



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 12th April 2020, Resurrection (Easter) Sunday

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon

This written worship has been prepared for you to use as we gather in separate places but united in love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that other people are sharing in this worship with you in their own homes is an encouragement to us and brings us closer together.

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

Reading: Luke 24:1-12

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. NRSV

Hymn: StF 309 See what a morning (the Resurrection Hymn).

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJrUEVKGXTQ>

See what a morning, gloriously bright,
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;
Folded the grave-clothes,
Tomb filled with light,
As the angels announce Christ is risen!
See God's salvation plan, wrought in love,
Borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,
Fulfilled in Christ, the Man, for He lives:
Christ is risen from the dead!

See Mary weeping, 'Where is He laid?'
As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb;
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name;
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!
The voice that spans the years,
Speaking life, stirring hope,
Bringing peace to us,
Will sound till He appears,
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

One with the Father, Ancient of Days,
Through the Spirit
Who clothes faith with certainty,
Honour and blessing, glory and praise
To the King crowned
With power and authority!
And we are raised with Him,
Death is dead, love has won,
Christ has conquered;
And we shall reign with Him,
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

Stuart Townend (1963 and Keith Getty (1974)

Opening Prayers:

Glory to you, O Father: 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.

Loving and Faithful Father, we thank You that we can celebrate this morning the resurrection of Your Son Jesus. That by His death on a cruel cross we are reconciled to You. That in His rising to life, we also are risen to a new redeemed life. May everything we do, from this day forward, be to Your glory, that we may be closer to You, reflecting You in our daily lives, being a witness to Your resurrection and saving power.

Come by Your Holy Spirit to my home this morning and help me to worship You in Spirit and in Truth. Strengthen me and uphold me for the days ahead, may I be a holy presence in an unholy world, a follower who does not deny Your power and majesty. Amen.

Easter 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. Amen

Hymn: StF 313 Thine be the glory.

Sing/read /pray /proclaim boldly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbB0OmKMLmI>

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.*

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 the glory,
Risen conquering Son,
Endless is the victory,
Thou o'er death hast won.*

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 the glory,
Risen conquering Son,
Endless is the victory,
Thou o'er death hast won.* Edmond Budry (1854-1932) translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875-1939).

Words of introduction to our prayer of confession:

Early in the morning, an empty grave, folded grave clothes and a familiar voice in a Roman guarded graveyard, impressions of footsteps in the dirt leading from the tomb showing that Jesus had risen. That He had come back, to those and for those, who had forgotten, belittled, denied and destroyed Him.

Let us pray: O God, this morning of all mornings, bring new life, where we are worn out and tired, new love where we have become hard hearted and selfish, forgiveness where we have wounded others with careless words or actions. May the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit abound where we are the prisoners of ourselves, held captive by pride, addictions, anger, lust or greed.

In a few moments of silence, we name the things for which we are asking pardon.
Silence

Thank you for the gift of forgiveness and on this resurrection morning, may we rise to new life. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!" Amen.

Scripture reading: Colossians 3:1-4

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. NRSV

A time to pause, re-read and reflect.

Reflection for Easter Sunday: You may have heard me mention previously that in the days of the early Church and right up to more recent times, every Sunday was considered to be a celebration of the Lord's rising, beating death and offering the gift of a new redeemed life to His followers. That was why the very earliest Jewish followers of the Way (Jesus), considered a Sunday to be the Sabbath day rather than the traditional Jewish Saturday; Sunday, the Lord's day, upon which to rest, pray, worship and with family to celebrate His glorious resurrection.

Paul's letter to the church in Colossae is short (just 4 chapters) but very powerful. It completely dispels the idea of a nice, tidy and "all things in moderation", Sunday only, private type of faith. The section I read on the Good Friday film clip (Col. 1:18) "...to have first place in everything" means to have first place in our lives, I wonder if we really comprehend what that means and if we do, if we are prepared to give Christ the first place in everything. First place in our finances, in our spare time, in our marriages and in our whole lives.

“for you have died...” and “If you have been raised with Christ” emphasise to us very clearly that what God wants is much more than just a religious segment of ourselves. Our lives, as followers of Christ, and Christ’s should be intertwined in such a way as to be impossible to see where one starts and the other finishes. “When Christ who is your life is revealed then you also will be revealed with Him in glory”. If this does not look or feel like your Christian life at the moment...don’t worry, it can be, that is what being a member of a Christian Church is for, to help each other, with tender hearted love, in the journey from “the almost” to “the committed”.

The Colossians letter, Luke 9 (from the Good Friday message), Luke 24 and the passages from John and Matthew I used for Maundy Thursday, all work together in perfect harmony to give a consistent tune or theme. Exactly the same theme that we see emphasised in the words of these wonderful resurrection hymns (which themselves come from Scripture, see particularly the letter to the Romans) “no more we doubt thee”, “life is naught without thee”, “we are raised with Him” and “we shall reign with Him”. Do we truly believe these verses we sing and those we read from the gospels or do we limit them with a “yes but...?”

The Easter period, when experienced and lived from the inside with the presence of the Holy Spirit, cannot help but change us, as it so completely changed the early Christians. For those already committed to Christ, it adds more depth and meaning. For those just starting on a spiritual journey it answers so many questions, “the dawning of hope”.

Is hope dawning in your life today on this glorious resurrection day? My prayer for you is that it is and from this day forward you will, in the words of Luke: “be amazed at what has happened”. Amen.

Lord may everyone who reads these words, receive a fresh anointing of Your Holy Spirit. Amen

We pray together our 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: StF 351 In Christ alone.

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RY4CW5pte98> An amazing virtual choir version.

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on Him was laid
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.
Keith Getty (1974 and Stuart Townend (1963)

Closing Prayers (from times past)

O' God, our Leader and our Master and
our Friend, forgive us our imperfections
and our little motives, take us and make
us one with Thy great purpose, use us and
do not reject us, make us servants of Thy
Kingdom, weave our lives into Thy plans
to bring peace and union to the world.
We are small and often feeble, in speech
and especially in action. Nevertheless, let
but Thy light shine upon us and there is
not one of us who cannot be lit by Thy fire
and who cannot lose himself in Thy
Salvation. Take us into Thy purposes O'
God. Let Thy kingdom come into our
hearts and into this world. Amen. H.G Wells
(1866-1946) Author.

O' Lord, never suffer us to think that we
can stand by ourselves, and not need
Thee. John Donne (1572-1631) Poet, lawyer and priest.

A prayer of blessing for resurrection

God of glory, by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and
hell: fill us, as Your church, with faith and
hope; for a new Day has dawned
and the way to life stands open in our
Saviour Jesus Christ. May we go forth
proclaiming "Christ is risen Alleluia!"
Amen.

**To conclude we sing Charles Wesley's
Easter Hymn: SoF 298 Christ is risen
today.** Sing/read /pray /proclaim the
words. You may enjoy this stirring version:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrI2s
BiIDxE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrI2sBiIDxE)

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Son of Man and angels say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high,
Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply,
Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Alleluia!
Dying once He all us saved, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave?
Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids Him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

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! Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Notices:

As we continue to spend more time at home, I hope you are using this opportunity to deepen your relationship with God. In agriculture there is a period you may have heard of called "fallow". It is a time when the ground is rested, the dictionary defines it as: "land that is ploughed and harrowed but left for a period without being sown in order to restore its fertility". Using this time as a fallow season in our lives means that we will come back stronger and more committed, ready for a fresh movement of God in our churches. Why not pray about one practical difference we could be doing and share it with me by email, text or phone.

A short message from Deacon Glenda. "On this Easter Day, as we are separated by this virus it is hard for us to shout our traditional Easter greeting to each other. I remember last Easter, when we decorated our Lenten cross with colourful flowers. For us this was a sign that death has been conquered by new life, the sign that Jesus had come back to life.

I am so fortunate to live close to the cliff top and can go for a short walk each day. We also have a garden, and, along with the cliffs, I can see all of creation coming back to life, the sign of resurrection is all around us. Creation is in full swing: daffodils, bluebells and apple trees about to burst into leaf and blossom, the birds building nests to rear their young. The darkness of winter is being transformed into the glorious light of new creation, of resurrection and Easter.

So, let us look out of our windows, walk around our gardens (if we have one) and know that Easter is still a time for

rejoicing. We see God's signs all around us of resurrection, we just have to be open to see. So, let us shout (raise) our Alleluia, for in Christ, God gives us new life, hope and joy especially at this time of separation and fear. Alleluia, Christ is risen, He is risen indeed." Contributed by Deacon Glenda Sidding.

Your Special Edition magazine: whilst you may have long ago finished puzzles, gives some excellent ways (scripture passages and a suggested reading plan) to help us draw closer to God during this time of isolation. If you do not have one it can be found on the Circuit website <https://www.candwmc.org.uk/> type "Bransgore and Highcliffe" into the search box and see the PDF file.

There are many excellent resources with which we can connect. Local BBC radio stations broadcast a service every Sunday morning at 8am. I have been blessed in watching All Souls Langham Place in London – there you will hear some excellent preaching and great worship. <https://www.allsouls.org/Groups/337797/Watch/Watch.aspx>

Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip
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