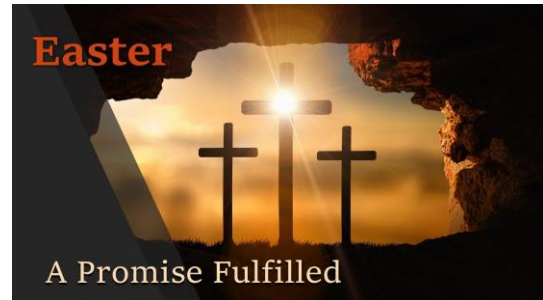


Opening Words:

In silence, read John 20:1 then pray quietly, with growing confidence:

After the agony of the cross, Lord Jesus you are here. After the desolation of the grave, Lord Jesus you are here. After your triumphant bursting from the tomb, Lord Jesus you are here.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**



Hymn: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today"

https://youtu.be/peSt3BT_MgM

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!
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!
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!
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!
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 (1707-1788)

Let us pray:

O Lord God, Eternal Creator, you dwell in the hearts of all who worship you today. We praise and thank you for raising Jesus from the dead and setting us free to worship and adore you. To you belongs all the honour! Jesus Christ, Merciful Saviour, you meet us when we turn to you. On that first Easter morning you rose from the grave to conquer sin and death for ever. To you belongs all the glory!

Holy Spirit, Divine Presence, you are the very Breath of Life. We receive the peace of the risen Christ as did those first disciples in the Upper Room. To you belongs all the praise!

Pause

O God, the Three-in-One, we confess that our lives have been full of death and hate instead of life and love. Forgive us our sins and strengthen in us all that is good.

Pause

As we receive your assurance of forgiveness, you fill us afresh with love and life, compelling us to pour them out into the lives of others. Amen.

Bible reading 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

For me, Easter Day has always been a great day of celebration, the darkness of Good Friday is past once again and we celebrate this great and glorious day as we sing out Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia! The big question that has challenged the Church for many generations has been "what does the resurrection mean?" There was a school of thought in Corinth that the resurrection of Christ was about the rising of his Spirit, but not of his body and in chapter 15 of his first letter Saint Paul is proclaiming the importance of the risen body of Christ, that Jesus had been truly dead and was now truly alive, in full flesh and bones bodily form.

Consider:

- *Two thousand years on from that first Easter Sunday how important is it to you that Christ the man who had been dead is now alive?*
- *How important is it for you to understand the resurrection? Are you prepared to take it in faith? Can you separate out, the difference between the resurrection of the Spirit and the resurrection of the body? What difference does it make to you?*
- *As we continue on our journey out of the Covid Pandemic, does the message of God conquering all the powers take on a fresh meaning to you?*

Hymn: See what a morning 309 Stf https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_9mKEyJGy0

See, what a morning, gloriously bright
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem
Folded the graveclothes, tomb filled with light
As the angels announce, "Christ is risen!"
See God's salvation plan
Wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice
Fulfilled in Christ, the Man
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

See Mary weeping, "Where is He laid?"
As in sorrow, she turns from the empty tomb
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!
The voice that spans the years
Speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us
Will sound till He appears
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

One with the Father, Ancient of Days
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with
certainty
Honour and blessing, glory, and praise
To the King crowned with power and authority!
And we are raised with Him
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has
conquered
And we shall reign with Him
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!
And we are raised with Him
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has
conquered
And we shall reign with Him
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

Bible Reading: John 20: 1-18

There are certain stories in the Bible that we could perhaps quote almost word for word and maybe this is one of them. Those of us who have been a part of the Christian community all our lives will have heard this account of Easter morning hundreds of times, and you may be like me and love this story. I believe that there are dozens of sermons to be preached on this passage, I would like to ask you three questions to consider.

Consider

1. *Why was Mary going to the tomb while it was still dark? She wasn't going to anoint the body, because Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had done this already according to John's account. Maybe she just needed to be near to him, maybe she had loved him so much. Have you felt that way? It was still physically dark, but it was also dark in her heart.*
2. *What do you think was going through the Disciples minds as they arrived at the tomb? John claims that the unnamed second disciple see and believes, he doesn't appear to understand. Do you need to understand, to believe?*

3. *Why do you think Jesus chose Mary Magdalene to be the first witness to the resurrection? She is the first person to see the bodily form of the risen Christ, how do you think that the men might have responded when a woman came and proclaimed his resurrection to them "I have seen the Lord!" she says.*

Prayers for others:

On this Easter Day, we remember those who have gone before us to glory. May we, like them, inherit your eternal kingdom.

We pray for all who are fearful today: people living alone; people who have endured great trials; people who are scared for each new day. Come among them and breathe your resurrection peace.

We pray for your worldwide church, united today in joyful acclamation of the risen Christ. May we, your church, daily witness to the life of the risen Christ in our own lives through our love for God, self, and neighbour.

We pray for the leaders of the world, and for the people they govern. Endue them with wisdom and justice, so that they might govern all people with equity.

Finally, we pray for ourselves. In Christ we are indeed more than conquerors. May Alleluia! be our triumphant song today and always.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn Thine be the Glory! 313 StF

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbBOOmKMLmI>

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
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
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

Blessing

To you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, may God give you grace and peace (1 Thessalonians 1:1c). **Amen.**