

17 April 2022 Easter Sunday

Hymn 370 Christ the Lord is Risen today

The Lord is Risen **The Lord is Risen indeed**

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also with you.

Sentence

The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia! 1 Corinthians 5.7–8

Prayer of Preparation

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.

'Hear, o Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. 'And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.

Collect

God of glory, fill your Church with the power that flows from Christ's resurrection, that, in the midst of this sinful world, it may signal the beginning of a renewed humanity, raised to new life with Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Isaiah 65:17-25

¹⁷ For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.

²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

²³ They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD— and their descendants as well.

²⁴ Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain says the LORD.

Hymn of the Risen Christ

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us: *so let us celebrate the feast, Not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* Christ once raised from the dead dies no more: *Death has no more dominion over him.* In dying he died to sin once for all: *in living he lives to God.* See yourselves therefore as dead to sin: *and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.* Christ has been raised from the dead: *the firstfruits of those who sleep.* For as by one man came death: *by another has come also the resurrection of the dead;* For as in Adam all die: *even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, ^[b] when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Luke 24:1-12

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them.

⁵ The women^[b] were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.

⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." ⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.

¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Sermon

The Creed

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the world and for the church.

God in whom we trust and hope, save us when we call on you.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn 382 Now the Green Blade Rises

Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving

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.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin,
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

And now we give you thanks that you raised him to life triumphant and exalted him in glory.

By his victory over death, the reign of sin is ended, a new day has dawned,
a broken world is restored and we are made whole once more.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

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

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us.

Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen

The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, giver of life, in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.

May we who celebrate this holy feast walk in his risen light and bring new life to all creation.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Blessing

Almighty God, who redeemed us through the resurrection of Christ, [who raised us to newness of life through the waters of baptism,] and has brought us out of slavery into everlasting freedom, give you joy and peace in faith and bring you to your eternal inheritance; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

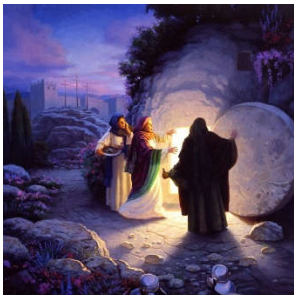
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**



The Lord is Risen, The Lord is risen indeed.

The reading from Luke is slightly different from the ones we are most used to, the tomb is empty, but we don't actually see the Risen Lord in this reading. We know that Jesus is Risen but Jesus' followers do not believe at this point, despite the fact that Jesus had told them on several occasions that he would rise from the dead.

In those days, most people believed that one day there would be a mass resurrection, sometime in the future: God would raise everyone who was deserving, all the oppressed and all God's people. We shouldn't be surprised at how stunned they were that first Easter morning. It wasn't just a lack of faith; it was simply that nobody had even dreamed that one single person could be killed and then raised to a new sort of bodily life the other side of the grave, while the rest of the world just continued.



The women come to the tomb to anoint the body because on Friday there had been no time before the Sabbath started at sunset, to anoint Jesus' body. Joseph of Arimathea had very quickly put the body into the nearest tomb. These women probably spend the whole Sabbath fretting and at the first possible moment they come with their spices and ointments to anoint the body. They are going to the tomb to do the last thing they can do for their beloved friend.

I wonder if Mary was comforted that Jesus had commended her for anointing his feet the week before, saying *'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial'*.



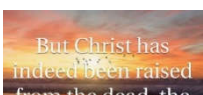
In the midst of tending to the necessary chores, especially the things that need to be done in the hard times, the women were met by the experience of God's grace. Sometimes faith means going on and tending to the necessary chores.

Prepare the spices, go to the grave, tell the others, even when they think it an idle tale, do the housework, go to work, do what needs to be done. If we are faithful in the tasks that are ours and do the necessary jobs, we too may be bearers of the good news of the day, and we will also receive the grace of God.



If Luke had been making up a story, long after the event, as some people have suggested, he would not have had women going first to the tomb (women were not regarded as credible witnesses); and he would have had the apostles believe the story at once, ready to be models of faith and lead the young church. But in the real world, it seemed to them a silly dream. Exactly the sort of things (they thought) that you'd expect from

women crazy with grief and lack of sleep. When people are making up stories, they want the most believable witnesses, and they want the heroes to look good and do the right things.



Luke did not make this story up. The truth of this story is the heart of the Christian faith. As Paul, said to the Corinthians 'If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.'²⁰ But Christ has indeed



been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.' If this story is not true then our whole lives are a sham, there is not point in anything we do because our whole faith is based on the fact that Jesus died for our failings and rose again.

The two heavenly messengers at the empty tomb report that Jesus has been raised from the dead. They simply state, '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.

Jesus is not contained in the tomb, he is alive. Ready and able to continue God's work but in his resurrection body which could and would be in a specific place or everywhere as needed. The verb translated here as 'he is risen' is actually a passive verb because Jesus did not do the work himself but was the passive recipient of the power. Jesus was raised by God.

If Jesus had died to save us but had not come to life again it would have all been in vain, the two events are so inescapably linked that neither can be considered without the other. It is not just that someone died for us, but that Jesus was perfect, it is not just that someone was raised from the dead, but that God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus is God's response to Jesus 'death; God's vindication of Jesus, God saying that everything the Jesus did in his earthly lifetime: his preaching, his love for the poor and the outcast, everything was exactly right.

Jesus had trusted God and believed that it would happen plus told his disciples, but they did not understand or believe him.



The women tell the remaining eleven disciples what they had seen but the men dismiss the story as nonsense. However, Peter, dear impetuous Peter, takes his guilty soul and runs to the tomb. When he gets there, he finds an empty tomb, a few grave cloths, no heavenly messengers, no body, and he went away wondering to himself what had happened. It will be a few days later that Peter meets the risen Lord and gets to restore his relationship and cleanse his spirit but this day all he can do is wonder.

While the gospels all affirm that the tomb was empty, they all point beyond it to the post resurrection appearances. For all the importance of the historical data, the gospels ground our faith not on the stone that was rolled away, or the linen cloths left behind, but on the presence of the risen Lord in human experience.

It is not the persuasive power of the empty tomb but a personal encounter with the risen Lord that leads to faith. It was that way for Mary, Peter and Thomas and the other



disciples, it is that way for us. We may search the empty tomb, whether literally or in memory or our imagination, not in order to run scientific tests on the evidence for the resurrection but in meditation and praise, because we have met the risen Christ in our own

experience.

From the beginning, the gospel is good news not least because it dares to tell us things we didn't expect, weren't inclined to believe and couldn't understand. Did we expect that gospel would be something obvious, something we could have dreamed up ourselves?

The mood of That Easter morning is one of surprise, astonishment, fear and confusion. Yes, Jesus did say this would happen, but the disciples didn't know what was going on, what it all meant or what would happen next. The resurrection was a surprise for them and in many senses a surprise for us. Easter is always a surprise whether we meet it in celebrating the feast itself, or in the sudden surges of God's grace overturning tragedy in our own lives or in the world.

As we reflect on the meaning of the empty tomb, we reflect that the messengers told us: he is not in the tomb, he has risen. Alleluia

