



**Opening Words:**

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](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 readings** John 20: 1-18

**Reflection**

Having just spent the day at the Presbyteral Synod, I am reminded again how difficult the whole process of

change is, Rev Julian Pursehouse has been the Chair of the East Anglia Methodist District for the last ten years, and that is now changing as he prepares to move on, yesterday was our final Presbyteral Synod with him in the chair. As I prepare to move to a new appointment in September, I am conscious that this is my final Easter as the Superintendent of the Ipswich circuit and the minister of the churches in my pastoral care. I never find change easy and as I experience Easter 2024, I am mindful of just how enormous the whole experience of Easter was to the early followers of Jesus. The first Easter Day begins with the feelings of **loss**, they had been so certain that they had the promised Messiah in their midst, and they wanted more of the same, Mary had stood at the foot of the cross and seen the man she loved die an agonizing death, it must have felt as though her life had ended that night. I can only imagine how devastated she must have felt as she came to the tomb that first Easter morning.

Mary's emotion changed in a second as she reached the tomb, the stone had been rolled back, her mind starts to leap to possible conclusions, she doesn't investigate the possibilities, but in a state of **panic**, she runs for help. As a circuit, we are trying to figure out what to next, with the likelihood of us facing a period with a potentially depleted number of ministers in the circuit, what are we to? The task seems impossible, we feel confused as we scratch around trying to find solutions. Even as Peter and John approach the empty tomb there are no certainties, only **confusion**, what has happened to the body? Has somebody removed him? Why are the grave clothes laid in the way they are? You might be like me at times of change, there is a huge burden of responsibility resting on our shoulders, what are the options? what if we get it wrong? Might we be blamed? I love the scene where Mary is in the garden, feeling lost, confused and panicking, what happens next? It is at this moment that she turns to the gardener, she needs help. The most precious moment of the whole story is when Christ, the man who she had seen die on the cross is there in front of her. We try to deal with change ourselves, and yet we know that God is with us in everything we do. I am convinced that we will deal with the challenges and changes we face, because we know that God is alongside us guiding us through, and his glory will be fulfilled in the end.

*Consider:*

- *How do we cope today when things change? There is something built into our psyche that makes us want to hang on to the things we love, and it is painful letting go.*
- *What is your initial reaction to change? Do you panic? Does the whole thing scare you? Do you just long to go back to how things used to be?*
- *Where do we go from here? Change is a time of confusion and can be stressful for all concerned. Who do we turn to when the certainties in life, appear to be uncertain.*
- *It is at times like this, when we are helpless and lost, that we turn to Christ and seek his guidance and we trust that he will not fail us.*

**Hymn: See what a morning** 309 Stf [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_9mKEyJGy0](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!

### **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.**