

Easter Sunday Communion Service
St Andrew's and St George's West
4 April 2021



Music Improvisation on *Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!*

Andrew Carvel

Welcome and Call to Worship

Stones of fear are rolled away.

Christ is risen!

Walls of prejudice are broken down.

Christ is risen!

Those who were pushed aside are welcomed in.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Come, let us worship God.

Hymn Christ is alive! Let Christians sing

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.

The cross stands empty to the sky.

Let streets and homes with praises ring.

Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift, and war,
where colour, scorn, or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Opening Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Core of Community, whenever we gather, you are with us.
Whenever we gather, you make of our hearts, one heart.
Risen One, we welcome you into our midst.

God of renewed presence this Easter day,
we thank you for your labour of miraculous love,
for the hope we can find through Christ's rising.

We confess that faith doesn't always come easily.
When we face loss in our own lives, sorrow can weigh us down.
In the midst of the pain that life brings,
our challenges can feel like a stone too heavy to roll away.

Forgive us, O Worker of Wonders. Easter shows us that nothing is impossible for you.

Embrace, renew and restore us.
Thank you for assuring us that the power of your love will never let us go.

May the words that Jesus taught, words that have stood the test of every time and trial,
strengthen us as we pray together:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

New Testament Reading

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. 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.'

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward 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. Then 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?' 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.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said 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 went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Anthem Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

*Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace, good will to all people.*

Resurrection Recollections

Mary Magdalene

It was still dark when I got there. He was dead—I knew that..

Watching from the foot of the cross we had heard him say it, "It is finished", and then he was dead. Finished..... ended..... over.

As the sun rose I saw that the stone was no longer in front of his tomb.

And I ran... I ran to find Mary his mother, who was staying with John. Peter was there too. And I told them that his body wasn't there.

John

We got up and we ran. Most of the time we were running together but I got there first. It was as Mary had said, the stone had been rolled away.

I could see the linen wrappings lying there. I could smell the spices that had been

wrapped in the cloths. Still catching my breath, I waited for Peter, I didn't want to go into the tomb without him.

Peter

Mary told us. Out of breath from running she told us, and we had to see for ourselves.

John ran faster than me. He was fitter—younger. He got there first and stood outside the tomb looking, but not going in. I caught up and I pushed past him. The linen wrappings that Nicodemus and Joseph had so tenderly wrapped around his body lay on the floor. The cloth they had tied around his head was there too, rolled up, all by itself.

John came in and stood beside me. He looked stunned. What could we do? Neither of us knew what was happening. We came out of the cave and we went home.

Mary Magdalene

I'd come back. I knew John and Peter were way ahead of me and by the time I reached the garden they'd gone again.

I thought I'd have no tears left but I was still weeping...

When I looked again into the tomb I could see two angels and they asked me why I was still crying. They were angels — God's messengers — surely they knew why I was crying!

I walked away from the tomb and I heard someone ask me a question. It was a man, he had his back to me, and he asked me who I was looking for. I assumed he was the gardener. I asked him if he had moved Jesus' body, and he turned round and he said my name, Mary, and I knew. I knew he was alive. It wasn't the gardener, it was Jesus!

I wanted to hug him for ever — to feel his strength, his love, his kindness.

But he told me to go and find Peter and John and tell them what had happened, and I did. But I told Mary what had happened first for she was his mother.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

O Jesus, my son.

Mary told me that your body had disappeared and then she went back to the garden.

Wasn't it enough that I had to watch you die so publicly? And now for someone to desecrate your tomb.

And now Mary has come back to tell me that you are alive, that she's seen you and talked with you in the garden. Jesus, I want it to be true but I stood there for hours and watched you die. How can you be alive?

Reflection

Hymn Christ has risen while earth slumbers

Christ has risen while earth slumbers,
Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised,
as we doubted and denied.

Let the moon embrace the blessing;
let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumour.

Christ is risen, God is here!

Christ has risen for the people
whom he loved and died to save ;
Christ has risen for the women
bringing flowers to grace his grave.
Christ has risen for disciples
huddled in an upstairs room.
He whose word inspired creation
is not silenced by the tomb.

Christ has risen, and for ever
lives to challenge, and to change
all whose lives are messed or mangled,
all who find religion strange.
Christ is risen. Christ is present,
making us what he has been —
evidence of transformation
in which God is known and seen.

Prayers for Others

Risen Lord, we thank you for the hope of Easter morning
that resonates in song, in word, and in laughter.
The good news of Easter is that everything has changed, forever.
Death does not have the last word.
Resurrection has the power to change despair into hope,
fear into courage, questions into faith.

Not everyone enjoys the hopefulness of this day.
For many people the question, "Why are you weeping?",
is very real and very present.
God of new life, too many of your beloved children are engulfed in hardship
and suffering, loss and grief, as in a winter with no signs of spring.
We pray on this Easter morning for those who have lost a loved one,
for those whose health in body or mind is poor,
for those without a home,
for those searching for meaningful employment,
for those who struggle to provide for their families,
for those who know hunger, or violence, or the horrors of war.
To all who have lost hope, we ask that you will somehow communicate your love and care.

We pray on this Easter morning for those who faithfully share the hope of Easter,
by caring for the frail and the sick,
comforting the grieving,
offering friendship to the lonely,
feeding the hungry,
teaching the young,
speaking up for the marginalised and oppressed,
working for peace, caring for a fragile planet.

And we pray for your children everywhere who live out their faith in the Risen Lord,
even when that brings ridicule, opposition or persecution.
This is the day when joy returned to the earth and new life was breathed into creation.

We rejoice and are glad; and we pray for your life-giving spirit to be set free in our world today, in your church, and in us, your ever hopeful, sometimes joyful, still wanting-to-be faithful people. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

The Invitation

We stand in the resurrection garden of God -
a place suffused and shaped by love
and ripe with its potential;

and this is the table of the risen Jesus -
a place fashioned and furnished by Love
and rich with its promises...

We share these gifts of grace,
to encounter Christ,
and be healed by Love
and transformed with Life.

Communion Narrative and Thanksgiving

Before the dawn in the garden -
when Love was resurrected,
before the cold silence of the tomb -
by which Love was swallowed,
before the black horror of the cross –
on which Love was broken,
before the bitter struggle of another garden –
through which Love affirmed its choices,
Jesus, eating a final supper with his friends
blessed and broke bread and poured out a cup of wine,
sharing these tokens with them
as a confirmation of the life he had lived
and a sign of what was to come.

So, we too,
recalling that moment and honouring that life
take and break this bread (the bread is broken)
and pour out this wine (the wine is poured)
as a confirmation and sign that we are part of its ongoing story.
We remember with wonder and joy that Love, though broken on a
cross, was not defeated.
Though swallowed by death, Love was not silenced
but lives unvanquished and still speaks to all
words of welcome, healing and hope.
And so we join our voices with that of Creation
and with all those who bear witness across the world,
and throughout the ages,
to the transforming power of God's love and life:

**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!**

Consecration

And as we rejoice and remember,
send down your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine,
that we may once again
encounter Love
and be transformed.

The Sharing of the Gifts

Jesus, Love resurrected, comes to each of us
as the bread of life, and the cup of blessing.

Friends, these are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Let us eat and let us drink - both in homes and sanctuary.

(People partake, those in sanctuary coming forward to receive).

Hymn

Eat this bread, drink this cup (repeated 3 times)

Eat this bread, drink this cup,
come to me and never be hungry.
Eat this bread, drink this cup,
trust in me and you will not thirst.

The Sharing of the Peace

May the peace of the resurrected Jesus,
the challenging peace of committed life,
the liberating peace of selfless love,
the vibrant peace of new possibility,
transform us with joy.

The peace of the risen Christ be with you all.

(we exchange a sign of peace)

Hymn

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son

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

From where we are to where you need us,

Christ be beside us.

From what we are to what you can make of us,

Christ be before us.

From old systems to new ways,

Christ be beneath us.

Through the streets of this world to the very gates of heaven,

Christ be above us.

May Christ who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with new life.

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

Music

Toccatà

Théodore Dubois

Worship Leaders: The Reverend Dr Rosie Magee, Dorothy Tarrant

BSL Interpreter: Mary McDevitt

Opening Prayer: Crispin Longden

Scripture Reader: Ruth Sheard

Resurrection Recollections: Helen Hammond, Crispin Longden, Danni Smith, Dorothy Tarrant

Director of Music: Brigitte Harris

The Choir of St Andrew's and St George's West

Vocal ensemble: Eleanor Cozens, Caitlin McGillivray, Eleanor Wilson, Tim Cooper, Drew Crichton, Andrew Carvel

Pianists: Eleanor Wilson, Eleanor Cozens

Organist: Drew Crichton

Director of Music: Brigitte Harris

Technical team: Alison Bruce, Andrew Carvel, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

Digital Coordinator: Andrew Carvel

Sources:

Flower Cross: Community of St Andrew's and St George's West

Call to Worship - by Maren Tirabassi, *Before the Amen*, The Pilgrim Press, 2007 (adapted)

Resurrection Recollections and Prayers for Others adapted from Spill the Beans, Issue 38

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Anthem: Jean Kleeb, Missa Brasileira (2016)

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