

Easter Day Service & Love Feast.
(celebrated with bread/cake and water)



The Easter Proclamation:

Christ is Risen
He is Risen indeed.
Alleluia!

Hymn 298 StF:

Christ the Lord is risen today;
Alleluia!
All creation joins to say:
Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high;
Alleluia!
Sing, you heavens; let earth, reply:
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 your sting?
Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save;
Alleluia!
Where's your 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!
You to know, your power to prove,
Alleluia!
Thus, to sing, and thus to love:
Alleluia!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Opening Prayer:

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us a little child one of us,
flesh and blood to share in our humanity.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us as carpenter
and yet in whose creative hands a world was fashioned.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us as fisherman
and yet pointed to a harvest that was yet to come.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us as teacher
and opened eyes to truths that only the poor could understand.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us as healer
and opened hearts to the reality of wholeness.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us as prophet, priest and king
and yet humbled himself to take our place upon the cross.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus who came to us as servant
and revealed to us the extent of his Father's love for human kind.

Blest are you, Risen Lord Jesus, who rose from the ignominy of a sinner's death
to the triumph of a Saviour's resurrection.

Amen

Prayer of Confession:

On this morning of hallelujahs, we must confess the frailties of our humanity. We have not done any great evil, but we have sometimes failed to do good when we had the chance.

We have not intentionally hurt anyone, but sometimes we have failed to offer healing to the broken.

We easily accept the witness of the angel in the tomb, but find it difficult to share this good news with our friends and neighbours.

Bring us new life, creative God.

Where we are tired and stressed, give us the energy to serve your creation; transform our weary hearts into fountains of grace;

forgive us of all the damage we have done, and fill us with the joy of your Spirit.

In the name of Jesus Christ, who gives us new life, we pray.

Assurance of Pardon:

God, our Creator, gives us new life;

Christ, our Redeemer, prepares an abundant life for us;

Holy Spirit, our Joy, calls us to life affirming service.

This is our good news found in Christ's words of Grace:

Our sins are forgiven

On this very first day, and every day, we walk as God's people, forgiven, restored and made whole.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

The 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.

Save us from the time of trial

And deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power

and the glory are yours

Now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading: John 20:1-18

Hymn:

Led like a lamb to the slaughter
In silence and shame,
There on Your back You carried a world
Of violence and pain.
Bleeding, dying, bleeding, dying.
*You're alive, you're alive,
You have risen, Alleluia!
And the power and the glory is given,
Alleluia, Jesus, to You.*

At break of dawn, poor Mary,
Still weeping she came,
When through her grief she heard Your voice
Now speaking her name.
Mary, Master, Mary, Master!
*You're alive, you're alive,
You have risen, Alleluia!
And the power and the glory is given,
Alleluia, Jesus, to You.*

At the right hand of the Father
Now seated on high
You have begun Your eternal reign
Of justice and joy.
Glory, glory, glory, glory.
*You're alive, you're alive,
You have risen, Alleluia!
And the power and the glory is given,
Alleluia, Jesus, to You.*

*Graham Kendrick
Copyright © 1983 Thankyou Music*

Address:

A well-known passage of scripture, read so much in church and when alone. Today, perhaps more than before, this is particularly apposite.

I would like to look at two points, reversing the order of the two episodes of the scriptures.

We are in lockdown. Cut off from family whom we love and friends whom we treasure. We are Mary.

Now she was cut off from the one she loves above all else. She is cut off from Jesus by death, "from whose bourn no traveller returns" ...or?

Can you imagine her joy, that sheer explosion of excitement on seeing him again?

Can we imagine it, can we experience it?

A degree of it yes. When we are released from this lockdown who is it you will rush to greet, to embrace, to hug? Who will you spend time in the company of with such joy? Where do you long to go and enjoy being there with those people who are special to you?

We can imagine her need to cling to Jesus.

We need to hold this moment in our hearts and our souls and our lives, for when this is past, and past it will be, we need to remember that desire to see, to embrace, to be, so that the love and friendship we have for others is neither dissipated nor forgotten.

And Jesus risen from the tomb? What does this mean to us?

Jesus offers a new way of life, not only in the next world as we too shall be raised but in this world. As the gift of eternity, the victory over sin and death frees us from bondage to such earthly weights, dawns on us we realise we have been given that life of abundance.

We, in this lockdown, have become aware of what matters, of what it really means to have abundant life.

It is not money, nor possessions, nor fame, nor even great power. It is the things we already had but so often overlooked.

It is the faithful service and dedication of ordinary men and women, people like us who understand the meaning of sacrifice, of doing what is right, what is needed.

It is the simple acts of kindness, of support, of a kindly word, of a generous smile.

It is the joy of seeing one another as created in the image of God and valuing each one as a sister or brother in and of God's creative love.

We are called to live our lives for these things, we are called to remember and to rejoice.

Do not forget these things we have learnt at this time, as the Israelites were to remember what they had learnt in their trials "Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem[b] on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

It is a deep sadness to me and my fellow Presbyters that we cannot share

Communion with you at this Holy time, but there will be a time when we share in that

remembrance of that great and promised feast. Until then keep the faith, be the faith, be the resurrection people God has called us to be in his Son, Jesus Christ, our Risen Saviour.

God bless you all,

Amen.

Hymn 348 StF:

He is Lord, he is Lord;
he is risen from the dead, and he is Lord;
every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He is King, he is King;
he will draw all nations to him, he is King;
and the time shall be when the world shall sing
that Jesus Christ is King.

He is love, he is love;
he has shown us by his life that he is love;
all his people sing with one voice of joy
that Jesus Christ is love.

He is life, he is life;
he has died to set us free and he is life;
and he calls us all to live evermore,
for Jesus Christ is life.

Anonymous

Easter Intercessions:

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

That our risen Saviour may fill us and all the faithful with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection.

We pray for those who feel isolated at this time, that they may know the presence of the Risen Christ on this and every day.

We pray for those frontline workers, those in the NHS, postal workers, police officers, fire officers, paramedics, ambulance personnel, teachers, delivery drivers, milk deliverers, shop workers and all who are giving of themselves to others in this testing time.

We pray for persecuted Christians and churches across the world, may they find fresh strength in the good news of Easter.

We pray O God that you will give us humility and that we may be subject to one another in Christian love.

We pray that in the kingdom's service we may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter and that we will work so that war may cease through all the world.

We pray, especially at this time Jesus may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the suffering, the weak and the dying, that they may find comfort and strength.

We pray that, according to Christ's promises all who have died in the faith will see the glory of the resurrection and may be raised on the last day .

We pray that God may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people, so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection in word and deed.

Heavenly Father, in Christ 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. These our prayers we ask in and through Christ our Lord.!

Amen

Hymn 293 StF:

All heaven declares
the glory of the risen Lord;
who can compare
with the beauty of the Lord?
For ever he will be
the Lamb upon the throne;
I gladly bow the knee,
and worship him alone.

I will proclaim
the glory of the risen Lord,
who once was slain
to reconcile us to God.
For ever you will be
the Lamb upon the throne;
I gladly bow the knee,
and worship you alone.

Noel Richards (b. 1955) and Tricia Richards (b. 1960)

EASTER DAY LOVE FEAST LITURGY

Introduction:

This meal was called: the Agape feast. Agape being the Greek word for the self-giving love of God seen in God's love for the world. Today, we call it the Love feast. Thus, early Christians shared this common meal, as an expression of the self-giving love seen ultimately in God's love for the world.

Since that early time many Christians have desired to celebrate Holy Communion. Due to the lack of an ordained minister, they could not. Thus, a service with the similar significance was established that did not require an ordained minister.

The Love Feast quickly became a regular part of Methodist society meetings in Great Britain and throughout the English-speaking world.

As said above the Love Feast has often been held on occasions when the celebration of the Lord's Supper would be inappropriate, often where there is no one present authorized to administer the Sacrament, as in this our present case. Love Feasts include the sharing of food. It is customary not to use communion bread, wine, or grape juice because to do so might confuse the Love Feast with the Lord's Supper. The bread may be a loaf of ordinary bread, crackers, rolls, a cake or a sweet bread baked especially for this service. The wine of the Communion is replaced with water.

Liturgy:

On this glorious Easter Day,

We have come to celebrate the greatness of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

On this great day, we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord

My sisters and brothers, let us rejoice: **Alleluia!**

On this most holy of days,

the One whom men had thought to destroy

has risen triumphant from the tomb!

My sisters and brothers, let us rejoice: **Alleluia!**

On this holy day, we celebrate our New Life in the Risen Christ;

through the death of Jesus, the weight of our sin has been lifted from us;

through His glorious resurrection,

we have become sons and daughters of God.

My sisters and brothers, let us rejoice: **Alleluia!**

Alleluia, alleluia,

Jesus is Lord of all the earth, He is the King of creation

Alleluia, alleluia, Jesus has died and is risen.

Alleluia, alleluia, come, let us praise the living God,

joyfully give praise to our Saviour.

The Lord is with us.

We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Loving God creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey,
and set before us the way of life.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**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.

Holy are you Lord God, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

By your great mercy we have been born anew
to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead
and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

Once we were no people, but now we are your people,
declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ,
who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

We are your people O God and desire to hold to our ties of Christian Community
and friendship. In this act we share that love, repentance, and fellowship, which
binds us to one another and to God who is the source of our love

Almighty God, help us realize that we are individuals that are a part of the one whole, though apart for this season. We dedicate our lives to each other in loving service for all humanity. May our ties of Christian community and mutual helpfulness bind us as we work toward the fulfilment of your divine purpose in the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. Amen.

Celebration of the Bread and Water:

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6.32-33).

We take this bread as a symbol of the strength that comes from God, and remembering that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (we eat)

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (John 4.13-14).

We take this water as a symbol of the abundant life, love, and friendship shown to us through the example Jesus who is the Christ. (we drink)

Post Agape prayer:

Through faith, may God dwell in our hearts in love. May we bring glory to you, Loving God, the Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever.

Amen.

Hymn 313 StF:

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:
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:

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:

*Edmond Budry (1854-1932)
translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875-1939)*

Blessing

As people of faith,
we go to the world to share our hope.
As people of life,
we go into the world to serve.
As people of Easter,
we go to tell the Good News of resurrection.
We go to live and serve, to hope and love.
We go with the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.