

Sunday Worship
at Home
11th April 2021
2nd Sunday of Easter



WE PREPARE

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hail to Jesus!
God whose life leaps free of deathly forces,
with wounded hands and side,
revealing the costliness
and ringing true in victory
as it stands deep within our human struggling journeys;
We worship you today.

Hail to Jesus!
The Human One, the Godly One,
joined for ever in eternal mystery, yet claiming hope which rises
from the very ground of earth's tombs:
We worship you this Eastertide.

Risen Christ, show to us now, we pray,
the wonder of your living presence,
not in wisps or doubtful glimpses,
but in the glory of life hard won,
sweeping through our souls in splendour
and beyond us into a waiting world.
This we pray in faith and hope. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



HYMN

Love's redeeming work is done;
fought the fight, the battle won:
lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er,
lo, he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ has burst the gates of hell;
death in vain forbids his rise;
Christ has opened paradise.

Lives again our glorious King;
where, O death, is now thy sting?
dying once, he all doth save;
where thy victory, O grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led,
following our exalted Head;
made like him, like him we rise;
ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!
Praise to thee by both be given:
thee we greet triumphant now;
hail, the Resurrection Thou!

We say, 'Sorry'...

Dear God,
When we are tempted to watch your rising
as though it is a bright picture
painted for our momentary enjoyment,
separated from our everyday life:
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

When we find it hard to believe in the power of your raising
because so many things around us
go on as if nothing has happened:
Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

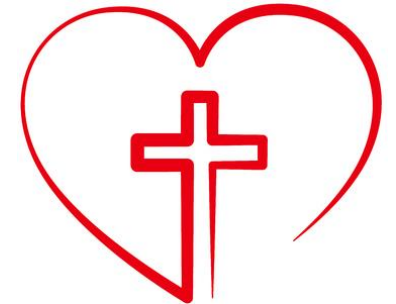
When we see the victory of your resurrection
as salvation for ourselves alone,
and fail to share in you dream

of bringing to every system of oppression,
and every force on earth which destroys,
the justice, peace and compassion which is the sign of your reign:
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

**Forgive us now and enter every part of our life with grace.
Stay with us now, risen Christ we pray. Amen**

... and receive God's forgiveness...

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**



We give thanks...

Our spirits sing in joy, O God.
Thankfulness spreads throughout the earth
like bursts of golden sunshine springing forth
among the grey-green colours of our trembling hopes.
Liberation from cynicism and apathy blossoms red in gladness,
celebrating a different future, a vision splendid,
in the face of your determination to bring new life into the world.
Thanks be to God for the miracle of Easter. Amen.

a Collect for today...

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,

that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father. Amen

And we make our prayers in the name of the one who taught us
saying...

Our Father,

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

GOD'S WORD

John 20: 19 – end

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."



²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin,^[a] was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 4: 32 - 35

³² Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

HYMN

The Spirit lives to set us free,

walk, walk in the light;
He binds us all in unity,
walk, walk in the light.

*Walk in the light,
walk in the light,
walk in the light,
walk in the light of the Lord.*

Jesus promised life to all,
walk, walk in the light;
the dead were wakened by His call,
walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light . . .

He died in pain on Calvary,
walk, walk in the light;
to save the lost like you and me,
walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light . . .

We know His death was not the end,
walk, walk in the light;
He gave His Spirit to be our friend,
walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light . . .

By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,
walk, walk in the light;
the Father's kindness is revealed,
walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light . . .

The Spirit lives in you and me,
walk, walk in the light;
His light will shine for all to see,
walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light . . .

Reflection

Jesus' disciples were ordinary, everyday people, just like you and me. Did their best; got things right; made mistakes. When they met Jesus, their lives were turned upside down, and they walked alongside, shared with, learned from their Lord.

Ordinary, complex humans - as are we all; it's interesting how history remembers them. Peter, always rushing into things; Jesus called him, 'The Rock' upon which the Church was built. Judas, 'The Betrayer' who gave away Jesus with a kiss. Then, Thomas; I'm not sure the years have been kind to Thomas - always known as, 'Doubting' - his name synonymous with uncertainty. Yet, there is so much more to this ordinary man. Although we hear from him just three or four times, God really uses him for His Glory; despite the title, he is a shining example of discipleship.

In the first encounter he's, 'Brave'. Having heard Lazarus is ill, Jesus says he's heading back to Judea to see his friend. The other disciples remind Jesus that those Jews have just tried to stone Him, but Thomas pipes up, 'Let us go also, that we may die with Him.' They all go and witness first hand Jesus' power over death as he calls the now deceased Lazarus to, 'Come Out' of the tomb; which he does. What a display of Jesus' Power and Glory! Brave Thomas!

The next time we meet Thomas, he's, 'Curious'. Jesus, at table with his friends, knowing He will shortly be betrayed, arrested, flogged and crucified, seeks to reassure the disciples that what will happen is not the end. 'Let not your hearts be troubled.... In my

Father's house are many rooms... I go to prepare a place for you... I will... take you to myself that where I am, you maybe also. And you know the way to where I am going... However much the other disciples really understand, they likely nod along with Jesus. Not Thomas, he doesn't understand, he doesn't know where or how or the way, so he questions Jesus. In response we hear Jesus' amazingly comforting words, *'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'* Had Thomas been content also to nod along, we might never have heard Jesus' Words of Comfort and Hope! Curious Thomas!

Today we see another three parts of Thomas. 'Missing' - wherever he is when the others are together, locked in that room, whatever he is doing, feeling, thinking; he misses Jesus' appearance. There'd been a definite death and a rumoured resurrection; apparently Jesus has risen from the dead. Yet when He visits his close friends, Thomas misses it. Had he been there, he would have seen Jesus on that first evening. God calls His followers to share together in community and be encouraged by one another. Missing Thomas!

Next, the familiar, 'Doubting'; Thomas doesn't believe when the others say they have met with the risen Jesus; he is vehement in his comments, *'UNLESS I see the marks in His hands, I will NOT believe.'* Nonetheless, Jesus uses this side of Thomas for His glory. The following week when all the disciples are together, Jesus appears again, gently giving Thomas the chance to see and touch His wounds. Thomas instantly turns from, 'Doubting' to 'Believing', with the words, *'My Lord and my God.'* Jesus uses this ordinary chap's feelings in an extra-

ordinary way, speaking to Thomas and at the same time looking over the man's shoulder and speaking to each one of us, throughout time and space, *'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'*

'Doubting / Believing Thomas', showing us that it is ok to have times of uncertainty, that Jesus will not chastise us; yet, opening the opportunity to hear Jesus' words of Life and Hope, and receive His special blessing on all who trust Him.

Through these brief glimpses of one ordinary man, Jesus offers us chances to believe and trust that He has power over life and death. That, having died a terrible death on our behalf, He rose again, defeating the darkness of death forever. And that, in time we will go on to be with him in his Father's House of many rooms.

Not a bad legacy for such an ordinary man; ordinary, like you and me, who allowed Jesus to work in and through him.

Which leaves us, of course, with one final question. How will Jesus' Power, Glory and Blessing shine through each of us, ordinary folk? Amen.



We make our response...

We declare our faith in God...

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

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

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN

Let there be love shared among us,
let there be love in our eyes;
may now Your love sweep this nation,
cause us, O Lord, to arise:
give us a fresh understanding
of brotherly love that is real;
let there be love shared among us,
let there be love.

WE PRAY TOGETHER

Make real your risen life among us, O Christ.
Stretch it out across the heavens like stars of light
which show us where your truth might lie
in the dark places of suffering

...we bring to God places of suffering

Warm our struggling world, O Christ,
where hearts lie cold in calculated self-interest,
showering your sparks of compassion
and the flames of justice
into the ashes of unlikely places.

...we bring to God issues of concern

Show to those who are ill, or wounded by life,
your outstretched, wounded hands, O Christ,
that they may believe that you know and care
and accompany them in every day of their lives.

...we bring to God those who struggle at this time

Pour love down like fruitful rain, O Christ,
over the dry places of our life,
so that the hidden seeds of our small ideas
may open into new greening
and bring forth the flowers of transforming hope.

...we bring to God ourselves

Embrace your Church, O God,
so that we may know your life-giving love so profoundly
that our celebration flows over and covers the groaning creation
with the wonder of your abundance.



**Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again. Amen.**

OUR SERVICE DRAWS TO A CLOSE

HYMN

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone – who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless Babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the love of God was satisfied,
for every sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain,
then, bursting forth in glorious day,
up from the grave He rose again!
And as he stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine –
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man
can ever pluck me from His hand;
till He returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Let us go into the world as those
who are filled with the risen life of Jesus Christ
and the bearers of grace.

And may the wonder of Easter break anew in
us, in those we love and in and across all the
earth, on this day and in all the days to come.
In the name of the Great Creator,
the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit of God.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



*Material for this service drawn from:
New Patterns for Worship - Church House Publishing &
Liturgies for High Days – Dorothy McRae-McMahon
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Service compiled and reflection written by Claire