**OOS for Easter Sunday April 12th 2020**

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1. **Welcome**

Welcome to this Easter day Service. In our churches on this day we would begin with the words, ‘Alleluia! Christ is risen!’ the response given would be, ‘He has risen indeed! Alleluia’ For obvious reasons we do not meet in church today but have this opportunity to meet on-line to worship.

1. **So, as we come together let us pray:**

Risen Lord Jesus,
we gather today to celebrate.
We gather to share in the joy of your resurrection.
The stone has been rolled away,
death has been defeated,
you have overcome all the powers of darkness.
May we know your risen presence with us today.
**Amen.**

1. **Let us sing the hymn**, ‘Christ the lord is risen today’.
2. **Prayer**

Gracious and Eternal God,

We come today on the Easter Sunday bringing you our thanks and praise

because you in your love for us have sent Jesus to be our saviour. We

can’t fully express how much Jesus means to us and pray that you will take this worship as an expression of our love of you.

We recognise how much it cost you, and we desire to renew our relationship with you once again. We are reminded that you did this for us and for all people.

Lord we confess that we have sinned against you and each other and we ask for forgiveness. As we call to mind our sins is a short silence lets offer them to God……..Loving God may we hear those wonderful words of Grace: Your sins are forgiven.

Send your Holy Spirit afresh on us today and may that same Spirit open our eyes once again to the greatness of your love. Amen.

1. **Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:**

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.**

1. **Reading: Matthew 28:1-10 (NIV)**

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.**2**There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3**His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4**The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**5**The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. **6**He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **7**Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

**8**So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9**Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10**Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

1. **Let us sing the hymn,** ‘Resurrection Hymn’
2. **Talk**

I am reminded that after the death of Jesus the disciples were struggling, so much so, that John’s gospel tells us they met together ‘behind locked doors.’ The trauma of the events in the last few days had taken its toll, they were frightened and felt very alone. It may be not so unlike the situation we might find ourselves in today. Because of the coronavirus may are isolated, locked away as it were, some are afraid and others wondering how long before this will end. For the followers of Jesus, it seemed after all the promises of a glorious future, hope had disappeared and there was a sense of loss and abandonment.

In Matthew’s gospel in chapter 28 it tells us that the two Marys went to look at the tomb. Maybe they were still trying to make some sort of sense of the events of the previous days. It was whilst they were there a violent earthquake shook the ground. This Matthew tell us is because an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel rolled back the stone and sat on it. You can imagine that when this story was originally told people must have though grief had drove them both mad. The guards who had been given the job to watch the tomb are frozen to the spot so much so, it says they were like dead men.

The two Mary’s find themselves faced with the angel who tells them, not to be afraid. The angel knew what they were looking for Jesus and declared that he was not there, he had risen. What would that mean to them! The angel’s message was that Jesus was not there, that he was alive and that he would go ahead of them to Galilee. The women were filled with mixed emotions, afraid and yet filled with joy. They needed to tell the disciples what they had witnessed. On the way back they encountered Jesus, who greeted them and they, ‘clasped his feet and worshipped him.’ His message was not to be afraid, and to go and tell his brothers to go to Galilee where he would meet them.

The surprise of what they had witnessed turned into Joy. Amid hopelessness, hope was rediscovered. This discovery was to motivate and drive the disciples to rediscover their faith and this led to their future mission and ministry. I do believe what we witness these days will be turned around, that we will rediscover our purpose as church.

It is during this horrific event that a ray of light is discovered. Jesus had told them, but they had not understood. As they reflected upon events, they would have recounted his words, about his death and his rising from the grave. As they begun to put things in the right perspective their joy was renewed.

What does it mean for us to discover Jesus? Are we filled with joy? How might we share this message of hope with others? What is for sure this world needs to know that God’s love displayed through the cross is the same love we can experience today.

On this Easter Sunday 2020 let us not ever stop being surprised at what God can do but be filled with joy and expectation at what God is doing. Especially at this time let us be filled with hope. The hope that Jesus gave to us through defeating the grave.

May God bless you in these days and may we look to the future filled with hope.

Amen.

1. **Prayers**

God of grace,
we bring before you those who have no joy and no hope,
those who see no future, no light at the end of the tunnel,
those scarred by pain and sadness, those who grieve.
**God of grace and resurrection power,**
***bring your joy and healing today.***

We pray for those yet to hear your good news,
whether that is because they live in far-flung places,
or because they are closed to the message and the possibility
of ‘What if?’
May we be Easter people, willing always to share the good news
of hope, restoration and freedom to all those we meet –
neighbours, friends and strangers alike.
**God of grace and resurrection power,**
***bring your joy and healing today.***

We pray for those recovering from natural disasters
such as earthquakes and hurricanes, famine, flood and poverty,
for all whose darkness is very real.
**God of grace and resurrection power,**
***bring your joy and healing today.***

We pray for all those who are suffering because of the coronavirus, for those who have caught it and suffering either in isolation or in hospital, for doctors and nurses and all frontline staff. We pray for families and friends and the many who struggle at home, especially those who are alone and afraid. We pray that you will continue to be with us and that you might bring your healing upon your world.

**God of grace and resurrection power,**
***bring your joy and healing today.***

May all share in the joy of your resurrection.
**Amen.**

1. **Blessing**

Take with you the joy of the risen Lord,
and share the good news with all those you meet.
**Amen**.

1. **Let us sing the hymn, ‘O Lord my God’**

