



The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme Sunday 20 April 2025 Easter Day



Anna has prepared our Easter Day worship

Call to Worship

This is the good news:
the grave is empty,
Christ is risen

Alleluia

This is the good news,
the light shines in the darkness
and the darkness can never put it out

Alleluia

This is the good news,
once we were no people,
now we are God's people

Alleluia

Alleluia, Christ is risen

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Opening Prayers

Astounding God, very early on that first day you caught chaos unawares: planting grace in a garden, setting love loose on creation, flinging joy into the air.

Jesus, son of justice, very early on that first day, you staggered sin, throwing its weight off the world; you confounded death, leaving it alone in the grave; you opened the gates of the Kingdom, so all could follow you into life.

Holy Spirit, very early on the first day of the week, while we were washing sleep from our eyes and trying to make sense of our lives, you sang glad songs to us, rolling away fears from our hearts so we can see the risen Lord.

God in community, Holy and One, on this first day of the week, we lift our hearts to you in songs of praise and thanksgiving. Amen

Confession

Lord Jesus Christ,
today we have come to rejoice with You in Your risen life.
The Spirit bears witness that we are children of God, heirs of eternal life,
and this day we confess You as the way, the truth and the life,
risen from death and leading our worship gloriously in heaven.
Today we confess also that we have no claim on You other than Your love for us.
You died for us to deal with all our sins, which we freely acknowledge before
You.
You rose for us that we might know You as Saviour and Lord, and live new lives,
turning our back on sin and pressing forward in Your good purpose for us.
Therefore, we bless You and honour You as our living and reigning Lord.

Prayers of Forgiveness

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from your sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect for Easter Sunday

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Readings

The First Reading: Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but

God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

Thanks be to God for the gift of His word.

The Gospel Reading: John 20:1-18

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. So 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.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and 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. They 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.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus 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.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus 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.” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His Holy Word.

Reflection with Richard

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

These are the traditional words with which Christians greet each other in Eastertide. It is a simple statement of truth, fact, faith and belief. It is an encouragement to one another and a sign of recognition.

The exchange is not even ten words long, yet it states the most glorious understanding that Jesus, who was dead, is now alive.

When he was teaching the disciples he had spoken of his death several times and had even explained to them that he would rise again. But it must have been impossible for them to really take in the truth of it until it had happened.

But when it did happen. They began to live a new adventure: A life where death is not the end; a life where God is always with us, around us, within us, beside us. And they recognised God in a new way too.

Until this day they had believed that God was powerful, that God was real and a living God. They had heard the stories of God parting the Red Sea and freeing the people from slavery in Egypt. But they were stories of long ago.

Now, before their very eyes Jesus had parted the water of death and walked straight through. God had broken the slavery of sin and the prison of death. Everything had changed.

And all this is celebrated in these nine words:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

I remember that on the Easter morning when I was working in France, I came in to work in the morning and was met by the local French Catholic Priest. He shook me by the hand and with a great smile said in French:

“Le Christ est réssuscité!”

I never did become particularly fluent in French and the priest’s expectant look didn’t help my brain as it tried to work out what he had said to me.

And then it struck me, that he had spoken the great Eastertide greeting: “Christ is Risen.”

But understanding it was only half my problem. Even though I had worked out what he had said, I had no idea what the response to it was in French.

He held his expectant gaze and I found some words:

“Oui! C’est vrai!” I said. “Yes! It’s true!”

The priest through back his head in joyful laughter at my unorthodox response and my continuing difficulty with the language. “That is not what I expected,” he said in English, “but you have the meaning!”

And isn’t that the great wonder of this day. How spectacular it is that God should come to be with us and die before our eyes, and then come back to life. It is unexpected, and yet it’s meaning is to show us how much impact God has upon our lives.

God is always with us, a God, stronger than death calls us to live in his presence each and every day. Whatever we face, we meet it in the presence of a living God who has overcome even death.

And so for the next 50 days when we meet, we share the wonder of the Easter greeting:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Intercessions led by Jasmin Smith

Lord God, our hearts fill with joy today at the most wonderful news ever:
Jesus is alive!

We thank you for all the signs of life that we see around us: sunshine, blossom on the trees, baby birds and animals, buds peeping through the ground; new life blooming everywhere. Thank you for the smell of spring, the warmer days and the lighter nights - all pointing towards the regeneration that comes from you.
Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.
Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you went to the cross for us. Thank you that you love us so much that you willingly suffered all the pain and horror so that we might have a relationship with God. We rejoice that the curtain of separation was torn in two as you died, reconciling us to God. Thank you for love beyond measure.
For us.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.
Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Thank you, Lord, for the tremendous victory of the resurrection. Thank you for the hope, the joy, the fulfilment, the everlasting life that your rising brings. Words cannot fully express the amazing triumph of that silent moment in the garden when you once again began to breathe.
Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.
Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord, we thank you for signs of resurrection in our own lives: perhaps something new learnt, a chance for rest and relaxation, a new job, a new member of the family, a recovery. There are so many ways that you bring new growth into our lives. We pause now to thank you for the special times that we have recently experienced...

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord Jesus, as the women came to the tomb in sorrow, their eyes full of tears, we are aware of so much sorrow still in our world. We lift to you now all the places where conflict exists – between nations, between factions, between families, between partners.

We bring to you our suffering planet: where the beauty you have created is being squeezed by humanity's selfishness and greed.

We bring to you all those who are in pain: those we know and love who are sick, full of sorrow, loneliness or despair.

Lord, we deeply desire that your resurrected presence will fill those people and places of pain and redeem them, bringing the new life that is so dearly needed. Touch every heart with your eternal love, filling each seemingly hopeless situation with the promise of resurrected, everlasting hope.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Lord, the news of your rising was so amazing that even your closest friends struggled to believe it at first. We pray for all those we know who struggle to believe and trust in you. We ask you to help them ponder the evidence, just like Peter did, and to think seriously about what they see. Help us to show them, by our joy at your resurrection, that new life in Jesus is for everyone, forever.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

As we celebrate your victory, Lord, go before us this week into every situation we face. Give us new eyes to encounter your freshness and new life. Help us to remember that your resurrection is forever, not just for one day. Thank you for

being alive in us now. Breathe your Spirit into our hearts this week so that we may be faithful witnesses to all that you are and all that you have done.

Yours is the glory; risen, conquering Son.

Endless is the victory over death you've won.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Trusting in the compassion of God, we pray

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

now and for ever. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Easter God, we bring you our praise and thanks. You take away the pain of our Good Fridays, the watching of suffering and the waiting for death, and transform our helpless into the fragile beginnings of hope.

You take the bleakness of our Holy Saturdays, the weariness of defeat and desolation, and transform our despair into the will and courage to go on.

You take the grieving of Easter Sunday morning, the fearful approach to the tomb, and transform our bewilderment into the breathless excitement of new life.

And so, with Mary and the other disciples, with all who have wept and been comforted, with all who have mourned and found hope, we sing your Easter praises, through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, **Amen.**

Blessing & Dismissal

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

May Easter's incredible joy fill us

And may the blessing of God almighty,

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Be among us and remain with us. **Amen**