

### CALL TO WORSHIP

‘By his power God raised the Lord from the dead,  
and he will raise us also’ (1 Corinthians 6:14).

Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!**

### SONG: COME, PEOPLE OF THE RISEN KING

<https://youtu.be/jD2KYdHyX44>

Come people of the risen King  
Who delight to bring Him praise  
Come all and tune your hearts to sing  
To the Morning Star of grace  
From the shifting shadows of the earth  
We will lift our eyes to Him  
Where steady arms of mercy reach  
To gather children in

*Rejoice Rejoice*

*Let every tongue rejoice*

*One heart one voice*

*O Church of Christ rejoice*

Come those whose joy is morning sun  
And those weeping through the night  
Come those who tell of battles won  
And those struggling in the fight  
For His perfect love will never change  
And His mercies never cease  
But follow us through all our days  
With the certain hope of peace

*Rejoice, rejoice...*

Come young and old from every land  
Men and women of the faith  
Come those with full or empty hands  
Find the riches of His grace  
Over all the world His people sing  
Shore to shore we hear them call  
The Truth that cries through every age  
Our God is all in all

*Rejoice, rejoice...*

### OPENING PRAYER

Faithful God, whose word is life,  
come with saving power to free our praise,  
inspire our prayer and shape our lives  
for the sake of the kingdom of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Risen Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins  
that took you to the cross.

Where we have lived in our own strength and not  
by the power of your resurrection,  
**forgive us Lord.**

Where we have lived only by what we can see and  
not in faith and love,  
**forgive us Lord.**

Where we have lived for this world alone and  
doubted our eternal home with you,  
**forgive us Lord.**

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

May the living God forgive you and free you from  
your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,  
and raise you to new life in Christ our risen Lord.  
**Amen.**

### READING: Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene,  
Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought  
spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’  
body. <sup>2</sup>Very early on the first day of the week, just  
after sunrise, they were on their way to the  
tomb <sup>3</sup>and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll  
the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’

<sup>4</sup>But when they looked up, they saw that the  
stone, which was very large, had been rolled  
away. <sup>5</sup>As they entered the tomb, they saw a  
young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the  
right side, and they were alarmed.

<sup>6</sup>‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘You are looking for  
Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has  
risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid  
him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell his disciples and Peter, “He is  
going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see  
him, just as he told you.”’

<sup>8</sup>Trembling and bewildered, the women went out  
and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to  
anyone, because they were afraid.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SONG: JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN TODAY**

<https://youtu.be/Mv169n74fwQ>

**Jesus Christ is risen today; Alleluia!  
Our triumphant holy day; Alleluia!  
Who did once upon the cross; Alleluia!  
*Suffer to redeem our loss; Alleluia!***

**Hymns of praise then let us sing; Alleluia!  
Unto Christ our heavenly King; Alleluia!  
Who endured the cross and grave; Alleluia!  
Sinners to redeem and save: Alleluia!**

**But the anguish He endured; Alleluia!  
Our salvation hath procured; Alleluia!  
Now in above the sky He's King; Alleluia!  
Where the angels ever sing; Alleluia!**

**EASTER REFLECTION: WHY ARE WE HERE (8)  
To proclaim the risen Lord**

Have you ever done a jigsaw only to find that one piece is missing and you cannot complete the puzzle? Or you've recorded a programme and just as the vital ending was about to be revealed the recording stopped. Isn't it frustrating! We have something like this here in Mark's gospel with the resurrection story. The ending seems to be missing.

You and I know the resurrection story. We know that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden on the day of resurrection, but that's in John's gospel (John 20:10-17). We know that Jesus spoke with two disciples on the road to Emmaus, but that in Luke's gospel (Luke 24:13-35). We know that there was an earthquake and the soldiers guarding the tomb became like dead men, and as the women hurried away from the tomb with the news of Jesus' resurrection they met him and worshipped him, but that's in Matthew's gospel (Matthew 28:1-10). All these things we know about the resurrection appearances of Jesus are in the other gospels.

Did you know that there is no resurrection appearance from Jesus in Mark's gospel. Take a look. It's not there. Some Biblical scholars are convinced that Mark's gospel didn't originally end with the words, 'They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid' (v8). It is such an

unusual ending. Many scholars think the last page of the manuscript went missing, which was not uncommon in ancient times. But why would God allow the original ending to disappear? There were indeed some in ancient times who thought the ending was missing, which is why they added v9-20, but the oldest manuscripts don't have v9-20.

Other scholars do think that v8 is where Mark originally ended, with the women in fear and silence, for in Mark's gospel Jesus is often telling people to stay silent, and that's what the women did here. They say that instead of a simple happy ending, Mark has given us something more powerful, a strange puzzle for the reader, wondering what on earth must have happened and what it all means.

Whichever argument you believe, we should remember that Jesus told his disciples again and again that he would suffer and die and be raised to life (8:31; 9:12; 14:27-28). At the time they didn't understand what Jesus meant, but Mark doesn't want his readers to go on being puzzled, and neither do I want you to be puzzled. So, let's deal with what's here rather than what isn't.

Mark lists three women as witnesses of Jesus' death, the two Marys and Salome (15:40), although there were many others present at the cross whom Mark doesn't name. The two Marys, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses also saw where Jesus was buried (15:47). These women did not have time to collect the appropriate spices to anoint Jesus' body before his burial as it was nearly the Sabbath when Jesus was laid in the tomb.

So early on the Sunday morning it was these three women that made their way back to the tomb, and as they went they wondered, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" (v3). It's an obvious question. Tomb stones were heavy and they knew they couldn't move it. You can see from this question that they were not thinking about resurrection, they were thinking about anointing the dead. They were grieving and simply went to do for Jesus what was necessary, to complete the burial process.

Naturally, the three women got the shock of their lives when they arrived. The shock was that the tomb stone was already rolled away. In one sense that was good news. Job done. They could now anoint Jesus' body. But a second shock to hit them was that a young man dressed in white calmly spoke to them, saying 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified.' Yes, they were. So, this was the correct tomb; they hadn't mistaken it for another. The young man went on to say, 'He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him' (v6). The body of Jesus was gone. No need for the spices then.

If anyone says to you 'I don't believe in the resurrection' just ask them, 'What happened to Jesus' body?' People have tried to disprove the resurrection, but why would the followers of Jesus die for something they knew to be a lie?

'Who moved the stone' is a the story about Frank Morrison's attempt to look deeply into the last days of Jesus' life and ultimately to disprove the resurrection. He ended up writing a different book altogether. It's an old book but worth a read if you want to go through a methodical mental process of understanding what really happened and why. He writes, 'If the women's statement was true, and the remains of Jesus were no longer in the tomb, it would be easy to test that fact... However baffling and disconcerting it may seem at first sight, the evidence for the essential accuracy of the women's story is overwhelming in its consistency and strength' (p116).

So the women hurried off to tell Peter and the other disciples the astonishing news, and that they would see Jesus in Galilee. But the gospel finishes with the women fleeing from the tomb 'trembling and bewildered' (v8). Their reaction is consistent with grief and shock. Trembling is a physical reaction and bewilderment is a mental reaction.

There Mark's gospel ends. At least the oldest manuscripts end there. The announcement of the angel to the three women was that Jesus was not dead but alive. The centurion's declaration at cross that 'Surely this man was the Son of God' was confirmed on Easter morning. The powers of evil had done their worst, but they did not have

the final word and never will. As Paul says in one of the earliest Christian documents, 'But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead' (1 Corinthians 15:20).

For Mark's readers, who endured such terrible persecution, Mark's resurrection message would have been a great encouragement. God will have the last word, and those who commit themselves to him will be vindicated. It's a message of encouragement that we need reminding of today. We are living in difficult times, where there is a lot of trembling and bewilderment. So what message can we take away this Easter?

In the darkness of grief and pain and loss, these things do not and will not have the final word. The final word on life and death and eternal life belongs to Jesus, who conquered death and is alive. The crucified Lord is the resurrected Lord. The difficulty we have today is not that others don't believe it, but that we don't believe it enough. We have heard the story so often that it fails to move us. But it is astonishing! It is revolutionary! It is true!

As you know, my Mum died in January. Yes, I miss her and would love to talk to her again. I would like to hear her wisdom and give her a hug. But I know I will not be parted from her for ever. She had a strong faith in the risen Lord Jesus and was looking forward to being with him. When faced with the stark reality of death, resurrection seems absurd. When I looked into her coffin and saw her body, it seemed as though death laughed, but I will have the last laugh because Jesus lives, and because he lives my Mum lives, and I too will live even though one day I'll die. This Easter you also will live if you trust in him. Let's pray.

God our Father, we thank you for Mark's gospel and for the three women who are not so different from us. In our fear and trembling, help us to declare the truth that Christ is risen; to the glory of your holy name. **Amen.**

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Jesus, stand among us

**In your risen power**

Risen Lord Jesus, we praise and worship you, for in your power you brought life out of death through your resurrection, giving hope to all people. May our worship be full of joy, and our lives be full of your resurrection power.

Jesus, stand among us  
**In your risen power**

Risen Lord Jesus, you appeared to the two Marys and to Salome and sent them to the disciples and Peter. Strengthen your Church to tell the gospel to people in ways they can hear and receive today. Open the ears of our neighbours, families and friends to your saving mercy and love. We pray for the persecuted Church, that they may delight in your presence this day despite whatever they are facing.

Jesus, stand among us  
**In your risen power**

Risen Lord Jesus, as we rejoice in your presence, we pray for the world in which we live. We pray that division and hatred may be overcome with the good news of your resurrection victory. We pray for all countries across the world dealing with the pandemic. We pray for wise and godly leadership, that kindness and compassion may rule the hearts and minds of those in authority. We also pray that there may not be vaccine greed but a recognition that all people need help.

Jesus, stand among us  
**In your risen power**

Risen Lord Jesus, we remember those who are heavily burdened in life. We pray for those who have lost hope and are in despair. We ask your blessing on those who are chronically ill and those who can no longer cope on their own. We pray for those approaching death and for their loved ones who are caring for them.

Jesus, stand among us  
**In your risen power**

Risen Lord Jesus, we thank you that we share in your resurrection, that we have been raised with you and seated in heavenly places. We thank you for our loved ones who have died. May they share

with all your saints in the unending joy of your presence. We rejoice that death is conquered and you have won the victory, giving hope to the world.

Jesus, stand among us  
**In your risen power**

Merciful Father,  
**Accept these prayers  
For the sake of your Son,  
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. 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.**

**SONG: ONE DAY WHEN HEAVEN  
(GLORIOUS DAY)**  
<https://youtu.be/kUdR2vK4Yw4>

**One day when heaven was filled with his praises  
One day when sin was as black as could be  
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin  
Dwelt among men, my example is he  
Word became flesh and the light shined among  
us, His glory revealed.**

***Living, he loved me,  
Dying, he saved me,  
Buried, he carried my sins far away  
Rising, he justified freely forever  
One day he's coming  
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day.***

**One day they led him up Calvary's mountain  
One day they nailed him to die on a tree  
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected  
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is he  
Hands that healed nations, stretched out on a  
tree, and took the nails for me.**

*Living, he loved me...*

**One day the grave could conceal him no longer  
One day the stone rolled away from the door  
Then he arose, o'er death he had conquered  
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore.  
Death could not hold him,  
The grave could not keep him from rising again**

*Living, he loved me...*

**One day the trumpet will sound for his coming  
One day the skies with his glories will shine  
Wonderful day, my Beloved One, bringing  
My Saviour, Jesus, is mine**

*Living, he loved me...*

#### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Living, loving Lord, as the women came early in the morning, carrying spices to honour your body, we bring these gifts. Accept what we have to offer and bless what we give in worship; for your glory's sake. **Amen.**

#### THE PEACE

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said "Peace be with you." Hallelujah!

The peace of the risen Christ be always with you.  
**And also with you. Hallelujah!**

#### HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord is here

**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

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.

**We praise you risen Lord Jesus.**

When we wandered from you in our sin you sought us with your steadfast love and did not give up on us. In the fullness of time you sent your Son to be our Saviour and Deliverer. Being fully human,

he lived our life and died our death upon the cross. Yet death could not hold him for your love is stronger than death.

**We praise you risen Lord Jesus.**

Therefore with angels and archangels and with 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.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed 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 had 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 we die, so in Christ we shall be made alive. Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and 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 forever. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Risen Saviour, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the love of God our Father, to whom we give praise and glory forever.

**Amen.**

#### BREAKING OF THE BREAD



Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

**Therefore let us keep the feast. Hallelujah!**

#### **DISTRIBUTION OF THE BREAD AND WINE**

We meet the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread. Draw near with faith.

The body of Christ broken for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**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 Risen Lord. Amen.**

#### **EASTER HYMN: THINE BE THE GLORY**

<https://youtu.be/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 has lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory...*

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;

#### **CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING**

God our Father, by your glory Christ was raised from the dead. Strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life: for your glory's sake. **Amen.**

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you this Easter Day and for evermore. **Amen.**

Hallelujah! Go in joy and peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Hallelujah!**