

Sunday 9 April 2023

Easter Sunday



The principal theme of this service is joy. All the elements of the service should work together harmoniously to impart that effect: flowers, light, music, and liturgy.

Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN 1 Christ the Lord is risen today (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This version of the Gloria is sung to the tune of **Cwm Rhondda**.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Easter Day

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 and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter said: '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; 40but 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.'

Acts 10:34–43

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Colossians

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.

Colossians 3:1-4

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [Now the Green blade rises](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)
[Low in the grave he lay](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

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.

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.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

The disciples returned to their homes, but Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 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. 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.' When she had

said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Thinking 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.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned, saying to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). 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".' Mary Magdalene ran to the disciples and said, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her. *John 20:1-18*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Mary knew Jesus well. It's entirely possible that she was the lady caught in adultery. She had been exorcised by Jesus. Surely no-one knew Jesus better than her? Yet she did not recognise him at the entrance of the empty tomb. Why?

Mary exemplifies the three-stage process of recognising Jesus. We note that **firstly** she was crying. Her eyes were wet, and you can't see well through tears. I'm not blaming her because the centre of her life—Jesus—had only just been killed by judicial murder. But her tears got in the way. She was not weeping for him. He was dead—or so she thought, so beyond any further pain. No, she was thinking of herself. And the problem with thinking of self is that others don't get a look in, not even God in the form of Jesus.

Mary's thinking of herself, as seen by her tears, meant that everything was viewed in terms of how it related to her. Objectivity goes out of the window. 'He's dead but said he would rise again from the dead' became 'My Jesus is dead, and I'll never see him again'. She forgot the prophecies that he'd rise again from the dead. She forgot his promises. All she thought of was her grief. All she thought of was *her*. Notice that she hadn't come to rejoice at an empty tomb: the accounts in the other Gospels show that she wasn't thinking straight; we know this because they relate how she came to anoint his dead body so she expected him to be dead still—and had forgotten the big, heavy stone in front of the tomb.

She didn't recognise Jesus because she was looking at herself. This over-emphasis on self is the root of all sin and has to be done away with. We will never see Jesus as he really is while thinking first of self. In fact, it's a paradox: you can't think of Jesus if you think of yourself; it *is* possible to think of self properly if you think of Jesus first. When we look at ourselves too much, we come to expect Jesus

to be just like us. And we are most unlikely to see the influence of the real Jesus if we look for someone more ordinary, more like us. Jesus is Lord. We're not. We will never see the real Jesus until we look at him. The Christian looks with the eyes on Jesus, not with the eyes on self. The first step in recognising Jesus is to put self aside. Stop crying.

Secondly, we see that when Mary stops crying, she realises that she is looking *into* the empty tomb. Yet he was alive and had moved outside of it. Perhaps because so much of our Easter celebrations concentrate on the crucifixion, and probably because we are 'rational people', we can be surprised that Jesus is not inside his tomb. People don't rise from the dead—but Jesus did. He rose from the dead and Mary didn't expect it. She expected to find a dead Jesus; after all, a Jesus who rises from the dead is a powerful, supernatural Jesus. Perhaps we shy away from so powerful a figure. What if he asked us to do anything. And while we give an intellectual assent to the fact that he has risen from the dead, we don't really believe it. The biggest miracle of all time is the resurrection. If the resurrection didn't happen, then maybe other miracles don't. Suddenly, we are denying that Jesus' other miracles occurred, and that miracles can still occur. No: if Jesus can rise from the dead, then we should never look for him *inside* the tomb. A matter of hours before—when Jesus was being questioned by Pilate—Jesus had admitted that he was the Messiah, a King, but had said that his kingdom was not of this world. But we tend to forget that Jesus is a spiritual King, operating in the spiritual realm, so we can see him when we look at the spiritual. Mary didn't recognise Jesus was because she was looking with human eyes rather than spiritual eyes. We see him through our spiritual apparatus; we see him in answers to prayer; we see him through scripture. The true Christian looks with their back to the empty tomb, looking out with the same spiritual eyes as Jesus.

She was looking at self, rather than at Jesus then she was looking into the empty tomb. And then something happened. Something amazing—it's in verse 16 of today's Gospel. Jesus called her by name, and she turned round. It's an act of grace. The **third** part in our recognising of Jesus is that we turn round. The Greek word here is usually translated as 'repent'. To see Jesus properly, we turn from self, from our earthly ideas of who Jesus is and repent, turn around toward Jesus. We say sorry, perhaps, for the way we have viewed him. We say sorry and, because of the power of Easter, he is able to say, 'I forgive you'.

But this Jesus calls us by name, and the only correct response is to worship him. If we want to see, to recognise Jesus, we must stop thinking of self; we must stop looking inside the empty tomb; and we turn around. The rest is up to God. We call

it grace. The grace that raised Jesus from the dead. That drove away the devil. That forgave our sins. That allows us free access to God through Jesus.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his
glorious and life-giving resurrection ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That isolated and persecuted churches
may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That God may grant us humility
to be subject to one another in Christian love ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,
the weak and the dying,
to comfort and strengthen them ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That, according to his promises,
all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised on the last day ...
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,
so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,
we pray to the Father.

All Hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
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:

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Amazing grace!

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

HYMN 4 **Thine be the glory!** (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Dismissal

God the Father,
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

All **Amen.**

God the Son,
who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

All **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,
whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

All **Amen.**

And the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ.**
Amen.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All **He is risen indeed!**
Alleluia!

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
almighty and eternal Father,
and in these days of Easter
to celebrate with joyful hearts
the memory of your wonderful works.
For by the mystery of his passion
Jesus Christ, your risen Son,
has conquered the powers of death and hell
and restored in men and women the image of your glory.
He has placed them once more in paradise
and opened to them the gate of life eternal.
And so, in the joy of this Passover,
earth and heaven resound with gladness,
while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation
sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

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

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God of Life,
who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son
to the death of the cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
have delivered us from the power of our enemy:
grant us so to die daily to sin,
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.