

HOLY COMMUNION EASTER 2021

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

WELCOME

As we gather together on this Easter Sunday may we rejoice in this new day and all the hope it offers.

HYMN: JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

**All: Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
The first commandment is this:
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'
The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater than these.
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
All: Amen. Lord, have mercy.

CONFESSION

God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins,
to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

**All: Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*,
pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,
confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,
and keep *you* in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

THE COLLECT

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory: to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity.

READINGS

Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Mark 16:1-8 -Jesus Has Risen

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION

What strikes me about our first reading from Acts is that here is Peter, the man who ran away when Jesus was arrested and denied knowing him, speaking publicly about who Jesus is, “the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead”. For me this is powerful proof that Jesus was raised from death and was seen by Peter and others; indeed they ate and drank with the risen Lord – no mere fantom! How that encounter changed not only Peter but the other disciples. They lost their fear of speaking about Jesus and risked their own lives for a truth they knew to be real.

And then we have the women, going in the early morning to provide the ritual anointing of the dead. They would have been in grief, that terrible empty place of no hope, where all is lost and there are no emotions other than tears, sadness, loss, maybe anger. Up to this point in time life had taught them that when going to anoint the dead, do not anticipate any surprises, such as the body being missing. Their minds have become so wrapped around unchanging expectations that when suddenly confronted with unexpected life, it becomes uncomfortably frightening. No wonder they ran away!

Yet beneath that holy fear they soon discover a new and unprecedented hope – for a life transformed. Resurrection faith begins as an experience---a coming together of unbelieving, broken followers, who, by finding Jesus in a wholly new, incorruptible body, were themselves resurrected. It didn’t start as theological dogma—something that needed to be believed because someone told them to. Eastertide assures us that evil and emptiness will not be triumphant over our lives because Christ has overcome the forces of

darkness by his resurrection and is now to be experienced, not as a memory, but as a living presence.

When we experience that living presence, we too are by the power of God resurrected into a new life of hope. And like those early disciples this God empowered hope pours out of us into the world and things are never the same again.

When we come back to church as a physical building will we find, like the tomb, the door blown away and the risen Jesus walking with us out of the building and into the world? That may fill some with fear, for like the women of Easter dawn we may have set expectations of what will be.

Let me read you an extract from a book called, "Tattoos on the Heart", by a Jesuit Priest, Gregory Boyle who worked for many years amongst gang members in the USA transforming his church from being more than a regular place of worship – which provoked grumbling amongst his congregation.

"It was about this time that a man drove by the church and stopped to talk to me. He was Latino, in a nice car, and had arrived at some comfortable life and living. He knew I was the pastor. He waxed nostalgic about having grown up in the projects and pointed at the church and said he had been baptised and made his first communion there.

Then he takes in the scene all around him. Gang members gathered by the bell tower, homeless men and women being fed in great numbers in the parking lot. Folks arriving for the AA and NA meetings and ESL classes.

It's a Who's Who of Everybody Who Was Nobody. Gang member, drug addicts, homeless, undocumented. This man sees all this and shakes his head, determined and disgusted, as if to say 'tsk tsk'. "You know", he says, "This used to be a church".

I mount my high horse and say, "You know, most people around here think it's finally a church". Then I ride off into the sunset."

I guess you could say that the power of resurrection life had broken out in this example of church. We may not thankfully be awash with gang members and drug addicts at Kingston Park, but who are the lost, the lonely, the disenfranchised?

When we come together to worship inside the building, are we going to be Easter people so filled with all that God has done for us that we are able to burst forth with that resurrection power into the world – to serve and heal as God calls us into this small corner of His world?

I have hopes we will be, because so far I see a church full of love and hope and people eager to serve – that my friends is precious. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Holy and everlasting God,
thank you for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead:
in him Light triumphs over darkness, life triumphs over death;
in him is our hope and the promise of life eternal.

We pray for the church throughout the world:
for all who preach the Gospel, for all who seek to lead others to the risen Lord,

for all who teach of his forgiveness, for all who are persecuted for their faith,
for all who have their hope set on eternal life;

(Silence)

that we may all rejoice in the power of the risen Lord.

Jesus, risen Lord,

Open to us the gate of glory.

We look for the coming of peace on earth.

Lord, let us hear that voice which says, 'Peace be with you'.

Let your peace begin in our hearts and in our homes.

Let your peace grow in our communities.

Let your peace reach out into the whole world.

(Silence)

Jesus, risen Lord,

Open to us the gate of glory.

As the risen Lord appeared in the Upper Room,
may he be known to be in our homes and among us.

Lord, destroy all that would lock us in or deny us freedom;

enter our lives that we may live for you.

We pray for our loved ones.

(Silence)

Jesus, risen Lord,

Open to us the gate of glory.

We think of all those who weep today, the sorrowful and heavy hearted,
all who are distressed and those who feel lonely.

We remember all those who are sick,

those who mourn and those who care for them.

(Silence)

Lord, bring them to wholeness of body, mind and spirit, bring them comfort,

wipe away all tears from their eyes, that they may see you and know life is eternal.

Jesus, risen Lord,

Open to us the gate of glory.

Blessed be the risen Lord; he has broken from the tomb
and opens for us the gate to life eternal.

Blessed be the risen Lord; He brings us light and life and joy and hope.

Blessed be the risen Lord.

Jesus, risen Lord,

Open to us the gate of glory.

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All: **and also with you.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER D

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Almighty God, good Father to us all,
 your face is turned towards your world.
 In love you gave us Jesus your Son
 to rescue us from sin and death.
 Your Word goes out to call us home
 to the city where angels sing your praise.
 We join with them in heaven's song:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Father of all, we give you thanks for every gift that comes from heaven.
 To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
 With signs of faith and words of hope
 he touched untouchables with love and washed the guilty clean.

This is his story.

**All: This is our song:
 Hosanna in the highest.**

The crowds came out to see your Son,
 yet at the end they turned on him.
 On the night he was betrayed
 he came to table with his friends
 to celebrate the freedom of your people.

This is his story.

**All: This is our song:
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
 he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
 This is my body, given for you all.
 Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
 he took the cup, gave it and said:
 This is my blood, shed for you all
 for the forgiveness of sins.
 Do this in remembrance of me.

This is our story.

**All: This is our song:
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
 we celebrate the cross
 on which he died to set us free.
 Defying death he rose again
 and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

This is our story.

**All: This is our song:
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Send your Spirit on us now
 that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
 with opened eyes and hearts on fire.
 May we and all who share this food
 offer ourselves to live for you
 and be welcomed at your feast in heaven
 where all creation worships you,
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power
 be yours for ever and ever.
 Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: 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.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread
 to share in the body of Christ.

**All: Though we are many, we are one body,
 because we all share in one bread.**

Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world,
 have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world,
 grant us peace.

GIVING OF COMMUNION

Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
All: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The president and people receive communion.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

All: Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.

HYMN: THINE BE THE GLORY

DISMISSAL

The peace of God,
 which passes all understanding,
 keep your hearts and minds
 in the knowledge and love of God,
 and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
 and the blessing of God almighty,
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.