

Easter Sunday – Sunday 17th April 2022

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer:

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

As we come to worship, may we, like the women at the empty tomb, celebrate and share the joyous news of your rising, of love, hope, forgiveness, and freedom. Risen Christ, draw close as we worship. **Amen**

Hymn: Christ the Lord is risen today

Charles Wesley

StF 298

1. Christ the Lord is risen today;

Alleluia!

All creation joins to say:

Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high;

Alleluia!

Sing, you heavens; let earth, reply:

Alleluia!

2. Love's redeeming work is done,

Alleluia!

Fought the fight, the battle won;

Alleluia!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;

Alleluia!

Christ has burst the gates of hell:

Alleluia!

3. Lives again our glorious King;

Alleluia!

Where, O death, is now your sting?

Alleluia!

Once he died our souls to save;

Alleluia!

Where's your victory, boasting grave?

Alleluia!

4. Soar we now where Christ has led,

Alleluia!

Following our exalted Head;

Alleluia!

Made like him, like him we rise;

Alleluia!

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies:

Alleluia!

5. King of Glory! Soul of bliss!

Alleluia!

Everlasting life is this,

Alleluia!

You to know, your power to prove,

Alleluia!

Thus to sing, and thus to love:

Alleluia!

Let us pray together

Methodist Worship Book p160

Glory to you, O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation. You overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Amen

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 25: 6-9

⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. ⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. ⁹ It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Hymn: Low in the grave He lay

Robert Lowry **StF 305**

1. Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Saviour,
Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!

**Up from the grave he arose;
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And he lives forever, with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!**

2. Vainly they watch his bed, Jesus my Saviour,
Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave...

3. Death cannot keep its prey, Jesus my Saviour;
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave...

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:1-12

¹ But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body.

⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵ 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.' ⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.'

⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But

these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² 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.

Time to Reflect:

'Why do you look for the living among the dead, he is not here, but has risen...remember how he told you.' How could the women at the empty tomb remember? With weeping and sorrow, they had shared his agony on that Friday, witnessing him cry 'it is finished' and the last breath of their beloved as he hung on a cross. So, they run back and tell the disciples, who think this is an idle tale, or as one translation puts it, 'nonsense'.

Today we celebrate that 'nonsense' or idle tale, beyond human imagining. We celebrate the message of resurrection, forgiveness, and abundant grace beyond measure. Our lives are touched by hope, astounded by the love of Christ. Love that bore nails hammered through flesh and bone. Love that was rejected, betrayed and abandoned. Love that was too strong to be bound and held by death. Love that burst forth from a tomb with the rising sun.

The joy of Easter is perhaps not only that God has raised Christ from the dead. Easter joy is also about the possibility and the promise that, regardless of what our lives are like now, new life is available to each one of us today. Nothing is the same, everything has changed, Of most significance as we celebrate Easter, is perhaps not what we do today, but what we do tomorrow, the day after, and the day after that.

How will we now live differently in the light of the resurrection? Jesus did not die and rise again so that we might continue life as usual. If this new life and freedom do not change us, perhaps, we might as well put the stone back over the entrance to the tomb, and let the women's story remain an idle tale.

Take a time to sit quietly

Let us pray again:

In our time of prayer there is an opportunity to bring before God the things on our hearts and minds using the following themes:

Holy God, we come to you today with our prayers:

We pray for our world...

We pray for the Church...

We pray for all those striving for justice...

We pray for those who are unwell...

We pray for those grieving the loss of loved ones... **silence**

We offer all our prayers in and through the name of the risen Christ, **Amen**

Now let us join our prayer together as we say the Lord's prayer:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done - on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever.**

Amen

Hymn: Thine be the glory

Edmond Budry

StF 313

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:
Thine be...

3. No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught 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:
Thine be...

A prayer of blessing

Methodist Worship Book p.173

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.