

Welcome

Christ the Lord is risen today

Christ the Lord is risen today: Hallelujah!
Let the whole creation say: Hallelujah!
Raise your joys and triumphs high: Hallelujah!
Sing now, heaven, and earth reply: Hallelujah!

Love's redeeming work is done; Hallelujah!
fought the fight, the battle won; Hallelujah!
vain the stone, the watch, the seal: Hallelujah!
Christ has burst the gates of hell. Hallelujah!

Lives again our glorious king; Hallelujah!
where, O death, is now your sting? Hallelujah!
Once he died our souls to save; Hallelujah!
where your victory, O grave? Hallelujah!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Hallelujah!
following our exalted Head; Hallelujah!
made like him, like him we rise: Hallelujah!
ours the cross, the grave, the skies. Hallelujah!

Greeting

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Christ is Risen. **He is risen indeed**

Sentence of the Day

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.
Mark 16:6

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.'

Lord, have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit

Prayer of the Day

Living God,
Long ago, faithful women proclaimed the good news of Jesus' resurrection, and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them, that our witness may be as bold, our love as deep, and our faith as true. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶ 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; ⁸ 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.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

¹ Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

² **Let Israel now say, “His mercy endures forever.”**

¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation.

¹⁵ **The voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.**

¹⁶ The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

¹⁷ **I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the LORD.**

¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me severely, But He has not given me over to death.

¹⁹ **Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD.**

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD, Through which the righteous shall enter.

²¹ **I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.**

²² The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ **This was the LORD’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.**

²⁴ **This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

Acts 10:36-43

³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹ “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Mark 16:1-20

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

^{16.1} When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶ “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’” ⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. ⁹ When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. ¹² Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. ¹³ These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. ¹⁴ Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. ¹⁵ He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their

hands on sick people, and they will get well.”¹⁹ After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.²⁰ Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

This is the gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon Mark 16:1-20 -Jesus is Risen!

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. 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.

Offering

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

Blessed be God forever.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we who would come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ must consider how St Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves before presuming to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For the benefit is great, if with a penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament. We then spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and he in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

Yet also the danger is great if we receive the bread and cup unworthily. Judge yourselves therefore, that you be not judged of the Lord. Repent truly of your sins, having a steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour. Amend your lives and love your neighbour.

Above all, give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, truly God and truly human, who humbled himself to death on the cross for us sinners, that he might make us children of God, and raise us to eternal life.

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we acknowledge with shame the sins we have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us.

We earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for all our misdoings. Have mercy on us, most merciful Father. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him: have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear the words of assurance for those who truly turn to Christ:

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the perfect offering for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2

Hymn TIS 314 The day of resurrection! earth, tell it out abroad;

**The day of resurrection! earth, tell it out abroad;
the passover of gladness, the passover of God:
from death to life eternal, from earth up to the sky,
our Christ has brought us over with hymns of victory.**

**Our hearts be pure from evil that we may see aright
the Lord in rays eternal of resurrection light;
and listening to his greeting may hear, so calm and strong,
his own 'All hail' and, hearing, may raise the victors' song.**

**Now let the heav'ns be joyful and earth her song repeat,
the whole world shout in triumph her living Lord to greet;
let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord has risen, our joy that has no end.**

The 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.**

It is indeed right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, Might Creator and Eternal God.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your son Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the true passover lamb who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death; by his rising to life again he has restored to us eternal life.

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 hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Glory to you, O Lord most high.**

Prayer of Approach

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.

All glory to you, our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross for our redemption: who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that we who receive these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New lookCovenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' Amen.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord.

After Communion

Almighty and everliving God, we heartily thank you that you graciously feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus assure us of your favour and goodness towards us and that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of your eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of your dear Son. And we humbly beseech you, heavenly Father, so to assist us with your grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as you have prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end.

Hymn TIS 380 Yours be the glory

Refrain

**Yours be the glory Risen conquering Son
Endless is the victory Over death You've won**

**Yours be the glory Risen conquering Son
Endless is the victory over death You've won
Angels in bright raiment Rolled the stone away
Kept the folded grave clothes Where Your body lay. Refrain**

**See 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 is living Death has lost its sting. Refrain**

**No more we doubt You Glorious prince of life
Life is naught without You Aid us in our strife
Make us more than conquerors Through Your deathless love
Bring us safe through Jordan To Your home above. Refrain**

Notices

Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord 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.**

Sermon

The constant refrain of the early church was: Jesus is risen. He has risen indeed.

Let's try it: Jesus is risen. **He has risen indeed.**

It is a strange claim to base the establishment of a new church. Let's face it, the almost unanimous human experience is that people who are really dead do not come back to life. Perhaps sometimes people who are only apparently dead, but in reality are only asleep or unconscious, sometimes these people are revived. But they are only revived for a time, but invariably eventually die, and they really die, and they don't rise that time.

Even in the Bible there are only a very small number of examples of people that do not really die.

In Genesis 5:23-24, there is a rather obscure case of Enoch. It says²³ *Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years.*²⁴ *Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.* The letter to the Hebrews tells us: *By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away."* For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. We know precisely nothing else about Enoch.

Elijah the prophet in the Old Testament did not die either. He and his mate Elisha were walking when they saw chariots and horsemen of fire, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. The prophet Malachi said Elijah would come back before the last days, and he came back as John the Baptist. John certainly died properly when King Herod had his head chopped off.

Yet, despite the universal lack of anyone rising from death, the first Christians claimed that Jesus really died, and rose from a very real death, and did not die again, but ascended into heaven in bodily form.

As I said, this is a strange claim on which to base a religion, but Jesus's followers insisted on it, so let's look at it a little closer.

Firstly, they claimed Jesus really died. Many have tried to claim that Jesus didn't really die, but only fainted or swooned. The Islamic Koran specifically claims this, and claims that the cold of the tomb revived him. However, this doesn't gel with what we know of Roman crucifixions and executioners. The Roman soldiers who executed Jesus made sure he was dead. Normally, executed criminals suffocate when they run out of strength to hold themselves up on the nails through their feet. If they take too long to die, the soldiers would break their leg bones, and they would then die very quickly. In Jesus's case, the soldiers were sent to do this, and found Jesus already dead, but rammed a spear into his side to make absolutely sure. We can be absolutely sure that Jesus was dead. If he wasn't, the soldiers and those who put him in the tomb would know.

So, we know he died, but how do we know he was alive again.

In our gospel this morning, women went to the tomb to properly prepare his body for burial. The fact that it was women is telling, if anyone wanted a story that Jesus had risen to be believed, they wouldn't have made women the first witnesses. Women just weren't considered reliable witnesses - in those days.

In any case, the first thing they found was that the heavy stone that had blocked entry to the tomb had miraculously been rolled away. No Roman soldier would have dared defy his officers to do this at risk of the death penalty. They were supposed to be guarding the tomb, and they wouldn't

have let anyone else in, because they were stationed there to ensure none did. They were watching for people to come to the tomb, but no one did - Jesus just went out, probably while they were asleep!

When the women got there, the stone was removed, and Jesus's body was gone. An angel said Jesus had risen, and was going ahead of them into Galilee where they would see him, and they did. From our reading from Mark this morning we know that after the women, two men saw Jesus - presumably Cleopas and another on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. Mark says he also appeared to the 11 remaining apostles. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he said that more than 500 people saw Jesus after he had risen, and most of them were still alive when Paul wrote his letter. So there were a lot of people who witnessed the risen Jesus.

The thing is, he didn't just appear to these people, he also told them to *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*¹⁶ *Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

What's more, the people who saw him did preach that he had risen - and they kept doing this at great personal cost. They proclaimed the risen Jesus even as many, including Stephen and James, were martyred, or killed for their trouble. In fact, early Christian tradition holds that 10 of the original 12 apostles were martyred - basically all of them were killed by people who didn't like them preaching that Jesus had risen from the dead. All of them except Judas (who committed suicide), and John (who somehow lived to an old age on the Island of Patmos) - and yet Christians kept on preaching this. They could have saved their lives by notg preaching Jesus, but something obviously motivated them to preach, because verse 20 of our reading today says ²⁰ Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

As they preached signs accompanied them: they drove out demons; they spoke in new tongues; ¹⁸ they picked up snakes with their hands; and when they drank deadly poison, it did not hurt them at all; and they placed their hands on sick people, and they got well."

But it was not these miracles that motivated the early believers to preach the risen Christ. These signs only strengthened the resolve they had to preach the risen Christ they had seen with their own eyes, or had been seen by people they personally knew. They were absolutely certain that Jesus had died, had risen from the dead, was taken up into heaven and he sits at the right hand of God.

These apostles were certain of this truth so much that they were prepared to die for it, and most of them did.

We too can be certain of this truth as well. No one has ever found any remains of Jesus's body, and no one ever will, despite the demonstrably false hoaxes that keep cropping up from time to time. The witness of Jesus's followers is an unbroken chain over the last two thousand years, despite their constant persecution and the real and successful threats to their lives. This chain guarantees for us the certainty of Jesus's resurrection, and guarantees for us the certainty of the eternal life he promises those who believe in him.

It is with certainty that we can join the great refrain of the early Christians:

Jesus Christ is Risen - He is risen indeed! Hallelujah