

He is Risen!

Gathering

Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.

*This week, it would be appropriate to find a **white cloth** or scarf to signify that this is a celebration - Easter.*

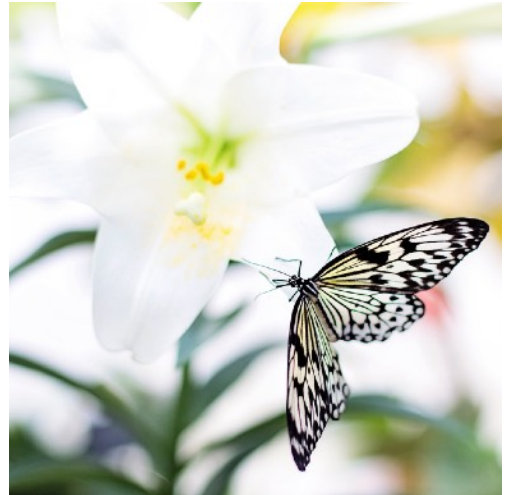
Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God

Gathering

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

It is an ancient greeting used by the early Christians to identify one another, an affirmation of our confidence in and commitment to Love.



Light Candle

Just before day break, Mary went to the tomb.

And a voice said, "Mary".

Light the candle

And a voice said, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?"

He is not here.

He is not here."

And a voice said, "Don't be afraid.

But go and tell my friends that they will see me."

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!!

Acknowledgement of Country

As we look upon the hills and valleys and ocean,
we see the love poured out upon this Land
by those who have cared for this place
since time beyond measure.

***We honour those who have gone before
and those who are yet to come.***

May we be mindful of the calling
God places on all humanity
to care for Creation.

May we take the lead
from the Wadi Wadi people of the Dharawal nation,
whose stories are entwined
with the stewarding of this place.

***May we learn from them
and walk with them.***

Call to Worship

Today as we gather to worship...

Come and see, Jesus is not here,
the tomb is empty,
come and see, Jesus is risen.
Come all who are weary or sad,
let us celebrate,
for Christ is here,
Christ is risen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, resources for Easter, 17 April 2022, p.94

Christ is risen indeed!

Let us worship the risen Christ.

Sing - Yours Be The Glory (TIS 380)

Yours be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've
won;
angels 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 greets us, scatters fear and
gloom;
let the church with gladness hymn of
triumph sing,
for the Lord is living, death has lost its
sting.

Yours be the glory...

No more we doubt you, glorious Prince of
life;
life is naught without you: aid us in our
strife;
make us more than conquerors through
your deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to your home
above.

Yours be the glory...

Words: Edmond Louis Budry

Prayer

Living God,
today we come together in joy and in praise.
The sorrow of these last days has passed.
Jesus is risen,
he is with us today, and forever.

Our joy is inexpressible,
our thanks are too much for words.
On this day we come together remembering and rejoicing that though our saviour was
crucified, died, and was buried, he rose again, bringing
joy to the sadness,
hope to the despair
and praise to the discouraged.
Help us to carry this wonder with us, always, and never forget what you have done for us.

On this day, we come together with prayer in our hearts,
and joyful songs on our lips.
Jesus' promise is fulfilled.

Help us to take strength from the truth of the resurrection, help us to remember that
though we each travel through our own times of trial,
though the darkness may surround us,
your light will always shine.

On this day, we come together,
rejoicing in the gift of life,

sure in the truth of your presence within them.

Help us to remember that our lives are to be lived in Jesus' footsteps,
striving to love and to care for all whom we meet.

Give us the boldness to step forward in faith and hope, shouting with joy,
Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed. Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, resources for Easter, 17 April 2022, p.94

Listening for God's Voice

Reading:

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Reflective Prayer

A dewy morning,
a morning of fear,
a morning of doubt,
a morning of unknowing,
a morning of anger,
a morning of regret,
a morning of loss,
a morning of duty.

This morning,
this Easter morning,
they came to the place,
to the tomb,
prepared for the worst,
prepared for the grief,
prepared for the loss.

They came unprepared for the joy,
for the wonder,
for the new world,
they came unprepared
for the light of the world,
shining bright through
the darkness of the last days.

We come this morning,
in their footsteps,
with their same fears and doubts,
but prepared for the
light and the joy,
help us loving God,
to be ready to see
ready to hear,
and ready to believe,
in your Son,
our Saviour.
Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, resources for Easter, 17 April 2022, p.96

Reflection

Sometimes it is really hard to celebrate.
When your body, mind or spirit is weary,
when your heart is breaking,
when life just seems to be hard right now.

I can only begin to imagine what Jesus' disciples felt waking up that morning, if they had even slept much, waking up to the reality that their teacher and friend had been killed. I can only begin to imagine how the women felt as they made their way to the tomb to complete the task of burial that had been left when Passover began a couple of days ago.

And yet the Risen Christ breaks into the haze of grief and confusion, and sets them all on a new path.

But they don't all get it right away. It takes some of them much longer than others to comprehend.

Mary remains weeping at the empty tomb and is met by someone she thinks is the gardener. It is not until he speaks her name that she recognises her teacher and friend (20:16).

Despite his running to the tomb and back, Peter, it seems, saw and believed but was yet to understand (20:9)

And the gospel writer tells us that it took Thomas almost a week, and only when he saw Jesus with his own eyes (we'll hear more about that next week).

So if you are not yet ready to celebrate or if you are struggling to comprehend, know that you are in good company!

And while today is a special celebration, it is also true that our celebrations are meaningless if we are not living everyday in the wonder of the risen Christ.

So what does that mean?

It means that while the death of Jesus seemed like a full stop, the risen Christ is a kind of, "But wait there is more!", an exclamation mark that draws us into God's way for the world. And this is what is so radical and so challenging to the world today.

The way of God, the thing Jesus described as the "Kingdom of God" or the "Kingdom of Heaven" is a way of living in the world that is entirely shaped by love - love of God, love for one another. This love is gentle and kind, seeks justice, is generous - and will give all of itself for the sake of another.

This way will not be influenced by money or political power or military might.

And while this way may find us facing even death itself, death will not have the last word. Life does.

Love does.

Bishop Desmond Tutu, who gave his life seeking peace and reconciliation between white people and coloured people in South Africa, put it this way:

"Goodness is stronger than evil;

Love is stronger than hate;

Light is stronger than darkness;

Life is stronger than death.

Victory is ours through [Christ] who loves us."

The challenge for us, the challenge for all who believe in the risen Christ today, is to live in ways that reflect that.

If we say that goodness is stronger than evil, then how do we embody goodness in the world - even when we are sometimes victims of evil?

How do we remain committed to love even when hatred swirls about us and sometimes within us?

How do we continue to shine light into the dark recesses of our world, of our community, of our own lives and relationships? How do we be light in those dark places?

What does a full and abundant life look like today - even in the face of sickness or poverty or any manner of things our society judges to be "less than"? How do we prevent ourselves from falling into the trap of measuring "abundant life" by money or success or power or physical strength?

And it seems to me that the life of the Risen Christ stands before us as a call to make choices, hard choices sometimes, that believe in the power of love, the power of life, to overcome.

I am challenged as we prepare to vote to elect a new government, to think about the kind of society God dreams for us and to wonder about how we help to shape our community in ways that better reflect God's vision for us - how might we shape a society that measures success by the way we treat and care for our most vulnerable (and not just those who can afford to pay), a world where justice is known, a world where all of God's creation is valued and sustained - a world that is not afraid to take the hard road because we know that life comes through death.

And so, as we reflect on the wonder of an empty tomb, as we enjoy what is left of this fabulous weather before autumn sets in,
may you find new life for weary bones and exhausted minds;
may you find new courage to embody life in all its fullness;
may you know yourself loved beyond measure by the God of Eternal Life and Love.

God of joy and delight, open our hearts to receive the risen Christ with hope in the new life you promise. Calm our fears and free our voices to sing our praise to you.
Give us courage to live in ways that embody your new life. Amen.

Adapted from Seasons of the Spirit, resources for Easter, 17 April 2022, p.96

Responding

Sing - Here In This Place (TIS 474 - vv1,2,4)

Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away,
see, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven light years away,
but here in this space, the new light is shining,
now is the kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in, and hold us forever;
gather us in, and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery;
we are the old, who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

© Marty Haugen

Prayer for Others

Living God,
out of the darkness of death and human cruelty,
comes life, everlasting, Jesus' tomb lays empty,
his friends wonder and worry
doubt and rejoice,
the light is in the world

now and forever,
and in this light we bring to you our prayers for others and ourselves.

As we gather today,
one in the long line of Christian communities,
celebrating Easter,
in troubling times in our lives and in our world,
some of us happy,
some of us sad,
some of us struggling
and some of us thriving,
we pray for ourselves,
that your love will be our strength and our shield,
that we will walk always with Jesus on our hearts,
on our minds, and on our lips.

On this day of celebration,
we bring to you prayers for all those in pain,
all those lost,
all those struggling in a world of inequality,
help them to be bound up in your care,
to know your presence in this world and in their lives,
and help each of us to offer support in every way we can
to all those in need.

[We pray especially for people who are grieving or mourning the loss of someone they love,
we pray for people who struggle to keep a roof over their heads, people who are sleeping rough or people who are dependent on the hospitality of friends or family,
we pray for people who are sick or whose mind or body is failing.]

On this day of rejoicing,
as we look back to the resurrection and forward to your promised kingdom,
where peace will reign,
we bring to you prayers for all those impacted by war and violence all over the world and here at home.

[We especially pray for the people of Ukraine - God it is hard to know what to pray]
Bring peace to the lives of all peoples,
bring justice to the broken hearted and devastated
bring reason to the unreasonable,
and bring wisdom to all those with the power to create change.

On this day of wonder,
this Easter Day,
we bring to you prayers for your church,
help us to remember why we join together,
in the midst of our singing and speaking, our activities and our outreach,
our hopes and our dreams for an uncertain future,
help us to remember that we come together in your name,
to worship you
and give you thanks,
this day and all days.
Amen.

Offering

As we make our offering, this is not just about cash - many people give electronically now - this time is also an opportunity to consider what time, skills and commitment we make to the work of God in the world...

Giving God,
creator of all that we have,
and all that we are.
On this Easter Day,
the day we have been waiting for
the day when you gave us everything
we bring to you our offering
our tokens of dedication to you,
to your church,
and to your mission and ministry here and everywhere.
Accept them we pray,
and use them for your good
and the good of all your people,
in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, resources for Easter, 17 April 2022, p.95

Sending

Sing - Praise The God Who Changes Places (TIS 178)

Praise the God who changes places,
leaves the lofty seat,
welcomes us with warm embraces,
stoops to wash our feet.

Friends be strong!

Hold your heads high!

Freedom is our song! Alleluia!

Praise the rabbi, speaking, doing
all that God intends,
dying, rising, faith renewing,
calling us his friends.

Friends be strong...

Praise the Breath of Love, whose freedom
spreads our waking wings,
lifting every blight and burden
till the spirit sings:

Friends be strong...

Praise, until we join the singing
far beyond our sight,
with the Ending-and-Beginning,
dancing in the light.

Friends be strong...

Words: Brian Arthur Wren

Music: William P. Rowan

Benediction

Go now, aware of the presence of new life continually around you.

Go now, living in the promises of the God who will not abandon us, but whose love endures forever.

Go now, proclaiming the Good news:

We have seen our God!

Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen indeed!

Rev Kath Merrifield

17 April 2022