

Worship for Fleet URC & Beacon Hill URC

Sunday 4th April 2021 – Easter Sunday

With Holy Communion



Led by Karen Smith

Opening music: He has Risen

Reading: Isaiah 25: 6 -9 read by Tom Dean

The Message

6 But here on this mountain, God-of-the-Angel-Armies will throw a feast for all the people of the world, A feast of the finest foods, a feast with vintage wines, a feast of seven courses, a feast lavish with gourmet desserts. **7** And here on this mountain, God will banish the pall of doom hanging over all peoples, the shadow of doom darkening all nations. **8** Yes, he'll banish death forever. And God will wipe the tears from every face. He'll remove every sign of disgrace from his people, wherever they are. Yes! God says so!

9 Also at that time, people will say, "Look at what's happened! This is our God! We waited for him and he showed up and saved us! This God, the one we waited for! Let's celebrate, sing the joys of his salvation.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

Welcome & Gathering Prayer

O God of all our days,
we come this morning with eager anticipation.
We seek to know you, to see you, to touch you.
Open our hearts,
that we might experience you anew.
Open our lives,
that we may be faithful witnesses
to your resurrection.
May we, with shouts of joy,
proclaim your steadfast, liberating love
to all people, everywhere. Amen.

Call to worship

Out of the darkness of grief and despair
comes a message of hope. Christ is risen.

Christ is risen, indeed.

We run to the tomb to see for ourselves.
And it is true. Christ is risen.

Christ is risen, indeed.

We hear a voice call our name,
and we know our risen Lord
is with us now and always.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen, indeed.

Thanks be to God.

—adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2006*, © 2005
Abingdon Press. Posted on the [Ministry Matters](#) website.

Hymn: Jesus Christ is risen today
Sung by Newcastle Virtual Choir
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 that He endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation hath procured, Alleluia!
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Confession

Written by Diane Robinson The Vine at Home ©
Twelvebaskets 2021

Lord Jesus Christ, we can only begin to imagine the wonder and relief in Mary's eyes as she met your living presence in the Garden on that first Easter morning, and ran to share the Good News with the other disciples.

We, too, want to feel that excitement as we celebrate that Jesus who was dead is alive, that good is stronger than evil, that love is stronger than hatred, that life is stronger than death and that you, Lord, are with us to the end of time. On this day of light and gladness we come to worship you.

As we look at the cross – we see that it points upwards to our Creator God, downwards to men, but it points outwards too. Holy Spirit help us to express our worship in your world today by reaching out to others, by reflecting Jesus' compassion and by sharing God's amazing love in all the ways we can.

And as we draw nearer to you in worship, our Living Lord, we want to say sorry for all the times we forget or ignore your living presence with us. For those times when we allow our own selfish wants to dominate our thoughts and rule our lives. For all those times we have been uncaring and unwilling to forgive others, Lord, please forgive us.

Hear God's words of love and mercy, your sins are forgiven.

The Lord hears our prayer,

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, read by Pam Hudson
hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Reading: **John 20: 1 – 18** read by Tom Dean

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” **3** So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. **4** Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, **7** as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. **8** Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. **9** (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) **10** Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb **12** and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. **13** They asked her, “Woman, why are you

crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” **14** At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). **17** Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” **18** Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God: Alleluia!

Reflection

Jesus Christ is Risen today! We have sung that this morning; we have said responses saying Christ is Risen indeed! He is risen. In our life times we have probably read and said it in countless hymns, prayers and poems on the Easter Sundays we have celebrated. He is risen.

Nowhere does it say ‘he may be risen’ or ‘he may still be alive’. It simply says he is risen. These are astounding words, these three words. Their very simplicity makes them so compelling

and significant because they summarise our faith; they are so life changing, hope giving, reassuring, reaffirming, faith restoring, faith growing.

Easter is a time of hopeful joy. Not just because of all the Easter eggs which are consumed; not just because of the Easter chickens which look fluffy and cuddly. Not just because the daffodils and spring flowers adorn the countryside and gardens. It is more than that because the words 'He is risen,' declare Jesus Christ is alive in the world.

We all have our own traditions around Easter—Easter egg hunts, family lunches, Easter flowers, and worship. Last year, we thought those traditions would not be the same, just that once, but here we are again, easing our way out of another lockdown that has been testing, tiring and has meant many have missed seeing family and friends for long periods of time. Like last year though, we still believe that just like every Easter before, the sun will rise, and something will be different.

Easter is a day of new beginnings and new life. We have celebrated Seeds of Hope throughout Lent in our services, on our web sites, in our Lent group and Prayer time. Visiting preachers have been delighted to embrace the focus we have had and found seeds of hope in the texts they have explored with us- because they could see them there when they too looked deeply into the situations and words of those Scriptures. In one of our Lent group meetings, we thought about how those looking in see Christian worship and whether they see the joy and rejoicing that faith and salvation mean to

us. We concluded, probably not. Well, today of all days is the day to transcend that impression and express the wonder and joy we feel.

I want to share some words I shared last Easter, as they still ring true in 2021:

‘May your morning be holy. May it be joyful. May it be a celebration. May it be whatever it is you need on this day. For even though we cannot be near one another as a church family at this time, God always draws near to us. Even in the wilderness, God is there.’

This is the message of Easter. That lives are continually being changed and empowered through the retelling of the Gospel story. A story that didn't end with a closed tomb and a dead body but with an empty tomb and a resurrection. A story that shouldn't leave us unmoved. It should encourage us, as we realise that any struggles we might have with our faith are probably no different to those experienced by the early believers.

Sometimes we might wonder if it's all worth it. And then, into our moments of doubt walks Jesus and shows us his wounds and touches our hearts. If at that moment we will open our hearts to him then our lives will be empowered, as were those who listened to Peter's words. If we remain unmoved, if all this is a story and nothing else then how will the world outside understand the Good News of Easter - of release from fear and

sin through the cross and resurrection, of empowerment, of the possibility of a new and real relationship with God?

Today is a day for hope and love that overflows. It is a day of gratitude for the days we've had and the days to come. It is a day when we remember that love is stronger than hate, and death does not have the last word. It is a day to take a moment to give thanks and appreciate all that is around us, to rejoice in the world that surrounds us.

Listen to the birds chirping; the trees rustling. See the frogspawn in the ponds and the Spring flowers bursting through to nod and smile at us. Smell the difference in the April showers and the wind blowing; sniff the scent of food cooking and the hyacinths in their bowls. Enjoy the chocolate and the celebration meal you may have today – really taste it and savour the flavours of such good gifts. Appreciate your time out and about and feel the sun, or possibly next week, snow, on your face.

Take a moment to appreciate this new day, and as you do, think of some of the things you are grateful for & make them your own private prayer today. Cherish this holy morning of all mornings. In the words of Isaiah: 'Let's celebrate and sing the joys of his salvation.'

Prayers of Intercession

written by Matt Forsyth

God of the resurrection,

As darkness fell, Your love shone through.

We pray that this same light might shine in the darkness around the world.

God of the resurrection,
As blood was poured out at the Cross,
We pray for the blood poured out due to war,
May the love of the Cross bring healing and unity.

God of the resurrection,
As the empty tomb represents freedom,
We pray for those struggling with addiction and mental illness in our community.
May the freedom found at the tomb be a lived reality for those struggling today.

God of the resurrection,
As Mary found the tomb empty and voiced the news,
We pray for all who face oppression and are unable to use their voice.

God of the resurrection
As Mary wept, we weep for those who grieve lost ones due to Covid-19 and other diseases.
Surround them with your peace and love this day.

God of the resurrection,
May we be a resurrection people,
May we leave this place and say 'I have seen the Lord'.
Amen

Recognising you by Amy Scott Robinson by permission

Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you!

Let's raise our hearts and lives to God,

We lift them to the Lord!

Let's offer our thanks and praise:

Loving God, maker of all,

You designed and crafted us;

You hold us in your arms.

We thank you and praise you.

We celebrate your victory!

Holy Spirit, God with us,

You called and inspired us;

You bring us together this day.

We thank you and praise you.

We celebrate your victory!

Jesus Christ, brother and King,

You loved and saved us;

You claim us as your people.

We thank you and praise you.

We celebrate your victory!

Lord Jesus,

we remember that on the night before you died
you shared supper with your friends.
In a house, around a table,
you gave them bread and wine:

Your body, broken; Your blood, poured out;
A sign of God's renewed relationship with the world.
You stretched out your arms to suffer and die;
You are with us in our suffering.
You rose again from the dead;
You are with us forever.
We thank you and praise you.

And today we celebrate,
with all God's people:
Love has won;
Christ has conquered.

You invite us to share this meal with you:
One family, one community.
Your love is transforming us,
Your love is transforming us,
Your power is healing us,
And so with all your disciples,
across the world and through all time,
young and old,
from our towns to your heavenly city,
We hear your call.

Lord Jesus,

we remember that on your resurrection day
you again shared a meal with friends.
In their home, after a long day,
you broke bread again:
Refreshing the weary;
Accepting their gifts;
You opened their eyes to your holy presence.

As we share this bread and wine –
a precious taste of things to come –
may you feed us and forgive us.
Breathe your Holy Spirit into each one of us.
Lift us, carry us, break down the barriers,
transform us, unite us,
and send us out to be your people in this place.
Alleluia! Amen.

Here is bread:
broken, as the body of Christ was broken
broken, as the heart of God was broken
broken, as the seal of the tomb was broken
broken to make us whole.

The body of Christ, broken for us. [*we eat the bread*]

Here is wine:
a cup that brings us together, even in our social distancing
a cup of forgiveness and blessing.

The blood of Christ, poured out for us. [*we drink the wine*]

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March 2021

Post Communion Prayer

You called us to this feast, Jesus. We thank you for feeding our hearts and minds, today and every day, joining us to your great church that is in Heaven and on earth. Holy Spirit, you have helped us to remember Jesus on earth and to know he is risen and with us now.

Help us tomorrow to remember him, when we are angry or happy, laughing or crying, and to welcome him into our whole life as he welcomes us. Loving God, send us from this place assured that we are forgiven, accepted and loved. Send us with your light in our eyes, your peace in our hearts, and knowing that nothing can separate us from your love. Amen

Hymn: Thine be the Glory

Sung by UMC Virtual Easter choir Edmund Bundry (1854 – 1932) Tune: Maccabaeus

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.

Refrain:

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

Lo! Jesus meets thee, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets thee, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for our Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

Refrain:

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

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.

Refrain:

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

Closing Prayer

Lord God, may we proclaim with joy
Your message of hope for the world;
May our lives, as well as our worship,
Testify to the truth of the Resurrection;
Broaden our vision of what is possible
Through new life in you. Amen
Susan Sayers *Prayers for Public Worship*

Blessing

We have come from darkness and despair
to hope and joy.

We have been transformed by new life.

Go from this time of worship to witness and to testify to the
message of hope we have received this day.

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.

—adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2006*, © 2005
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May the blessings of God and his amazing grace be with you
as you celebrate this Easter with thanksgiving in your heart.
Have a blessed Easter.

Closing music: Jesus Christ is risen today

Responses led by Pam Hudson

Images from Pixabay.com & The Worship Cloud

Opening slide image of the sunrise John Towner at Unsplash

Opening music from [STF 302 - He Has Risen part of Singing
The Faith; Contributed by Paul Wood & Ian Worsfold | The
Worship Cloud](#)

Closing music: [Downloadable MP3s | The Adoremus Hymnal –
Ignatius Press](#)

Hymns: [Jesus Christ is Ris'n Today - Google Drive Newcastle
Virtual Choir](#)

Thine is the glory [Discipleship Ministries | Watch the Easter
Sunday 2021 Virtual Choir \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](#)

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