

HWECE Easter Morning Service 12 April 2020

All the hopes and expectations of Christians are realised in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Christ has risen, he has risen indeed. Let God's word call us to worship

Call to worship Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Ps. 118:1 NIV)

When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place. (Ps. 118:5 NIV)

The LORD is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation. (Ps. 118:14 NIV)

I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done. (Ps. 118:17 NIV)

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 23 the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes. 24 The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. (Ps. 118:22-24 NIV)

Hymn 458 Christ the Lord is risen today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzy7jFNUc3w>

Prayer of Invocation

We give you thanks, our great and mighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the hope we have in Jesus, who died but is risen and rules over all. We praise you for his presence with us. Because Christ lives, we can live also, and we have that sure and certain hope of resurrection from the dead. We live in him knowing that nothing past present, or yet to come can separate us from your great love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Glory to you, O God: On this Easter day you won victory over death, raising Jesus from the grave and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you O Christ: For us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: You lead us into all truth and reveal to us our Saviour

Glory to you, O Blessed Triune God, Now and forever

God of glory fill your church with the power that flows from Christ's resurrection so that, in the midst of this sinful world, it may signal the beginning of a renewed humanity, risen to new life with Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen

Confession of sin

Almighty God, in raising Jesus from the grave, you shattered the power of sin and death. We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear, bound by the ways that lead to death. We overlook the needs of others and pass by those who sorrow. Forgive us, God of mercy. Help us to trust your power to change our lives and make us new, that we may know the joy of life abundant given in Jesus Christ the risen Lord. Amen

Assurance of Pardon

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. (Rom. 8:9-11 NIV)

Hymn 460 Glory to Jesus, risen conquering Son

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kv23_DDdEw

Announcements

Prayer meeting Thursday at 7:30pm via Skype

Prayer for illumination

God of life, your Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. Your Spirit inspired the prophets and the writers of Scripture. Your Spirit draws us to Christ and helps us to acknowledge him as Lord. We ask that you will send your Spirit now to give us deeper insight, encouragement, faith and hope through the proclamation of the Easter Gospel. Amen.

Bible Reading 1 Cor 15:3-20

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve 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 to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. 12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Cor. 15:3-20 NIV)

Intercessory Prayer

O Holy God, beyond our imagining and yet near to us in Jesus Christ, we come before you this Easter day in gratitude. We confess, O God, that we like to think of Easter as a sunny and warm day, full of light and sweetness, redolent of all that is fragrant in springtime. Yet no matter what the weather outside, on this day your world remains in so many corners a dark and stormy place, sunk deep into the cold winter of sin and evil. Those who first witnessed your Son's resurrection found it to be a fearful and fearsome event. For you, O great God of surprises, crashed into our reality with something new and unexpected. But on this morning, we do not want to forget the darkness of Good Friday afternoon and the way by which the Easter victory, about which we so happily sing this day, came about. We cannot forget the sacrifice, the bloody death, the God-forsaken pain of it all. This clash between your kingdom and this world was fierce.

Today we do praise you for all the might, power, and creativity by which you won the victory, Father. We praise you for raising from the dead our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the great shepherd now of all of his sheep who follow him. But because we cannot and must not forget also the darkness of sin that even still is around us, we make petition this morning for all people anywhere and everywhere who continue to feel crucified by a cruel world and yet do not perceive any Easter.

We pray for refugees, for tortured prisoners, for the innocent victims of war. We pray for abused children, for stricken families from whom a loved one has disappeared without a trace. We pray for the homeless poor and those victimized and diminished by racism, discrimination, and oppression of all kinds. We pray for all those who can see no Easter light because all that is good and lovely has been eclipsed by a depression that will not lift, by chronic pain that will not abate, by a stretch of unemployment with no end in sight, or by a job that is slaying the spirit day by day because the work seems so meaningless. O Lord, the things that led Jesus to the cross have not yet disappeared from the face of the earth. The need for resurrection remains stubbornly present in the lives of millions. Make us, O Spirit of the living God, life-giving spirits to minister to those in need this Easter Sunday and always.

Right here in this congregation there are also many needs. So we make petition for those who mark this Easter without that family member or friend. We pray for those who feel lonely because of this extended isolation. Be with us today as we feel that we need to believe in the resurrection more than ever but is finding

it more and more difficult because the absence of that dear person is too real to deny, too total to grasp. We pray for those who are sick this day or who are worried about a loved one who is very ill. As the effects of a fallen world works death in our bodies through pain, through weakness or a mind that is troubled with care as we bare in our bodies reminders of our frailty and mortality may the hope of resurrection fill us with joy as we contemplate receiving an immortal body that will never know time dependent weakness, will never grow old and will never see decay.

Above all we thank you for the presence of the Spirit of the living Lord, Christ Jesus. As we encounter your presence, may we know for sure that we have indeed been in your sacred presence, and may this encounter in turn embolden us to live an Easter life not only now but also in the days to come and forevermore. Help us to take what we experience and learn here and to allow it to set a holy tone for us always and everywhere. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ who has taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done on earth
 as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our debts, as we also
 have forgiven our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one,
 for yours is the kingdom and the
 power and the glory for ever.
 Amen.

Hymn See what a morning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xM-fpXayUg>

Sermon

Hymn 467 Low in the grave he lay

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CRmYOpI_fA

Benediction

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Now and forevermore. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21 NIV)