

**Bulletin for Easter Sunday 4th April 2021**

Good morning and a very Happy Easter!

The Lord has risen! He has risen indeed!

Let's pause as we come to worship..... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! (R&S 232)

Prayer: Lord of earth and heaven  
we are so glad this morning to sing Alleluia!  
We rejoice to praise you with hymns of new life!  
May we emerge into the light of Easter with renewed hope  
and with your joy in our hearts.  
We ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we give in your service,  
today and every day.  
Through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: John chapter 20 verses 1 to 18

Reflection: Mary so wanted - needed - to be near him. She set out as soon as she could, before it was light, to go to the tomb. To grieve, not in the abstract, but with him.

For Simon Peter and the other disciple, traumatised and grieving as they were, the empty tomb was an unwanted mystery. An added confusion, to be puzzled over. Something which they might believe, but didn't fully understand... But for poor Mary it was agony and disaster. She so needed to be near him...

She was exhausted, too tired to think about it, or to talk with the others. Already miserable and weeping, this was too much. She was in floods of tears, her eyes so bleary, red and swollen that she couldn't see. She didn't know where to go. She just wanted to be near him.... wherever he was. So she stayed and wept at the tomb; where at least he had been. And beyond her hope, she was in the right place.

She was in the right place to hear his voice and to see him through her tears; to be near him, not in death but in life! Near him not to grieve but to rejoice - Alleluia!

Hymn: This joyful Eastertide, away with sin and sorrow! (R&S 248)

Prayer: Compassionate God  
We hold before you in prayer your world...  
which you loved so much that you sent your Son  
to live with us... to die like us... and to rise from the tomb.  
We pray for those struggling with grief and loss...  
for those feeling swamped by anxiety or depression...  
and all those unable to feel the joy of this Easter morning.  
We remember those closest to us; and those we miss...  
Compassionate God, we commit them into your care,  
along with all our prayers, spoken or unspoken,  
in the name of the risen Jesus. Amen

Hymn: Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son (R&S 247)

Blessing: May we follow Christ into a new life...  
and may the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us and with all those we love  
this week and always. Amen

\*\*\*\*\*

As we return to worshipping together, please remember that we need to wear masks, especially indoors; maintain a distance from each other; and not chat indoors. Singing is still not possible indoors, services must be short, and extra ventilation may make it chilly. Crucially, you **must** let your Church Secretary know you want to attend. In our Billingshurst and Petworth buildings worship is being held indoors. In Pulborough it will be held outside on the grass. All services at 10.30am.

For those who prefer to continue worshipping from home for now, I will still be leading services on Zoom (including Easter hymns!) at 10.30am and at 6.00pm.

And for all of us there is a chance to chat at the 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' Zooms.

Anne Lewitt