

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2021

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.

Today is Easter Day... the day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Christ is Risen..... **He is risen indeed..... Alleluia!**

Christ is risen..... and as he came to Mary in the garden.... He comes to us..... whether gathered here or sharing worship in our own homes.....

Christ is Risen..... **He is risen indeed..... Alleluia!**

Christ is risen he comes to all.... even those who cannot recognise him the lonely, the down trodden and the bereaved. He waits to be recognised offering his love and reassurance to all in need

Christ is Risen..... **He is risen indeed..... Alleluia!**

But were you there the day He died? Were you there the day they crucified my Lord?

StF 285 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLJ0IjLAmOA>

No – none of us were there!

There was a crowd... rabble rousers... soldiers... voyeurs... all wanting to mock! Some of the disciples were there... Jesus' mother, Mary, was there to see her son die, comforted by John.

For some, perhaps, this was a peaceful vigil. Others came to jeer and mock. Some even expected a spectacular miracle.

But Jesus hung there... "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing!" (Luke 23:34)

But we know it was not the end of the story!

StF298 Christ the Lord is risen today!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVIKjE4uIFI>

Sung by Salvation Army Western Territory Australia

Prayer of thanksgiving

Reflect on all that Jesus suffered and that, through his resurrection we are free. Recall the prayer Jesus taught the disciples as we say again The Lord's Prayer

We can read in each of the gospels of the scene on that Sunday morning. Each of the gospels give a slightly different emphasis on what happened, and the order in which things occurred. All give prominence to the role of women, in particular that of Mary Magdalene. The good news of the scene at the tomb that we are to hear today is from John's gospel.

Read John20: 1 – 18

Reflection – *They think it's all over..!*

75 years ago, television commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme, spoke words that have become a familiar phrase, "They think it's all over..."

This must have been very much what many people in Jerusalem thought after the Crucifixion! Jesus was dead. The Jewish leaders had got rid of the thorn in their sides. The movement with all its followers would be at an end.

The disciples and followers of Jesus must have been bereft. Even though Jesus had spent much of his time in the last few weeks of his life trying to tell the disciples about what would happen to him, the disciples, with their worldly minds and cares, were unable to comprehend what was being said. It was not surprising that they hid behind doors scared for the knock, afraid to open the door, and to be seen outside.

Whilst the men were hiding, the women were ... what can we say? – Curious, caring, wanting to show their love and concern for Jesus? Who knows? But they were moved to go to the tomb not knowing what they would find. Luke records that they certainly expect the stone that covered to tomb to be in place. He also tells us that they took spices for the body with them. This was highly likely to be myrrh – remember the gifts of the magi at Jesus birth in Bethlehem.

But there was no body! Just an empty tomb! We have been reminded in the reading of the action and reaction of the women, and subsequently of the disciples who found it difficult to believe what Mary Magdalene was telling them. We can imagine the reaction on being told by Mary that the tomb was empty – and that Jesus was alive – and that Jesus had spoken to Mary.

Mary was the first eyewitness to see the Lord following his resurrection. She not only saw him, she spoke with him, and touched him. This privilege was given to a woman whose broken life had experienced healing and forgiveness. In Jewish culture this was astounding, as a woman could not even give evidence in court. Yet Mary Magdalene is the one to whom the truth is revealed. It is Mary who is given the task by the risen Jesus to tell the disciples what she had seen to be the first eyewitness.

We cannot be sure how the news that Mary brought was received. Some of them just thought it was nonsense, but Peter “jumped up and ran to the tomb to look.” After looking he was still left wondering what had happened. That evening the disciples were still afraid and met behind locked doors for fear of the Jewish leaders. It is there that Jesus appears to them with His greeting of Peace. “Peace be with you!”

Later, on the same day Jesus joined two friends on the road to Emmaus, and after hearing what they had to say about the happenings in Jerusalem, Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets explaining all that the scriptures concerning himself. What a lesson that must have been!

Life had changed for the disciples and the followers of Jesus in a way which they could not have imagined. It was not going to be the same again.

A year ago, we had just started a period of “lockdown” as the Covid-19 pandemic struck the country. I am sure that many of us had been watching the news during the previous months, and whilst hearing, did not necessarily understand the full impact of what we were hearing. We were not able to celebrate Holy Week and Easter in the usual way in our Churches. Ascension and Pentecost came and went without our usual gatherings. Sunday services became Facebook events, and meetings went to Zoom. Many of us learned to appreciate alternative uses of technology. We all missed meeting family and friends.

As things improved, we have been given hope. Hope of meeting, hope of travel, hope of vaccines. We have been able to meet for worship, whether in our buildings or using technology. Perhaps we have even enjoyed the opportunities Zoom has given to join in meetings without having to leave our homes, being able to hear what is said and even share in Bible Study and quizzes. Above all, we hope and look forward to release from restrictions.

On that first Easter day the followers, though afraid, must have been given hope as they came to understand, like the two friends on the road to Emmaus, the things that Jesus and scripture had been saying about His life.

I am sure that the disciples would have liked to say, “*It is all over now!*” But it was still to be a long road of learning to live a new way without the physical presence of Jesus. There was still a lot to learn, still a lot of adjustment to make – and many dangers still to face. Just like us, as we look to a future of a new life living within the constraints of ever-present danger.

Above all – remember in all things - Jesus is alive. Jesus lives. And he lives every day in your heart and in mine.

So, we can truly respond: Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

StF 297 Christ in alive!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJn5Qi_asaI

Prayers *From Methodist Worship at Home for Easter Day*

On this Easter Day, we remember those who have gone before us to glory. May we, like them, inherit your eternal kingdom.

We pray for all who are fearful today: people living alone; people who have endured great trials; people who are scared for each new day. Come among them and breathe your resurrection peace.

We pray for your worldwide church, united today in joyful acclamation of the risen Christ. May we, your church, daily witness to the life of the risen Christ in our own lives through our love for God, self and neighbour.

We pray for the leaders of the world, and for the people they govern. Endue them with wisdom and justice, so that they might govern all people with equity.

Finally, we pray for ourselves. In Christ we are indeed more than conquerors. May Alleluia! be our triumphant song today and always.
Amen.

StF 313 Thine be the glory

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KufEOJ_lvnU

An Easter Blessing

As we look forward with hope for better days, more opportunities to meet and greet each other, the risen Christ goes with us, to strengthen and guide us in all we do.

We bless each other as we recall the words of the Grace.

Another Easter Prayer

This prayer has been written by the Revd Michaela Youngson. President Methodist Conference 2018-19

When everything was dark
and it seemed that the sun would never shine again,
your love broke through.

Your love was too strong,
too wide,
too deep
for death to hold.

The sparks cast by your love
dance and spread
and burst forth
with resurrection light.

Gracious God,
We praise you for the light of new life
made possible through Jesus.
We praise you for the light of new life
that shone on the first witnesses of resurrection.
We praise you for the light of new life
that continues to shine in our hearts today.

We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy,
will live in us each day;
and that we will be bearers of that light
into the lives of others.
Amen.