

Praying for our world

Jesus, hope of the world.

We remember your resurrection.

New life after death,

Light after the darkness of the night.

We turn to you, our inspiration and hope on this Easter Day.

In you there is light for the world.

You are The Way when many are isolated at home.

You are the source of life when death threatens our nation.

You offer the healing of the nations.

We hold before you a world struggling with pandemic:

Naming those we know;

Our community here in...

Situations on our hearts...

Risen Lord, bring healing and bring peace at this time.

Amen

We join in the prayer given to us by Jesus...

Our Father who art in heaven...

On this Easter Day we make our offering as we are able:

**Crucified and Risen Christ, I offer my gifts and myself in thankfulness
for all you gave for me, my Lord and my Saviour. Amen**

Brian Wren's Easter hymn ([StF297](#)/H&P190) "Christ is alive!" includes the line: "Let streets and homes with praises ring." May your street and your home ring out resurrection hope this wonderful Easter Day.

**Lord God, you have delivered us from darkness,
and brought us into the Kingdom of your Son.
By his resurrection we are brought to new life.
Reign in us that we may live lives of joy and hope,
confident in your peace and presence in the days ahead. Amen**

The Grace of God, the joy of the risen Christ and
the power of the Holy Spirit be with you on this Easter Day.

United in the Risen Christ across Darlington District

Easter Sunday 12th April 2020

If you are able, you may like to read the words in bold aloud.

Call to Worship:

The LORD is my strength and my might;

he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

'The right hand of the LORD does valiantly;

the right hand of the LORD is exalted;'

(Psalm 118: 14-16a)

*If you have access to a hymn book or the internet read, sing or listen
to **Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!** StF300 / [H&P197](#)*

Let us pray:

Loving God, on this Easter Day we come, in our many different homes,
to raise our Hallelujahs, to worship and praise you.

On this special day we rejoice in the rising of Jesus our Lord. The
fulfilment of his life on earth. Our reconciliation and our salvation.

We join with our brothers and sisters in faith around the globe to offer
our praises and our thanks for sending your Son to earth.

Our confession:

For the things done that we should not have done, and for the good
things left undone, we say sorry to you gracious God.

Forgive me Lord

*As you offer your personal confession to God,
know that you are forgiven and loved.*

Thank you, Almighty God, for forgiving me.

Amen.



Bible Reading [Matthew 28: 1-10](#)

Reflection from Richard Andrew, Chair of the Darlington District.



Richard Bavin, The Empty Tomb, Methodist Modern Art Collection

Take some time to look carefully at the painting. What do you see?

The painter places us, the viewer, at eye level within the tomb, after Jesus has walked out into the early morning light, and invites us to share in the fear, awe and joy that the women experienced on that first Easter morning.

The resurrection of Jesus challenges our fundamental assumptions about how our world is. In his commentary on this passage Stanley Hauerwas writes that, 'Those who thought they were alive now discover that what they took for life is death. Jesus' resurrection creates a life freed from the death that grips our everyday lives. This is life reborn, revealing to us how death has determined our living.'¹

I invite you to dwell a while in the tomb and, in your own time, to journey with Jesus into the light. You might find it helpful to reflect on some key phrases in the story.

¹ Quotation from Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, (SCM: London, 2006), pp.244-245.

'He is not here'

- He is already ahead. What is God calling you to leave behind so that you can journey on with Christ?

'Come and see the place where he was laid'

- Matthew has been training us to see all the way through his Gospel. What do you see now? What is God's Spirit pointing out to you?

'He...is going ahead of you'

- Are you ready to follow? What is holding you back? Offer it to God.

'Suddenly Jesus was there in their path, greeting them'

- Jesus promised to be with us to the end of the age. He is with you now. Spend some time rejoicing in his presence and be thankful.

'Do not be afraid'

- What are you fearful of at the moment? Place it into God's hands. Remember Matthew's emphasis that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us

'Go and take my word...'

- God has called us to be witnesses. That may feel daunting. But it is not a journey that we take on our own. It is one that we take with Christ and with other disciples.
- What is God challenging you to now? Who is God calling you to connect with today? Ask God.

Take some time to offer your thoughts and reflections to God and, as feels appropriate, offer a prayer, spoken or silent.