

Easter Sunday 4th April 2021

Easter comes with the dawn. Daybreaks of light and new life

Opening Prayer

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Glory to you, O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

We praise and worship you the living God. And say together the prayer that Jesus taught his followers:

Our Father

Bible Reading John 20.11-18

Reflection

Mary's grief is strong enough to draw her to the place where she can be as close as possible to Jesus' body. She is shocked to find the tomb open, the body missing, so she runs to tell the disciples. Peter and John hear her story and run to the tomb to see for themselves. And then they go home.

But Mary stays. She has experienced a double loss, the death of her beloved rabbi and now his body is gone. She weeps in grief and bewilderment. She only recognises the person behind her when he calls her by name. Could it be? It is the Lord! She wants to give him a hug, but he holds back and says, don't cling to me for I haven't yet returned to the Father. This suggests from now on she will have a different relationship with him – a spiritual rather than earthly friendship.

How many times have we heard people during the pandemic say, 'I just want to have a hug with so-and-so? a parent in a Care Home, a new grandchild, a sibling, a dear friend. Those who could only visit relatives in care homes through a glass window, those who couldn't visit family members who live far away and the limited family numbers who were permitted to gather for the funeral of a loved one but couldn't share memories at a wake have all found restrictions unnatural. The hardest thing about Covid restrictions has been the lack of human and social contact with others.

We may not be able to shake hands and hug and kiss each other on the cheek at the moment, but we can share in our mutual celebration of Christ's resurrection from death, overcoming injustice and death to bring peace and wholeness for all.

We may not be able to see Jesus in the flesh, but we can know that he is alive in our hearts and in the world through his Spirit. We have assurance that disease and

death will not have the final word – that he came to bring new life – life unrestricted by our many physical human limitations. We can see his work in the world bringing healing and hope to so many through the work of nurses, doctors, carers, charities, and government financial aid. We can see positive signs of new life in the vaccinations, in care of neighbours and in the building of community in our congregation and in our towns and villages.

We do not know what the future will look like, and we know that we will never be the same, yet we know that we have learned new things – how to use new technology and how to keep in touch even when we cannot gather in person. We've learned that we need each other and God in our lives to have meaning and purpose, and a strong sense of belonging to you and to each other. AMEN

HOLY COMMUNION

The Peace

On this night, our Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples:
'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

THE THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Lord our God , . . .

In communion with your faithful people in every time and place
we join with all creation in the eternal hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We praise you that we are here today, around the table of Jesus.

We have heard the good news of your love; the cross is the sign of your arms stretched out in love for us and the empty tomb declares your love stronger than death.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

Send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine, and upon your people, that Christ may be with us and we may be made ready to live for you and to do what you ask of us, today, and every day to come.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord,
In the power of the Holy Spirit
In the love of the Creator of all
One God to whom be glory and praise forever.
AMEN.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God you have fed us generously at the table, as we have remembered Jesus' death and resurrection and rejoiced that he is with us today.

We are ready now to follow him, and to be your people in the world.

May your Holy Spirit show us the way, make us holy and fill us with love.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

BLESSING & DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord as we love and serve each other.

And the blessing of God, Three in One

be with you and remain with you always.

AMEN.