

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

# Easter Celebration



for the Sixth Sunday  
of Easter



*Welcome as we continue to meet in this new way  
to celebrate the Easter season.  
Just as those first disciples did, we now gather each  
week,  
in excitement and confusion!*

***In all that is strange, it is also wonderful in that we  
are now sharing in leading our worship  
with friends from all three of our usual services,  
and of course many of us already know each other  
from times when we join together for special  
services.***

***It is a great gift that we are able to worship together  
as one congregation and hear each other's voices  
as we share in familiar and new ways of singing,  
praying, and hearing God's voice among us.***

Today's service was recorded at home by members of  
The Ministry Team, and their families.  
Thanks also to Dudley & Sylvia Hughes  
for leading us in the Prayers.

We start looking towards Pentecost and the gifts of the  
Holy Spirit - this week, Jesus tells his friends that even  
though he must soon leave them, he will send the Holy  
Spirit to be with them, and they will be comforted by the  
Spirit's power, which brings gifts of love, joy and peace.  
We are to live in the Way of Jesus, loving one another  
as he has commanded us to do.

*Please join in with the prayers and hymns.*

# ***The Gathering***

*Linda 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***

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.  
**Those who believe in him shall never die.**

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:  
**Dying you destroyed our death,  
rising you restored our life.**

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

*We sing together:*



## ***Hymn***

**O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hands have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed:**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
'How great thou art! How great thou art!'  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
'How great thou art! How great thou art!'***

**When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:**

**And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,  
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away my sin:**

**When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
and take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
and there proclaim, 'My God, how great thou art!'**

*words: Stuart Kline (1899-1989)*

*music: Swedish folk melody, arranged by Stuart Kline*

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

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.**



## ***Absolution – Linda***

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.**

*Let us sing together the song of the angels, 'All glory be to God on high'*

## **Gloria**

All glory be to  
his peace on  
to all his people  
the glory of his  
In songs of  
our hearts their  
to worship him  
our God and

O Christ, the  
O Lamb  
O Jesus who for  
in mercy hear  
Most high and  
most high his  
the Father, Son  
in glory ever

*Words: based on Gloria in excelsis*  
*Music: KINGSFOLD arr. Jeremy Jepson (b.1973)*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo*

God on high,  
earth proclaim,  
tell abroad  
name.  
thankfulness and praise  
homage bring,  
who reigns above,  
Heavenly King.

Father's only Son,  
enthroned on high;  
sinners died  
our cry.  
holy is the Lord,  
heavenly throne;  
and Spirit reign  
one.

## **Collect** – Paul

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

Risen Christ,  
by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples:  
help your Church to obey your command  
and draw the nations to the fire of your love,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.**



***First Reading*** – Acts 17.22-31 – *Read by*  
*Lynda*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ‘Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.”

Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.’

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**

‘If you love me’, says the Lord,

‘you will keep my commandments.

I will send the Holy Spirit to be with you.’

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia**

***Gospel*** – John 14.15-21 – *Read by Brenda*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to  
John

**Glory to you, O Lord**

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

Alleluia! This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**





## ***Music for Reflection - If ye love me***

*(based on John 14:15-17) by Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)*

*sung by the Choir of All Saints, Northampton*

## ***Homily – Lesley***

## ***Hymn***

**Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace  
to let you be my servant too.**

**We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.**

**I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.**

**I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.**

**When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,**

**born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.**

**Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.**

*Words and music: Richard Gillard (b. 1953)*

***Prayers of Intercession*** – led by Dudley & Sylvia  
*Hughes*

Risen Lord, as we bring our prayers before you,  
fill our hearts with Easter joy.

Love of the Father, love of the Son,  
abide in your Church.

Pour out your Holy Spirit of truth  
and challenge the narrowness of our vision.  
Help us to be people of faith and trust  
in a world that needs new hope and confidence.

Risen Lord,  
**Fill our hearts with Easter joy**

Loving Father, you challenge the unjust structures of our  
world,  
and call us to care for all people,  
especially those who are powerless and disadvantaged.  
Give to all who hold public office  
your wisdom and compassion.

Risen Lord,  
**Fill our hearts with Easter joy**

Loving Son, you call us to live in love for one another,  
We thank you for those who love us,  
and pray for our families and friends,  
especially those from whom we are separated.  
May we build communities  
of loving care for all people.

Risen Lord,  
**Fill our hearts with Easter joy**

Loving Spirit, breathe your life-giving power  
upon all who are frail,  
all who are suffering or anxious.  
Bring healing and restoration to those who are ill,  
and strengthen all who care for others,  
especially our NHS workers and care home staff.

Risen Lord,  
**Fill our hearts with Easter joy**

Risen Lord, you hold all souls in life,  
and call us home to that place of refreshment and peace.  
We remember those who have died in recent days,  
and those whose year's mind we recall in the coming  
week.  
Bring us to share with them in your glory.

Risen Lord,  
**Fill our hearts with Easter joy**

Holy One, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
We join our prayers and praises with all who worship you,

with those on earth and those in heaven,  
may we abide in you as you abide in us,  
so we may welcome others into your community of love.

Risen Lord,  
**Fill our hearts with Easter joy**



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

Rejoicing in God's new creation,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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 – Linda***

Jesus said,  
'Abide in me and I will abide in you.' Alleluia.

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



## ***Hymn***

**Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour  
first-begotten from the dead,  
thou alone, our strong defender,  
liftest up thy people's head.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Jesu, true and living bread.**

**Here our humblest homage pay we,  
here in loving reverence bow;  
here for faith's discernment pray we,  
lest we fail to know thee now.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
thou art here, we ask not how.**

**Paschal Lamb, thine offering, finished  
once for all when thou wast slain,**

**in its fullness undiminished  
shall for evermore remain,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
cleansing souls from every stain.**

**Life-imparting heavenly manna,  
stricken rock with streaming side,  
heaven and earth with loud hosanna  
worship thee, the Lamb who died,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
risen, ascended, glorified!**

*Words: George Bourne (1840-1925)*

*Music: George Martin (1844-1916)*

### ***Final Prayer - Paul***

God our Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life:  
may we thirst for you,  
the spring of life and source of goodness,  
through him who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

### ***Blessing – Linda***

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

Christ, the Lord of the living and the dead,  
who died and rose to life eternal,  
grant that you may abide in him and belong to him for  
ever;

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.**

