

9th April, 2023

The paper-version Service



To Begin:

Find a Bible

and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: 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.**

Song:

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross,
Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing,
Alleluia!
unto Christ, our heavenly King,
Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave,
Alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save.
Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured,
Alleluia!
our salvation have procured;
Alleluia!
now above the sky he's King,
Alleluia!
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all ye heavenly host,
Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia!

The Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright

Hallelujah, Christ is risen; **He is risen indeed, hallelujah.**

Peter's sermon in Acts 10 is a great summary of the wonderful Good News of Jesus.

1. Who is Jesus?

Peter presents Jesus as the Lord of all. This is no demi-god of Roman or Greek myth, this is a true hero, the God of all, through whom all things were made and in whom all things hold together (See Colossians 1:15-20).

This God has come to us, in human form, in Jesus. This Jesus is anointed – the word 'Christ' or 'Messiah' means anointed. Jesus is not anointed with oil, the traditional method of setting a person apart as king or priest, but he is anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God lives in him and is seen through him in two extraordinary ways. Firstly, Jesus does good. This contrasts with the 'gods' of the age who typically were seeking their pleasure, not giving to others. Secondly, Jesus acts with power, performing miracles that release others from the power of evil. There is no dualism or battle such as, again, found in the 'pagan' religions – Jesus is LORD!

2. Jesus is killed!

In the light of the person of Jesus presented by Peter, this news is truly shocking. And even more shocking is that we are implicated in his death. People like us, killed him by crucifixion.

3. But God raised him from the dead

Jesus was seen by witnesses (500 at one time Paul tells us - 1 Corinthians 15:3-8) this was no illusion, or wishful thinking. Many of these witnesses were tortured and executed for their belief in Jesus, Peter included. They were transformed by their experience of the risen Christ, from frightened disillusionment to courageous preachers of Christ, who testified to the truth of Jesus' physical resurrection. He ate and drank with these first witnesses. And we are witnesses today as he lives with us by his Spirit – and we too are commanded to preach and testify to Christ the Lord.

4. Jesus is appointed judge Peter's final point is probably wrongly less mentioned:

'He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.' (verse 42). It is less popular to talk of Jesus the judge, than Jesus who loves us. But love is not just soft and squishy, like a pink fluffy heart-shaped cushion. Love is also tough.

Love wants the best for us, even when we don't want the best for ourselves. A loving parent gives their children good things, but will refuse to give in to every request for more chocolate, more fizzy drink, more tv, etc, etc. And a loving parent will set boundaries for a child's best, which like a fence around a garden keeps danger out and creates a safe place to explore and play. That same loving parent will need to reinforce these boundaries, meaning that there will be consequences for deliberate disobedience. Sometimes the consequences are a direct result of the danger created, sometimes there will be supporting disciplines.

Ultimately, there can be a complete breaking of the relationship of trust and love. This breach is seen in the prodigal child who abandons his father and household. God will seek and search, as in the lost sheep and the lost coin, and God will wait as in the prodigal son (see Luke 15). There is a way back, but not all will accept it (see Matthew 7:13-14). God will judge us based on our actions, which reveal our faith and the direction of our love, that is, the location of our hearts (see Matthew 6:19-21, and 7:33).

Conclusion:

The result of Peter's sermon, even before he reached the conclusion was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The result of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, an anointing upon us.

We are sanctified by Jesus' death, his blood, and the work of the Holy Spirit. We are put right with God, forgiven our sins, and enabled to receive eternal life. And we are equipped to tell others of the good news of peace.

The resurrection validates everything Jesus says, we have access to God the Father, through the Son and by the Holy Spirit, and we are commissioned to share this news with all. God saves from sin, from guilt and shame, and from death forever and the proof is the empty tomb!

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Easter Sunday: God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.* **Amen.**

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 19th April at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26th April at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.