

11th April 2021 10 am Powerful, Pertinent and Poignant Easter

Service led by Bhav Joshi (St. Paul's Leamington), talk by Revd. Tim Mitchell (Diocesan Healthy Churches Development Mentor), Reading by Jo Mitchell

Introduction and Prayer for Her Majesty the Queen after the death of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.....	1
1 st Song: Jesus Christ is Risen Today.....	2
Introduction from Bhav.....	2
Confession.....	3
2 nd Song: Happy Day.....	3
Video for kids: Oh, Wow, What a God!.....	3
Reading: John 20:19-31.....	4
Talk.....	4
Statement of Belief.....	6
3 rd Song: Thine be the glory.....	6
Blessing.....	7

Introduction and Prayer for Her Majesty the Queen after the death of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh

[Statement from the Bishop of Coventry, the Right Reverend Dr. Christopher Cocksworth appeared on screen first:]

"With people across Coventry and Warwickshire, I mourn the passing of His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, and I give thanks for the great energy and dedication of his long life of service. I pray for Her Majesty The Queen and for the whole Royal Family, that in the midst of grief and loss, they may know the peace and strength of God."

[Tim Mitchell:]

I'm talking to you on Friday afternoon, having recently learned of the loss of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. This is a shared moment of sadness for our nation. And I'm sure we're going to mark this in a number of ways in the diocese in the coming days. The service we're about to show was recorded before I learned this news, but I thought it would be good for us to pause, to pray and give thanks to God for Philip, to have a few moments of silence and to pray for Her Majesty the Queen and her family.

God of our lives,
we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip,
for his love of our country and for his devotion to duty.
We entrust him now to Your love and mercy
through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

[pause]

Merciful God, be close to all who mourn,
especially Her Majesty the Queen and all members of the Royal Family.
May they know the hope of Your promises, and the comfort of Your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

**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.**

[The following text was displayed on screen in silence:]

As you watch the service this morning which was recorded before we received news of the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, please keep Her Majesty the Queen and her family in your prayers.

[Tim Mitchell:]

Happy Easter! A warm welcome to you. Glad that you joined us for this service online. It is of course the second Sunday of Easter. And I'm recording this from my home. I actually recorded my sermon this morning at sunrise, so I hope you'll enjoy that a little bit later on. And my wife Jo read the lesson for us, you'll get to hear that later too. I'm really pleased that Bhav Joshi from St. Paul's Leamington is going to lead us through this act of worship.

1st Song: Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Before I hand over to Bhav, I'd like to introduce the first hymn which has been provided by David Stone from the cathedral, it's *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia! | 2. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia! |
| 3. But the pains which He endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation hath procured, Alleluia!
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia! | |

Introduction from Bhav

[Bhav Joshi:]

Thank you, Tim, for that introduction earlier. Happy Easter! Our Christ is risen indeed, Alleluiah!

As Tim mentioned, my name is Bhav Joshi, and I'm a member of St Paul's Church here in Leamington Spa. By day, I'm a marketing manager and work for a global vending manufacturer. I'm also a part of the Race Equality Advisory Group here in the Coventry diocese, as well as a South Asian Forum champion for Evangelical Alliance here in the West Midlands. I've also got a podcast which I host, called Couch Conversations with Rani, which looks at our faith through a multicultural lens from a British Asian perspective – normalising our faith without normalising our God.

So it's Easter. On that first Easter day, Christ is risen, He comes to His disciples, and He said, "Peace be with you." And they were so glad to see Him. And as they were glad to see Him, I'm sure many of us will be glad to get back into our church buildings. It's an exciting time, as the pandemic has been going

on for so long, and I know that we are desperate to get back in and worship together and praise our Father together.

There have been over 3.7 million views across the nation on online church worship platforms. How amazing is that! There are people who have never known our Father, who are coming to know Him, and those that have wondered and questioned are potentially viewing these wonderful online church services across our nation. Here in the Diocese of Coventry, so many churches have provided online worship and shown that the Church is very much alive. We are the Church, the Body of Christ, alive, and sharing the Gospel in whichever way we can. Yet we cannot deny the challenges that the pandemic has brought for so many people, so much loss and grief and pain. And it's not always been easy to help other people during that time.

Confession

And so we're going to spend a few moments coming together and confessing our sins to our Father in Heaven.

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.
We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

2nd Song: Happy Day

We continue to worship God by joining in with the song *Happy Day*, which has been provided by Malcolm Evans of All Saints Church, Allesley.

1. The greatest day in history,
Death is beaten, you have rescued me.
Sing it out, Jesus is alive.
The empty cross, the empty grave,
Life eternal, You have won the day;
Shout it out, Jesus is alive!
He's alive!

Chorus:

Oh, happy day, happy day,
You washed my sin away;
Oh happy day, happy day,
I'll never be the same,
Forever I am changed.

2. When I stand in that place,
Free at last, meeting face to face,
I am Yours, Jesus You are mine;
Endless joy, perfect peace,
Earthly pain finally will cease;
Celebrate, Jesus is alive!
He's alive!

Chorus

Bridge:

Oh what a glorious day,
What a glorious way,
That You have saved me!

Repeat bridge x 3

Chorus x 2

Video for kids: Oh, Wow, What a God!

We are now going to show a video of our children and young people. So do join in. And I'm sure for those of you who are young at heart will also enjoy this.

[The song's theme is that there's only one Creator - God - and He's amazing - there's no-one like Him, and "There'll never be another like Him". It is performed by a group of four with electric guitars, dressed as pandas, doing things you'd expect to do in the summer.]

Reading: John 20:19-31

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'

22 And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples 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.'

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' **27** Then 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.'

28 Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

29 Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **31** But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Talk

[Tim Mitchell:]

Happy Easter! I hope you're enjoying the Easter season. Many of you who celebrated Easter last week will recall that, on that first morning of Easter Day, Mary raced to the tomb to find the body of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When she got there, she found the tomb was empty. And for that reason she went and sought the disciples to see if they'd perhaps taken the body. And when she found Peter and John, they too raced to the tomb, to see if they could locate Jesus' body. And of course they did race. It was the older disciple, John, who for some strange reason won that race but was afraid to enter the tomb. Peter arrived second, and perhaps in keeping with his bold personality went into the tomb, and discovered that the tomb was empty. The two disciples, unbelieving in many ways, left the tomb perplexed. But Mary stuck around, and she was rewarded for her patience and her desire to find Christ, because she met what she thought was the gardener. And then the gardener said, "Mary, Mary!" and her response was, "*Rabboni!*" She knew that she had seen Christ, that He had

spoken to her, and her heart was alive with love for Jesus. And of course, Jesus told her to go and tell the community.

But now we are focusing this week on that evening where we find that the disciples were in the upper room. They were locked away for fear. They were afraid of the of the religious authorities, and of course this is understandable, because they had seen what had happened to Christ, they'd seen from a distance the crucifixion and feared for their own lives. But that first Easter evening was incredibly poignant for us today, because we've spent the last year in and out of lockdowns, and at a distance from people. And we may have suffered from anxiety, been afraid, fearful for the future. So Easter is extremely poignant for us. I was struck by what Stephen Cottrell said to General Synod last September, when he said, "I hate this virus, because people have died alone, they've not had their families around them." And indeed, when I reflect on my own life, I've lost three family members during the last 12 months. So Easter is incredibly poignant for us at this time. One of my daughter-in-laws, when I asked her what she was most looking forward to at the end of the lockdown, she said, "Actually, it's giving you a hug," which so touched me. And each of you will be thinking of embracing people, of giving loved ones a hug, welcoming them into your home.

So for us, this Easter is incredibly poignant, but it's also incredibly pertinent too, because we find that Jesus entered the upper room where the disciples were huddled together. And He breathed over them. When we've spent the last year avoiding breathing over people, Jesus breathed over the disciples. And as He did so, He breathed peace. And of course, that is so pertinent for us, because we need the peace that Christ gives when He breathes the breath of life over us. This of course echoes the breath that God breathed right at the beginning, "in the beginning," the *Ruach*, the breath of God hovered over the deep¹, and we find breath was present when God breathed into Adam and brought life²; and Elijah breathed into a mother's child who'd died, and brought the child back to life³. And in Ezekiel, the passage about the dry bones, Ezekiel saw the breath of God bring life to the bones⁴.

So breath is very pertinent; and Jesus, in breathing over the disciples, also gave them authority, and He commissioned them to forgive, to restore relationships. And as we gather again in our communities, our families and in our churches, this Easter is so poignant, because we will need to forgive each other. There'll be people we'll reconnect with that we haven't seen for a long time. And I know that there's a temptation to think, "Well, I've not heard from you for three months or six months," and to feel aggrieved. But the lockdown has had an impact on all of us. Easter, the message, is poignant, because we're called to forgive. So I trust that when we do gather in our buildings, we'll be extending forgiveness to each other. If we've felt let down, perhaps we haven't seen folk for many months, or had a phone call or a card, let's extend loving-kindness and forgiveness, as that's what Jesus extended to His disciples.

And of course, Easter is incredibly powerful, because on that Easter evening, Jesus in breathing over the disciples and granting them peace, also brought about a transformation. The disciples were no longer afraid or fearful or anxious about the future. The power of the Spirit came upon them, and the power enabled them to go forth, to open the doors and get out and connect with people. And in many ways that will be what it will be like for us: we'll be returning to our buildings, we'll be reconnecting, we will be extending forgiveness to each other, and of course the power of the Spirit will be sending us out to connect with those in our community. So let us listen to those in our community, and see what their hopes and dreams are for the church. And of course, we'll be able to

1 Genesis 1:2 – see, e.g. <https://www.gotquestions.org/meaning-ruach.html>

2 Genesis 2:7

3 1 Kings 17:17-24

4 Ezekiel 37:1-14

extend hospitality to our community too. One scholar said, "The future of the church depends upon the hospitality of the world." Jesus sends us out with power to connect and to engage with our communities.

So I hope that you'll be celebrating this season of Easter and will remember these simple points:

- that Easter is poignant, because of the end of lockdown, which is very much on the horizon.
- It's very pertinent, because the disciples were given authority to forgive, just as we have.
- And of course it's very powerful, because we have the commission and the strength to connect with our communities, and to embrace those we've not seen for many months.

Happy Easter!

Statement of Belief

[Bhav Joshi:]

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;
He was buried;
He was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to His followers, and to all the apostles.
This we have received, and this we believe.
Amen.

We are now going to pray, so do join me in prayer.

Father God, we thank You for the death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that through this sacrifice, we are able to have the fullness of life, and an intimate relationship with You. We thank You for a multicultural, multi-generational church around the world. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who are suffering. May they know Your peace and love at all times.

Father, I pray for every person watching or listening, that You would bring a new revival into our lives. Restore and heal every area that is broken: peace, whether it's pain, overwhelming sadness, grief anxiety or depression; a fresh anointing of your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, which advocates for us, transforms us, unites, brings love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

May we remember the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that lives in us. May we know Your deep love, transforming power and peace, which surpasses all understanding.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

I hope you've enjoyed this time of worship together. Tim has given us so much food for thought about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that as you go back into your church buildings, that you would continue in worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ who is risen and alive. Alleluiah!

3rd Song: Thine be the glory

Our final song is being brought to us by the Cathedral Choir. Once again, have a wonderful happy Easter in however you are celebrating today. God bless.

1. Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes where Thy body lay.

Chorus:

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.

2. Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let His church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
For the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.

Chorus

3. No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life!
Life is nought without Thee: aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors, through Thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above.

Chorus

Blessing

[Tim Mitchell:]

I'd like to close our service with a Gaelic blessing, which is one of my favourites.

May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
the rains fall soft upon your fields,
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.



***May God richly bless you as you celebrate
the resurrection of Jesus Christ.***

Happy Easter!

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

[NIVUK 2011] Extracts from the Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised, copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica, formerly International Bible Society. [Used by permission](#). All rights reserved. 'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica. UK trademark number 1448790

"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" was first written in Latin titled "Surrexit Christus hodie", as a Bohemian hymn in the 14th century by an unknown author on manuscripts written in Munich and Breslau. In Latin, it had eleven verses. It was first translated into English in 1708 by John Baptist Walsh to be included in his *Lyra Davidica* (Collection of Divine Songs and Hymns). The verses of the hymn were revised in 1749 by John Arnold. Initially the hymn only had three verses translated with just the first verse being a direct translation; in 1740 Charles Wesley (one of the founders of Methodism) added a fourth verse to the hymn as an alternative, which was later adopted into the hymn as part of it. [source: Wikipedia, accessed on 11th April 2021]

Happy Day – by Ben Cantelon and Tim Hughes. Copyright © 2006 Thankyou Music (PRS) (adm. worldwide at CapitolCMGPublishing.com excluding Europe which is adm. by Integrity Music, part of the David C Cook family. Songs@integritymusic.com) All rights reserved.

Thine Be the Glory, Risen Conquering Son (French: À toi la gloire O Ressuscité) - by the Swiss Protestant minister, Edmond Budry 1854–1932, translated by Richard Hoyle 1875–1939 (translated 1923) – Public domain