

On this Easter Day, let us pray for salvation for the world,
salvation triumphant over sin, pollution, disease, death.
The Lord hears our prayer:
Thanks be to God.

In the name of Jesus our risen Lord and Saviour, **Amen**

Hymn StF313 H&P212

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son

Blessing

May the light of the Risen Christ dispel our shadows;
May the love of the Risen Christ renew and enable us;
May the joy of the Risen Christ shine through us,
that we may walk with him and bring others to him,
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore.
Amen

Darlington Methodist District Worship at Home Holy Week 2021

Maundy Thursday

Today we remember the last meal Jesus had with his disciples. Usually we share in communion together, but even if we cannot share bread and wine, we can look back to that evening and join in prayers and worship. You might like to have some bread or cake and a drink, and use them to share with Jesus and his disciples in every time and place. Or simply sit and imagine yourself at his table, where he will feed your heart and wash your feet, and strengthen us all for our service together.

Gathering in worship

As a family gathered, in all our different homes and places, we gather in the name and in the presence of the living God who makes us one.

Hymn StF499 H&P500

Great God, your love has called us here

Prayer for Thursday

Loving God, on this night Jesus gathered with his disciples and shared around the table. May we know the fellowship of that gathering, and be fed in our hearts by his presence. Nourish us and strengthen us, that we may live and serve to your glory, in the name of Jesus our living Lord, **Amen**.

Reading: [Mark.14:1-11](#)

The story begins with two hints of what is to come - Mark first of all tells us that the Jewish leaders were plotting against Jesus, and then tells us a story. It begins like so many of the stories about Jesus, having a meal in a friend's house - then Jesus says he has been anointed in preparation for his burial. That is the cue for Judas to begin his plan to betray Jesus...

Bible quotes are from NRSVA; online quotes are at
bible.oresmus.org

Prayers are from various sources including MWB.

Other prayers and all reflections written by Rev Tony
Buglass, supernumerary minister in the Tynedale Circuit.

Reading: [Mark.14:12-31](#)

The Passover is a special family meal - the disciples would have looked forward to it much as we look forward to our Christmas dinner. There would be laughter and singing, the sense of a special occasion - but their oneness is spoiled by a contradiction. Despite the closeness of their fellowship, Jesus announces that one of them will betray him. He knows they don't understand him - they think that following him will mean what it has always done, travelling together around Galilee. They can't see that the time has come for the cross - and that the cross was the way they would all have to go. So when Jesus says "One of you will betray me" they all strongly deny it. But he was right - they were all to betray him that night...

Reading: [Mark.14:32-51](#)

In this episode, the battle begins. The warmth of the upper room is left for the cold darkness of a night in the garden; the disciples who have just told Jesus they will stick with him fall asleep, leaving Jesus to face his ordeal alone. Then suddenly, the quiet of the night is broken by the arrival of the mob, with Judas at their head. Within minutes, there is a scuffle, Jesus is arrested, and the disciples have run for it. The scene is set for the trials and execution.

There is one curious footnote - in v.15, we read of the young man who is almost caught, but is able to escape because he slips out of his gown and runs away naked. It has often been argued that this is Mark himself, adding in an oblique way that he was there, and thus the story he tells is reliable. Today, however, we are not so much concerned with the historical accuracy of the details of the story as with the thoughts and feelings running through the mind of that young man. The sudden terror of the mob, the unreasoning desperation which drives him to escape even by leaving his clothes behind, and as he shuts his door behind him and begins to get his breath back, the sharp awareness of failure. Whatever happens in the next

special signs and wonders. We see him in the ordinary: the evidence of God at work in and through his people is the special nature of their ordinary life and discipleship. If people visit a church, and find friendship and welcome, there is God. If people come to worship, and find in the singing and the devotion of those around them something which uplifts them and enables them to worship, there is God. If ordinary acts of kindness and generosity kindle a warmth of light in someone's life, if being a good neighbour helps someone to be cared for and know they are part of the community, there is God.

The resurrection was a real event. It really did happen, there is enough testimony in the Gospels to support the claim. But the sudden silence at the end of Mark doesn't deny it, it simply puts us where those women were at that moment: we can't prove it, most of the time we don't see it, but we live in the conviction that it is true.

Intercessions

On this Easter Day, let us pray for life for the world, life triumphant over persecution, illness, suffering, death.

The Lord hears our prayer:

Thanks be to God.

On this Easter Day, let us pray for love for the world, love triumphant over indifference, hatred, death.

The Lord hears our prayer:

Thanks be to God.

On this Easter Day, let us pray for peace for the world, peace triumphant over fear, warfare, inner conflict, death.

The Lord hears our prayer:

Thanks be to God.

On this Easter Day, let us pray for joy for the world, joy triumphant over despair, frustration, deprivation, death.

The Lord hears our prayer:

Thanks be to God.

Either way, there are no stories of resurrection appearances like those in the other Gospels. So some decided to put that right, and added their own endings, borrowing from the other Gospels:

- the appearance to Mary Magdalene, including the disbelief of the disciples, is in the other Gospels;
- the appearance to two who were walking in the country seems to be taken from Luke's Emmaus road story;
- the command to go and preach everywhere seems to come from Matthew's Great Commission in Mt.28.

However, looking back through the Gospel, it is obvious that Mark does believe in the resurrection: he has Jesus predict it several times, and even gives his readers a 'trailer', anticipating what they would see when it happened:

Reading: [Mark.9:2-10](#)

Hymn StF134 H&P457

Christ, whose glory fills the skies

The Transfiguration is in all three Synoptic Gospels. It gives a glimpse of 'the real Jesus', the Jesus whom surely death could not contain. In Mark's version, Jesus tells them not to say anything until he is raised from the dead, which has the disciples pondering what that could mean. They will find out! The glory they have glimpsed will be seen not as a temporary thing which is then 'camouflaged' again in the ordinary, but will be seen in the reality of the Risen Christ: the death he must endure will be real, not pretend, as it is only by entering fully into whole reality and depth of human experience that he will be able to embrace and save humanity, but if death is a reality, so is the new life which will shine out and bring new life and light to the whole human race. In the meantime, that glory has to be put away, and they trek together back down the hill to the ordinary world and the work which has yet to be done.

That's the point: most of the time we don't see the risen Christ in

24 hours (and he knows he must fear the worst) he will never again be able to sit at a table without remembering the one who shared wine and bread with him - the one he left, as he ran away...

Prayers

Father, on this night, the night on which he was to be betrayed, Jesus washed his disciples' feet and said they ought to wash each other's feet. We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, humble us.**

On this night, Jesus prayed for his disciples to be one. We pray for the unity of your Church...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, unite us.**

On this night, Jesus prayed for those who were to believe in him. We pray for the mission of your Church...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, renew our zeal.**

On this night, Jesus commanded his disciples to love, but suffered rejection himself. We pray for those who are rejected and unloved...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, fill us with your love.**

On this night, Jesus reminded his disciples that if the world hated them it first hated him. We pray for those persecuted for their faith...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, increase our faith.**

On this night, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them. We remember those who have died, and pray for those who have been bereaved...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, renew our hope and trust in you.**

Our Father...

So we come to his table. We have done no better than they did - we have made our promises, and have broken them. We have set out to be his disciples, and then behaved as if he wasn't there. He still invites us to come to his table - come, in faith and humility; come, let him feed you, and show you that there will be more to his cross than any of his enemies or friends expect...

Hymn StF569 H&P594

An Upper Room did our Lord prepare

Blessing

May your peace fill our hearts, and your light dispel the shadows, your grace transform us, and your love enable us to be the disciples you call us to be. In the name of Jesus our Living Lord,
Amen

Good Friday

Gathering in worship

As the crowd gathered in Jerusalem that day, we come together to share around the cross and the tomb

Hymn StF276 H&P170

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim

Prayer for Friday

Father, we thank you that you have revealed yourself to us in so many ways, and especially that you have revealed yourself clearly in Jesus Christ. We thank you for his coming, his ministry, his words and his example. Today, we praise you that he did not hold back from death itself, and that through death he gave us life. We cannot match his giving, but what we are we give to you. Take us and use us, that something of Christ's loving and giving, his living and dying, might be seen in us; for his sake. Amen.

Easter Sunday

Gathering in worship

As the women walked to the tomb in sorrow and found joy, so may we come into the presence of the Living Jesus.

Prayer for Sunday

Wonderful God, we have no words that can express your power and our awe. You have raised your son from the dead! He is risen, and all creation sings your victory and glory! He is risen, and we are free from the power of sin and death. We have no words big enough to express your power and our awe, but we have hearts full of amazement and adoration, and we offer them to you.

We are sorry for the times we have lived as if Jesus had stayed in the tomb. Forgive us for the times we have allowed despair to take possession of us; for the times we have given in to the power of sin; for the times we have failed to trust you.

Help us to praise you in the living of resurrection life - may the victory we celebrate today so fill our lives that we may be faithful to you in all things; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, **Amen.**
Our Father...

Hymn StF297 H&P190

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing

Reading: [Mark16:1-8](#)

The ending of Mark's Gospel is a bit of a puzzle. The earliest and best manuscripts end at v.8 - the women find the tomb empty, a man dressed in white tells them Jesus is risen, and they leave in fear and trembling, and say nothing because they were afraid. And that, impossibly, is that as far as Mark is concerned. It almost looks as if Mark doesn't believe in the resurrection! More likely, there was more, but those pages of the original Gospel were lost - the actual text is very abrupt, it does look as if the last page was torn off at some point and lost.

-“It is finished.”

Father, we pray that you will fill each one of us with the life of your Spirit, so that we may respond to the calls that you give and follow your Son on his healing, teaching, forgiving, accepting, suffering way of life for others until the end of our lives, and on into life everlasting with you. In the name of our crucified Saviour, our Risen and Living Lord., *Amen.*

Hymn StF287 H&P180

When I survey the wondrous cross

Blessing

Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on, take us with you. **Amen.**

Saturday

The Gospel writers say nothing about today. It's the sabbath, a day of rest. It's an empty, grim day for Jesus' family and friends. Outside the town there is a cross, and nearby, a sealed tomb. In the upper room is a mother who has seen her son executed, and his friends who have lost their leader, and perhaps their purpose. Today is a day for reflection, and for prayer.

Prayer for Saturday

God of light, we pray for all whose days are dark and pain-filled.
God of life, we pray for all who are struggling with the reality of death.

God of hope, we pray for all who can see no further than now, and fear what the future may bring.

In Jesus, you came to walk our path through life and death.

Give us the grace and hope to walk with you in your light and peace.

In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

Reading: [Mark.14:53-65](#)

Jesus was left by all his friends. He was in the hands of those who wanted him dead, and those who wanted to save him were powerless to do so. As the procession heads for the High Priest's house, we catch a glimpse of Peter following at a safe distance. He cannot bring himself to stay away, nor can he bring himself to go any closer. The trial is a travesty of justice - the witnesses cannot agree on their evidence, the trial is itself illegally constituted indeed everything seems stacked against Jesus. The darkness of the early morning seems to symbolise the powers of darkness which have now taken over, and seem to be in charge...

Reading: [Mark.14:66-72](#)

This is Peter's story. While the trial is going on upstairs, he is confronted by some of the crowd, and comes face to face with his fear. This is the one who shortly before had promised Jesus he would stand by him, he would never deny him. In the garden, he did try for a moment to defend Jesus, but then ran for it like all the others. Now, he is in the grip of blind panic - who knows what will happen if he is positively identified as one of the disciples? He will say anything to get out of the spotlight, out of trouble. Twice in a matter of hours, big brave Peter is helpless in the grip of a fear that will make him say or do anything to save his own skin - regardless of who else needs him...

Reading: [Mark.15:1-15](#)

We return from Peter's plight to see Jesus before Pilate. By now, it is obviously daylight, and the events done under the cover of darkness are exposed to the full light of day. With daylight, comes hope - surely Roman justice will not allow this farce to continue? Surely Pilate must see through the plot against Jesus? And what about the crowds, the people among whom Jesus has worked his miracles over the last couple of years, the crowd who welcomed him into Jerusalem as Messiah only five days before - surely they will speak up for him? On the

contrary - the crowd howl for his blood, and Pilate is more concerned to keep the crowds happy than to apply Roman justice. Jesus is utterly alone - his friends have gone to ground, the people have turned against him, and the courts of law will not defend him. His fate is sealed, and he is led out to his death.

Hymn StF285 H&P285

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Reading: [Mark.15:16-32](#)

So events move towards their climax. Jesus is shamed and insulted by the soldiers. He is paraded through the town, so everyone can see who he is and know what is about to happen. Two killers are executed with him - as far as the Romans are concerned, he's just a part of another job lot of criminals to be put to death, and next week there'll probably be more. This one is nothing special. By the time Jesus has been nailed to the cross, he has been stripped of everything - his friends, his public, his liberty, his honour, and now his dignity. There isn't any further degradation possible - even those dying alongside him insult him.

Reading: [Mark.15:33-47](#)

The darkness which has overshadowed everything since Jesus and his disciples met to share Passover together has returned. Jesus hangs in agony for six long hours. He is ridiculed to the end, the crowd making fun of his last words from the cross. When he dies at last, there is almost a sense of relief that the inevitable end has come. The awful tension has gone from the scene - when Mark mentions the women, it's almost as if the cross is no longer the centre of our attention, we are left thinking of those who will somehow have to pick up the threads of their old way of life. It's all over.

However, Mark gives us two hints that the story isn't quite over. While Jesus was dying, the chief priests mocked him because he couldn't come down from the cross - but we hear the

centurion who supervised his execution come to believe in him **because** he didn't come down from the cross. The testimony that "this man really was the Son of God" signals that there's more to come. Then, after the burial, the two Marys note precisely where the body is laid. In a very short time this will become important - Jesus might be dead and buried, but the story is by no means over.

Intercessions

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Father, within our world your principles of love, justice, mercy and compassion are crucified every day, and in every land, by powerful people who do not really understand what they are doing to others, what they are doing to you. We pray for all those who suffer today as a result of the actions of others; the victims of greed, violence, warfare, oppression, injustice.

"When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother.""
Father, we pray for our family, the Church. United by our love for you, may we be united in our love for one another. We bring before you our Christian brothers and sisters of every land and race who are suffering today: those who are persecuted; those who are in need; those engaged in costly service. We pray for our congregation here, and for those from this congregation who are suffering in any way.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
Father, we pray for those who know the suffering of total despair: for the terminally ill and the grief-stricken; for the depressed and those consumed by guilt; for those who have lost their faith in life, in others, in you. We bring before you those who feel totally alone when faced with fears and pain that threaten to overwhelm them.