

17th April, 2022

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 set out below.

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.**

Song:

Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross,
Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing,
Alleluia!
unto Christ, our heav'nly King,
Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave,
Alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save.
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!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all ye heav'nly host,
Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia!

Read Acts 10:34-43 and John 20:1-18

The sermon given by Rev. Howard Wright ...

In our Acts reading, Peter tells the crowd that, ‘...everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’ What does it mean to believe, and why do I need forgiveness?

So, what do we believe about God? Many of us will have a visual image or association. For some it will be of a benevolent, white-bearded gentleman, for others a foreboding, strict headteacher with piercing eyes seeing right through our defenses and pretence of innocence. Others of us might have words that we would use, and the perhaps the order they come to us will give away what we believe most strongly. Words such as: almighty, holy, love, just, good, vast, spirit, gracious, angry – and you’ll have your own words to add to this list.

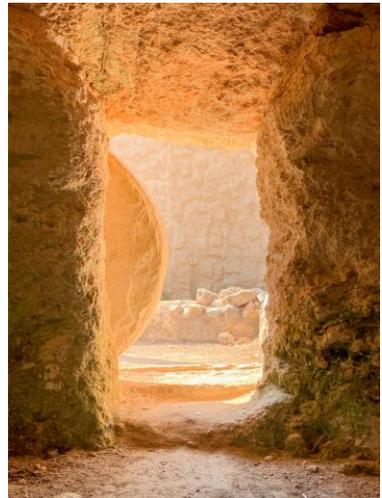


So, what is true? What can we believe about God? The Bible is our source of information (revelation), it is God’s ‘letters’ written to us which give us a picture of who he is. And in Jesus, we have the actual representation of God, physically among us (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus said, ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.’ John 14:9.

The two key things are a) believing that he is God and b) believing that he loves us.

To believe that God is God means acknowledging God is creator and sustainer of all, the one sovereign power, the supreme being, the absolute and utterly beyond us.

To believe that he loves us, means this totally ‘other’ from us, can relate to us. And not only relates to us but acts for our good. So much does God love us and act for our good, he gives his life, through his son, for us.



So, do we believe this?

To believe both that God is vast and cares, completely alters our view on the world. If God is both big and good, it means that we are not alone, and that the person who accompanies us can be trusted to act for good.

So, do we believe this? We might think we believe this, but do we?

If we're honest we might notice that quite often we forget how big God is, that there are moments when we find ourselves afraid. This might appear as anger or anxiety, and it might be about the future or the past, about events out of our control or about choices we must make. We may also notice that at times, our image of God might be benevolent, but also impotent. A god who cares but is soft and useless, just not big enough. Worse, we may find we have fallen into believing in a god who loves us in such a shallow way he's not bothered by our sin.

We may also notice that, in reality, we struggle with the idea that God does love us. We find ourselves doubting that he notices us or has time for our concerns. We're sure he could fix it, but we don't think he's bothered. We may find ourselves returning with the same sin to be confessed, unsure that last time counted as a proper confession, as we don't feel forgiven.

This Easter, let the cross remind us that God does love us so completely, and let it remind us that sin is serious too. And let the resurrection remind us that God is all powerful – he can transform the very worse, even death, in light and life, forever.

There will be struggles with faith and doubt along the way but look to Jesus and his demonstration of the Father. This will lead us to trust, hope, love and live.



Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:4-6)*



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: Easter Sunday:

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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 for ever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, 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).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat: Wed. 20th April at 2pm, Church Hall.
- Coffee & Questions: 27th April at 11am, Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.
- Next Tea and Praise: To be advised.