



Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

298 Christ the Lord is risen today; Alleluia!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15dmjnB8FZU>

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy 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!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

Charles Wesley

Let us pray.

Glory to you, O God:
you raised Jesus from the grave,
bringing us victory over death and
giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ:
for us and for our salvation

you overcame death
and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit:
you lead us into the truth
and breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
now and forever.
Amen.

Lord, as we celebrate your resurrection,
strengthen your church, that it may truly be an
Easter People deployed where you have
called us to be, whether we are together or
socially distanced. Help us, we pray, to tell the
Good News to the whole world. To declare
that you are risen and active in our lives and in
the life of your world.

Lord, as we worship together, but from home,
we ask your blessing on all those who we
would normally meet with to worship you. May
we all know that we are blessed by you,
because we continue to declare you are our
Lord, the Lord of all.

May you continue to lead us in your ways and
help us to reflect your light in our communities.

In the name of the risen Christ we pray.
Amen.

Luke 24:1-12 New Revised Standard Version
(NRSV)

The Resurrection of Jesus

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." ⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words seemed to them

an idle tale, and they did not believe them.
¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb;
stooping and looking in, he saw the linen
cloths by themselves; then he went home,
amazed at what had happened.

296 Christ has risen while earth slumbers

Christ has risen while earth slumbers,
Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised,
as we doubted and denied.
Let the moon embrace the blessing;
let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumour.
Christ is risen, God is here!

Christ has risen for the people
whom he we loved and died to save;
Christ has risen for the women
bringing flowers to grace his grave.
Christ has risen for disciples
huddled in an upstairs room.
He whose word inspired creation
is not silenced by the tomb.

Christ has risen to companion
former friends who fear the night,
sensing loss and limitation
where their faith had once burned bright.
They bemoan what is no longer,
they expect no hopeful sign
till Christ ends their conversation,
breaking bread and sharing wine.

Christ has risen and forever
lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or mangled,
all who find religion strange.
Christ is risen. Christ is present,
making us what he has been –
evidence of transformation
in which God is known and seen.

John Bell & Graham Maule

Reflection

Hymn writers so often manage to find a way of saying what I'd love to say, but they manage it much better. For me, there has often been the connection between words and music that somehow expresses something from deep within that would never find expression any other way. So I am grateful for hymn writers old and not so old.

John Bell & Graham Maule are two writers that I have come to value in recent years because of their insight and use of language, that brings a more modern turn of phrase to things we thought we always knew.

I was once asked to do the Myers-Briggs personality indicator test to see what I came out with. It will be of little surprise to many of you that I came out as being strongly introvert. Perhaps this is why, when it comes to Easter Day, I value most of all the way Jesus was discovered by Mary and the other women, and the way he came back.

I think I value this for two reasons. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday take a lot of emotional energy and by Sunday I still feel drained from rehearsing again all the things that Jesus went through, and of course ending Friday with that image of him strung up on the cross.

Being drained of emotional energy and being more introverted than extroverted means I value the way Jesus rose from the dead without fanfare or great fuss. He quietly allowed people to come and see for themselves and gently allowed the penny to drop as they remembered some of the things he had said about himself. Then they began to understand what actually come to pass.

I cannot help but link it with his birth in Bethlehem. If you believe the carols, it was a silent night when Jesus was born, and although shepherds were told and wise men followed on, it was almost as if Jesus' birth was secretive like his resurrection.

But then, I'm reminded of this image:



which says to me that God in Christ is gentle. He does not force his way into peoples' lives. He does not want the world and its wife to know what he is doing in the affairs of those who seek him or follow him.

This image says to me that Jesus is truly a gentle man. But let that not suggest he is not present or waiting or offering us opportunities.

On that first Easter morning, it was as if the whole world were sleeping when the most amazing thing happened. God in Christ defeated death, offered us hope and new life and eternal life with God.

As much as I like and enjoy the rousing Easter hymns (and it is always difficult to know which *not* to choose), for me it is the quiet revelation that Jesus makes in the garden that first Easter morning that has the deepest impact, the lasting impact. It is what resonates deep within.

If Jesus were too much like one of us, then I suspect the desire to say "I told you so" would have been just too tempting. But you see his resurrection was about the fulfilment of prophecy in the widest sense. This Easter morning is as much about celebrating God keeping his promises, as it is celebrating the new life that is offered to everyone by the fact of the resurrection.

This was the most world-changing event in all of the earth's history, yet Jesus speaks gently and lovingly to Mary. Even now, even when anyone else might want to shout it from the roof tops, Jesus gently comes to where people are and reveals himself with overflowing love and compassion and care.

Now of course we also hear the bit of the story where they go and tell the remaining eleven disciples who don't believe them at all, until Peter goes to look for himself. Sometimes we can want to make a point that the first people to share the Good News were women. Sometimes we laugh at the disciples for not understanding what Jesus said or that it might come true.

Perhaps the other side of all of this, is that for some people it will be very hard to just accept the story that we are now so familiar with. It may be met with disbelief. And that's OK.

It is OK because that is how the disciples first reacted, it is OK because it is a natural response. It is OK, because whatever Jesus

taught the disciples before his death, it wasn't until after, when they had some indication themselves, that the penny started to drop.

We can be like Mary, and we can share the story and sing our praises to God. We can be loud about it or quiet about it. But the story of that first Easter Day tells me that it is not our understanding alone that allows us to understand Christ is risen, but God already working in our hearts and minds.

Quietly and confidently we can share with each other and with anyone what we really believe about this Easter story, and sometimes it is in our sharing of the story that we become surprised about just how convinced we are that Jesus is alive.

So, I would encourage us all to share the Good News, with all the love and compassion and care that Jesus does on that first Easter morning, and see where it is that God leads us.

Maybe this Easter morning you are looking out of the window, seeing the flowers or hearing the birds sing. But just take that moment or two to think about how you came to know that Jesus is alive and how you know he is with us still. For then we can sing those great Easter hymns with all the more conviction and energy.

297 Christ is alive

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
To distant years in Palestine,
But saving, healing, here and now,
And touching ev'ry place and time.

In ev'ry insult, rift, and war,
Where colour, scorn, or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
And lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,
Can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
And find the way, the life, the truth,
Revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
Good news to this and ev'ry age,
Till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Brian Wren

Let us pray.

Loving God, we praise you that once more we
can celebrate the good news of Easter Day, the
message of the resurrection –
the new hope,
new joy,
new life that it brings.

We praise you for what we see in the Easter
stories, your love that could not be kept down,
that even death could not hold you, that above
all, your love, care and compassion were what
convinced those women at the tomb that yes,
it was you.

For all this we offer you our thanks and praise.

And we ask that you would teach us that these
stories of old, are stories of today, that we are
part of the living story of God and his people.

Lord, be close to us we pray, through the bad
and the good. Help us to know you are with
us and to call upon you.

Lord, we live in very strange times. It is as if
the whole world is on lockdown and we cannot
meet our family and our friends in the way we
would wish. It feels strange and hard to be
separated from human contact one with
another. Help us to stay close to those we
love even though we must remain physically
distant, and give us the courage to support
those around us where we can.

Lord, we pray for those we know who have
caught Covid 19, or think they may have. We
pray that those with medical expertise will be
able to continue to work to bring not just
medical help, but comfort too, when visitors
are so restricted.

Lord, we pray for those who know about
others who are infected, but cannot come
close, which feels so wrong and against our
natural inclinations. Give us the strength and
courage to do what is best, and support us in
our distress.

Lord, for all whose health, physical or mental,
is at risk at the moment, assure them and us
of your constant presence.

We pray for wisdom for all those with the
responsibility to lead.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

In a moment of quietness we bring our own
concerns before God.

The Lord hears our prayers.

Heavenly Father, we bring these and all our
prayers together as we share in the prayer that
Jesus gave us, saying:

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.

313 Thine be the glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPjTfw4a2ZE>

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.

Refrain:

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

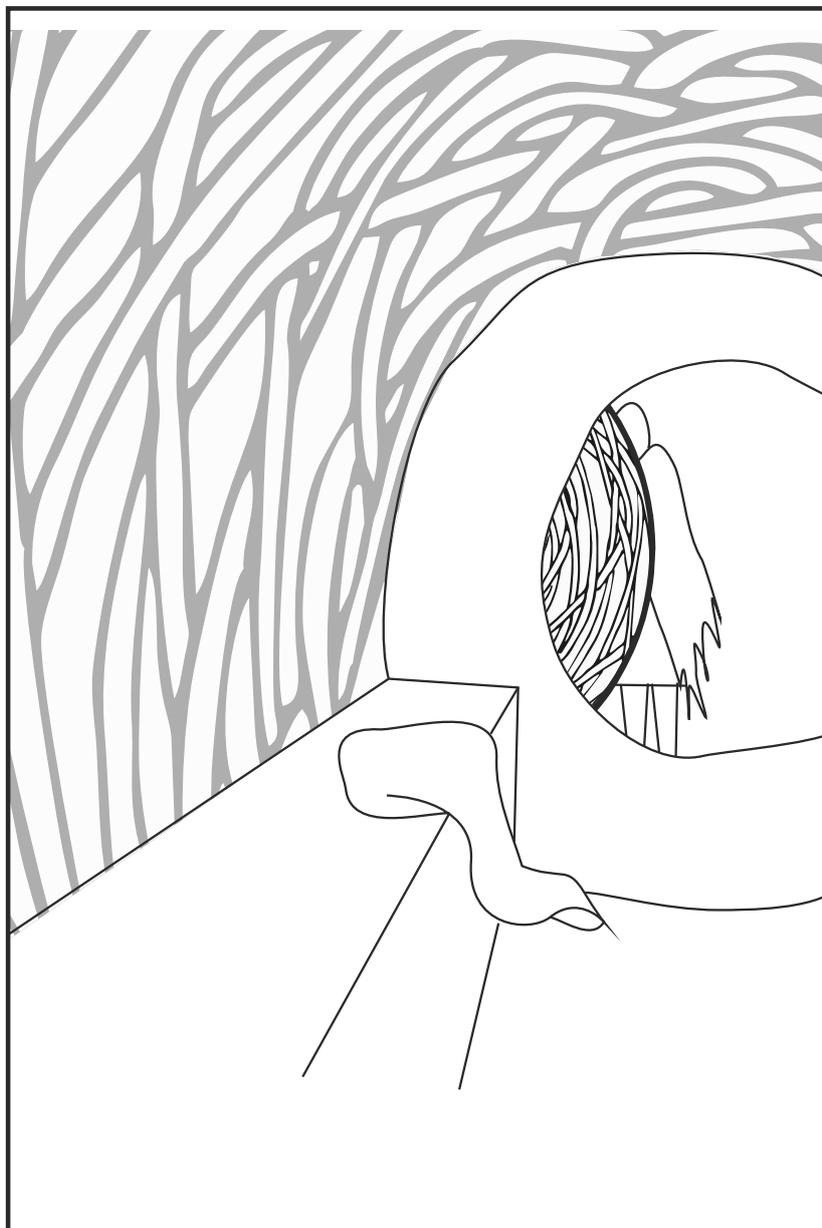
Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph
sing,
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its
sting.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conqu'rors, thro' thy
deathless love:
bring us safe thro' Jordan to thy home above.

Blessing

God the Father,
by whose glory Christ was raised from the
dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his
risen life;
and may the blessing of God, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit, rest upon us this day and for ever
more.

Amen.



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