



Sunday April 4th, 2021
Easter - Alleluia, Christ is Risen!
The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle



Christ is risen!
 He is risen indeed,
 Hallelujah!

The light shines in the darkness,
 and the darkness can not overcome it.

Call to worship

On this day of great celebration,
 we greet you, God of life,
 with dew on our feet, and wonder in our hearts.

Gather us in, from the long night of loss,
 from the confusion and grief,
 from our scattered lives.
 Gather us in and stay with us.

May the emptiness of the tomb,
 hold the fullness of your love
 in this time, and for all time,
 for us and for all creation. Amen.

Acknowledging



On this day of celebration we acknowledge

that we are here on the lands of the traditional custodians and we pay respect to elders, past, present and emerging. That same love that lifted Jesus from the tomb has been present here long, long before it was occupied by people from other places: the Spirit revealing the mystery of God in this land, since the dawn of time.

Singing:

Christ the Lord is risen today TiS 370

Christ the Lord is risen today: Hallelujah!
 Let the whole creation say:, Hallelujah!
 Raise your joys and triumphs high: Hallelujah!
 Sing now, heaven, and earth reply, Hallelujah!

Love's redeeming work is done: Hallelujah!
 Fought the fight, the battle, won: Hallelujah!
 vain the stone, the watch, the seal: Hallelujah!
 Christ has burst the gates of hell. Hallelujah!

Lives again our glorious king: Hallelujah!
 Where, O death, is now your sting: Hallelujah!
 Once he died our souls to save: Hallelujah!
 Where your victory, o grave? Hallelujah!

Soar we now, where Christ has led: Hallelujah!
 following our exalted Head: Hallelujah!
 made like him, like him we rise: Hallelujah!
 ours the cross, the grave, the skies. Hallelujah!
 words: Charles Wesley 1707-88 alt.
 Used with permission. TiS 370 CCLI 206 729



Prayer

God of the cross and the empty tomb,
 you sent Jesus to show us the way to life,
 and we praise you,
 knowing the heavy and deep cost you paid
 for coming among us in Jesus.

In the place where his body lay
 we sense unparalleled mystery
 and unending possibility,
 guarded by angels, unbounded by death,
 released into life eternal.

In the freshness of the morning,
 when we expect death
 you meet us and call our name.

Coming to you with hands full of herbs
 and hearts full of grief,
 you send us on our way with nothing
 but an outrageous message of hope
 to share, if we dare.

Bless you, for filling us with hope
 that transcends any of our expectations.
 Bless you, for coming to meet us
 for moving in alongside us,
 for forgiving our fear and calling us back.



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In the quiet we come to you,
 inexplicable Spirit of life,
 bringing what we need to lay down
 so that we might live ...
 (silence)

Sisters and brothers, hear this;
 we don't need anyone to roll away the stone of
 our faults and failings
 we don't need to carry ointments
 to anoint the body of our guilt and shame.
 The stone is rolled away.
 The body has been lifted up.
 We are forgiven, released,
 set free into resurrection life.
Thanks be to God, Amen.

Listening

Read: Isaiah 25: 6 – 9
 Mark 16: 1 – 8
 For these words of faith
 and for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflecting - Rev. Ian Brown

"Alleluia, Christ is risen"

On this Easter day, we take a few moments to reflect on some intangible but deeply felt realities. What does it mean to acclaim the Christ? What do we understand by 'risen'? The church has sometimes looked for easy options, but thankfully the scriptures are nuanced and rich. Perhaps it's a story of April fools, but the foolishness is deep and subversive.

Isaiah has a vision for a time when 'death will be swallowed up.' It's an attractive line, an end to death! We all face the grief that goes with death. We live in a time of being confronted with tragedies. We get numbed by the scenes, the stories and the numbers, people who all too often are 'swallowed up by death.'

Isaiah speaks to a tragedy; the suffering of the whole nation. He writes of a time when God:

"will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is

spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces."

For those who have suffered so much in exile, Isaiah's poetry indicates God will swallow up that which has swallowed them. It's a way of talking about the end of the exile. It's the promise of God to make it all right again. Isaiah's faith is in God, who restores and cares for people. This expression of hope, a deep human yearning, is one that's taken up in the New Testament.

The women are the ones, Mark tells us, who discovered the empty tomb. They cared enough to show up. They met a young man there who says,

"Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

They find the unexpected and ... they were paralyzed with fear.

Something has blown their minds - something so amazing that short circuits their thinking, they can't take it in!

I think the description of confusion fits. No one manages grief and shock well first off. Faced with the news that Jesus is risen, the women are confused and the disciples think the story is nonsense. They were there, they ran away from the pain of this reality. It was that bad. Isn't that how we would see it, finished, witnessed with our own eyes?

I think Mark did end his Gospel at this point. Mark's story finished with confusion and disbelief. An ending like this might make us wonder what happened next? What happened that explains the growing church? What fills in the gap between the puzzling end of the story and us reading it? What makes this story brim with ongoing life, where there had been only a sad and confusing ending?

It's the same as Jesus' pattern in life. When people hoped for a political messiah, Jesus said

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his kingdom was not of this world. When the expectation was for a Jewish focus, Jesus spoke of the sign of Jonah, where the Assyrians were saved and he healed the Roman centurion's daughter and spoke with the Samaritan woman, offering 'living water'. When they thought they had killed off their problem, leaving Jesus followers confused and without their leader, the reality was instead, that a power had been unleashed that would change the known world.

Where the women thought they would deal with a rock and remains, they find a space, they're confused. The angel reminds them of Jesus' words and points them to where they will meet him again.

On Easter Sunday, Christ broke out of the permanence of death; a breakthrough, a sign of hope for all. He is going ahead of you; to encourage peace and to help people. He is going ahead, showing the same love, working for justice and calling us to join in, keep your eyes open, you will see him. Alleluia, Christ is risen.

Singing This is the truth we hold TiS469

This is the truth we hold,
 source of the joy we share,
 hope that can make us bold
 trusting the name we bear:
 that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ has risen,
 in Christ shall all be made alive'.
 This is the song of praise
 echoing down the years,
 true for the present days,
 through all our doubts and fears:
 that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ has risen,
 in Christ shall all be made alive'

Christ is the living bread,
 Christ is the word to speak,
 Christ is the way to tread,
 Christ is the goal to seek;
 for 'Christ has died' and 'Christ has risen,
 in Christ shall all be made alive'

One in the faith we share,
 out in his name we go;
 Jesus awaits us there,
 longing that all should know
 that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ has risen,
 in Christ shall all be made alive'

words: Basil Ernest Bridge 1927-
 music: Martin Shaw 1875-1958
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Responding:
Prayers for World & Community

Resurrection God,
 We pray for a world full of confusion and disbelief. What we expect often does not happen, and what often happens is what we least expect. We pray for these places and people in the world. Come with the power of your Holy Spirit, to bless, to release and to bring peace:

We pray for the people in countries currently at war or in turmoil:
 Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Mexico, Turkey, Somalia, the Maghreb Region and Sahel Region of North Africa, Iraq, Myanmar and Libya.

**Come with the power of your Holy Spirit,
 to bless, to release and to bring peace.**

We pray for people and our planet affected by issues of social justice:
 Human rights abuses, climate justice, lack of adequate healthcare, refugee crisis, racial injustice, economic disparity, gun violence, hunger and food insecurity, gender and family violence.

**Come with the power of your Holy Spirit,
 to bless, to release and to bring peace**

We pray for people caught in situations of struggle and pain:
 drug, alcohol, gambling and other addictions, diseases of mind, body and spirit, homelessness and hunger, broken homes, relationships and lives, unemployment, those in prisons, or isolated and alone.



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**Come with the power of your Holy Spirit,
to bless, to release and to bring peace.**

We pray for the church, celebrating this holy day.
Use us to spread your message of hope. Help us
to see where you are and join in. Renew us with
love, make and remake us until we share your
shape and conform to your likeness.

**Come with the power of your Holy Spirit,
to bless, to release and to bring peace,
as we pray together:**

The Lord's Prayer

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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Passing the peace

May the peace of the risen Christ be with you:
and also with you.

Offering

Accept what we bring in our hands, God of
abundance, together with the gift of our hearts
and lives, to use in your service, in Christ's name,
Amen.

Notices

Have you seen the 7 days of Solidarity celebration
from UnitingWorld? Check it out here:
<https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/7dos>

Singing: Yours be the glory, TiS 380 1,2

Yours be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won;
angles in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes,
where your body lay.

*Yours be the glory, risen conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won.*

See, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he meets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord is living, death has lost its sting.
*Yours be the glory, risen conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won.*

(hold final verse until after the blessing)

Blessing

Living Jesus, send us out with hope.
Put your words into our mouths
and your Spirit into our souls
so that we might shine with your eternal light.

Go knowing that the God who calls you by name
when the dew is fresh on the grass,
is the same God who is with you
all the days of your life, and evermore. Amen.

Singing: Yours be the glory, TiS 380 -3

No more we doubt you, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without you: aid us in your strife;
make us more than conquerors
through your deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to your home above.
*Yours be the glory, risen conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won.*

Music: adapted from George Frederick Handel 1685-1759
Words: Edmund Budry 1854-1932, tr. Richard Hoyle
1875-1939 alt. Used with permission TiS 380 CCLI 206 729

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