

twelvebaskets



EASTER SUNDAY A

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Easter Sunday - Year A
5th April 2026



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise OR

309 STF – See, what a morning, gloriously bright

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

305 STF – Low in the grave he lay OR

298 STF – Christ the Lord is risen today; Alleluia!

Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18; Matthew 28:1-10

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain OR

296 STF – Christ has risen while the earth slumbers

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

316 STF – When Easter to the dark world came OR

353 STF – Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

311 STF – The day of resurrection, earth, tell it out abroad!

Blessing

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Call to worship

Come gather round,
For we have a remarkable story to tell.
Come worship together,
For the light of love is in our midst.
Come sing and give thanks,
Because life is stronger than death,
Love is stronger than hate,
Light is stronger than darkness,
This Easter and forever.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise OR
309 STF – See, what a morning, gloriously bright

Opening Prayers

Risen Lord,
First there was nothing, then there was light.

Later, the stone was rolled away, revealing the emptiness of the tomb.

What was once seen as sorrow, you turned into joy and a sense of peace.

What once was lost, you restored to life.

With you, from great loss we see endless possibilities and the victorious love of Christ our Lord.

Jesus' resurrection was not something that happened to us, but for us: a life-changing new reality that saves us from sin and gives us another chance at life.

When you raised Christ from death, you held our hands and lifted us to your glory and the warmth of your fatherly love.

Let us learn to live life with a fresh and beautiful outlook, in awe of all you created.

Now, when I look at the wonders of this world, let me truly appreciate your sacrifice and move with a renewed heart and sense of self.

Let the flowers smell that much sweeter, the stars shine brighter, the love I have for others feel stronger; let the woes of the day drift away like a distant dream.

Lord, let every breath I draw be done in gratitude for the life I have been gifted.

Life with you transforms us into a new reality, for us to live out our days on earth in harmony.

In appreciation of all you have done for us, and in giving your Son,
Let us go and tell.

Go tell of how you turn sorrow into joy.

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

Tell of your steadfast love, renewed hearts, and victorious love, of how Jesus is truly risen, not a memory, but alive and well in us.

Let us live in appreciation of all things, big and small, in our renewed sense of self, opportunity, and love for you.

For now and forever more.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Let's take a journey through the events of Easter together, placing ourselves in the scene. Easter morning begins with Jesus' friends and followers in deep sorrow. Just two days before they have seen him die, his body laid to rest in the tomb and the stone rolled in front of the entrance. A final seal at the end of his life. It must have been a very sad time for everyone. Some of them in shock, others feeling very sad whilst others simply couldn't believe it. Spend a moment with them, looking around at their faces as some weep, others shake their heads and everyone feels lost now Jesus is gone.

Pause for a few moments

Then as the sun rises, as darkness slowly turns to light, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to see the tomb only to discover the stone has been rolled away. They stare in disbelief – is that an angel they can see? An angel saying Jesus is not here, he has been raised to life! Their sadness has become fear and surprise! Quickly they tell the other disciples who come and join them wanting to see with their own eyes. As they step inside the tomb it is indeed empty – suddenly they have so many questions. How can the cloths be rolled up? Where is Jesus' body? What has happened? Spend a moment with all these people, looking around at their faces of confusion, as they shrug and scratch their heads trying to understand where Jesus can be.

Pause for a few moments

The early morning light has shifted to become a bright and glorious day, Mary Magdalene has met the risen Jesus, seen him with her own eyes as he gave her a message for the disciples. 'I have seen the Lord', she tells them. The other disciples arrive with the incredible news of what they found. Unable to contain their joy they're out of breath from running so fast! Here is Jesus with them he is alive! It's amazing and wonderful and extraordinary all at once! Spend time with them as they worship Jesus, laugh and smile and rejoice at his unexpected presence.

Pause for a few moments

The story of the first Easter is one that begins with sadness, turns to fear and then to exuberant joy! It is a story of good news, not only for those who first encountered him risen from the dead but for us too! Let us celebrate and be glad because Jesus is alive!

² Opening prayers written by Alice Arbon

Encourage everyone to make a joyful sound: clap, cheer, whoop, use musical instruments and party blowers as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

Amen.³

Hymn:

305 STF – Low in the grave he lay OR

298 STF – Christ the Lord is risen today; Alleluia!

Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18; Matthew 28:1-10

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain OR

296 STF – Christ has risen while the earth slumbers

Reflections on the readings

If you're a fan of reading detective stories or enjoy watching them on TV or your favourite streaming service, you'll know that finding the hard evidence for this or that features strongly in the storylines. A mere hunch about who did what to whom and when isn't enough on its own. It needs to be backed up by something; the telltale stain on the clothes, the old bicycle wheel pulled from the lake that reveals all, or maybe the complex DNA proof that's so relied on these days. So, what about the hard evidence that Jesus really died and really rose from the dead? For generations, Easter people detectives have been going after proof to convince the world. Some astonishing relics are held in holy places and given great reverence by some to prove the case; the Shroud of Turin for example. Joe Nickell's book, 'The Jesus Relics: From the Holy Grail to the Turin Shroud', is a fascinating read if you can find time for it.

But then... so is our beautiful Bible. And we should always find time for that! In all the New Testament readings scheduled for today; the ones about resurrection, **evidence** is **evidenced**. And I had to be careful to pronounce that correctly! What happens in the resurrection Scriptures is that lived experience speaks volumes; witnesses bubble over with what they've seen, heard and come to understand, however shakily and tentatively at first. To the clinical question, 'Have you got the evidence?' mortals just like us tell their stories, share their emotions and their voices erupt with shrieks of joy beyond compare. So, how about we go back to those passages for a while and expect to be blessed and inspired by them this Easter Sunday? Let's make a start.

Evidence from the Gospel of Matthew chapter 28 suggests the world was shaken up at the resurrection, with talk of earthquake, a dramatic, angelic descent and the great rumblings of a rolling gravestone which served as handy seating for the messenger: always welcome after a long journey. God's angelic messenger here is a bit like John the Baptist, someone who's preparing the way for an actual meeting with Jesus who's yet to appear. The two Marys are keen to check the tomb, fearful presumably of the emptiness they find, but then are given an unexpected guide who knows exactly what they're after and steers them right to it. The women in turn become messengers and guides, running full of fear and joy to tell the others. Jesus meets them. Alleluia. And Matthew claims that, 'They took hold of his feet and worshipped him'.

³ All Age Talk written by Gail Adcock

No harder evidence than that. Why not turn to your neighbour for a moment and respond to this question. Have you ever been surprised by someone who spoke to you and guided you to exactly where God needed you to be?

Evidence from the Gospel of John suggests that physical items evidenced resurrection; linen wrappings and the cloth that had cushioned the head of Jesus a little on its cold, stony pillow. It's not unusual for parents to keep baby clothes; the first booties or newborn onesie. When the baby stage is long past, looking at the clothing; stroking and even sniffing it perhaps, evokes many evidences and memories that there was indeed a birth and a baby, whatever the circumstances now. Hopefully a flourishing adulthood, but possibly not. Funeral directors have a special and tender ministry in clothing the dead with care and compassion, discussing with loved ones what they'd like them to wear. Jesus had, as the culture expected, linen wrappings around his mortal frame and they feature evidentially here. John's story is quite clear though, that by the time the disciples came to the tomb, Jesus is unwrapped and unbound with flesh and spirit free. Wonderful. So again, the invitation is to turn to your neighbour for a moment and respond to this question. In what ways do we recognise and experience one another through our familiar wrappings and trappings? (She's the one in Church who always wears that blue coat!) In what ways might we need to be set free from those?

Evidence from Acts 10:34-43 suggests that Peter's resurrection experience gave him a whole new sermon to preach and a whole new mission to forge ahead with among the early Christians. This is evidence of a profound human transformation in speech, understanding and action that living in the light of resurrection brought about for Peter's life, much to his own astonishment. He knew he was 'chosen as a witness' and 'commanded to preach and to testify' (10:31). But revisiting the resurrection event of Jesus over and over again in his speeches and sermons would never be enough on its own. The resurrection reality had to translate into something life changing for Peter's ministry. And so it did. 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every people anyone who fears him and practises righteousness is acceptable to him'. (10:34-35). For someone who would have been schooled in the notion of Jewish entitlement, this was big. So again, the invitation is to share with a neighbour for a moment and respond to this question. What do you reckon the difference is between *preaching* resurrection and *living* resurrection?

Last but not least, evidence from Colossians 3:1-4 suggests that resurrection people can aspire to higher things. The chapter continues (verses 5-17) by sharply contrasting base behaviours with higher aspirations in the Christian life. Anger and wrath superseded by kindness and patience. Slander and abuse put aside in favour of truthfulness and personal renewal. Verse 9 even refers to the stripping off of the old self and being clothed in a new self. Remember those linen wrappings? Sometimes the stark moralities that Paul raises with the readers of his age make us squirm a little in this day and age. It's a different historic context for Paul, surely? Well, yes it is. But no one would deny – surely – that in 2026, some sharp turnarounds in human behaviour across the globe are also very much needed and long overdue. Wouldn't evidence of those be evidence of resurrection living? What do you reckon? A final chance to chat with a neighbour about these things...

Many thanks for such great Easter Sunday engagement with these amazing Scriptures today. Let's go and live resurrection so the evidence can be seen in our lives, our Churches and our world.

Amen.⁴

⁴ Reflection written by Val Ogden

Hymn:

316 STF – When Easter to the dark world came OR

353 STF – Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it

Prayers of intercession

We encourage interactive intercessions this week. Please prepare some strips of cloth (about 20cm/4ins – a ripped up white sheet will do). Preferably, there should be enough for three strips for everyone. Please have enough pens/markers that will write on them successfully.

Let us pray in the light of Christ's resurrection:

- for fresh hope to rise in a place that is on our hearts. (Write the place name on a strip)
- for a person whose life and actions need transformation. (Write initials on a strip)
- for a burden that we ask Jesus to help us lift. (Draw a mark or symbol that depicts this on a strip).

During the next song/hymn, let the cloth strips be collected and placed reverently by a symbol of resurrection, eg. an Easter cross with flowers; a cut out of the empty tomb. You will need to decide.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Resurrection God,

As new life springs into being all around us,

So we give thanks for the gifts of the season,

The gifts of this day.

You have blessed us richly, and we offer something now to you and your mission here on earth – may these gifts be used to bring kindness, hope, love, prosperity.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

311 STF – The day of resurrection, earth, tell it out abroad!

Blessing

Go out with peace in your hearts,

And encounter a story of new life emerging all around.

Go and bring the love of Christ into your midst, always.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Val Ogden

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker