

5th April, 2026

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

Jesus Christ is risen today, alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, alleluia!
who did once, upon the cross,
alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss, alleluia!

who endured the cross and grave,
alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save,
alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing,
alleluia!
unto Christ, our heavenly King,
alleluia!

But the pains which He endured,
alleluia!
our salvation have procured;
alleluia!
now above the sky He's King,
alleluia!
where the angels ever sing: alleluia!

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright.

Read Acts 10:34-43 and Matthew 28:1-10 – The King Vindicated

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

The disciples have journeyed with Jesus for three years. They've invested heavily in this remarkable rabbi, leaving behind family, homes, and livelihoods. But their expectations are high having witnessed remarkable miracles and been inspired by extraordinary teaching.

Imagine then, how it felt on that dreadful Friday when Jesus hung dying on a cross.

This was a literal dead end.

We may face dead ends. There may be small things of fairly insignificant consequence, such as, we drop a glass that shatters – it's irreparable, a dead end. There may be bigger things, such as career ending moments, anxious financial concerns, or a shocking medical diagnosis, or a phone call announcing the death of a loved one. We all face dead ends.

The disciples expectations were shattered, this was a hopeless situation. Psychologists describe hope as vital for us to live – without any hope we are truly lost, emotionally, mentally, and thereby, physically, and ultimately spiritually. To live without hope is a dreadful thing, and as many, even secular philosophers (E.g. Albert Camus and Friedrich Nietzsche, and others) have identified, living without God and the hope of eternal life, is to risk despair – Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-19 & 29-32 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13).

As 'offered' by Paul we can eat and drink because tomorrow we die, but what if I've nothing to eat, or I do not have what others have got in terms of power, money, or experiences? Life is tough and it ends badly – it's a dead end, there is no actual happily ever after ... unless the resurrection!

The resurrection of Jesus changes everything. There is hope. The most awful Friday, becomes Good Friday, the morning that was dark, becomes the brightest of lights, the day of despair is hope-filled and sadness becomes joy. And, the promise of God is that he can do this for us daily, transforming our situations, not necessarily fixing our todays, but walking with us through them and promising a hope-filled tomorrow.

Life's dead-ends are no longer ends. As others have quipped, if we are not dead, then God has not finished with us yet! And, the ultimate dead end, is also no longer an end, we are invited into eternal life – a physical, purpose filled, life.

All are invited we simply have to ask God and receive. As Paul says, '*... if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*' (Romans 10:9.) Come on in!

Twice in the story from Matthew, the women are told to 'Go and tell....' (Matthew 28:7 & 10), and at the end of this chapter (Matthew 28:18-20) all disciples are commanded to go and tell. So, who will you share this news with?

Easter Sunday: *Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: April 15th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: April 22nd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.pariahofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>