

Easter Sunday 2020

Good morning. Welcome to this Easter Morning service.

Today is the greatest day in the church's year; we are not in church, but in a garden, which is quite appropriate really, as it was Mary Magdalene, the first to meet the resurrected Christ, who thought him to be the gardener. And it was Mary, who announced to the disciples that she had 'seen the Lord.'

Christ yesterday and today,

**All the beginning and the end,**

Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, and all ages;

**All to him be glory and power, through every age and for ever. Amen.**

*The Easter Candle may be marked at this point if this has not already been done.*

This is the day when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life.

Throughout the world Christians celebrate the awesome power of God. As we hear his word and proclaim all that God has done, we can be confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him for ever.

*A minister lights the Easter Candle, saying*

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,  
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The light of Christ.

**All Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The Collect

Let us pray that we may walk the risen life of Christ in glory.

God of undying life, by your mighty hand you raised up Jesus from the grave and appointed him judge of the living and the dead. Bestow upon those baptized into his death the power flowing from his resurrection, that we may proclaim near and far the pardon and peace you give us.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, first-born from the dead, who lives with you now and always in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen

The Liturgy of the Word

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**Alleluia. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
(John 20:1-18)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." <sup>3</sup> Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup> The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

<sup>5</sup> He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

<sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

The disciples returned to their homes.

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

<sup>13</sup> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

<sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Address

We are not able to celebrate Easter together as we normally do with our church family, with liturgy, the ringing of bells and the singing of joyful hymns. Instead, we experience the mystery of

the empty tomb and the encounter with our risen Lord in our homes and behind closed doors. Many people are worried and fearful at this time, many are separated from family members and some are grieving. Yet despite the challenging and painful situation the world is in, the message of Easter continues to be one of joy and hope.

We see in the garden near where Jesus had been crucified people did not wait for anyone to tell them what to do. They came and offered to do what they could. They did it because they wanted to and it was the right thing to do. Joseph of Arimathea came forward offering his own unused tomb. Nicodemus came out of the shadows bringing spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Because people came forward to offer what they could the work could move forward from offering what they knew to receiving the revelation of what was opening up ahead of them. On Easter morning Mary went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. She went to mourn and to anoint the body of Jesus. When she arrived she found there was no body to anoint. The tomb was empty. Where was Jesus? Who had taken the body?

Mary wanted to be close to Jesus the one who gave her life meaning and whose death caused the disciples to hide in fear. We may do the same when someone dies – we may feel the need to maintain a link – we tend their graves – we may cherish a special gift they gave.

Yet it is in this place of sadness and mourning that the resurrection was first announced. He is not here, he has been raised, is the message of the angels.

Easter provides an enormous injection of hope. And it is certainly needed. The tomb is found to be empty. God's love is stronger than death.

This Easter we feel the pain of family, friends, colleagues, the world and the pain in our own hearts. But the story does not

end in death. The message of Easter doesn't take away the pain but does provide meaning. It gives hope.

We will gather again. We will be with family again. As her majesty said, we will meet again, and we will be changed by the experience.

May we be strengthened in our faith, in our community and may we know the peace of God to be with us. Amen.

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

Prayers

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Amen.**

Gracious God,  
give skill, sympathy and resilience  
to all who are caring for the sick,  
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.  
Strengthen them with your Spirit,  
that through their work many will be restored to health;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Prayers for the church, world, community, and the suffering....

Blessing

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed!**

**Alleluia!**

God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ  
has given us the victory, give you joy and peace in your faith;  
and the blessing ...

The Dismissal

He is not here. He is risen.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**