

## **EASTER SUNDAY**

**17/4/22**

### **CAVES BEACH**

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

The discovery of courageous women at tomb at the tomb.

**“Jesus is risen!”**

The voices of astounded disciples.

**“He is risen!”**

The joyful cry of Easter Christians down the ages.

**“Christ is risen!”**

Joy beyond joy; hope beyond hope; love beyond love; yes, Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

This is the day of new life.

**Christ has broken free from death.**

This is the day of limitless opportunity.

**The power is released by cross.**

This is the day of renewed community.

**In worship and through service,  
we are one in Jesus Christ.**

This is the day of wonderful celebration.

**God’s love has suffered but won through;  
God’s love is forever with us and for us! Amen.**

**HYMN 370** Christ the Lord is risen today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztugxlfwP4c>

## **PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING & CONFESSION**

At the dawning of Easter, the warming light emerges.

As we awake to Easter, a new journey unfolds.

While we welcome Easter, Jesus greets us face to face.

In the presence of Easter, we are loved as we are.

When we walk through Easter, we are revitalized in faith.

Easter brings renewal of our faith

and the wonder of life with God.

Celebrate and honour this day with thanks

For there is so much to understand,

Great journeys ahead,

And delight to be found!

Let us tell of all these things!

God is with us! Alleluia!

Let us be still as we open our hearts to the Listening One.

Ever-present God, distractions draw us away from you.

As we hear the Easter word again, we open ourselves to you.

*Silent prayer*

Listening One,

**hear our prayers.**

In our busyness, we do not make time for you.

*Silent prayer*

Listening One,

**hear our prayers.**

With anxiety and worry, our focus is away from you.

*Silent prayer*

Listening One,

**hear our prayers.**

It is hard to lift our eyes to you when hurting and grieving.

*Silent prayer*

Listening One,

**hear our prayers.**

Even now, as we know your truth, we need to be reminded again.

*Silent prayer*

Listening One,

**hear our prayers.**

Listening One, ever-present God,

Today we offer our lives to you again.

Help us shed our uncertainties, our misunderstandings, our frailty of faith.

Fill us with the words and actions to tell of the Easter that dawns in our lives.

*Silent prayer*

Listening One,

**hear our prayers.**

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Friends in faith, we are not alone.

God is listening, seeing, caring, and knowing us

more than we ever know ourselves.

Be open to Easter revealing to you

an inner light that will not be dimmed,

a sunrise that shines the way ahead

and warms your back on your journey.

Thanks be to our Loving God.

Alleluia! Jesus has risen and walks with us.

## READINGS

- **Acts 10:34–43**

Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality,<sup>35</sup> but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.<sup>36</sup> You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.<sup>37</sup> That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced:<sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.<sup>39</sup> We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree;<sup>40</sup> but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear,<sup>41</sup> not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.<sup>42</sup> He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.<sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

- **Luke 24:1–12**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.<sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,<sup>3</sup> but when they went in, they did not find the body.<sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,<sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be handed

over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.”<sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words,<sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.<sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles.<sup>11</sup> But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.<sup>12</sup> 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.

**HYMN 390** Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U1MuOCHon4>

## **SERMON**

Whenever I read that passage from Luke I wonder how dumb those men we call the disciples must have been to not readily accept the word of all those women who ran back excitedly into the room where they were hiding. The women had such amazing news. I am sure that many of the women here today would say that men still don't listen!

Now let's turn to the culmination of the journey which has led us up to today by looking back through the ages.

The light has risen. The shadows over the days of Lent leading into the darkness of Good Friday are now behind us. Ahead of us are fifty days of celebration leading into that wonderful festival of Pentecost. We have delved into some of the deeper mysteries of our faith. We have joined together on a road that seemed to be leading us towards a dead end which promised bitterness and despair.

We embarked on this journey with the One whose race looked over, whose life and hope looked to have been snuffed out and then sealed behind a tomb stone of human hatred and hostility.

But God came back!

In the time before dreaming there was chaos and darkness. There was no sign of life, no sign of any hope, no today or tomorrow. Into this darkness came a voice which said: "Let there be light." It must have sounded like a pitiful plea in the midst of chaos.

Then light appeared.

This was followed by the simple words bringing out the earth, the sky and the sea. This was followed by trees, plants and vegetables. Next we have

the arrival of birds, animals and fish. Then comes people. Where there had been nothing we now have life.

God came back.

To start with there was life and peace and joy. But something happened. People became corrupt, greedy, envious and callous. There was hatred and violence.

And the waters swept through in a flood which covered everything. In the middle of this was a little wooden vessel which bobbed on the surface. A dove flew out and returned with a sign of hope. The boat came to rest and the animals on board left to start again. A rainbow appeared as a sign of hope.

God came back.

Then we come to Abraham who had not always acted wisely. Most of the time he was very faithful to God. He left his family and homeland behind to seek the land which God promised. He believed that he would start a whole new nation. Even when both his wife and he were long past childbearing Abraham was faithfully believing that Sara would bear him a child. With this new life there was much celebration. However one day there was another word which cast a deep shadow over that long awaited young boy. Even as the sacrificial knife hovered over him. But!

God came back

Much later there was a Pharaoh in Egypt who had long forgotten all that had been done for the nation by Joseph the dreamer who had once saved their nation. The Hebrew people had been put into slavery and worked under the constant punishment of the whip by the tyrants and when they complained all the male babies were murdered. At least they had a meal every day. In the midst of all this suffering they struggled to survive.

But God came back.

Firstly to Moses who was tending his flock when a bush burst into flames with a voice from within the fire saying: "I have heard the cry of my people and I am going to set them free. I am going to confront the Pharaoh and you are going to help me." Despite any misgiving that Moses had he experienced the presence of God.

God came back.

Just a few hundred years after fleeing from the Pharaoh's army through a break in the Red Sea the people of Israel were again in servitude under the Assyrians. Their cities and towns were burned and demolished. Not long after this their plight was overtaken by the invading Babylonian nation who took control of these slaves.

But God came back.

From out of nowhere there came a prophet called Ezekiel who stumbles on a mass grave which signifies the demise of his nation. Is the God of Israel dead? Everything seems to be shrouded in darkness and there is a mood of despair.

But God speaks again... there are people still alive.

Into this mass grave the word of life sweeps through the valley of death. God's Holy Spirit breathes life into the dead.

This was followed by a fiery prophet called Isaiah who charts out a return journey for those who have been dispersed and lost. This leads to a magnificent home coming party with dancing and celebrations. Even while under the oppression of the Assyrian tyrants the chosen people begin to sing and dance under watchful eyes. As they used their tambourines to send out freedom songs the secret police became nervous. Why?

God came back.

Then in the first century in a little town there was a census so that they could better tax and control the population. These troops were more ruthless than even the Assyrians had been. Down in some back street a young woman calls out in song saying: "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my saviour ... for God has scattered the proud and God has pulled down the mighty from their thrones." Mary is going to have a baby!

God came back.

Friday didn't surprise anyone who knew the ways of death. Given the religious-political-economic ways of the time Jesus was dead from the start. He went against so many social rules, and He associated with the wrong people. Outcasts were welcomed into the sanctuary and He went to wild parties with tax collectors and disreputable women. On top of that He insulted the religious hierarchy.

It is no wonder that He ended up at the 'Place of the Skull' after the religious establishment met and condemned Him. Caesar's local ruler had the troops but the crowd had been turned against Jesus. The One who came inviting everyone to join into a new life was, in the end, nailed to a cross.

We told the women to go out to the cemetery to do the last of the preparations for a dead body so that Jesus' body was treated with respect after such a horrible death. And the women came running back!

God came back.

Jesus even met with the women as they ran back to the safe house simply saying "greetings."

God was back.

As we are preparing ourselves for the time of death we fear that we need to keep a low profile and tyranny surfaces yet again. Just when we are feeling rejected, abused, betrayed, and blind-sided Jesus steps forward more alive than ever. His hands are still bearing the nail holes but His body is warm as He greets us with love. There is no hint of resentment for what He has gone through for us. He is simply offering immeasurable forgiveness and eternal life.

"Come," he says, "Come follow me, into the deep waters. Into the waters of chaos and darkness and vulnerability. Into the waters of death, where your life is sacrificed and all that was is snuffed out. Come follow me for the armies of despair are closing in behind wishing to enslave you forever. Come with me into the waters, and trust me. For I have been this way before. And you have followed me these forty days.

And when all life and hope was gone, God came back. Come, surrender to the waters, and rise with me today, singing and celebrating and feasting, because when death did its worst, God came back.

**HYMN 380** Yours be the glory

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

## **PRAYERS FOR THE OFFERING**

Take these gifts, all-seeing One, so that our community is a place where all are welcomed and supported in love. Let us be open to the Easter dawning again in this community. Let it be one of light and care as we learn more of life with you.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** (Roz Denniss)

Easter Sunday is the most triumphant day in the Christian calendar because it is the day when the crucified Christ rose from the dead after three days – allowing the Christian believer to be cleansed of sin in the sight of God – this is our salvation

Last week Jeff, Eve, Margaret and I went to the Newcastle city hall to hear the Newcastle University choir and the Christ Church Cathedral Camerata deliver the oratorio by George Handel called the Messiah

The music of the Messiah is exceptionally beautiful and the words are texts of scripture expertly blended to give the whole Christian story .....

beginning with Isaiah's prophecies

then the record of Christ's life on earth from the Gospels

Finally the agony of Christ's death is followed by his resurrection .....resulting in victory over sin and death for the believer (taken from both old and new Testaments)

Because of the pandemic, lockdowns, floods, fires and the war in Ukraine -- the Hallelujah chorus --depicting God's victory .....infuses us all with unity ,strength and deep emotion So I will ask you all to stand and experience the hallelujah chorus from Kings College Cambridge as the prayer of the people this Easter 2022

Hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth– King of kings and Lord of Lords

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weFJHtcxJt0>

Let us pray the Lord's prayer together

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.

**HYMN 242** I danced in the morning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkk0YodJqH8&t=73s>

## **BENEDICTION**

Easter dawns!

God is with us!

God's truth is revealed in unexpected moments.

Be open and listen for Jesus' way brings a clear path.

The Spirit warms us and never leaves us.

Tell of these things and share the Good News.

Easter dawns! God is with us!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liH\\_HdkWs74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liH_HdkWs74)