

Holy Communion for the Second Sunday of Easter



The Stour Valley Benefice

Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford, Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe

- A short introduction to the Season -

The Great Fifty Days of Eastertide form a single festival period in which the tone of joy created at the Easter Vigil is sustained through the following seven weeks, and the Church celebrates the gloriously risen Christ.

During this 'most joyful period' the lit Easter (or Paschal) Candle stands prominently in church for all the Eastertide services. The Alleluia appears frequently.

On the fortieth day, there has from the late fourth century been a particular celebration of Christ's ascension. He commissions his disciples to continue his work, he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then he is no longer among them in the flesh. The ascension is closely connected with the theme of mission. The arrival of the promised Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost completes and crowns the Easter Festival.

This season of joy and brightness is represented in our use of White or gold liturgical decorations and vestments.

**Growing in God**

Spiritual Communion

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

In joining with Revd Mark today as he celebrates the Eucharist from his own home, you too are able to join with him in communion. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Hymn: Now the green blade rises

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom men had slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,
back from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)
© Oxford University Press

The Gathering

Minister: In the name of the Father,
 and of the Son,
 and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

The Greeting

Minister: Alleluia! Christ is risen
All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Minister: The Lord be with you.
All: and also with you.

Prayer of Preparation

All: **Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from who no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Minister: In baptism we died with Christ, so that as Christ was raised from the dead, we might walk in newness of life. Let us receive new life in him as we confess our sins in penitence and faith. *(cf Romans 6:4)*

The Kyrie Confession

Minister: Like Mary at the empty tomb, we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Minister: Like the disciples behind locked doors, we are afraid to be seen as your followers.
Christ, have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Minister: Like Thomas in the upper room, we are slow to believe.
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

Minister: Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

Minister: Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

The first New Testament reading - Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd in Jerusalem: 'You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the

hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

'Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, "He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption."

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.'

Reader: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

The second New Testament reading – 1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Minister: Alleluia, alleluia. I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. *(cf Revelation 1:17,18)*

All: Alleluia.

Minister: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. *(John 20.19–end)*

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Creed

**All: We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from
heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin
Mary and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit, let us pray for grace to do the works of faith.

Grant to the Church, the gathered people of the gospel, wisdom to know and power to proclaim the good news of the Resurrection. Make her ministers strong in the Holy Spirit to bring pardon and healing in the name of Christ.

We pray for a world where many wish to believe but are held back by doubt. Open the way to freedom that is in Christ, that his peace may prevail among the nations and in the hearts of all people.

Grant to us, our families, friends and neighbours, the grace of the Resurrection. Break through the closed doors of our fear and doubt and give us the faith that needs no sign but the knowledge of divine love present among us.

Have mercy on all who suffer persecution of their faith, who must meet in secret and cannot worship openly. Give them strength in their need, give light to those who oppress them, so that all who trust in the Resurrection may be free to share their joy.

We pray for the departed who trusted their Lord in this world and now see him in the fullness of his glory. May their sins be forgiven and may we who now follow in faith share with them the promised blessing.

We pray in the name of Christ, by whose wounds we are healed.

Intercessor: Merciful Father,

All: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Minister: The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia. *(John 20:19,20)*
The peace of the risen Christ be always with you

All: and also with you. Alleluia.

Preparation of the Altar

Minister: Risen Lord Jesus Christ, we believe you, and all we have heard is true. When you break bread may we recognise you as the fire that burns within us, that we may bring light to your world.

All: Amen

The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister: The Lord be with you

All: and also with you.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: it is right to give thanks and praise.

Minister: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal Father, and in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts the memory of your wonderful works. For by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son, has conquered the powers of death and hell

and restored in men and women the image of your glory. He has placed them once more in paradise and opened to them the gates of life eternal.

And so, in the joy of this Passover, earth and heaven resound with gladness, while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

All: 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.

Minister: We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

**All: Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life:
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Minister: Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with St Mary the Virgin, St Peter, St Paul, St John the Baptist, St Leonard, and All the Saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Minister: Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the
glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Minister: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All: Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

The Agnus Dei

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Giving of Communion

Minister: Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

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

All: Most merciful Lord, your love compels us to come in. Our hands were unclean, our hearts were unprepared; we were not fit even to eat the crumbs from under your table. But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation, and share your bread with sinners. So cleanse and feed us with the precious body and blood of your Son, that he may live in us and we in him; and that we, with the whole company of Christ, may sit and eat in your kingdom. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Minister: Lord God our Father, through our Saviour Jesus Christ you have assured your children of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him: deliver us from the

death of sin and raise us to new life in your love, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: **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.**

The Blessing

Minister: God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Minister: God the Son, who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

All: Amen.

Minister: God the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord, empower you to fill you with Christ's peace.

All: Amen.

Minister: And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

The Dismissal

Minister: With the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work within you, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia.

Hymn: The strife is o'er

The strife is o'er, the battle done;
now is the Victor's triumph won;
O let the song of praise be sung; Alleluia!

Death's mightiest powers have done their worst,
and Jesus hath his foes dispersed;
let shouts of praise and joy outburst: Alleluia!

Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee,
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live and sing to thee, Alleluia!

*Finita jam sunt proelia
Symphonia Sirenum Selectarum (1695 Cologne), Francis Pott (1832-1909)*

For more information about our Benefice, including details of upcoming special services, events and activities for all the family, please visit:

www.stourvalley.org.uk



facebook.com/StourValleyCofE



[@StourValleyCofE](https://twitter.com/StourValleyCofE)

Christian Copyright Licence No. 523438

Common Worship: Times & Seasons and Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is included in this service, is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000, 2006.

Scripture quotations from *The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, is copyright © The Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in the USA, 1989.

(April 2026)



Although not all of us are able to meet in church for services, it is important to remember that the work of the Church continues, as do many of the ongoing costs in maintaining our historic buildings, as well as supporting the ministry in this benefice and the wider church. If you are able to make a gift please contact your church warden or Revd Mark.

Remember that if you are able, please Gift Aid your donation as it means that we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate from the Government at no extra cost to you – resulting in your £20 donation now being worth £25!

If you wish to donate regularly to your church, please consider signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme, please ask one of the churchwardens for a pack or sign up online at:

www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/

Alternatively, you can make an online donation to your chosen church through your smartphone by scanning the relevant QR Code below:

**Clare with
Poslingford**



Stoke by Clare



Cavendish



Wixoe



Hundon

