

Easter Bulletin for Sunday 17 April 2022

Happy Easter!

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

Hymn: This joyful Eastertide (R&S 248)

Prayer: Risen and living Christ,

As we worship you today
we come with awe and wonder, and fresh hope...
Our minds may struggle to understand
but our hearts feel
the warmth, the love and the joy!
We thank you for Easter -
for new life, for death overcome, for healing love -
and pray that the joy of Easter may transform our lives.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. In Jesus 'name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Isaiah 65: 17-25 and Luke 24: 1-12

Reflection: When Jesus was taken down from the cross on the Friday afternoon there was a rush to get Him buried before the Sabbath began. So it was only early on the Sunday morning that the women were able to visit the grave for the first time. They brought with them spices to anoint the body of Jesus, which was the custom, to show proper respect for the dead. It was still quite dark, and would have been very quiet - that's why they had chosen to go so early, while most people were still asleep, so they wouldn't be seen or stopped. Their eyes were red and full of tears, as they had been for the past couple of days - then they arrived, to find the stone already rolled away... and the tomb empty... It gave them their first inkling that something had happened - that something wasn't right... or perhaps was very, amazingly, almost unbelievably right!

When we know this story so well, can we still feel any of the fear and confusion of those grieving women? More importantly, perhaps, can we feel any of their shock, and then their growing, huge, incredible joy? I hope we can, because this isn't just a story from a very long time ago, but a deep truth which is still able to touch our hearts and change us today.

The truth of the empty tomb is that nothing - not illness or death, cruelty, treachery, or betrayal can separate us from the love of God or from God's gift of new life. Do you remember the words that Desmond Tutu used? 'Goodness is stronger than evil; Love is stronger than hate; Light is stronger than darkness; Life is stronger than death; Victory is ours through Him who loves us. ' Amen!

Hymn: Too early for the blackbird (R&S 249)

Prayers: Compassionate God,
the women were weeping that Easter morning,
and your world is still full of pain and sorrow.
We hold before you now
the many places where conflict exists,
where people are hurt by war, by violence,
by deliberate abuse of so many sorts...
We hold before you too our communities,
praying for our neighbours and our loved ones.
Wherever there are tears - of fear, despair or grief -
come and reveal your unlimited and unconditional love.
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Thine be the glory (R&S 247)

Blessing: May the joy of Easter lead us forward,
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

There will be a ' Sunday at Six 'service on Zoom at 6pm on Sunday - all welcome.

Anne Lewitt phone (01798) 872535 email aelewitt@gmail.com [day off Thursday]