

**The Vine at Home**  
**4<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – Easter Sunday**

**Call to worship**

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

This Easter day, we gather to worship, to give thanks, to celebrate life, resurrection, hope and the triumph of all that is good over all that is evil.

Let us join together in celebration!<sup>1</sup>

**Hymn: 313 STF – Thine be the glory**

**Opening Prayers**

Christ has risen

**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

He lives for ever

**Alleluia!**

Lord Jesus Christ, we can only begin to imagine the wonder and relief in Mary's eyes as she met your living presence in the Garden on that first Easter morning, and ran to share the Good News with the other disciples.

We, too, want to feel that excitement as we celebrate that Jesus who was dead is alive, that good is stronger than evil, that love is stronger than hatred, that life is stronger than death and that you Lord are with us to the end of time. On this day of light and gladness we come to worship you.

As we look at the cross – we see that it points upwards to our Creator God, downwards to men, but it points outwards too. Holy Spirit help us to express our worship in your world today by reaching out to others, by reflecting Jesus' compassion and by sharing God's amazing love in all the ways we can.

And as we draw nearer to you in worship, our Living Lord, we want to say sorry for all the times we forget or ignore your living presence with us. For those times when we allow our own selfish wants to dominate our thoughts and rule our lives. For all those times we have been uncaring and unwilling to forgive others, Lord, please forgive us.

Hear God's words of love and mercy, your sins are forgiven.

The Lord hears our prayer, Thanks be to God. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

**Let us now say the Lord's Prayer**

**Readings: Acts 10:34-43 - Gentiles Hear the Good News**

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<sup>1</sup> Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Diane Robinson

**34** Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. **37** That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: **38** 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. **39** 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; **40** but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, **41** 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. **42** 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. **43** All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”<sup>3</sup>

### **1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - The Resurrection of Christ**

**15** Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> of the good news<sup>[b]</sup> that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, **2** through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

**3** For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, **4** and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters<sup>[c]</sup> at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.<sup>[d]</sup> **7** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. **9** For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. **11** Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.<sup>4</sup>

### **John 20:1-18 - The Resurrection of Jesus**

**20** 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. **2** 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.” **3** Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. **4** The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, **7** and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples returned to their homes.

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## Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

**11** But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look<sup>[a]</sup> into the tomb; **12** 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. **13** 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.” **14** When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” 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.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew,<sup>[b]</sup> “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). **17** 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.’” **18** 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.<sup>5</sup>

### Reflections on the readings

On this Easter Sunday, let’s listen to this piece of Spoken Word poetry, written by Revd James Morley, a co-superintendent of the Sheffield Circuit.

Here, with my broken heart.  
All has fallen apart.  
In the silence, and the dark,  
Is this maybe,  
Where it starts?

I walk in desolation,  
Scarred by life’s devastation.  
Am I simply seeking some consolation?  
I guess it’s open to interpretation.

It’s a mystery.  
For it should not be.  
Is it confusion,  
Or collusion?  
Is your faith just to make you feel safe?  
Is my doubt just my lack of faith?

Dare I believe in what I did not ought,  
That which defies all rational thought?  
Found and lost.  
What I was looking for.  
Hope cast adrift so far from the shore.

Jesus wept.  
And I am weeping.

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But a voice comes softly, seeking  
And dawn comes quietly, creeping,  
Into my mind, my heart, my soul.

What is broken might be made whole.

Yet that's that still small voice again,  
Affirming I am known and named,  
That everything's different, yet everything has changed.  
And yet the song, it still remains the same.

The song.  
For the song, it is love.

I'd hold onto it, if I could,  
But it needs to be shared,  
And joined in with,  
And heard.  
Sung loud, in actions sweeter than a thousand words.

For now, for all,  
A different future has unfurled.  
So, despite all the world denies,  
Despite all the pain and the lies,  
Even though some things must die,  
Through heaven's eyes,  
I realise  
That I can rise.<sup>6</sup>

*[There is now some space for you to reflect and respond, on this Easter Sunday.]*

You may find these questions helpful, or you may choose to bring your own reflections on the last 12 months, the experience of travelling through Lent, and what resurrection means to you this Easter Sunday.

- How do you respond to this poem?
- How does the resurrection story make you 'feel'?
- What are the things that need to rise from the tombs, graves and abandoned places of this last year?
- Where are you seeking little 'resurrections' around you at the moment?

*[Once you have had time to reflect on these questions and perhaps discuss them in groups, you could close with this prayer.]*

Easter God, you bring new life into our world of darkness and grief.  
Easter God, the stories of Jesus that we have inherited show us the awesome truth about resurrection and hope springing up in difficult times.

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<sup>6</sup> Reflection written by James Morley

Easter God, your Spirit is at work in amongst us this day. Help us to listen to Her guiding, Her prompting, Her inspiration.  
May we be your Easter people this day, this week, and forevermore.

Amen.

### **Prayers of intercession**

God of the resurrection,  
As darkness fell, Your love shone through.  
We pray that this same light might shine in the darkness around the world.

God of the resurrection,  
As blood was poured out at the Cross,  
We pray for the blood poured out due to war, may the love of the Cross bring healing and unity.

God of the resurrection,  
As the empty tomb represents freedom,  
We pray for those struggling with addiction and mental illness in our community. May the freedom found at the tomb be a lived reality for those struggling today.

God of the resurrection,  
As Mary found the tomb empty and voiced the news,  
We pray for women who face oppression and are unable to use their voice.

God of the resurrection  
As Mary wept, we weep for those who grieve lost ones due to Covid-19 and other diseases.  
Surround them with your peace and love this day.

God of the resurrection,  
May we be a resurrection people,  
May we leave this place and say 'I have seen the Lord'.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

### **Hymn: 167 STF – Colours of day**

#### **Blessing**

Go out from here, you people of the resurrection.  
Keep the story alive – and may the miracle of new life be one you know, and live and share.  
Go, as the Spirit of God goes with you.

Amen.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Matt Forsyth

<sup>8</sup> Taken from Gathering Prayers for Remembrance Sunday by Christine Dutton