



Worship at Home – Easter Sunday - Sunday 20th April 2025

Opening Prayer

This is the Good News - the grave is empty, Christ is risen. **Hallelujah!**

This is the Good News - the light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never put it out.

Hallelujah!

This is the Good News - once we were no people, now we are God's people. **Hallelujah!**

Christ is our peace, the indestructible peace we share.

StF no. 298 *Christ the Lord is risen today*

1 Christ the Lord is risen today;
Alleluia!

All creation joins to say:

Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high;

Alleluia!

Sing, you heavens; let earth, reply:

Alleluia!

2 Love's redeeming work is done,
Alleluia!

Fought the fight, the battle won;

Alleluia!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;

Alleluia!

Christ has burst the gates of hell:

Alleluia!

3 Lives again our glorious King;
Alleluia!

Where, O death, is now your sting?

Alleluia!

Once He died our souls to save;

Alleluia!

Where's your victory, boasting grave?

Alleluia!

4 Soar we now where Christ has led,
Alleluia!

Following our exalted Head;

Alleluia!

Made like Him, like Him we rise;

Alleluia!

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies:

Alleluia!

5 King of Glory! Soul of bliss! Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
You to know, Your power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love: Alleluia!

Charles Wesley

A prayer of adoration

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. Glory to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.** (MWB p.160)

A prayer of confession

We are sorry, Lord, for the times when we stay in the tomb of our lack of belief and fill it with our fear. Forgive us, and release us to be your witnesses in your world today.

We are sorry for the times we are sceptical when others share the power of the Resurrection in their lives. Forgive us, and release us to be your witnesses in your world today.

We are sorry for the times when we live as if there were no Easter. Forgive us, and release us to be your witnesses in your world today. **Amen.**

Jesus is alive, death is overcome, he is your one true Son, and we are freed from sin. **Jesus is alive!** Our new lives can begin, on this joyful Easter Day, so let us rejoice; **Jesus is alive! Alleluia! Amen.**

Reading from the Old Testament: *Isaiah 25:6 - 9*

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine— the best of meats and the finest of wines. ⁷ On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. ⁹ In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Gospel Reading: *Luke 24:1- 12*

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Message

We live in an age of social media and conspiracy theories, as well as fake news. If that were not difficult enough for us, now there is AI (Artificial Intelligence) – robots and computers that can copy exactly what someone does, how they speak and act, and more worryingly, how they think. What are we to believe in this difficult, troubled, strange world of ours?

Is it that the truth is just too fantastic and amazing to believe? Is it that people are stubborn to change their opinions? Or are they challenged by the constant flow of different understanding? What are the subtle and underlying opinions and ways of thinking that stop us all from hearing truth, and adjusting our world view, or our lives accordingly?

So, as today, we read the gospel story and we see that the women, who went to the tomb out of devotion and love for Jesus, found it almost impossible to believe that he was raised from the dead. Then we discover that a group of men didn't believe them - something I'm sure the women were used to! We also reflect that powerful emotions were also at play - grief at Jesus' recent, unfair and dreadful death, and fear - at finding two men in white in the tomb instead of his body. No wonder there was confusion! But we also have to remember that we are reading a story written by Luke - an educated man, an intelligent author, and a Christian wanting to convince his readers of the truth that he knew - Jesus was alive and had been raised from the dead. Luke wrote his stories very skilfully, for, like all the gospel writers he invites us, his readers across the centuries, into the stories.

I have no doubt that those early Christians, as we are today, were convinced of the resurrection of Jesus not by an empty tomb (you can't argue anything by starting with nothing!) but by their experience of Jesus being alive - he mysteriously met them in their worship, he walked with them in prayer, and His Spirit continued the work of the Kingdom of God - making people whole, empowering the downtrodden, and changing and transforming lives with the Love of God.

There have always been conspiracy theories about the body of Jesus, but none of them mean anything up against the evidence of Christian people living out their faith, praying for their communities and their enemies, and standing by and loving the people who hurt the most and are most in need of love's security, and hope. And that's our hard job and difficult calling - knowing the risen Christ for ourselves, as well as the journeys of fear, guilt, and disbelief, we can live the resurrection and pray for a transformed world in the day and age in which we live. Happy Easter! **Amen**

Prayers of intercession

Lord Jesus, thank you that you went to the cross for us. Thank you that you love us so much that you willingly suffered all the pain and horror so that we might have a relationship with God. We rejoice that the curtain of separation was torn in two as you died, reconciling us to God. Thank you for love beyond measure. For us. Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Thank you, Lord, for the tremendous victory of the resurrection. Thank you for the hope, the joy, the fulfilment, the everlasting life that your rising brings. Words cannot fully express the amazing triumph of that silent moment in the garden when you once again began to breathe. Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord, we thank you for signs of resurrection in our own lives: perhaps something new learnt, a chance for rest and relaxation, a new job, a new member of the family, a recovery. We pause now to thank you for special times that we have recently experienced...

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord Jesus, as the women came to the tomb in sorrow, their eyes full of tears, we are aware of so much sorrow still in our world. We lift to you now all the places where conflict exists - between nations, between factions, between families, between partners. We bring to you our suffering planet: where the beauty you have created is being squeezed by humanity's selfishness and greed. We bring to you all those who are in pain: those we know and love who are sick, full of sorrow, loneliness or despair. Lord, we deeply desire that your resurrected presence will fill those people and places of pain and redeem them, bringing the new life that is so dearly needed. Touch every heart with your eternal love, filling each seemingly hopeless situation with the promise of resurrected, everlasting hope.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord, the news of your rising was so amazing that even your closest friends struggled to believe it at first. We pray for all those we know who struggle to believe and trust in you. We ask you to help them ponder the evidence, just like Peter did, and to think seriously about what they see. Help us to show them, by our joy at your resurrection, that new life in Jesus is for everyone, for ever.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

As we celebrate your victory, Lord, go before us this week into every situation we face. Give us new eyes to encounter your freshness and new life. Help us to remember that your resurrection is for ever,

not just for one day. Thank you for being alive in us now. Breathe your Spirit into our hearts this week so that we may be faithful witnesses to all that you are and all that you have done.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

We offer all our prayers in and through the name of the risen Christ, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

StF no. 313 *Thine be the glory*

1 Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where Thy body lay:

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.*

2 Lo, Jesus meets us,
risen from the tomb;
lovingly He greets us,
scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth,
death hath lost its sting:
Thine be the glory, ...

3 No more we doubt Thee,
glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught without Thee:
aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors
through Thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to Thy home above:
Thine be the glory, ...

CCL 821965 Edmond Budry translated by Richard Birch Hoyle

Benediction

Risen Lord, give us a heart for the simple things: love, laughter, bread and wine and dreams.
Give us a green growing hope, and make us a people whose song is Alleluia, whose name is love,
whose sign is peace.

Go forward today in joy and trust, In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Original materials adapted and arranged by Sue Taylor