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EASTER SUNDAY A

9th April 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Call to worship

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Our God is too big for death, for endings, for defeat.

Here I come to worship, to give thanks, because
The worst thing is never the last thing,
Resurrection is real, and happening again for all over the world this day.

Why not share with someone you trust at some point today – things you are grateful for, and ask them for their prayer of gratitude in return.

Easter God, thank you that you hear my prayers.

Happy Easter!

Amen.

Hymn:

309 STF – See, what a morning, gloriously bright - [YouTube](#)

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You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version that is familiar to you.

Reading: Matthew 28:1-10 – [Click for reading](#)

Response to the reading

Christ is Risen! Happy Easter!

This is the day where, all around the world, for the last two thousand years, the Christian church has celebrated and told again the story of Easter Sunday – the story of Jesus' resurrection.

The forty days in the wilderness of Lent have passed. The drama and horror of Holy Week is behind us, and we join together to celebrate that Jesus is alive – Hallelujah! Thank God! If you normally use the Vine at Home alone, or were planning to read through this reflection in private, perhaps today is a day you could find an opportunity to worship with someone else? If that's possible for you, now is your moment – even if it involves ringing someone up and asking them if they'll come over and read it with you, or sing the songs suggested at the end of the service together.

Because part of the miracle of Easter is that we are not alone. We are part of a huge congregation of people who live out the resurrection – we are an Easter people, and today is our day of feasting and joy.

Of course, the Jesus story doesn't make all our own pain and doubt and grief go away. And that's another crucial part of the story of today – that Jesus suffers with us, Jesus

understands the darkest places we go to, and yet Jesus is bigger than all that suffering. That's what resurrection means: the worst thing is never the last thing.

As Matthew describes it to us, that first Easter Sunday morning is chaotic, dramatic and terrifying. Then the angel speaks some familiar words, familiar at least to anyone who has been visited by an angel, 'Do not be afraid'...

Then: 'He is not here; for he has been raised'.

Some questions for us this Easter:

- What does 'resurrection' mean to you? Is it just about an old story, or does it speak to a deeper truth?
- How can you share stories of resurrection with people you might meet this week?
- The angel says 'He is not here, for he has been raised'. Where are you looking for meaning, for God, in your life? Is it in the equivalent of an empty tomb? Where do you think the angels would tell you to go if they could stand in front of you today?

A selection of Easter hymns and worship songs you might like to listen to, alone or with a friend or group of friends – sing along if you feel up to it and worship God together this Easter Sunday!

313 STF – Thine be the glory - [YouTube](#)

305 STF – Low in the grave he lay - [YouTube](#)

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain - [YouTube](#)

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Blessing

Go from here, as one of the resurrection people, go and live the truth of new life amongst death, light in the darkness, hope amongst despair.

You are a part of the Easter people, may you know the risen power of Jesus in your heart, your mind, your life this week and forevermore.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 9th April

- This Bank Holiday Monday, why not join in with giving thanks for the Easter story, and it's ability to continue to speak to, move and inspire people today, 2,000 years later.

If you would like to relive the story and join in with worship from around the world, you might like to watch this Easter Big Church Sing put together by the Methodist Church and All We Can in 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv5ambintOk&>

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Tuesday 10th April

- What is the most loving thing anyone has ever done for you? How have you experienced what Noel Robinson's worship song calls 'Outrageous Love'?
- Give thanks for these moments, and ask God to show you how to be loving, and overflow with divine love into the world around you.

Wednesday 11th April

- Seek a moment of quiet today, and reflect. If it helps, read this poem, an invitation to stillness (written by Tim Baker)

Still, my mind.
Still my noisy, rambunctious brain.
Still, my hands.
Still my twitchy, itchy, notification-seeking fingers.
Still, my lungs.
Still my anxious, surface-level, fleeting breath.
Still, my soul.
Still my wandering, yearning, crumbling spirit.
And be still,
Like the glass lake at sunset,
Holding a thousand gallons of tension
In the smooth invisible layer of absolute motionless.
I inhale. And hold it.
God breathes back at me,
Still.

Thursday 12th April

- Pour a glass of water.
- Think about the things you do that get in the way of your relationship with God.
- You might think it muddies the water of your life, but God forgives us for all these things, and offers us living water.
- Drink some of the water and give thanks for the way God reaches out to you with love and forgiveness.

Friday 13th April

- Draw a picture of your local church. Include on the picture all the ways you see God at work, and all the things you want to ask God to work in.
- Pray about it. If you can, talk to someone from the church about what you've prayed about.

Saturday 14th April

- Today, you might like to pick a 'prayer mantra' to repeat to yourself several times during the day, to help you focus on God, and to remind yourself that everything can be done prayerfully.
- Choose a mantra that works for you, but you could use one of these options;
 - o 'Thank you for loving me, God'.
 - o 'Show me what is mine to do, O God.'
 - o 'The Lord my God, the Lord is one'.
 - o 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.
 - o 'Faith, hope and love endure'.