

A BIBLE WORD PRAISE CELEBRATION
GREET RESURRECTION

This service is used on Easter Sunday or a Sunday soon after Easter. The minister/pastor/priest/worship leader does the bold print narration of each reading as set out, the readings are best done by representatives of the congregation. Songs/Hymns should be chosen appropriately so as not to clash with other Easter linked services, and also to fit with the readings they follow after. The service can be used with contemporary music/band group or traditional choir-based format: Contemporary and Traditional Service Orders are provided at the end. God's people need to hear our relationship with the Bible leading up to and in Easter resurrection worship to keep faith balance. Items for soloists, music/band group/choirs should be inserted or replace congregational songs/ hymns appropriately. The readings printed are adapted readings, but any full non-expanded proper translation Bible version can be used as well, though this extends service running time. It is recommended that readers from Children's Church be included for all ages ministry.

The service begins with the Bible being processed into the Church, the welcome and congregational notices given, and the call to worship from Psalm 150 (or like psalm) being given.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

*Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and the lyre,
praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,
praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.*

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Easter Songs/an Easter hymn is sung.

Introduction

Jesus Christ was first to face the challenge of Easter faith. Throughout his ministry he set his face towards Jerusalem and the cross, knowing by God's hand that he was the Lamb of God offered for our sins. He hung on the cross from the third to the ninth hour on Good Friday, put there by priests, princes and people, abandoned by his followers. Jesus' prayed "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they do," but he also cried out in death "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus died on the cross; the spear thrust through his chest spilt blood already separated into clotted red blood and watery serum - a sure indicator of death. If he had been wrong about God raising him, as he had told his disciples, death offered no second chance. He was right: every Easter morning we greet our Saviour's Resurrection with joy.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father

Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light.

In the fullness of time your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
so let us take up our salvation in the victory of his resurrection.

Then on the last day, when Jesus shall come again in glorious
majesty to judge the living and the dead, we shall rise to life everlasting,
through him who was dead, is alive, and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

Eternal God, we are in your holy presence.
We acknowledge our sins and the sins of the whole world
from which your Son came to redeem us.
We pray in his name for your gracious forgiveness.
As at first the world waited in its darkness for the coming of your divine light,
And the disciples waited and hoped – maybe there was more after Golgotha,
so we wait in this life, but we have resurrection expectation.
Please fulfil anew in every faithful heart the reality of grace
that comes with the death and resurrection of Jesus your Son.
Give us your peace in this world and in the world to come,
and grant us eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Let us now face the empty tomb:

Just after sunrise on the Sunday, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Salome went to Jesus' tomb, sealed with a huge stone they could not roll away... and found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. A young man in a white robe sat on the right side of the tomb. "Don't be alarmed," he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. ... Go and tell his disciples and Peter. ... Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone because they were afraid. *(Mark 16.1-9 Adap.)*

The role of the women who met Jesus on that Sunday and their account of what they saw is often met with scepticism, their credibility questioned. The New Testament tells that the disciples were also sceptical, yet these gospel writers came to stand by the women. Matthew's gospel says:

... the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met the women as they ran to tell the disciples. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." *(Matt 28.8-10 Adap.)*

Mary Magdalene stayed on at the tomb after the disciples saw it was empty:

Mary stood crying outside the tomb... and bent over, looked into the tomb and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked. She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!" Then she turned and saw Jesus standing there; but did not know it was him. "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are looking for?" She thought he was the gardener, and said to him, "If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned toward him and said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (This means "Teacher.") "Don't hold on to me," Jesus told her, "because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers; tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God." So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her. *(John 20:11-18 adap)*

Songs/Hymn:

Hearing the women, the apostles ran to the tomb seeking answers. Feel their hope and their faith rising...

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen, but did not go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went in..." he saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the head cloth folded up separately... Then the other disciple followed Peter in, and he saw and believed." (John 20.3-8 Adap.)

Jesus met ordinary disciples; he broke bread with them, they recognised him:

That same day two of them were going to Emmaus...as they discussed these things... Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. He asked them 'What are you discussing...?' 'Jesus of Nazareth' they replied, the prophet handed over and sentenced to death. They crucified him, but we hoped he was the redeemer. Now on the third day, our women and companions told us they didn't find his body in the tomb. ...As they approached the village, they urged Jesus to stay as it was evening. At the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?'

(Luke 24.13-35, Adap.)

Songs/Hymn:

Jesus met the fearful and isolated. Hear his words of peace and forgiveness:

On the evening of that first day of the week (after Jesus' death), when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said: "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

(John 20.19-23, Adap.)

The sceptical and doubting would not believe. The resurrected Jesus met them and showed them his hands and side:

Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later they were in the house again, Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them, and said "Peace be with you!" He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

(John 20.24-29, Adap.)

Songs/Hymn:

And Jesus met his disciples in Galilee, sending them and us to go to all peoples...

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always..."

(Matthew 28.16-20, Adap)

Hymn/Song/s:

Jesus then ascended to heaven. God's purpose to offer him for us was complete. Jesus' death paid the price for sin, his resurrection defeated death with everlasting life.

So too, let us worship God; your offering will now be received.

The offerings are brought forward by the office-bearers, who remain standing before the table for the prayers following:

O God our heavenly Father,
on Good Friday you gave your Son for us,
and vindicated him in the resurrection of Easter Sunday.
He was your greatest offering.
Accept our offerings, we pray, and use them in your service.

It is right, it is our duty and our joy at all times and in all places,
to give you thanks and praise.

You are our Holy Father, our Almighty and everlasting God.
You created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.
You made man in your own image,

You opened the tomb of Jesus, and gave the new life of his resurrection
and of our salvation which has come, the good news of the everlasting gospel.

[A traditional responsive prayer and the Lord's Prayer may also be used.]

[So with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven
we worship you and declare the greatness of your glory;
we praise you now and forever saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord; God of power and might;
Heaven and earth are full of your glory;
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the resurrection victory of your Son Jesus Christ.

Give to us belief beyond doubt and as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
give us sure confidence to behold him when he shall come to be our judge.
He is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

The Lord's Prayer: Let us say the Lord's prayer together....]

The last time Jesus met his disciples was at his Ascension, an act of the fullness of the resurrection he had, and the exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which resulted.

Then he said to them, "These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true." He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, saying, "This is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. ... I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised... Wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you." Then he led them out of the city as far as Bethany, where he raised his hands and blessed them. As he did, he departed from them and was taken up into heaven.

(Luke 24:44-51 adap. Alternatively Acts 1.3-9)

Song/Hymn: (if needed.)

Ministry Prayer:

A general prayer call to quiet repentance, of commitment and entering into ministry, a call for Holy Spirit ministry is given, with or without an altar call. If an altar/ministry call has been used, when this ends the service is closed.

Closing Message

Jesus Christ was cruelly executed by crucifixion, but he died for our forgiveness. When he was buried, his enemies thought his case was closed. But God vindicated Jesus Christ his Son and raised him from death. The Resurrector had come. God exalted Jesus to his right hand, to pour out the Holy Spirit on individuals of all nations to win them for God. This is our mission as we wait for Resurrection day, when Jesus takes his dominion.

Final song/hymn:

Blessing and Blessing Song:

A BIBLE WORD PRAISE CELEBRATION
GREET RESURRECTION - CONTEMPORARY ORDER:
*(Songs are suggestions only. For user friendliness with children,
note grouping of readings and songs into blocks.*
Recommendations: Band/Music Group sings in place of two or more songs)

Entrance of the Word
Welcome and Notices
Call to Worship

Service Introduction

Opening Song/s

**We want to see Jesus lifted high
Celebrate Jesus celebrate
Give thanks to the Lord**

Opening Prayer

Reading 1: Mark 16.1-9 - The Women at the Empty Tomb
Reading 2: Matthew 28.8-10 - The Women meet Jesus resurrected
Reading 3: John 20.11-18 - Mary Magdalene meets Jesus resurrected

**Songs: Come, now is the time
Lord I lift your name on high**

Reading 4: John 20.3-8 - The Disciples at the Empty Tomb
Reading 5: Luke 24.13-35 - The Disciples on the Emmaus Road

Song/ Song Group: When the music fades

Reading 6: John 20.19-23 - The Disciples in the Upper Room
Reading 7: John 20.24-29 - The Unbelieving Disciples

Song/ Song Group: Sing Hallelujah to the Lord

Reading 8: Matthew 28.16-20 - The Disciples in Galilee

Song/s: We'll walk the land

Offering: **Offering Song**

Reading 9: Luke 24.44-53
OR Acts 1.1-12 - The Disciples at the Mount of Olives

(Song These are the days of Elijah)

Ministry Prayer

Closing Message

Closing Song I serve a risen Saviour

Blessing and **Blessing Song**

A BIBLE WORD PRAISE CELEBRATION
GREET RESURRECTION
Traditional Order

Entrance of the Word
Welcome and Notices
Call to Worship

Service Introduction

Opening Hymn: **Jesus Christ is risen today**

Opening Prayer

Reading 1: Mark 16.1-9 - The Women at the Empty Tomb
Reading 2: Matthew 28.8-10 - The Women meet Jesus resurrected
Reading 3: John 20.11-18 - Mary Magdalene meets Jesus resurrected

Hymn: **Low in the grave He lay**

Reading 4: John 20.3-8 - The Disciples at the Empty Tomb
Reading 5: Luke 24.13-35 - The Disciples on the Emmaus Road

Choir: **(Choir performs selected item)**

Reading 6: John 20.19-23 - The Disciples in the Upper Room
Reading 7: John 20.24-29 - The Unbelieving Disciples

Hymn: **O for a thousand tongues to sing (Redemption)**

Reading 8: Matthew 28.16-20 - The Disciples in Galilee

Choir: **(Choir performs selected item)**

Offering: **Offering Song**

Reading 9: Luke 24.44-53
 OR Acts 1.1-12 - The Disciples at the Mount of Olives

Hymn: **The strife is o'er the battle done (Vulpus)**

Ministry Prayer

Closing Message

Closing Hymn **Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son**

Blessing and **Blessing Song**