

**The Five Alive with Bishampton and Throckmorton  
Praying Together on Easter Sunday**

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021**



**Alleluia. Christ is risen.**

*Light a candle as a symbol of Christ as the Light of the World. Jesus overcame death. He is alive. Jesus lives today and we are invited to live in his Light and carry his light to others. We pray,*

May Christ's light fill our lives  
and may we and all Christ's people shine as lights in the world  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

In your resurrection, O Christ,  
let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

## Hymn:

Jesus Christ is ris'n today, alleluia!  
our triumphant holy day, alleluia!  
who did once, upon the cross, alleluia!  
suffer to redeem our loss, alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, alleluia!  
unto Christ, our heav'nly King, alleluia!  
who endured the cross and grave, alleluia!  
sinners to redeem and save, alleluia!

But the pains which He endured, alleluia!  
our salvation have procured; alleluia!  
now above the sky He's King, alleluia!  
where the angels ever sing, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord,  
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
to you be glory and praise for ever.  
From the deep waters of death  
you brought your people to new birth  
by raising your Son to life in triumph.  
Through him dark death has been destroyed  
and radiant life is everywhere restored.  
As you call us out of darkness into his marvellous light  
may our lives reflect his glory  
and our lips repeat the endless song.  
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Keep a moment of quiet*

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,  
so may your mercy come down upon us to cleanse our hearts  
and set us free to sing your praise now and for ever.  
Amen.

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

Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius: ‘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.’

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

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. 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.’ Then Peter

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

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

## Reflection

*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.*

The rolling away of the stone from the tomb is the powerful image of Easter. It seems to have a special resonance this year, as we move gradually closer to an easing of lockdown and the sense of liberation that comes from it, and re-awakening of possibilities. What is so striking in John's Gospel, is that Mary arrives at the tomb in the dark.

Matthew tells the story of Mary arriving "*as the first day of the week was dawning*". Mark says, "*very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen*". Luke says, "*on the first day of the week at early dawn*".

To John then, Mary arrives at the tomb in the dark, yet with the promise of light and a new day beginning all around her.

One day this week I was up while it was still dark. I went outside to hear the bird song. I picked a good morning, because not only did I hear a chorus of birds - also, I saw the sun rise like a red ball of fire through the bare trees at the end of my garden. So, though it was dark, the promise of life and a new day was all around.

I wonder how much of the sights and sounds of a new day beginning, filled Mary that morning with joy? She had come to the place where they had laid Jesus. A second day of ....

Imagine her alarm then, when in the dim light of early morning, she discovered that the stone had been removed from the tomb. Mary assumed that "they" had taken her Lord's body, and she was panicked that she did not know where it had been taken. Confusion.

The two disciples whom Mary brought back with her, reacted differently. John looked in. He saw the linen wrappings but, at first did not go in. Then, Simon Peter entered the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings and

was struck with wonder and amazement. Then, John went in, again; “he saw and believed”. Jesus had risen. He had triumphed over sin and death.

Though Jesus had hinted, and sometimes had told them plainly that death would not be the end, and that He would rise from the dead, the disciples had never grasped it. Until now. John saw the tell-tale sign of Christ’s risen presence. Mary heard Christ whisper her name.

We may not feel we have had such a dramatic encounter with Christ, but God likes to leave tell-tale signs of His presence in our lives too. Gentle, unassuming signs, that “yes” He is with us; He has not gone away.

Easter is not a wonderful story from the past. Easter is a wonderful living story – happening today. It is our story. Signs of God being with us; often small signs yet transform everything. Easter brings all the possibilities of a new day dawning – light, sound, colour and life. Easter brings signs of God’s presence – His love – His life – His hope. Alleluia!

*Keep a moment of quiet to reflect before praying.*

## **Prayers**

*Offered by Sue Hiscocks*

Jesus is alive; Love has won the victory over sin and death.

On this Easter Day Lord, you raise us to new life, you forgive us our sins, you feed us with the living bread; as we celebrate the risen Christ, let us pray to the God of life, in whom we live; that our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection.

Jesus, Lord of life, and light of the world bring the light and peace of your gospel to persecuted churches and to all nations across the world;

that the church of God may be bursting with new life, filled with the love that takes even death in its stride; that new and mature Christians together, in all their various ministries, may work in God's strength for the coming kingdom.

..... You are our God: who does all things well.

Jesus, bread of life, give food to the hungry and nourish us all with your word, and by Your power may war and famine cease through all the world; that the inhabitants of our planet may recognise God's glory all around, co-operating in the sharing of his gifts, and cultivate the habit of caring love.

..... You are our God: who does all things well.

Jesus, our way, our truth, our life, be with us and all who follow you; grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love and deepen our appreciation of your truth and fill us with your life; bless our homes and families, and places of work and leisure, with new life in the hope of new possibilities touching the ordinary with beauty and joy.

..... You are our God: who does all things well.

Jesus, Good Shepherd, you gave your life for the sheep; recover the straggler, bind up the injured, provide for those who lack food, work or shelter and lead your people to new and fruitful pastures. Reveal the light of Your presence to the sick, all who feel trapped or imprisoned – physically, mentally, or spiritually –, the weak and the dying; comfort and strengthen them, that they may feel the stone rolled away and new light pouring into their lives.

..... You are our God: who does all things well.

Jesus, the resurrection, and the life, we give you thanks for all who have lived and believed in you; and according to Your promises, Lord Jesus

Christ, may all who have died in the faith of the resurrection be raised on the last day and find the fullness of God's eternity, flooded with the light of his love.

..... You are our God: who does all things well.

Lord, send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon Your people, so that we may bear faithful witness to Your resurrection.

Heavenly Father, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant that, as His death has recalled us to life, so His continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy; that we may live each moment thankfully, assured of God's company and mercy.

Jesus, Lord of life, accept our prayers and be with us always. Amen.

### **Collect for Easter Day**

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory;  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be praise and honour, glory and might,  
now and in all eternity.  
Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Hymn:**

Thine be the glory,  
risen, conqu'ring Son,  
endless is the vict'ry  
thou o'er death hast won;  
angels in bright raiment  
rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes  
where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory,  
risen, conqu'ring Son,  
endless is the vict'ry  
thou o'er death has 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.

No more we doubt thee,  
glorious Prince of Life!  
Life is naught without thee:  
aid us in our strife.  
Make us more than conqu'rors  
through thy deathless love.  
Bring us safe through Jordan  
to thy home above.

“The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said,  
“Peace be with you”.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
He has given us new life and hope.  
He has raised Jesus from the dead.  
Alleluia. Christ is risen.

We live in the peace and light of Christ.  
Thanks be to God. Alleluia.

