

## **Transcript Communion Service for Zoom, Easter 2021**

**Ed. 04.04.21**

### **Introduction and Prayer – Martin**

*Good morning. It's good to speak to you again. Even though we're not gathered in the same building, we worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all*  
This Easter Day, we rejoice with the Church everywhere, and we join in the Lord's Supper.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen**

**He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**Hymn 419** Thine be the Glory

### **Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer**

Jesus Christ, Lord of the morning,  
in the rising sun of a new day, in a garden damp with early-morning dew,  
a tomb lies empty – you are not there!  
You stand among us, risen and glorified.  
You have gone before us into the darkest places, and have made them holy.  
Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever, yours is the victory.  
In our places, and all places, we rejoice in your victory.  
This day, and every day, we welcome you afresh into our lives.

Loving, Living God,  
we praise you for this day of celebration, this day of praise and thanksgiving  
that changes the way we think and act and live - that changes everything.  
We pray now for change in our world;  
for change in all those places where there is human need.

We pray for the poor, the homeless, the sick and the hungry;  
for communities and countries divided;  
for people oppressed and persecuted, imprisoned, and exploited;  
for victims of war; for refugees.

We pray for the sorrowing, the fearful; for all troubled in heart or mind.  
Lord of life, hear our prayer.

Living God,  
may the truth of Easter break into every place of suffering and need:  
bring help and healing, strength and support;  
bring comfort and courage; bring faith, freedom, love and life –  
changes that you alone can bring.  
Lord of life, hear our prayer.

All this we ask, in the name of Jesus Christ our Risen Lord,  
and in his words we pray:

*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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

**READING: James will read for us from:  
John 20:1-18 (NCV): Jesus' Tomb Is Empty.**

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb while it was still dark. When she saw that the large stone had been moved away from the tomb, she ran to Simon Peter and the follower whom Jesus loved. Mary said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him."

So Peter and the other follower started for the tomb. They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down and looked in and saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. Then following him, Simon Peter arrived and went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there. He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus' head, which was folded up and laid in a different place from the strips of linen. Then the other follower, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. He saw and believed. (They did not yet understand from the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from the dead.)

Then the followers went back home. But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. As she was crying, she bent down and looked inside the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

She answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him." When Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus.

Jesus asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said to him, "Did you take him away, sir? Tell me where you put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Mary turned toward Jesus and said in the Hebrew language, "Rabboni." (This means "Teacher.")

Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, because I have not yet gone up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going back to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went and said to the followers, "I saw the Lord!" And she told them what Jesus had said to her.

*Amen. Thanks be to God.*

**Hymn** In Christ Alone - *words on screen*

**Message:**

Somebody said, 'The Easter story isn't so much about finding something new to say about it, but simply letting the story speak for itself'.

The New Testament has four accounts of the first Easter day, all slightly different. Today we read John's version.

We can never know for sure what happened on that first Easter Sunday. One thing is certain: if Jesus had not risen from the dead, we would never have heard of him: just another wandering preacher who fell foul of the establishment. Cynics in our time allege that there was no Joseph of Arimathea, no tomb, no burial. That the body of Jesus was left to hang on the cross to rot, or to be scavenged by birds and animals. But that would have meant ignoring the biblical law against letting hanged corpses remain in place overnight. Or that it was taken down and thrown over the cliff into the rubbish dump.

The Jews, and the Romans – the religious and the political authorities – could have easily disproved the story of the resurrection. They had only to produce the body of Jesus. Much as it was in their interests to do so, they couldn't do it.

For some Christians today, it matters greatly that the tomb really was empty, and the resurrection of Jesus involved his physical body. Others argue the opposite. These arguments distract us from the question that we have to ask ourselves afresh today: *"What does the story of the empty tomb really mean?"*

For the early Christians, there were two great truths:

- Jesus lives, as a figure of the present, not just the past.

and

- Jesus is Lord, one with God, raised to God's right hand, vindicated by God as both Lord and Christ, and therefore vindicated against the powers that put him to death.

By far the best proof of the resurrection is the existence of the Christian Church. Something happened that first Easter to turn a bunch of sad, despairing, frightened men and women into confident joyful people, courageously proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, even at the cost of their lives

Mary, and Peter and John, were confronted by a mystery. Against all expectations, they found the tomb open and empty. As we meet via the Internet this Easter Sunday, what does the story mean to us? A 2000-year-old legend with a happy ending? Or the risen Jesus, not always recognised by his friends; who appears, and disappears; who can enter through locked doors – the puzzling, disturbing, risen Christ who has gone ahead and wants us to look for him?

The Resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. Today, millions of people all over the world are celebrating Easter: the living proof of the Resurrection of Jesus. We follow the Jesus we cannot see, though we glimpse his shadow ahead of us, leading us towards the light.

Because we believe in the Resurrection, certain things follow:

- Jesus is not a figure of history, not just a memory. He is a living presence.
- The Christian life is not knowing *about* Jesus – it is knowing Jesus himself.
- The Christian faith never stands still. It is continually developing, adapting in line with the development of our own knowledge and experience.

The theologian Marcus Borg, put it like this:

"We are all part of an unending conversation – a conversation that began before we were born and will continue long after we've gone. The unending conversation about Jesus is the most important conversation there is. He is for us the decisive revelation of God – of what can be seen of God's character and passion in human life. The unending conversation about Jesus is the conversation that matters most."

We are part of that unending conversation.  
Amen. SDG.

**Hymn 417** Now the green blade riseth

**Communion:**

Jesus said,

"Where two or three are met together in my name, I am there among them".

*And:*

"I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me shall never be hungry, whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty...and anyone who comes to me I will never turn away".

**Remembering:**

On the night on which Jesus was betrayed,  
he sat at supper with his disciples.

While they were eating, he took a piece of bread, blessed it, and broke it ....

***(break bread and invite others to do the same)***

and gave it to them with the words:

"This is my body, which is broken for you.

Do this in memory of me".

Later he took a cup of wine, ***(take cup; invite others to do the same)*** saying,

"This cup is God's new covenant sealed by my blood.

Drink from it, all of you, in memory of me".

**Let us Pray:**

Loving God,

through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer,

which earth has given, and human hands have made.

We give thanks that, in the communion of your love Christ comes close to us and we come close to Christ.

Hear us, O Christ, and breathe your Spirit upon us, and upon this bread and wine.

May they become, for us, your body, vibrant with your life,

healing, renewing, and making us whole.

And as the bread and wine which we now eat and drink are changed into us,

may we be changed again into you, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh,

loving and caring in the world. Amen.

So now following Jesus' example and command, in our own spaces, but in fellowship with the Church universal, we take and share this bread and wine, the ordinary things of the world which Jesus makes special.

***The body of Christ given for you.***

***Share / eat bread...***

***The blood of Christ shed for you.***

***Share wine.***

Thanks be to God.

The peace of God be with you.

**Prayer after Communion:**

***Let us pray:***

Loving God,

In health and sickness, in joy and sorrow, loving, dependable,

you are always with us,

revealed in your full glory in Jesus Christ;

known to us in words and actions of good people.

The care of every soul, the cure of every sickness, is in your hands,

We do not know your will for us, but we trust that, in our lives,

your grace may be made known, and in us, through us, or even in spite of us,

your kingdom may come, your will be done.

O God, bless the sick and all who serve them; all who counsel the worried;  
comfort all who mourn.

So may your will be done in our lives today, bringing a glow of goodness over all  
in the name of Christ.

***Benediction***

And now,

May the Spirit of the living God, present with us now,  
heal you of all that harms you, in body, mind, or spirit.

In the name of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you and keep you.

May God's face shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you.

May God look upon you with kindness  
and give you peace. Amen.