

# Easter Day Holy Communion 2020

## Introduction

Me – planned: to share the leading of Easter Communion at Hales with Becky and leading Easter service at Wistanswick URC.

Free Church/Ecumenical celebration

In present situation more difficult, practically, to sing the great Resurrection hymns – hymns are sometimes said to be heart of Freechurch liturgy.

Of course, at the moment, we can't all share bread and wine – not in freechurch tradition for minister to celebrate communion alone – but of course I am not – there are 2 of us here and you are all out there celebrating with me. Some would say you can have bread and wine at home but I would point you towards 'Spiritual communion' part of Anglican and Catholic spirituality – praying that we receive that grace, that presence, we receive as we share in bread and wine.

Thanks to James Sale playing our music remotely in Aberystwyth – and to him I would say Pasg Hapus! and thanks also to Olly leading our prayers and the Hall family from Hales who are reading for us..

Now: **James** -*Gott des Himmels und der Erden* by Karg-Elert (God of heaven and earth)

## Easter Acclamation

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**All he has given us new life and hope**

**by raising Jesus from the dead.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

## Lighting of Easter Candle

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,  
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The light of Christ.

**All Thanks be to God.**

## The Easter Anthems

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us:  
so let us celebrate the feast,  
not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness:  
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ once raised from the dead dies no more:  
death has no more dominion over him.

In dying he died to sin once for all:  
in living he lives to God.  
See yourselves therefore as dead to sin:  
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6.9–11

Christ has been raised from the dead:  
the first fruits of those who sleep.  
For as by man came death:  
by man has come also the resurrection of the dead;  
for as in Adam all die:  
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15.20–22

### **Prayers – Adoration and confession**

Our crucified Lord makes himself known:

risen! living!

Lord of our lives,

Lord of history,

Lord of the universe!

Great God,

we praise you

for his living and dying

his rising

and his coming to be with us.

He beckons us onwards,

through life and death:

into your truth,

into your goodness,

into your joy.

We come, looking for him;

we come, praising,

opening our eyes to truth,

our hearts to goodness,

and reaching out for joy.

Receive our praise,

and as we follow where he leads,

may we, even in the problems we face at present,

be part of the flow of your love in your world

and glorify your name in us,

as you have in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Confession**

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us. Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all that divides us from God and confess our sins and shortcomings with a sincere and true heart...

Like Mary at the empty tomb, we fail to grasp the Wonder of your presence.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Like the disciples behind locked doors, we are afraid to be seen as your followers.

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Like Thomas in the upper room, we are slow to believe.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

### **Declaration of forgiveness**

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

**Amen.**

### **Readings**

#### **Acts 10:34-43**

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

#### **John 20:1-18**

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

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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.' <sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> 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.' <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> 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."' <sup>18</sup> 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.

## Sermon

### On-line Easter Day 2020

May God speak to us through his word and in our worship and celebration this Easter day, even in the midst of our present difficulties.

I have 2 very brief texts for this Easter morning.

*Jesus said 'Mary'*

*Mary said 'I have seen the Lord'*

It's a real privilege to lead our Easter Celebrations this morning. But, and there is a big but... Usually it is not difficult to find something you say on the greatest day off the year - I remember a few years ago being in Germany for Easter and attending a Baptist church with Anne's brother and sister-in-law. The hymns sounded familiar, the readings were put on the screen so we could look then up but then came the sermon... Later in the day we were asked what we made of it (with the little German I had learnt in sixth form general studies) to which I responded I had a shrewd idea what they were talking about as it was Easter Day!

Today though we come to worship – to hear God's word and gather around the table in a way we have never done before. We are 'locked down' – for some can go out for food or to work but for some they are recommended not to go out on any pretext. Some of us who are confined like this have the benefit of a garden and nearby empty field – for others life is much more restricted and we think particularly of them today – especially those who are ill or have lost love ones or who face financial disaster or the overwhelming pressure of it all with consequences for their mental health or resulting in domestic violence. Many of us will now know of some who are very ill or who have died in the epidemic – others within our church family are active on the 'front-line' and as a Doctor I have this nagging guilt that I can't be there with them.

I am glad that I have not heard anyone say why had God allowed this – worse still to suggest that this is some sort of punishment by our creator. At least, I have read one comment that could suggest that – but I think it was more like the OT prophets saying if you behave in a way that limits our life with each other and with God that there are natural consequences.

Rather as we see the sacrifices and risks that many are willingly prepared to make for the sake of others – it reminds me of comments and questions when the disaster in Aberfan took place – where was God when the mountain slipped onto the school? The response of one writer Edward England recorded in his book 'The Mountain that Moved' – *he was under the mountain with the children* and with those (many the fathers of the children) who strove to get them out.

That always reminds me of Paul's assertion in 2nd Corinthians: *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. Yes Jesus felt the absence of his father in his suffering on the Cross – but Paul is insisting that the father was with was him whatever happened – there in the thick of all Jesus suffered – suffered for us. But the implication is that the events we recall and celebrate this weekend are not a Friday when all was defeated then a marvellous change on Sunday – yes amazing as the event we celebrate today, it is all of a piece with Good Friday – indeed as Jesus meets his disciples in the Upper Room he then, on Easter Day, shares the

Spirit with them. That doesn't mean we don't learn and grow as we follow the events from Good Friday to Pentecost – just as we have journeyed with Jesus through Lent.

But what are we to learn of God in Christ today and in our present circumstances? The present epidemic is not unique – we can think of the Spanish flu in 1918 and any who have researched their family history may well have found relatives who died from Cholera in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Going further back, many of you will know the story of Eyam in Derbyshire where in 1665 the villagers self-isolated as we might now say now when they were infected with Plague from fleas in a bail of cloth from London. Led by their Rector William Mompesson they cut themselves off from the rest of the world so as not to infect others. We discovered a couple of years ago that my wife, Anne is descended from two of the families who were amongst those who died. Another thing I have learnt more recently is that the Rector was not alone – he was joined by Thomas Stanley – one of those ejected from the Church of England on St Bartholomew's Day in 1662 when the Book of Common Prayer and the Act of Uniformity came into force -so he was a non-conformist minister – but any difference of their understanding of the Christian faith did not prevent their working together in that amazing act of self-sacrifice. There, surely, God in Christ was alive and active.

An up-to-date story caught my eye this week as I read of co-operation between Christians, Jews and Muslims living beside the River Jordan at one of the possible sites of Jesus' baptism along with The Halo trust, worked together to clear the area of land mines that had prevented anyone using the land and buildings since they were laid over 50 years ago during the 6-day War. Amongst those able to return were Christians of various denominations to their churches to begin again to mark Jesus involvement with his people. And we rejoice with them today – and indeed with those of the Eastern Churches who celebrate the resurrection next Sunday,

All of this follows the traditional idea that death and resurrection, new life are what Dan, our former Curate, would have told us were a *type* of Christ – an example of a principal that became fulfilled in his life, death and resurrection. A similar lesson might be drawn from our present situation is the possibility of some things being different – hopefully better - maybe healing some of our divisions from Brexit maybe how we do church will be different.

True as that is there is more to today's celebration – yes Jesus reflects the eternal principal of God bringing a new thing out of what seems like disaster – but this is different – as we read in Paul and Hebrews and is reflected in many communion prayers – Christ died, *once for all*. Through him we can share in God's life and love.

But here, at last we come back to our text:

Jesus said '*Mary*' – he addresses her by name as an individual – when we were students we saw the musical Godspell a portrayal of Jesus as a clown with his friends – some said there was no resurrection but after his death and his return he greeted each on in the way he had before – for he meets us as me not only as part of a community – important as that is.

But there was another bit of our text –

*Mary said 'I have seen the Lord'*

Meeting the risen Christ changed her – she was able to declare what others couldn't believe. And that, in the end, is the question for us – not just *do you believe that he is alive* but what difference has it made in your life – does it mean you can face the troubles of life – and we

are not without them at the moment! Does it mean, if needed you can put your life on the line?

Maybe we need to look at the other end of this second part of our Journey with Jesus to when his followers – and us – are given his Spirit to strengthen and guide us day by day.

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

And to God be the Glory.

**Amen.**

## **Meditation**

### **Lord My Heart Sings**

Lord my heart sings, Like the blackbird,  
Feathered flautist,  
Serenading the snowdrops,  
Heralding the spring.

Lord my soul leaps  
Like a hare,  
Bounding across the fields.  
Bursting with energy,  
Heralding the spring.

Lord my spirit soars,  
Like a bird, high above,  
Descending to gather twigs,  
Build a nest,  
Heralding the spring.

Lord my hearts sinks,  
Plummeting into black despair,  
Caught in a severe late frost,  
Confronted with a sealed tomb,  
Winter with no hope of spring.

Lord, bird song proclaims your victory,  
Light floods the garden,  
Revealing an empty grave,  
Christ is Risen!  
My heart sings.

Risen Lord, you sprang forth,  
Strode out,  
Into all the world,  
Meeting people on their own patch,  
My soul leaps.

Living Lord, we are uplifted!  
Filled with joy and hope  
Legacy of your costly victory,

Gaining direct access to God.  
My spirit soars.

Lord my heart sings,  
A glorious Easter Anthem,  
Proclaiming Christ is Risen,  
Happiness surges within me,  
Lord, I will never stop singing.

*Y Mochyn Daear*

*And now Olly will lead our prayers for others*

### **Intercessions**

*At the beginning:*

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed.**

**Alleluia Alleluia.**

*During prayer:*

Lord in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer**

### **Invitation**

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me.

This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord.  
Come to him – meet and receive him.

### **Peace**

We are the Body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were baptized into one body.

Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.

May you know the peace of the Risen Christ.

### **Words of Institution**

*The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:*

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

### **Taking of Bread and Wine**

So now, following Jesus' example and command, we take this bread and this wine, the ordinary things of the world which Christ will make special. And as he said a prayer before sharing, let us do the same.

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

The Lord is here

**His spirit is with us**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give thanks and praise**

It is indeed right,

it is our duty and our joy,

at all times and in all places

to give you thanks and praise,

holy Father, heavenly King,

almighty and eternal God,

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

You created all things and placed Christ as the cornerstone.

You made your grace known to Israel in the wilderness,

and through your prophets you pledged

your everlasting love and constant faithfulness.

You anointed your son, Jesus,

with the Holy Spirit and power,

and he went about doing good

and healing those who were oppressed.

He was put to death, hung on a tree,

but you raised him on the third day,

and allowed him to appear, first to Mary Magdalene

and then to your other chosen witnesses.

So now we praise you within the gates of justice

and raise our glad songs of victory

for you have become our saviour

and hidden our lives in Christ in glory.

Therefore with angels and archangels,

and with all the company of heaven,

we proclaim your great and glorious name,

for ever praising you and *saying*:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Father, you loved the word so much that you gave your only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.

Not as we should, but as we can, we thank you for his wonderful birth, his pure and compassionate life, his atoning death, his triumphant resurrection, his continued presence with us and his gift of the Holy Spirit.

Remembering what he was and what he did we offer this memorial through the Holy Spirit may both us and these gifts of your creation be holy that the bread that we break may be for us the body of Christ and the cup that we bless may be for us the blood of Christ and that in sharing in the celebration together we may, by faith, share his presence and all his blessings, to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

And here we give ourselves, all that we are, to be a living sacrifice. We ask you to accept this sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pray that all your people may be filled with your presence and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord by whom and with whom, in the unity of the Spirit, all praise and glory be yours, Lord God, Heavenly Father, now and always.

**Amen**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Breaking Bread and Lifting Cup**

When we break the bread, is it not a means of sharing in the body of Christ?

Because there is one loaf, we, though many, are one body; for it is one loaf of which we all partake.

How can I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation and call on the Lord by name.

I shall pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper:

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The things of God for the people of God.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Blessing**

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever.

And the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

### **Dismissal**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**HYMN Thine be the glory**