

Bride Valley Churches

Easter Sunday Telephone Service 17th April 2022 (☎01308 293062)

Greeting: Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has given us new life and hope. He has raised Jesus from the dead. Alleluia. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Opening Prayer: Faithful one, whose word is life: come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives for the Kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise

1. Alleluia, Alleluia!

hearts to heaven and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the Cross a victim
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ the King of glory,
now is risen from the dead.

3 Christ is risen, we are risen;
shed upon us heavenly grace,
rain and dew, and gleams of glory
from the brightness of thy face;
that we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel-hands be gathered,
and be ever, Lord, with thee.

2 Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance
at his second coming yield;
then the golden ears of harvest
will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine,
from the furrows of the grave.

4 Alleluia, Alleluia,
glory be to God on high;
Alleluia to the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
to the Triune Majesty.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885)

Prayers of penitence: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength
And not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes
As faithless and not believing,
In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
And doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

May the God of love and power
Forgive us and free us from our sins,
Heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit,
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect:

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the 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. Amen.

Reading: Acts 10.34-43

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."

Gospel Reading: Luke 24 verses 1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Reflection

'Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the other women' were beginning to despair – they knew it sounded fantastical, unbelievable, but they knew what they had seen and heard and been told. They repeated their story again and again, some shouted in exasperation, some cried at being ridiculed – how could they get the men to believe them?

'But Peter got up and ran to the tomb' – this was unbelievable, and yet so much of being with Jesus had been unbelievable ...

Impetuous as ever, he ran to see for himself, not waiting to convince himself it couldn't be true like the others. Not cautious in case it was a trap. He just went.

'Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves,' no longer wrapped around a decaying corpse. There was nothing more to see. There was nothing and no one to explain how this could be 'and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.'

That is where today's reading leaves the disciples and where it leaves so many people. A strange story, with rational explanations aplenty if you want them, with supernatural belief if that feels better, but with many questions and much wondering.

For so many people across history this story has been the deal-breaker – it's unbelievable, people don't come back to life, those who believe it are deluding themselves; end-of-story.

Even for many Christians this part of the story is so difficult to work out that they cling to the cross, to Good Friday, to the horror of death, to the desperate state of their sin and everyone else's – forgetting that the very reason Jesus died was to wipe out all that and bring in new life!

Luke tells us that still that same day, before the disciples and their friends had had time to process things Jesus appeared, first to two friends in Emmaus, then, once they had rushed back to tell the others in

Jerusalem, he comes among them too. Once they see the truth, once they meet him, alive, resurrected, inexplicable, but real, their lives can never be the same again.

The same is true for us. Once we accept he is alive – whatever we understand that to mean, even if we really don't understand what that means our lives have the potential to never be the same again.

Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' John 10:10

The bit of John 3 that we forget sometimes is verse 17 'For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.'

The cross is important, amazing, terrible, but without the resurrection where would we go next. Jesus' conquering death gives us that potential for new life, amazing abundant life in him.

I've used that word potential twice now – potential because you have a wonderful new life waiting for you, but it won't be forced on you – you have to accept it.

If you don't or can't believe; the offer is still there – he's not going to force you to see life in a new, exciting, challenging way – he's not going to force wonderful hope for this life and the one beyond onto you. You can stay as you are and I will do no more than tell you my story and how I feel about my daily new life and leave it to you – I'm not into shouting people into the Kingdom because God isn't.

If you do believe, but have got no further than the cross, no further than sorrow and guilt at your own and the world's sin, no further even than gratitude to God for his wonderful gift – you have missed the potential of new life too.

The call to discipleship is not only to die to our own self with him – BUT to rise to new life with him too!

That's what you are offered life beyond the death of Jesus, life lived in the light of the resurrection. That's what you have to offer the world and those you love – wonderful, positive, joyful, abundant life!

I leave you with something to think about – what does it mean to live as if Jesus has risen again and lives in you? How does every day look with him to see it with? What does life feel like, look like, with him there? What can you do that you can't do if he wasn't alive?

What could the church community look like if it is a place, a community where the risen Jesus has a place? Being a true friend, bringing joy wherever you are, welcoming people at the door...?

I'd like you to think of how your life could be different or how it *could* be differently lived as if – it is lived, KNOWING that Jesus is alive.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; He was buried; He was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles; this we have received, and this we believe. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray: We pray for our Bishops; our leaders; and all the ministry team here across the Bride Valley.

Risen Lord Jesus, you were an early riser that first Easter morning; you needed no alarm to raise you from your three-day slumber. The engines of creation went into reverse and you rose, scattering to the winds the remnants of death. Raise us, we pray, from the slumbers of our too-easy faith and put us to work in the garden of your new creation. **You are risen. We are risen. Alleluia!**

Risen Lord Jesus, you caught the world by surprise when you broke the steel cords of death. Help us to believe that all things are possible, that nations can make peace, that men and women can love their enemies, that justice can prevail and the meek can inherit the earth. Make us part of the revolution that your resurrection began, especially in those nations where there is war, injustice and persecution, and for refugees seeking a place of refuge. **You are risen. We are risen. Alleluia!**

Risen Lord Jesus, you have given us thousands of mornings, but none like this. Give us eyes to see the outline of the new world that your disciples began to see that day. Help us to see all of life in

the light that streams from the empty tomb. Help us to hear the captives' song of freedom and to taste the song of sweetness of release as eyes are opened and lives are made whole. We pray for any we know who are trapped in difficult situations and long for a way out of the tomb in which they feel imprisoned ...**You are risen. We are risen. Alleluia!**

Risen Lord Jesus, you met your special friends at precisely their point of need – Mary Magdalene, Thomas, the two walking to Emmaus, Peter at the lakeside. And to each you brought hope and the promise of life in abundance. Meet us, your Church, in the same way, with hope and abundant life, so that we can bask in the light of your resurrection and reflect that light into a muddled world.

You are risen. We are risen. Alleluia!

Risen Lord Jesus, may this Easter story echo afresh around the world and bring millions to wonder, and to weep with joy, at the entrance of the empty tomb. **You are risen. We are risen. Alleluia!**

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,
And peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father,
We worship you, we give you thanks,
We praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, lamb of God,**

Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has given us new life and hope. He has raised Jesus from the dead. God has claimed us as his own. He has brought us out of darkness. He has made us light to the world. Alleluia. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

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 Lord be always with you: **and also with you.**

Final Hymn: Thine be the Glory ACNY 9

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.*

2 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;

**You take away the sin of the world:
Have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of God the father;
Receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the holy one,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
Refrain

3 No more we doubt thee, glorious prince of life!
Life is nought 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.
Refrain

Edmund L Budry (1854-1932), translated by Richard B Hoyle (1875-1939)