

*The Benefice of St Mary the Virgin,  
Higham Ferrers with St John the Baptist,  
Chelveston-cum-Caldecott*

# Easter Celebration



for  
the Third Sunday  
of Easter



*Welcome as we continue to meet in this new way  
to celebrate the Easter season.*

*We hear how our risen Lord Jesus appears to his  
disciples*

*and there is excitement and confusion in equal  
measure!*

*Some believe immediately, and some doubt.....*

Today's service was recorded at home by members of  
The Ministry Team and their families.

*Some parts of the service are taken from material from the  
Wild Goose Worship Group*

You may like to have a candle, a shell (or small stone or pebble), a Bible and some bread ready for the prayers, as during this whole service we reflect on the disciples who meet the risen Jesus on the road, as they run away from Jerusalem in fear to Emmaus but do not recognise him until he sits down at table with them and blesses and breaks the bread. Then they remember how their hearts had burned within them as he had explained the scriptures to them as they walked together....

So today, on the third Sunday of Easter our themes include finding Jesus in scripture, in the breaking of the bread, and in one another as we journey together as the pilgrim people of God.

*Please join in with the prayers and hymns as we worship together.*

# ***The Gathering***

*Michelle greets us:*

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## ***Opening Acclamation***

This is the Good News -  
the tomb is empty,  
Christ is risen.

**Alleluia!**

This is the Good News -  
the light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness can never put it out.

**Alleluia!**

This is the Good News -  
once we were no people,  
now we are God's people.

**Alleluia!**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*We sing together:*

## **Hymn**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Hearts to heaven and voices raise;  
sing to God a hymn of gladness,  
sing to God a hymn of praise:  
he who on the cross a victim  
for the world's salvation bled,  
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,  
now is risen from the dead.**

**Christ is risen, we are risen;  
shed upon us heavenly grace,  
rain, and dew, and gleams of glory  
from the brightness of thy face;  
that we, Lord, with hearts in heaven,  
here on earth many fruitful be,  
and by angel-hands be gathered,  
and be ever safe with thee.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Glory be to God on high;  
to the Father and the Saviour,  
who has gained the victory;  
glory to the Holy Spirit,  
fount of love and sanctity;  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
to the Triune Majesty.**

*words: Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885)*

*music: Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)*

## ***Prayers of Confession*** – led by Lesley

Like the disciples behind locked doors,  
we are afraid to be seen as your followers.

Lord, have mercy

**Lord, have mercy**

Like Thomas in the upper room,  
we are slow to believe.

Christ, have mercy

**Christ, have mercy**

Like the two on the road to Emmaus,  
we do not recognize you among us.

Lord, have mercy

**Lord, have mercy**

## ***Absolution*** – Michelle

May the God of love and power  
forgive you and free you from your sins,  
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,  
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*We sing together the Peruvian Gloria*

## ***Gloria***

*Cantor:* Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to the Father.

**All:** **Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to the Father.**

*Refrain:*

*Cantor:* *To God be glory for ever!*

**All:** ***To God be glory for ever!***

*Cantor:* *Alleluia, amen.*

**All:** ***Alleluia, amen.***

***Alleluia, amen.***

***Alleluia, amen.***

*Cantor:* Glory to God, glory to God,  
Son of the Father.

**All:** **Glory to God, glory to God,  
Son of the Father.**

*Refrain*

*Cantor:* Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to the Spirit.

**All:** **Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to the Spirit.**

*Refrain*

**Collect** – *led by Linda*

Let us pray that we may walk the risen life of Christ in glory.

Risen Christ,  
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:  
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life  
and fill us with your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.**

**First Reading** – Acts 2.14a, 36-41 – *Read by Brenda*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter, standing with the eleven,  
raised his voice and addressed the crowd,

‘Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God  
has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom  
you crucified.’

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and  
said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what  
should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be  
baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so  
that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift  
of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your  
children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the  
Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other  
arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves  
from this corrupt generation.’ So those who welcomed his  
message were baptized, and that day about three thousand  
persons were added.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

***Celtic Alleluia*** – led by Keith & Jo – all join in singing:

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia**

This day is made by the Lord;  
now is the day of rejoicing.

We will praise the Lord,  
risen to eternal life!

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia**

***Gospel*** – Luke 24.13-35

*We hear a soundtrack from the animated film 'The Miracle Maker' based on this passage from Luke – the video clip can be seen on the website.*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke  
**Glory to you, O Lord**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when

they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Alleluia! This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

***Homily*** – Michelle

**Poem** – ‘Easter 2020’ by Malcolm Guite -  
*read by him in a recording made for Easter Day*

And where is Jesus, this strange Easter day?  
Not lost in our locked churches, anymore  
Than he was sealed in that dark sepulchre.  
The locks are loosed; the stone is rolled away,  
And he is up and risen, long before,  
Alive, at large, and making his strong way  
Into the world he gave his life to save,  
No need to seek him in his empty grave.

He might have been a wafer in the hands  
Of priests this day, or music from the lips  
Of red-robed choristers, instead he slips  
Away from church, shakes off our linen bands  
To don his apron with a nurse: he grips  
And lifts a stretcher, soothes with gentle hands  
The frail flesh of the dying, gives them hope,  
Breathes with the breathless, lends them strength to cope.

On Thursday we applauded, for he came  
And served us in a thousand names and faces  
Mopping our sickroom floors and catching traces  
Of that virus which was death to him:  
Good Friday happened in a thousand places  
Where Jesus held the helpless, died with them  
That they might share his Easter in their need,  
Now they are risen with him, risen indeed.

## **Hymn:**

***Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to his name.***

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth:  
he is the King of creation:**

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth:  
Jesus has died and has risen:**

**We have been crucified with Christ:  
now we shall live forever:**

**God has proclaimed the just reward:  
life for the world, alleluia!**

**Come, let us praise the living God,  
joyfully sing to our Saviour:**

*words and music: Donald Fishel (b.1950)*

## ***Prayers on the Emmaus Road*** – led by Paul & Lynda

*For which you will need a candle, shell or pebble, Bible and bread.*

On the road to Emmaus, two followers of Jesus, fleeing from Jerusalem, talk about what had happened to him. They do not yet know that he is risen - they were in darkness and could not yet pray as we can pray in our dark times:

Lord Jesus,  
you know the pain of abandonment and betrayal,

look mercifully on us who endure the pains  
and suffering of the world,  
who are facing times of darkness  
when we so often forget to look for the light.

*We light a candle as a sign of the light that is always with us  
and pray in a moment of silence that we may be enlightened in  
our hearts and minds.*

Risen Lord Jesus,  
**be our light and our hope.**

As the two followers walk along, deep in discussion, even  
argument, Jesus draws near, but they do not see that he is the  
Risen Lord. When we do not recognize how close Jesus is to  
us, may we pray:

Lord Jesus,  
you call us to follow you on the Way,  
come to us in our times of despair,  
when we so often turn in on ourselves,  
and help us to recognize you among us  
for you walk with us always.

*We lay down a shell, or stone, as a sign of the pilgrimage of  
faith and the journey of our lives, with Jesus our constant  
companion, and pray in a moment of silence that we may walk  
with him in faith and trust.*

Risen Lord Jesus,  
**be our companion on the Way.**

In answer to Jesus' questions, the followers tell their story,  
which is his story, and he opens the scriptures to them. We  
pray for our eyes to be opened to God's Word:

Lord Jesus,  
the image of the invisible God,  
the one for whom all things were made,  
the beginning and the end,  
open our hearts and mind to your Word,  
speak to us in ways we can hear,  
so that our whole being knows your truth.

*We open a Bible and pray in a moment of silence that Jesus may open the scriptures to us so that we may live as his people in the world.*

Risen Lord Jesus,  
**be our truth and our life.**

As they near the end of their journey, the two followers invite Jesus to share their supper. Seated at table, as he blesses and breaks the bread, and suddenly they see who he is. We pray to see Jesus in the world today:

Lord Jesus,  
you are among us in the ordinary things of life;  
and in the breaking of the bread  
you promise to always be with us,  
feeding us and transforming us.  
Even though we cannot now share  
the sacrament of bread and wine,  
be among us as we break bread at each meal,  
be with us in all the ways we are fed and nourished,  
so that we might be your people in the world.

*We break a piece of bread and pray in a moment of silence that we may know the presence of Jesus with us in the ordinary things of life, food for our bodies and nourishment for our souls.*

Risen Lord Jesus,  
**be our Bread of Life.**

At the end of the journey, the two followers know the joy of the resurrection and hurry back to Jerusalem to tell of all they have seen:

Lord Jesus,  
you are the resurrection and the life;  
may we live with courage even in the face of death.  
Bring comfort and hope to all who suffer,  
be their companion and guide in times of struggle,  
and strengthen those who care for the sick.  
As you gather to yourself those who have died,  
hold in your love those who mourn.

*In a moment of silence, we hold our hands up to God, praying for the blessing of peace for all who suffer, strength and protection for our NHS and care workers and remembering with love, all who have died.*

Risen Lord Jesus  
**be our strength, our beginning and our end.**

Risen Lord Jesus,  
draw near to us and all those for whom we have prayed,  
speak to us and teach us,  
inspire us and enlighten us,  
and send us to tell others the Good News  
of your love and life for ever. **Amen.**

We bring all our prayers together  
as we pray in the words you have given us:

## ***The Lord's Prayer***

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## ***The Peace – led by Lesley***

The two disciples told what had happened  
on the road to Emmaus,  
and how Jesus had been made known to them  
in the breaking of the bread. Alleluia.

The peace of the risen Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

*We are invited to share the Peace with those we are with, or to take a moment to think of those we love but cannot be with in the current situation, and of those with whom we are worshipping online today.*

## ***Hymn***

**Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty;  
hold me with thy powerful hand:  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven  
feed me now and evermore,  
feed me now and evermore.**

**Open now the crystal fountain  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fiery cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through:  
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield,  
be thou still my strength and shield.**

**When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.**

*Words: William Williams (1717-1791)*

*Music: CWM RHONDDA John Hughes (1872-1914)*

## ***Final Prayer*** – led by Linda

Living God,  
your Son made himself known to his disciples  
in the breaking of bread:  
open the eyes of our faith,  
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **Blessing** – Michelle

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you**

God the Father,  
by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,  
strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit,  
come down upon you this day, and remain with you  
always.  
**Amen**

## **Acclamation**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**