

Welcome

Welcome to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church as we join in with the joyful celebrations of the whole Christian church on this Easter Sunday. This is the highlight - the central celebration of the Christian faith. After the longing of Advent, the light joys of Christmas and the dark themes of Lent our hearts are lifted as, this day, we rejoice at a message of New Life and revel in the promise that death has been overcome for us all.

We do so, of course, in a world that continues to endure the health, economic and social effects of this pandemic and we do so in line with the requirements of the so-called 'roadmap', so we anticipate returning to the building in a couple of weeks. How appropriate it would have been to have met again for worship in the church today, but we have made solidarity perhaps the central reason for our decision to close for worship.

And solidarity continues...not until April 12th will non-essential shops be able to open; so not until then will signs of resurgence appear along, for instance, the Whiteladies Road; so not until after the 12th does it seem appropriate that we should take our part in that resurgence - we hope, though, that the glorious window display in the porch that has been in place for the last week will have gone some way towards sending out and sharing the Easter message of hope with the community.

Because it *is* a message of hope for the community - indeed, for the world - and if we have endured much as part of that world so also do we bear the joyful responsibility of sharing Easter hope with that world. It's a simple message, really; on this day we hear again of how a few grief-stricken followers went to mourn a death and found themselves surrounded and taken over by a mystery that would change everything, but that *in that moment* was, simply, an empty tomb, a strange messenger and an unexpected, joyful message 'He is not here; He is risen' - and their changed future - the *world's* changed future - stretched out before them; unknown, but now shot through with joy.

Now, all these years later, the joy remains - and we hope that everyone who joins with us this morning will feel the welcome and warmth of that joy - and will feel like joining in the worship that arises in our hearts...

['On the darkest day of all'](#)

Matt Osgood

Responsive reading – Call to worship

Leader Christ is risen!
All **Alleluia!**
Leader The Lord is risen!
All **He is risen indeed!**
Leader The heavens shall rejoice:
All **The earth shall be glad,**
Leader The whole world shall keep the feast.
All **For Christ is risen, the everlasting joy.**
Leader Now all things are filled with light, heaven, & earth, & all beneath the earth
All **All creation celebrates the resurrection of Christ.**
Leader This is the day of resurrection,
All **We shall be glorious in splendour for the celebration & embrace each other in our hearts**
Leader We shall speak also, brothers and sisters, to those that hate us, and in the Resurrection we shall forgive all things. So let us cry:
All **Christ has risen from the dead,**
Leader By death trampling on death,
All **On those who were dead He has bestowed life.**

['Thine be the glory'](#)

Daily Service Singers

Opening prayer

Lord, we meet in the joy of Easter, surrounded by the joy of Easter; warmed, in a cold, still-suffering world - by the joy of Easter. And for that joy - the joy of the risen Jesus - we worship you; we are thankful and full of rejoicing that you have put joy at the centre of everything - not the fears that surround us, the insecurities that hold us back, the losses we have endured - those things are *not* at the centre - *joy* is at the centre. Jesus is risen - he is risen indeed - we echo the cry of joy that rings down the centuries, that goes beyond mere religious celebration - to world-changing living and life-changing believing and following -

So, Lord, because Jesus is risen, we are joyful, because Jesus is risen, the power of death is ended, because Jesus is risen, we are set free; we worship you in joy; we rejoice in 'newness of life' and we look to live and serve in freedom this and each day. Now, Lord, take us as we are; in our isolation and insecurity, in the midst of a still-grieving, still-suffering world; and as we worship you this day, we ask you once against to fill us with joy

and lift our hearts from the things that seem so central to our lives, to the one thing that is the true centre of everything; the joy of the risen Christ

Lord's Prayer

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 forever. Amen

[See What A Morning](#) (Resurrection Hymn)

Townend & Getty, sung by Kristyn Getty,
Margaret Becker, Joanne Hogg

Readings

[Isaiah 25.6-9](#)

[Mark 16:1-8](#)

CG 30 'Eastertide Gospel Acclamation'

Tyndale Virtual Singing Group

Sermon

Lord we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard & understood be touched by your spirit & may what is decided lead us towards your Kingdom

What to make of the rising of Jesus in this extraordinary year? Perhaps never has there been a time when we so much wanted something to save us from the mess of the world

Oh, of course there will have been other times. I imagine the people alive at the time - some now may still remember - will have reacted with fear at the unknown future in 1939..

And on lots of other occasions; perhaps quite localised ones; after receiving bad news of health or after a life-changing accident or in the midst of grief -

A different, changed future opens up - it's quite unknown, what will happen, what life will be like - and we just want *something* to happen to save us. It's not rational, of course - we know, in the real world, nothing's going to swoop in from on high or from somewhere else and make everything just as it was before.

Atheists when they're feeling confident pour scorn on such ideas - a god to save us? Pah! Ridiculous! Though perhaps even *they*, in less certain moments, must think, 'but what if?!'

We want to help children to grow past such naive beliefs, we recognise that a mature faith goes beyond the 'God-of-glory-God-of-grace-please-find-me-a-parking-place' stage..

Still...nothing can compare to this worldwide pandemic, with all its loss, grief and economic damage, can it?

Maybe science will save us: vaccines are little short of miraculous, aren't they? Though the distribution takes us back into the messy world of politics..

Maybe a combination, then, of science, politics, common-sense, communication, face-masks, PPE, with a dose of economic stimulus & NHS-type health & social care thrown in

Will that be enough? Maybe...maybe not

What are we to make of the rising of Jesus at such a time? Mark's 'bare-bones' story is a strange thing.

None of the warmth of John: Mary & the gardener (Rabboni!); doubting Thomas; seaside barbecues.. None of the loveliness of Luke's Emmaus Road story - just made for Easter evening services.. None of the great ending in Matthew - the Great Commission in Galilee.

If we only had Mark..thank goodness we have the other stuff as well!; probably the early readers of Mark thought it was a bit of a flat ending; which may be why there's a complicated history about extra verses and a second ending, seemingly to fill out all the details.

But bare-bones Mark, glass-half-empty Mark (I like this guy!); Mark *unadulterated* gives us the rising of Jesus in all its mysterious, fearful, simple, *strangeness* -

The very last words - *So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid*

Look, I know I've been criticised before for not filling Easter Day with enough joy. I know we all need a bit of an uplift after all this time,

Still - I wonder if Mark's isn't just the resurrection story *for* our time. Surely we can't settle for just another 'happy ever after' tale, can we? Surely we don't really want something today that will just gloss over all that's happened and take us to sunlit uplands?

See, I think this Easter we need something that suits the time - the *moment*..

And the moment is, for many, a moment of stunned, unexpected grief; for others it's a hardly-daring-to-hope moment, as some freedoms return and the immediate threat of illness recedes (a bit); for others it's a moment of trepidation, as they aren't sure if they'll be able to cope with being out-and-about after such a long time.

Yes, it's a joyful, happy moment for many - if only last week's warm weather had lasted into the Easter weekend! - but we can't pretend the last year hasn't happened. More than, perhaps, for many a year, we have to hold on to that well-established truth, that the Easter Jesus still bore the scars of the Jesus of Good Friday.

As I say, a *moment*. The women who went to the tomb were 'in a moment' as well; imagine it: seconds before they had been deep in grief & loss, ready to do the usual mourning rituals.

Then, in a moment, all that they had expected was thrown into disarray - the stone rolled away, the tomb empty; Jesus nowhere to be seen, and some kind of a messenger - just the one; an 'Angel of the Lord' in Matthew's story; *two* men in Luke; two 'angels in white' in John;

For Mark, just a young man in a white robe; a spare, simple, strange telling – and the message, so familiar to us – ‘go and tell’
 But did you notice, they didn’t – go & tell I mean..’they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid’. *That’s* the moment. Later they did; Matthew, Luke and John all say that they did....
 But in Mark, in the moment, they were afraid – too afraid, perhaps, too overwhelmed by the mystery of it all; too gobsmacked, to use a modern phrase, to do anything much except –
 May we imagine? Everything they knew and expected was changed utterly; everything they understood of grief and death and loss was overturned; everything they thought it meant – insofar as they could think that the cruel death of Jesus meant anything at all - was rendered meaningless by the rolled-away stone and the empty tomb and the messenger.
 Can’t we understand – can’t we begin to understand? In this Easter of all Easters I think we can. Let’s not rush on too quickly to all the joy of Easter; all the familiar elements of gardeners and Emmaus Road and barbecues and Peter and all the rest –
 There’s a season of Easter yet to come- but for now, for today, let’s stay *in the moment* – Jesus has risen; soon enough there’ll be ‘thine be the glory’ and ‘You’re alive, you’re alive, you have risen’ – and we can revel in all the centuries of debate and celebration..
 But how quickly all that ends up just being an exercise in comparative religion of the ‘ours is better than yours’ variety as we all compete for attention in the religious marketplace of the world – settled, familiar stories; well-trodden paths of devotion; lots of well-known hymns and songs and sunrises and bunny rabbits and Easter Eggs and all the rest..
 But for now – in this Easter of all Easters, with the grave clothes of grief all around; and the tombstones of loss everywhere – *and the scars* - businesses still closed, jobs and livelihoods still ended, unknown futures, frailty everywhere –
 Let’s stay in the moment - in the glorious, strange, glad, mystery of it all – an empty tomb, a rolled-away stone, a messenger – and a message ‘*Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.*
 This suffering world deserves a moment like this, don’t you think – when everything we know and expect is changed utterly; everything we understand of grief and death and loss is overturned; everything we think Jesus’ death means – insofar as we think that the cruel death of Jesus means anything at all in such a world - is rendered meaningless by the rolled-away stone and the empty tomb and the messenger.
 Not much to come in from outside to save us – except this, perhaps - and in such a world, this Easter Day, please God, *please God* we will be able to say, whoever we are, whatever this has all been like for us – with Isaiah ‘This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.’

Offering & Grace

Lord, in this moment we come before you; surrounded still by much of grief and loss, yet with hope in our hearts that because of this Easter Day – this rising – nothing will be the same ever again – and if in this moment we are rendered dumbstruck by strangeness we are also awestruck at your greatness and power – the power over death, indeed – so we come and once again give of ourselves in these and all our gifts and in this bread & wine; so that, in giving and in receiving, in serving and in living by faith, we may yet see the things of earth transformed into the things of heaven...

The grace of our lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, Amen.

'All I Once Held Dear'

Graham Kendrick/Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church

Communion

Invitation & Confession

The table of the Lord is spread, it is for those who will come and see in broken bread and poured out wine – not mere symbols, but the very substance of his life shed for us on the Cross and raised again the third day. The risen Christ is present among his people and it is here that we meet him. The invitation is for all those who are seeking him and who are weary of their sin and doubt to come and share the feast.

Lord our God, we humbly make confession. Here at this table we confess our part in a fearful world, where people huddle together for security, and look for their salvation only among the things they already know. We confess the church’s fear and its inward-looking spirit, rarely ready to let the Word of life go in a needy world.

We confess our own fear; fear of our own thoughts, fear of each other, fear of new understanding.

Father forgive us and set us free once more in the spirit of the risen Christ to live and be unafraid; to live in hope, in joy and in love in Jesus’ name, who is Lord and Saviour of all.

Listen to the good news before the Cross, ‘Do not be afraid, for I have overcome the World’ listen to the good news of resurrection – ‘Do not be afraid’ – for he who was dead is alive for evermore.

Thanks be to God, Amen.,

Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. In the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in memory of me – for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Thanksgiving

We lift up our hearts to the Lord this Easter day.. We give thanks to the Lord our God this Easter day. It is right, and our duty and joy at all times and in all places and especially at this time and in this place, this moment, of resurrection to give you thanks and praise, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord....

Thank you our Father for what you have made and given to us: thank you for who you have given and what He has done for us, thank you that He lives, and that His spirit breathes new life into the world – and thank you for this sign and reality, where the good news is once again set free in the light of his rising.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying Holy Holy Holy, 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!

God our Father, pour out the H S on all your people, that we may have faith, and upon these gifts of bread and wine and this eating and drinking, that this may be for us the mystery of the body and blood of our risen Lord – so that we may receive Christ to ourselves once again, for the strengthening of our faith, the assuring of our hope, and the deepening of our love.

Responses

Leader	Here is bread	All	For us to feed on Christ
Leader	Here is wine	All	For us to refresh our souls
Leader	How shall we eat?	All	At Easter we come to the banquet of God's Kingdom,
Leader	To celebrate the risen Christ	All	He makes us whole
Leader	How shall we drink?	All	At Easter we drink the new wine of the Kingdom,
Leader	To celebrate the risen Christ	All	He brings us new life.
Leader	The risen Christ bids us eat, and drink, and live	All	We eat and drink in faith

Bread & Wine (sung during: '**Bread of life, hope of the world**' Tyndale Virtual singers – solo Alison Waddington)

Prayer after communion

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have touched holy things:

Our ears have heard your word – now make us deaf to clamour and dispute, and ready to listen for every whisper of peace and reconciliation in the world

Our tongues have sung your praise. Now make them free from deceit, and ready to speak only the truth in love

Our eyes have witnessed the drama of salvation in broken bread and poured out wine. Now make them shine with hope and look for signs of your Kingdom

Our bodies have been fed with your body. Now refresh them by your Spirit and make us ready to work for your Kingdom in the world.

Our lives this day have been filled with the risen life of Christ; now make us live by faith in the coming of your Kingdom, Amen.

BPW 575 ['Lift High The Cross'](#)

The Chancel Choir, The Chapel Choir, Broadway Baptist Church and The Oratorio Chorus, Southwestern Baptist Seminary, The Festival Brass

Benediction

So may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, Amen

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Mike & Mavis reading; Rachel sorting music, Tyndale's singers singing, virtually – thank you one and all for taking part.

As the season of Easter gets under way the awe and wonder at the sacrificial love of Good Friday gives way to the awe and wonder of the rising of Jesus, and the lasting, deepening, message of hope that it brings. It's the hope that will fill us every day, and especially as we anticipate worshipping together again in the church in a couple of weeks' time. Until then our support of and prayer for one another will strengthen our commitment to sharing the hope in the world..

["Hallelujah" chorus](#)

G.F. Handel - 350 united voices