

Worship@Home Easter Sunday: with Revd Dr Samantha Gillard

Easter Call to Worship

Friends, the tomb is empty! The stone has been rolled away!

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!

For three days he lay in that cold and lonely cave.

But God's love cannot be contained by anything, not even death!

Thanks be to God, who gives us victory throughout our Risen Lord.

Death has been swallowed up in victory!

Where, O death, is your victory? **Where, O death, is your sting?**

Christ is risen! **He is risen, indeed!**

Come, let us worship the Risen Christ!

Call to worship for lent cited: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/04/call-to-worship-for-easter-morning.html> written by Stephen Fearing, and posted on Liturgy & Hymns by Stephen M. Fearing. <http://www.stephenmfearing.com/>

STF 298 Christ the Lord is risen today

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUrtBPkc0ZY&list=RDSUrtBPkc0ZY&start_radio=1

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! All creation joins to say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth
reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia! Fought the fight, the battle won,
Alleluia! Vain the stone, the watch, the seal, Alleluia!
Christ has burst the gates of hell, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia! Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Alleluia! Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia! Following our exalted Head,
Alleluia! Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia! Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia! Thus to sing, and thus to love,
Alleluia!

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CCL:I Song Number: 4662491

Bible reading:

Matthew 28: 1-10: <https://bible.oremus.org/beta>

Time to Reflect

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

I have a vivid memory of sitting on the sofa on 23rd March 2020, hearing the announcement that the moment had come for us all to play our part in stopping the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home. Like many, I felt shocked and unsure of what would come next. And yet, I also knew these restrictions were temporary, and that at some point we would once again step outside our homes.

Seven days later the post arrived. Among the letters was one I had been expecting and praying about yet was suddenly nervous to open: the result of the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee. To my joy, I was recommended for pre-ordination training for presbyteral ministry. I sat down, knowing my life was about to change, and a whirlwind of emotions washed over me. Looking back six years later, I can smile—but at the time, the mixture of joy and fear as I prepared to step into something that I knew would be life changing, was overwhelming.

I often reflect on those emotions when I think of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they went “to look at the tomb” where Jesus had been laid before the Sabbath.

Our Gospel reading from Matthew 28:1–10 dramatically recounts what happened next. Pause for a moment and remember the week these women had lived through: Jesus entering Jerusalem to shouts of Hosanna, the intimate gathering at the Last Supper, the fear as Jesus was arrested, tried, beaten, and condemned. They had watched him carry the heavy cross and then be nailed to it. These two women, along with the disciples and so many others, had placed all their hope in Jesus—and now he was dead, sealed in a tomb. And then everything changes.

Matthew speaks of an earthquake, an angel descending, the guards frozen in fear, and then the angel’s words: “Do not be afraid.” The women witnessed God at work beyond anything they could have imagined. The God who had seemed silent on Good Friday revealed that even the worst the world could do—even death itself—could not defeat divine love.

Jesus had risen.

Then we hear the beautiful line in verse 8: “So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy.” What an honest expression of faith: fear and joy intertwined. As they ran to share the news, they encountered Jesus himself. He quieted their fear, confirmed the angel’s message, and sent them out to proclaim the good news.

This encounter with the risen Christ changed everything for them. Their hope was restored, their purpose renewed. The adventure of sharing God’s love—a task that would stretch, challenge, and inspire them—began with that moment of meeting Jesus and hearing him say, “Do not be afraid.”

This Easter Sunday, we stand with those women at the empty tomb—perhaps carrying our own mix of fear and joy, uncertainty and hope. And yet the risen Christ still meets us, still calls us by name, and still sends us out.

In a world still marked by uncertainty, division, and longing, the message of the resurrection remains as powerful as ever. Jesus meets us not in our perfection but in our humanity, offering peace where there is fear and hope where there is doubt. The empty tomb invites us to trust that God is always at work, even when we cannot yet see the whole picture. And just like the women, we are invited to step forward in faith, carrying the good news into the lives of those who need it most.

So, the question for each of us today is this: How might Jesus be calling you to share the Good News with those around you?

Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...

The Church and its calling...

Loved ones going through difficult times...

For peace, justice, and reconciliation...

In Jesus name. **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven

STF 313 Thine be the glory

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXzmjNE-yLA&list=RDIXzmjNE-yLA&start_radio=1

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**

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**

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Blessing

Go forth with renewed hope, Trusting in the transforming love of God.
God does not leave things as they are;
With God, all things are made new.

All creation responds to God's presence; The world is alive with possibility.

We open ourselves to this truth;
With Christ, we trust our whole lives to this power.

Nothing is beyond the reach of God; Neither evil, nor hardship, nor death.
Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed

Jeanyne Slettom, from *Process and Faith*, an affiliated program of the Claremont School of Theology and Cited: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/04/easter-benediction.html>