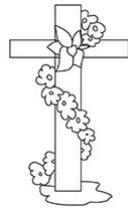


**Easter Sunday Circuit Service 4th April 2021
Farnworth and Worsley Circuit**



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

Call to Worship:

Lord, as we meet to worship,
may we recognise that you are the Lord of life,
the Lord of hope,
the one who makes all things new!
All praise and honour, glory and might be yours,
now and in all eternity.

Hymn:

The day of resurrection,
earth, tell it out abroad!
The passover of gladness,
the passover of God!
From death to life eternal,
from earth unto the sky,
our Christ has brought us over
with hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil,
that we may see aright
the Lord in rays eternal
of resurrection light;
and, listening to his accents,
may hear, so calm and plain,
his own 'All hail!' and, hearing,
may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful,
let earth her song begin,
the round world keep high triumph,
and all that is therein;
let all things seen and unseen
their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord is risen,
our joy that has no end.

St John of Damascus (c.675–c.750)
translated by John Mason Neale (1811–1866)

Prayer of Praise and Confession:

Living Lord,
we thank you for the life that you lived on this earth, for the
weakness of human form that you took on, for the sacrifice that you
made through the week before Easter, and today for your new life in
the resurrection.

Living Lord, we thank you.

We thank you for the life that you have given to each one of us, for
the gifts and skills that make us unique, for the relationships that we
have with those we know and meet, and for our new life and
confidence through your resurrection.

Living Lord, we thank you.

We thank you for creation that found life through you, for the
beauty of the rising sun on this Easter Day, for the new life that we
see this spring, for the provision that you give us and for your
nurturing power that is so visible through it all.

Living Lord, we thank you.

We thank you for the Church that lives because of you, for the
fellowship that we have with our brothers and sisters throughout the
world, for the unity that we have as the body of Christ, and for the
resurrection power that inspires us.

Living Lord, we thank you.

For everything that we have mentioned and for everything that we take for granted, all that we can give you in return is our thanks. Please help each one of us to show you our thanks through our faith and our actions inspired by the life that we have in you.

Amen.

Risen Jesus,
on this day of your resurrection, the day on which we celebrate new life in you,
we come and acknowledge our sins,
knowing that it is only because of your sacrifice on the cross that we have any right to join in the celebration.
We remember the times that we have forgotten the power of your resurrected life, the times that we live as if there is no one or nothing on our side, the times that we live without an expectation of your presence.

Risen Lord, forgive us.

On this day of your resurrection, we acknowledge that we do not always look at other people as those whom you have died for. We find it so easy to judge because of gender, or race, or clothes, or family, or differences.

Risen Lord, forgive us.

On this day of your resurrection, we acknowledge that we do not treat your world as the place of which you are Lord. We take all that you have made for granted as we abuse it for own comfort and wealth.

Risen Lord, forgive us.

On this day of your resurrection, we acknowledge that we do not expect to encounter the risen Jesus, and we do not show the risen Jesus in all that we do. We often lack faith, and we often don't show the faith that we have.

Risen Lord, forgive us.

Thank you that you died for our sins, thank you that you rose again, thank you that we can start again and know that our sins are forgiven.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, which 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 them that 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:

*He has risen,
he has risen,
he has risen,
Jesus is alive.*

When the life flowed from his body,
seemed like Jesus' mission failed.
But his sacrifice accomplished,
victory over sin and hell.

He has risen, ...

In the grave God did not leave him,
for his body to decay;
raised to life, the great awakening,
Satan's power he overcame.

*He has risen,
he has risen,
he has risen,
Jesus is alive.*

If there were no resurrection,
we ourselves could not be raised;
but the Son of God is living,
so our hope is not in vain.

He has risen, ...

When the Lord rides out of heaven,
mighty angels at his side,
they will sound the final trumpet,
from the grave we shall arise.

He has risen, ...

He has given life immortal,
we shall see him face to face;
through eternity we'll praise him,
Christ, the Champion of our faith.

Gerald Coates (b.1944), Noël Richards (b.1955) and Tricia Richards (b.1960)

Reading: Isaiah 25: 6-9 (New Revised Standard Version)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained
clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

he will swallow up death for ever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

It will be said on that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save
us.

This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Reading: John 20: 1-18 (New Revised Standard Version)

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.

Hymn:

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:

Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him, Love who had been slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:

Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:

Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872–1958) (alt.)

Reflection: Rev. Darren Garfield

There are three stories here in John’s gospel, which is very convenient for a Methodist sermon! Three stories that give us a glimpse into the meaning of resurrection. Stories that lift us above the bleak reality of the cross, the awfulness of crucifixion. Three stories and three people that offer hope.

Firstly we have Mary coming to the tomb. She goes there to mourn the death of Jesus. She is full of grief, sadness, and the sense that the whole world has lost its meaning and purpose. We can only imagine how she feels in those moments, after the awful events of Good Friday. For Mary, and for so many others there, all is bleak and all is definitely not well. And it gets worse, because as she gets to the tomb she sees that the stone has been rolled back and the tomb is empty. What does she feel in that moment? Not only is Jesus dead, but his body has been stolen too! What’s going on? Despair, sadness, or a feeling of annoyance and irritation that his body has been taken. Stolen by grave robbers - a big problem back in those days, apparently. So in her desperation she runs to Simon Peter and the other disciple and screams out to them, we don’t know where they’ve put him! In this story there is no hope; everything seems lost and hopeless. Jesus is dead, and his body has gone. We’ll come back to Mary in a moment.

The second story describes the two disciples running to the tomb. The beloved disciple runs faster, but Peter goes into the tomb first. Maybe there’s a bit of rivalry going on here, a bit of a race to get to the tomb first. But it doesn’t matter. The beloved disciple peers in and sees that the linen that wrapped Jesus’ body was still there, all neatly folded. Peter went in and saw it too. Yes, something was definitely wrong! But it was the other disciple, the nameless one, whom Jesus loved, who saw and then believed. This was no awful grave robbery, this was no terrible end to the life of an amazing man, but this was a realisation that in fact everything was right;

everything was okay, and death itself was not the end. Let's come back to that beloved disciple in a minute.

And the third story takes us back to Mary. Poor Mary, desolate, bereft, anxious over the theft of Jesus' body. But then an odd thing, a strange encounter with two angels. Angels, in Jewish culture as you know, were often seen as signs of the divine presence, the reality of God in their midst. Angels that asked her why she was crying. Angels, who tried to console Mary, but still she was both grief-stricken and confused. Even the presence of Jesus himself, the risen Jesus, at first did nothing to take away her sadness; after all, as far as she was concerned he was just the gardener. Nothing wrong with gardeners, of course! Although Mary thought that this gardener had taken away his body. Where is he? Where is Jesus? Let's come back to that scene very soon.

Three stories, and they become our stories too.

Remember the first story - Mary, coming to the tomb. Expecting to anoint Jesus' body. Mary, the first person we meet in this passage from John, becomes us, becomes our voice, becomes an example of what we are and what we do: our searching and longing, our hoping and praying and yearning. That's what Mary did and that so often is our experience. Longing for purpose and a reason and, to pinch another current phrase: a roadmap through all our struggles and challenges of life. We can put ourselves in the place of Mary, and cry out, where is he? Where have you put him? Where are you Lord, where are you when I'm struggling? When I feel unwell? When I'm angry? When I'm confused? When I still can't see family and friends? When I'm struggling with all that is going on in the world. We long for so much. We pray and we hope that the world will be better and that God will reveal himself to us. Where are you, Lord? Why don't you show yourself to me? If the famous, celebrated Mary, can express longing, if the well-known Mary can reveal and express all her struggles, then maybe that gives us permission, even confidence, to do the same.

Remember the second story – particularly focussing on the beloved disciple. The other disciple, not Peter. The quiet one, the one who was a bit more reticent, a bit hesitant, who peered into the tomb, rather than bursting in! That's what Peter would have done. But this is the disciple who was a bit nervous, a bit unsure. His identity is never revealed. Maybe he was John, one of Jesus' disciples, or Lazarus, or Thomas. Whoever it is, probably John, in my view. he certainly showed some nervousness around the empty tomb. How often do we feel like that? Uncertain about the future, frightened about the present, full of regrets about the past. Apprehensive, even a bit bewildered. But there is hope, even in our confusion! The beloved disciple seems to get everything right! At the last supper he sat next to Jesus, even leaning against him and trusting him. At the foot of the cross, there he is, with Mary beside him, and Jesus asking him to take Mary into his own home and look after her. Then here, now in all the uncertainty, the disciple entered the tomb and saw and believed. Even in our doubts we can trust and hope and believe.

And thirdly, there is the gardener. Well, no it's not the gardener, it's Jesus. But Mary doesn't realise that at the time. It is only when he calls her by her name, that everything changes. Everything is different. Mary. Mary. And her world is broken open when Jesus calls her name. I'm drawn to the story of the stranded container ship that blocked up the Suez Canal for nearly a week. Remember the story? The 200,000-tonne ship that ran aground in all the mud. And how hundreds of ships were waiting to get through the canal that links the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, a busy, busy trade route! But eventually after days, it was freed with the help of tugs and dredgers. A pretty amazing feat! What seemed impossible became possible. I thought, there has to be a sermon in that somewhere!

The impossible becomes possible. So it was 2000 years ago, the one who was dead greets Mary. So for us. Because we can put our own name there, and hear Jesus calling us by name, reassuring, comforting, guiding and encouraging us. Whatever our name is. All is well.

But Easter isn't just a happy ending to a sad story; it tells us that all our questioning, our suffering, our uncertainty, can be transformed by the very power of God's love. There is nothing that is beyond God's love, nothing, nothing in our lives that cannot be changed by the grace of God. Mary, and the disciples, and countless others have understood that over the years. And so do we. And so can we as we open our lives to God's transforming love.

Hymn:

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 (b.1963) and Keith Getty (b.1974)

Prayers of Intercession:

There are periods of silence for your own prayers and thoughts
'See what a morning, gloriously bright with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem; tomb filled with light as the angels announce Christ is Risen!

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! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

With joy in our hearts, lets pray together.

We remember with gratitude the presence of the Church in remote and highly populated areas , all over the world.

We pray for all other Christians celebrating the wonder of the Resurrection. *Silence*

'for He lives! Christ is risen from the dead!'

Risen Lord, we praise you for changed lives and new hope, for sins forgiven and peace in our hearts. Disturb any complacency which is blurring our spiritual vision. Give us a sense of your risen presence, abiding with us always. *Silence*

'for he lives! Christ is risen from the dead!'

Risen Lord, conquerer of evil, we pray for all those who experience darkness and destruction. We pray for your world, that there might be peace on earth. We pray for nations in turmoil, and for people who have lost all hope. Help us to be your peacemakers . We pray for courage to speak out against injustice and oppression; Give to your people power to overcome and to live with the assurance of your living hope. *Silence*

'for he lives! Christ is risen from the dead!'

Risen Lord, who has granted us the power to overcome sin and destruction, we welcome you this Easter Sunday. Enter our lives and the lives of all people, that all may experience your new life in us.

We pray that those families and friends who have not yet met you,
may be drawn to know you, and of your faithfulness and love.

Silence

‘for he lives! Christ is risen from the dead!’

Risen Lord, who greeted Mary in her despair, we pray for all those
who are trapped by their circumstances in lives that give them little
hope. We remember all those filled with pain, anxiety or sorrow.
Also we pray for those who are dying, and those who mourn.
Come alongside them and speak their name.

May they know the comfort of the risen Lord, the peace of Christ
who came and stood with Mary, on that first Easter Sunday morning,
transforming despair to hope.

Heavenly Father, may our lips and our lives express our thanks and
praise to you for rescuing us and setting us free to live.

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus
Christ.

‘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! Alleluia!! Amen**

Offering:

*(For those who are setting aside their offering each week this prayer
may be said:)*

Generous God,
out of your providing,
we bring these gifts.
May the use of our gifts
and the offering of our lives
be for your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

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, ...

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, ...

Edmond Budry (1854–1932)
translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875–1939)

Blessing:

God of new life and new beginnings,
we have been drawn here today
to encounter again the mysterious story of life everlasting.
Help us, like Mary, to stay close to this mystery,
to embrace our emotions,
to hear you when you call us by name,
and to experience new wonders.

Alleluia! Go in joy and peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Alleluia!

Amen.

After Service Telephone Chat:

Sunday 4th April 11:45 AM

Telephone Number: 0333 011 0616

Access code: 623 5908

Please note the call asks you to press the '£' key after entering the access code. You can either press the '#' key, or just wait, and you will be connected to the telephone chat.

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