

Worship for Easter Day
(Complete text. The same as video is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying

Welcome

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn: Christ the Lord is risen today! STF 298

'Christ, the Lord, is risen today!' Alleluia!

All creation joins to say: Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high; Alleluia!

Sing, you heavens, and 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!

Let us pray.

Glory to you, O God:

You raised Jesus from the grave, Bringing us
victory over death And giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ:

For us and for our salvation

You overcame death

And opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit:

You lead us into truth

And breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now
and for ever. **Amen.**

If we have fallen into despair,

Lord, forgive us.

If we have failed to hope in you,

Lord, forgive us.

If we have been fearful of death,

Lord, forgive us.

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ,

Lord, forgive us.

Silence

May the living God raise us from despair, give us
victory over sin and set us free in Christ. **Amen.**

Lord of all life and power, who through the
mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the
old order of sin and death to make all things
new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and
alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him
in glory; to whom with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and
might, now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

Hymn: See, what a morning STF 309

See what a morning, gloriously bright

With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;

Folded the grave-clothes

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!**

Acts 10:34-43 NRSV

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 NRSV

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

The LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly." I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.

The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Colossians 3:1-4 NRSV

So, if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Gospel: John 20:1-18 New International Version – UK (Video reading by Candy Evans)

The empty tomb

¹Early 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. ²So 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!' ³So 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 round 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.

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

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 round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise 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 towards 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.

Sermon: *The heart of faith*

A year ago, the world was still coming to terms with the pictures we were seeing from Paris of the historic Notre Dame in flames. A year on,

and we find ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic that few would have predicted. Despite being told to stay apart, the world has rarely been more united. That goes for Christians too. For those of us who celebrate Easter today, we are not doing so in our normal places of worship but through Facebook and skype and zoom and YouTube and smart phone. Some of us have had to become tech-literate quickly indeed if we are to remain in contact with family and friends. So we give thanks that technology has enabled us to remain connected, even in this time of global crisis. This is certainly an Easter that will not be easily forgotten! And even if our celebrations are a bit muted because of the restrictions on movement with which we currently live, this still remains THE festival that makes sense of the whole of our Christian faith. St Paul wrote to the Corinthians, telling them that without the resurrection, there wasn't a Christian faith at all. And yet, a BBC poll released last Easter found 23 per cent of all those calling themselves Christians "do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead" at all. Even among Christians who regularly go to church, only just over half were completely sure of it. Yet, whilst it might be a difficult tenet to hold - out of step with modern realities - it does make some sort of sense. For it is about LIFE, and FORGIVENESS and ALL.

1 Jesus summed up his mission in these words: I have come that they may have life and life in all its fullness. If nothing else, the story of Easter is about new life bursting out of the tomb and destroying death. Belief in the resurrection is not simply about believing a rather strange event actually occurred sometime in the first century. In resurrection, the order of the universe is revealed - that life follows death. With it a new pattern of discipleship is established. Belief in Jesus is not about keeping on doing the things that have always been done. To quote St John XXIII: 'we are not on earth to guard a museum, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life.'

Resurrection is a proclamation of freedom – the freedom of God to do a new thing and to lead us into the future. To reshape our faith so that it is not about preservation but about expectation.

2 Easter is also about FORGIVENESS. As we are drawn into God's future, so we become much more aware of what holds us back. It is true to say that the crucifixion of Jesus was one of the greatest acts of injustice ever perpetrated. If God was serious about justice, then something had to be done! So the resurrection of Jesus, is God's commitment to righting wrong.

Many have spoken about the current crisis provoked by Covid-19 as a world-changing event. Our lives have been radically re-ordered and previously hidden folk on minimum wages and precarious contracts have become visible and proclaimed heroes. People have talked about the rediscovery of kindness, community and self-sacrifice. But, when this is all over, will those discoveries last or slip away again in the rush to return to 'normal' life?

Forgiveness, whilst a central part of the Christian faith, is often misunderstood. It is not about erasing the past, or forgetting what mistakes or deliberate actions we, or others, have done. But it is about, in acknowledging those things and having them acknowledge, that we nevertheless do not count them against others. It is about being judged, not by our pasts, but by our futures; not by what we have been, but what we are becoming. If this crisis means that we return to a society that is more forgiving in that sense - helping others to a better future whatever their past - then it will have embraced the meaning of the resurrection.

3 Peter preaches in Acts 10: I truly understand that God shows no partiality. It could be argued that Methodist doctrine and belief can be summed up in one word: ALL. Resurrection faith is not sectarian, nor does it seek to limit. It is not looking to establish a special group or clique. It resists segregation and discrimination based on characteristics, social background, or national identity. Some have said that this virus has

made us one because it is indiscriminate in who it affects. But that's not really true, is it? To date, nine London bus drivers have died due to the virus, a result of doing their jobs. Unlike many, many better paid people, they couldn't work from home and still get paid. The people most affected will be those who cannot afford not to work, whatever the risks, and who live in cramped and substandard housing without access to a garden or a car. In many parts of the world, it will be the poorest who are denied access to vital treatment who will succumb. What a contrast to God's economy, where the last are ALWAYS first, and all have equal access to the riches of his grace. All are blessed and all shall be satisfied, 'for, as in Adam, all die, so in Christ, shall all be made alive.'

How do we live out our resurrection faith today? It clearly says to us that death is NOT failure. In the light of Easter, death becomes, not an end, but the ground of a new beginning. Death becomes the starting point and the ground of new hope. It does not take away the pain of death, but gives us sure ground to hope, a hope that says, whatever we do today will build a better tomorrow.

This is resurrection faith. Hallelujah!
AMEN

Affirmation of Faith

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. (*United Church of Canada*)

Hymn: Happy Day (Tim Hughes)

The greatest day in history, Death is beaten
You have rescued me
Sing it out Jesus is alive
The empty cross, The empty grave
Life eternal You have won the day
Shout it out Jesus is alive
He's alive!

*Oh happy day, happy day
You washed my sin away
Oh happy day, happy day
I'll never be the same
Forever I am changed*

When I stand, in that place
Free at last, meeting face to face
I am Yours Jesus You are mine
Endless joy, perfect peace
Earthly pain finally will cease
Celebrate Jesus is alive
He's alive

*Oh happy day, happy day
You washed my sin away
Oh happy day, happy day
I'll never be the same
Forever I am changed*

Oh what a glorious day
What a glorious way
That You have saved me
Oh what a glorious day
What a glorious name

*Oh happy day, happy day
You washed my sin away
Oh happy day, happy day
I'll never be the same
Forever I am changed*

What a glorious, glorious day,
I'll never be the same

Hymn: Cannons (Phil Wickham)

It's falling from the Clouds
A strange and lovely sound
I hear it in the thunder and the rain
It's ringing in the skies like cannons in the night
The music of the Universe plays

We're singing you are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are

Beautiful and free
The song of galaxies
Reaching far beyond the milky way
Let's join in with sound
Come on let's sing it out
As the music of the universe plays

We're singing you are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are

All Glory honour power is yours Amen
All Glory honour power is yours Amen
All Glory honour power is yours Amen
All Glory honour power is yours forever Amen

You are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are
And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are

And you are
Holy, Great and Mighty
The moon and the stars
Declare who you are

**And I'm so unworthy
But still You love me
Forever my heart will sing
Of how great you are**

Prayers of intercession

In the power of the resurrection we offer our prayers to God.

Let us pray.

Remember, O Lord, in your love the Church throughout the world as we adapt to new ways of worship, learning and caring, service and the sharing of faith

those recently baptised, confirmed and those who would have been welcomed into membership today,

those who minister to others especially in chaplaincies to front line workers.

Silence

May your whole Church know your power and be a sign that Christ is risen.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love the world you have made and encourage the peoples of the world who share a common threat to share too resources and knowledge to help each other
Those who risk much that society can function – for the NHS, social workers, the police and ambulance services, all public servants and council employees, health care workers, shop workers, the armed forces, the voluntary groups, Foodbank workers and the myriad of people who serve society.

those who strive for justice and peace among the nations that the most vulnerable among us will not shoulder the greatest burden and pay the highest cost in these days of trouble.

Silence

May the whole earth be transformed by mercy and rejoice in hope.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those whose suffering is increased as a result of the pressures on the NHS

Those who suffer from domestic or any other abuse in the home
those who mourn when even our ways of saying our farewells prevented.

Silence

May all in need find comfort, strength and freedom in the living Christ.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who have died: those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone.

Silence

May all your children receive grace and light according to their needs and come at last to share with all the saints in life eternal.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen

Hymn: Forever (Kari Jobe)

The moon and stars they wept

The morning sun was dead

The Saviour of the world was fallen

His body on the cross

His blood poured out for us

The weight of every curse upon Him

One final breath He gave

As heaven looked away

The son of God was laid in darkness

**A battle in the grave
The war on death was waged
The power of hell forever broken**

**The ground began to shake
The stone was rolled away
His perfect love could not be overcome
Now death where is your sting?
Our resurrected King
Has rendered you defeated**

**Forever He is glorified
Forever He is lifted high
Forever He is risen
He is alive, He is alive!**

**The ground began to shake
The stone was rolled away
His perfect love could not be overcome
Now death where is your sting?
Our resurrected King
Has rendered you defeated**

**Forever He is glorified
Forever He is lifted high
Forever He is risen
He is alive, He is alive!**

**We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
The Lamb has overcome**

**We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
The Lamb has overcome
You have overcome**

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said: 'Peace be with you!' Then they were glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia!
The peace of the risen Christ be always with you.
And also with you. Alleluia!

Offering

Here is bread, God's good gift.
It will become for us the bread of life.

Here is wine, God's good gift.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, are rightly yours, all-gracious God. By your creative word you brought the world to birth; in your generous love you made the human family, that we might see your glory and live for ever in your presence.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, are rightly yours, all-gracious God.

When we wandered from you in our sin you sought us with your steadfast love and did not give us up. In the fullness of time you sent your Son to be our Saviour and Deliverer. Made of flesh and blood, he lived our life and died our death upon the cross. Death could not hold him and now he reigns at your right hand.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, are rightly yours, all-gracious God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we bless and praise your glorious name, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessèd is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessèd indeed is the Lord Jesus Christ who, at supper with his friends, took bread and gave you thanks, broke it, gave it to them and said:

'Take this, all of you, and eat it.

This is my body given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.'

When supper was ended, he took the cup and gave you thanks, gave it to them, and said:

'Drink from it all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for everyone,
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

**Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Therefore, Father, we celebrate this Passover of gladness; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Accept, through him, our great high priest, this, our sacrifice of praise.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and the blood of Christ.

Gather us, who share this feast, into the kingdom of your glory that with all your people in every time and place we may praise and worship you for ever;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,

**by whom and with whom
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours,
heavenly Father, now and always
Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

Silence

We meet the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Let us pray.

God of our salvation, we thank you for our communion with the risen Christ and with all who love him in earth and heaven. We pray that, strengthened by his grace, we may serve you faithfully all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: Thine be the glory STF 313

**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.**

***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:**

***Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won!***

Blessing

God, the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.