

Sunday 'Spiritual Communion' on Easter Day

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Opening Sentences

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.**



Prayers of Preparation and Confession

Renewal of Baptismal Vows

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Therefore I ask:

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? **I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord? **I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth the life? **I come to Christ.**

Gloria in excelsis Deo

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 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.



A reading from the Gospel

Read Matthew 28 v 1-10 (A reflection attached to the end of the service sheet)

Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer. **Our Father...**

Let us give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now and in the week ahead.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally in the bread and wine,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Christ yesterday and today,
The beginning and the end,

Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, and all ages;
**To him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever. Amen.**

Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace of the Lord be always with you



Reflection on Matthew 28 The Resurrection

It is finished! And Jesus of Nazareth, hanging on the cross, breathed his last breath. The End..

Except of course it was not the End. For whilst His mission on earth had finished it was not the final act of the Divine Mystery. For Christ was then to descend into the depths of Hell where He would free all those who were captive. And He would then be resurrected in a new form and substance and reveal Himself amongst us. And He would ascend into Heaven where He would sit down at the right hand of the Creator where He now intercedes on our behalf. And He will one day come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. And then He will reign in a kingdom which will never finish .. for it has no end!

This is the Easter message. It is the message that, with every end there is a new beginning. It is a message we need right now as we wonder how the world will be changed through the current health crisis. What will the future hold when this is finished. Because it will finish. This moment in history will come to an end. So let us take the time this Easter to wonder what happens next. What will the world look like going forward? Perhaps it will look like this ..

Perhaps when this is finished people will start to appreciate a new kind of world. Perhaps what the children will remember from this isolation is a time when mums and dads were at home more and that this was good. Perhaps there will be a rise in small creative businesses, moving away from big multinationals, because all the true entrepreneurs had a moment of stillness to think and plan and take courage. Perhaps when this is finished there will be a Coronavirus baby boom because partners have had more time to love one another. Perhaps our health will have more of a priority after this. Perhaps we will think more about how we get our food, where it comes from, how much there is to go around. Perhaps when this is finished we will start feeding our families and communities in new ways. Perhaps we will contact our elderly family and neighbours more frequently. Perhaps when this ends there will be a new appreciation of our NHS and those who teach our children every day. Perhaps we will exercise a little more in the new post-virus world. Perhaps communities will be re-energised and re-imagined. Perhaps when our streets are bustling again our hearts will be also .. with gratitude and togetherness and love?

There is no doubt that this current crisis will end. It will be finished! And neither is there any doubt that with it's end will come a new beginning. The question is what kind of new beginning will we focus on?

This is the Easter message. A new start from something ending. Laughter from the mourning. Joy from the sorrow. Life from death.

With this final breath Jesus breathed a new Spirit into the world. A Spirit of hope and joy and peace. A Spirit that would inspire a Church to rise in every new generation and take forward a mission of salvation to the world. An Easter Spirit. A Holy Spirit. As I extinguish the light of last year's Paschal Candle in the font in an empty church this morning I will also light a new candle for the year ahead. The old has gone. The new has come. Life from death. Light out of darkness. The light of Christ .. thanks be to God!