



EASTER DAWN SERVICE

Welcome to St James, the parish Church of Bulkington. Thank you for joining us today, whether you are in the building or participating from home. We are very glad to be with you.

From earliest times Christians have gathered through the night of Easter to recall the story of God's saving work, from creation through to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We experience new life - light which offers hope to all.

This service is being livestreamed so that as many as would like to can be part of our worship. The camera will only focus on those contributing to the service.

There will be no collection plate passed around today, but please give generously to support St James. You can

- Leave a cash donation (including brown envelopes) in the plate provided on your way in or out of Church
- Join the Parish Giving Scheme (please speak to Rev Charles about this)
- Online at <https://tinyurl.com/y5o6gncq> (the QR code will take you to this page)
- Make an electronic donation via bank transfer or standing order.



The Vigil

We gather outside the Church, around the Easter fire

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
on this most holy night,
when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life,
the Church invites her children throughout the world
to come together in vigil and prayer.

This is the Passover of the Lord.

We remember his death and resurrection
by hearing his word and celebrating his mysteries,
confident that we shall share his victory over death
and live with him for ever in God.

Our Bible readings take us through the story of the Old Testament:

Genesis 1:1-5, 26-27

In the beginning God
created the heavens
and the earth.

² The earth was barren,
with no form of life;
it was under a roaring ocean
covered with darkness.

But the Spirit of God
was moving over the water.

³ God said, “I command light to shine!” And light started shining. ⁴ God looked at the light and saw that it was good. He separated light from darkness ⁵ and named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening came and then morning—that was the first day.

²⁶ God said, “Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures.”

²⁷ So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women.

After our first reading we pray:

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation. Your love cannot be contained and overflows in the wonder of creation. You formed the universe out of nothing and moulded us from the clay of the earth. All you have made sings of your marvellous deeds, O Lord, our maker and redeemer. Amen.

Genesis 3:1-13

The snake was sneakier than any of the other wild animals that the LORD God had made. One day it came to the woman and asked, “Did God tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”

² The woman answered, “God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden, ³ except the one in the middle. He told us not to eat fruit from that tree or even to touch it. If we do, we will die.”

⁴ “No, you won’t!” the snake replied. ⁵ “God understands what will happen on the day you eat fruit from that tree. You will see what you have done, and you will know the difference between right and wrong, just as God does.”

⁶ The woman stared at the fruit. It looked beautiful and tasty. She wanted the wisdom that it would give her, and she ate some of the fruit. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some to him, and he ate it too. ⁷ Right away they saw what they had done, and they realized they were naked. Then they sewed fig leaves together to make something to cover themselves.

⁸ Late in the afternoon a breeze began to blow, and the man and woman heard the LORD God walking in the garden. They were frightened and hid behind some trees.

⁹ The LORD called out to the man and asked, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ The man answered, “I was naked, and when I heard you walking through the garden, I was frightened and hid!”

¹¹ “How did you know you were naked?” God asked. “Did you eat any fruit from that tree in the middle of the garden?”

¹² “It was the woman you put here with me,” the man said. “She gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³ The LORD God then asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The snake tricked me,” she answered. “And I ate some of that fruit.”

After our second reading, we pray:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation. The sin which we dare not confront breaks your heart and nothing can be concealed from your sight, yet you showed mercy to our ancestors. Show mercy today to all who fall, and shatter the power of evil, O Lord, our maker and redeemer. Amen.

Exodus 14:13-22

¹³ But Moses answered, “Don’t be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the LORD save you today. These Egyptians will never bother you again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you won’t have to do a thing.”

¹⁵ The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you keep calling out to me for help? Tell the Israelites to move forward. ¹⁶ Then hold your walking stick over the sea. The water will open up and make a road where they can walk through on dry ground. ¹⁷ I will make the Egyptians so stubborn that they will go after you. Then I will be praised because of what happens to the king and his chariots and cavalry. ¹⁸ The Egyptians will know for sure that I am the LORD.”

¹⁹ All this time God’s angel had gone ahead of Israel’s army, but now he moved behind them. A large cloud had also gone ahead of them, ²⁰ but now it moved between the Egyptians and the Israelites. The cloud gave light to the Israelites, but made it dark for the Egyptians, and during the night they could not come any closer.

²¹ Moses stretched his arm over the sea, and the LORD sent a strong east wind that blew all night until there was dry land where the water had been. The sea opened up, ²² and the Israelites walked through on dry land with a wall of water on each side.

After our third reading, we pray:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation. You heard the agony of your people as they cried out from slavery, and you gave them Moses to lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear the cry of the enslaved and the homeless today and lead us through the turbulent sea of life to our true home with you, O Lord, our maker and redeemer. Amen.

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Some time later, I felt the LORD's power take control of me, and his Spirit carried me to a valley full of bones. ² The LORD showed me all around, and everywhere I looked I saw bones that were dried out. ³ He said, "Ezekiel, son of man, can these bones come back to life?"

I replied, "LORD God, only you can answer that."

⁴ He then told me to say:

Dry bones, listen to what the LORD is saying to you, ⁵ "I, the LORD God, will put breath in you, and once again you will live. ⁶ I will wrap you with muscles and skin and breathe life into you. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

⁷ I did what the LORD said, but before I finished speaking, I heard a rattling noise. The bones were coming together! ⁸ I saw muscles and skin cover the bones, but they had no life in them.

⁹ The LORD said:

Ezekiel, now say to the wind, "The LORD God commands you to blow from every direction and to breathe life into these dead bodies, so they can live again."

¹⁰ As soon as I said this, the wind blew among the bodies, and they came back to life! They all stood up, and there were enough to make a large army.

¹¹ The LORD said:

Ezekiel, the people of Israel are like dead bones. They complain that they are dried up and that they have no hope for the future.

¹² So tell them, “I, the LORD God, promise to open your graves and set you free. I will bring you back to Israel, ¹³ and when that happens, you will realize that I am the LORD. ¹⁴ My Spirit will give you breath, and you will live again. I will bring you home, and you will know that I have kept my promise. I, the LORD, have spoken.”

After our fourth reading we pray:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation. You bring life from the darkest valley of death. When hope is lost and our dry bones are scattered in shame, speak your word to your broken people, that we may stand confidently before you, and breathe your Spirit into us that we might live, O Lord, our maker and redeemer. Amen.

The Service of Light

The unlit Easter candle is brought forward and marked with the cross and five incense studs, to remind us of Jesus' wounds.

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
set us aflame with the fire of your love,
and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Christ yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,
Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever.

All: Amen.

By his holy and glorious wounds
may Christ our Lord guard and keep us.

All: Amen.

The Easter candle is lit from the fire.

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The light of Christ.

All: Amen.

We follow the Easter candle into Church.

The Exsultet

We sing these words of praise for Jesus' resurrection, sung since the early days of the Church:

Sing, choirs of heaven! Let saints and angels sing! Around God's throne exult in harmony! Now Jesus Christ is risen from the grave! Salute your King in glorious symphony!

Sing, choirs of earth! Behold, your light has come! The glory of the Lord shines radiantly! Lift up your hearts, for Christ has conquered death! The night is past, the day of life is here!

Sing, Church of God! Exult with joy outpoured! The gospel trumpets tell of victory won! Your Saviour lives; he's with you evermore! Let all God's people sound the long Amen!

The Lord be with you
All: and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right and good that with hearts and minds and voices
we should praise you, Father almighty, the unseen God,
through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who has saved us by his death,
paid the price of Adam's sin,
and reconciled us once again to you.

For this is the Passover feast,
when Christ, the true Lamb of God, is slain
whose blood consecrates the homes of all the faithful.

This is the night when you first saved our ancestors,
freeing Israel from her slavery
and leading her safely through the sea.

This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell,
broke the chains of death
and rose triumphant from the grave.
This is the night when all who believe in him are freed from sin,
restored to grace and holiness,
and share the victory of Christ.

This is the night that gave us back what we had lost;
beyond our deepest dreams
you made even our sin a happy fault.
Most blessed of all nights!
Evil and hatred are put to flight and sin is washed away,

lost innocence regained, and mourning turned to joy.
Night truly blessed, when hatred is cast out,
peace and justice find a home, and heaven is joined to earth
and all creation reconciled to you.

Therefore, heavenly Father, in this our Easter joy
accept our sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering.
Grant that this Easter Candle may make our darkness light.
For Christ the morning star has risen in glory;
Christ is risen from the dead and his flame of love still burns within
us!
Christ sheds his peaceful light on all the world!
Christ lives and reigns for ever and ever!

All: Amen.

We turn on all the lights and make a joyful noise!

The Easter Acclamation

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading – Luke 24:1-12

We share the story of the first Easter:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices that they had prepared. ² When they found the stone rolled away from the entrance, ³ they went in. But they did not find the body of the Lord^[a] Jesus, ⁴ and they did not know what to think.

Suddenly two men in shining white clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women were afraid and bowed to the ground. But the men said, “Why are you looking in the place of the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶ Jesus isn’t here! He has been raised from death. Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you, ⁷ ‘The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners who will nail him to a cross. But three days later he will rise to life.’ “ ⁸ Then they remembered what Jesus had said.

⁹⁻¹⁰ Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women were the ones who had gone to the tomb. When they returned, they told the eleven apostles and the others what had happened. ¹¹ The apostles thought it was all nonsense, and they would not believe.

¹² But Peter ran to the tomb. And when he stooped down and looked in, he saw only the burial clothes. Then he returned, wondering what had happened.^[b]

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Commission

We move to the font and sing:

He is Lord, he is Lord

He is risen from the dead and he is Lord.

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess

That Jesus Christ is Lord

Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

All: With the help of God, I will.

Will you persevere in resisting evil,
and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

All: With the help of God, I will.

Will you proclaim by word and example
the good news of God in Christ?

All: With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people,
loving your neighbour as yourself?

All: With the help of God, I will.

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society,
by prayer for the world and its leaders,
by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

All: With the help of God, I will.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith,
that you may be rooted and grounded in love
and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

All: Amen.

Hymn - Thine Be The Glory

- 1 Thine be 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.
*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 the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
Refrain
- 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.
Refrain

Edmund L Budry (1854-1932), translated by Richard B Hoyle (1875-1939)

The Dismissal

May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his new life;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

The Blessing

The Dismissal

With the risen life of Christ within you,
go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

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