

twelvebaskets

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EASTER SUNDAY

12th April 2020

A short act of worship for use in peoples homes
while churches are closed.

A free resource funded by **twelvebaskets**.

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Prayer

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Lord's day is here, and amongst all the uncertainty, around the world we find ways to celebrate the resurrection.

Show us your new life, risen Christ. Amen.¹

Hymn: 305 STF – Low in the grave he lay [YouTube](#)

Low in the grave he lay,
Jesus, my Saviour,
waiting the coming day,
Jesus, my Lord:

*Up from the grave he arose,
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives for ever with his saints to reign:
He arose! He arose!
Alleluia! Christ arose!*

Vainly they watch his bed,
Jesus, my saviour;
vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus, my Lord:

Death cannot keep his prey,
Jesus, my saviour;
he tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Lord:

Prayers

Living, life-giving God,
Who desires for all people life in all its fullness,
Who desires for all people lives filled with signs of hope and promise,
We gather this Easter morning to journey with you.

We add our voices to the generations who have worshipped and witnessed,
Who have met to pray, sing and tell your story.
So this morning we bring you our thanks and praise.

For in your all enveloping love,
You breathed the world into life and formed each of us in your own image.
We ignored you and sidelined you, choosing to put ourselves first.

But you did not leave us in that place of darkness and isolation
But chose to give yourself in your son Jesus,
To experience our life, our joys, our fears and pain.
As he lived our life, he also died our death.
But the tomb could not contain him, and you raised him from death that we might
enter into a relationship with our living Lord.

So all praise and glory be given to you.

Amen.²

We say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Colossians 3:1-4 - [Click for reading](#)

John 20:1-18 - [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the readings

Why are we here?

What happens when we die?

What is the meaning of life?

(If you listened to the Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy, perhaps you are already muttering '42').

Is this all there is to existence?

Perhaps these 'big questions' feel more pertinent than ever at the moment.

Easter Sunday doesn't necessarily answer all the big questions, and the Easter story raises one or two of its own...

But Easter does add a huge portion of hope to the equation.

That's what this day is all about: because he lives, I can face tomorrow. On Easter Sunday, or Resurrection Sunday as it is in some traditions, we celebrate the remarkable crescendo of the gospel stories – where the crucified Jesus becomes the risen Jesus. Where death loses its sting. Where life, love and hope win against death, hate and despair.

This crucial moment in the Christian story, and in the story of humanity, doesn't immediately bring about the end of all that is evil, unjust or broken in our world.

Easter doesn't solve the world's problems. We know that, as we live through the pain and confusion of a global pandemic.

But that is why Easter matters.

Because, at Easter, we realise that “the worst thing is never the last thing” (to quote Pastor Adam Hamilton from the Church of the Resurrection in the USA).

At Easter, we learn that “it will be alright in the end, and if it's not alright, it's not the end” (to quote Mark Kermode, film reviewer and podcaster).

The big questions, the uncertainty and the pain don't disappear with the resurrection. But everything seems a little bit brighter. That's what it means to be a resurrection people, to be an 'Easter people' – we have hope.

So when it comes to questions about the afterlife, we can't possibly know for certain what it will look like. But because of Jesus, because we believe in resurrection, we have hope.

When it comes to existential questions like 'why are we here?' or 'what is the meaning of life?', we don't know quite how to answer – but we have hope.

When we think about the future, when we face up to uncertainty and anxiety, when we watch the news or live with the pain of our families and friends, we can't bring immediate resolution. We can't fix everything overnight. But we have hope.

As Paul puts it in Colossians, we are 'made alive' in Christ. We live life to the full, and we live it with hope, because we are resurrection people.

On that first Easter, Jesus' followers found themselves locked away inside. Scared, confused, bereaved. Their whole way of life, what was normal to them, their lives for the last few years, had been taken away from them, and so suddenly as well. So as we sit in our homes, with so much of our normal not available to us, let us briefly look forward in the Gospel. Pentecost was just around the corner for them – our Pentecost is just off in the distance. The disciples will discover that they could not go back to how it had been, however much they wanted to...

But that is for the coming weeks.

So today, as you go about your day, whatever that involves, go about it with hope.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Hallelujah!³

Prayers of intercession

You might like to watch this short video from All We Can, in which one of their members of staff, Steve Adams, leads us in prayer for coming through this 'winter season' and for new life on the other side – a prayer of resurrection, if you will.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XO_YE_7QiBI

Just hold a moment of quiet. Reflect on all you have read, heard and thought about so far in this little act of worship.

What do you need to bring to God in prayer?

[Pause. If you are sharing this act of worship with someone, invite everyone to join in saying the words below]

In the quiet, I bring myself to you, Lord Jesus. Move through me, that I might have the courage for this day, this week, this month, this strange 'winter season'.

You might, at this point, like to light a candle or several candles and use this as an opportunity to pray for the individuals, families, communities and situations that are on your heart today. As you light each candle, say the name of the person or situation you are praying for out loud.

Loving God, amongst the darkness and uncertainty, shine your light.

May I be a light to others this day, this week and in the months ahead, in whatever way I can.

In Jesus name I pray.

Amen.

Hymn 313 STF – Thine be the glory [YouTube](#)

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.

Refrain:

*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.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

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.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Blessing

We celebrate the miracle of resurrection, and we recognise the need for new life in the world around us. We are your people Lord, the people of new life – help us to use our gifts and our lives to inspire new life, to enable resurrection, by the Spirit of the living God.

Amen⁵

- 1 Prayers by Tim Baker
- 2 Prayers by Christine Dutton
- 3 Reflection written by Tim Baker
- 4 Prayers provided by All We Can – allwecan.org.uk
- 5 Additional prayers by Tim Baker

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