its power since it was lived by One and many, through more than twenty centuries of change and conflict.

Our Church building may be closed, but our Church is alive in the community in which it is present! Go and **BE** the Church God has called us to be!

AMEN.

THE AUTHOR OF LIFE SAYS:



MAN SAYS...
SHOW ME AND I'LL TRUST YOU.

GOD SAYS...
TRUST ME AND I'LL SHOW YOU.

PSALM 126:6