

BRIDE VALLEY CHURCHES EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE 9TH APRIL 2023

The service has been prepared by the Reverend Jane Williams and is available on
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.**

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)

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.**

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.**

Absolution

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

God of Glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

This is the word of the Lord: **thanks be to God**

Hymn: Jesus Christ is risen today

1 Jesus Christ is risen today, *Alleluia.*
our triumphant holy day, *Alleluia.*
who did once, upon the cross, *Alleluia.*
suffer to redeem our loss. *Alleluia.*

who endured the Cross and grave, *Alleluia.*
sinners to redeem and save. *Alleluia.*

2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, *Alleluia.*
unto Christ, our heavenly King, *Alleluia.*

3 But the pains that he endured, *Alleluia.*
our salvation have procured; *Alleluia.*
now above the sky he's King, *Alleluia.*
where the angels ever sing. *Alleluia*

Surrexit Christus hodie Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Gospel Reading: John 20 verses 1-19

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 around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" 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.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Easter Reflection by the Reverend Jane Williams

On that first Easter Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene was checking in. Someone who was both notable and personal had died. Almost everyone in the area knew who Jesus was – the itinerant rabbi who did signs and wonders, who some said was the long-awaited Messiah. But Mary knew him personally. The gospel of John doesn't introduce Mary Magdalene until very late in the story – until the moment of crucifixion, when we read that Mary Magdalene was keeping company with Jesus' mother and aunt at the cross. But it is clear that Mary knew Jesus personally. She was up at first light once the Sabbath was over to see the place where they had laid the one she called 'My Lord'.

You know what happens next. It's the story we tell every Easter Sunday. She arrives to see that the stone has been rolled away. She runs to where Simon Peter and the other disciple were staying and they come quickly. They go in and see that the tomb is empty, with the grave clothes neatly folded. And then they quickly return home, maybe afraid of being out in the open for too long.

Mary stays, weeping, and as she herself peers into the tomb, she sees two angels in white seated where Jesus' body had been. '*Why are you crying?*' they ask her. '*They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him,*' she replies. A man behind her then asks her the same question and, thinking he was the gardener who might have carried him away, she says, '*Tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.*' And Jesus simply speaks Mary's name, and she immediately recognises him.

He surprises her with the work of God, the work of new life and resurrection, a resurrection that is all about love, and relationship, and reconciliation. And Jesus says he must return to the Father. Why? To prepare a place for us. So that where he is, we may be also.

She returns to the disciples telling them that she has seen the Lord but, unlike the first time, there doesn't appear to be any attempt to return to the garden to see for themselves what Mary has told them. They retreat back to where they are staying and it's behind these locked doors that, later that day – the evening of the first day of the week, that Jesus suddenly appears. And what Jesus brings into this situation, this place of fear and confusion, is *peace* - a peace that only *he* can bring. In his first words to them, he says '*Peace be with you*'.

And it's into *this* Easter, the Easter of 2023, that Jesus still brings peace.

If Easter tells us anything, it is that God's love outlasts everything and anything else. It tells us that death does not, and never will, have the last word. Easter breathes God's life over us again and whispers into our waiting hearts – hearts that today may be filled with uncertainty and fear – that his '*kingdom endures from generation to generation*'. It tells us again that those who trust in the Lord will not be put to shame as he willingly went to the cross for us. It confirms that though, in current times, we live through the Garden of Gethsemane, the cross, and the tomb, God guarantees the resurrection. A resurrection that will be just as the first, centred on love, relationship and reconciliation.

So, may the God of hope fill you with joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, this Easter and always. **Amen.**

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 adapted from the Electric Bible written by Peter Dainty

Living God, we praise you on this Easter Day for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We join with millions of our fellow Christians throughout the world to celebrate the victory of our Lord over sin and death. Hallelujah! **Christ is risen!**

Even as the birds and trees and flowers utter a glad song of redemption from the grip of winter's death, so may we add our shout of praise for the light of hope that has dawned upon the world through the triumph of Christ over cross and grave. Hallelujah! **Christ is risen!**

We were not there to see the empty tomb, but we thank you that we have our own evidence of the resurrection in the presence of the living Christ. We thank you for the times when we have triumphed over adversity; when the light of faith and hope has scattered the darkness of our doubt and fear; when we have been strengthened and guided by the Spirit at times when, left to our own resource, we would have been defeated and lost. Hallelujah! **Christ is risen!**

We thank you that Christ's living presence has enabled the Church to survive and grow through the centuries, proclaiming to the world the gospel of love and peace. Hallelujah! **Christ is risen!**

We thank you that Christ still walks the earth, challenging, calling, inspiring, guiding and strengthening men and women of all races and nations to lives of holiness, service and joy.

Hallelujah! **Christ is risen!**

Peace to Christ Jesus, the Son of man, born of the human race, who went about doing good, healing the sick, seeking the lost, preaching the truth and inviting all to enter into the Kingdom of God. Hallelujah! **Christ is risen!**

Praise to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who loved to the uttermost, died on the cross and rose again to live and work among us still through his body, the Church. Hallelujah! **Christ is risen! Praise the Lord! Amen.**

As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

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.

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, 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.

Final Hymn: Thine Be the Glory

1 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;
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), tr Richard B Hoyle (1875-1939)

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. Amen.**