

EASTER DAWN SERVICE

We meet in the church garden.

Gospel reading: John 20:1-9

Before the dawn, Mary and the women came
and found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

They heard the angelic voice:

"Why do you seek among the dead
the One who is everlasting light?

Behold the clothes in the grave!

Go and proclaim to the world: 'He who was slain has slain death.

He is proclaimed as the Son of God,

the Saviour of the human race'."

Christ is risen from the dead

Mary and the women heard the message in confusion and fear.

They were astonished; they trembled.

What was this thing that had happened?

Early in the morning they had come to anoint his body,

But now they were told:

Christ is risen from the dead

They heard, but they could not understand.

'Go and tell', but they could not speak.

They ran; they looked for his body.

They sought it but found it not.

Could it be true that:

Christ is risen from the dead?

Mary, weeping went to the gardener,

'The stone is moved, but he has gone.

Tell me, where have you put the body?'

He spoke and called her by name.

'Mary. I am alive. Tell my disciples that truly

Christ is risen from the dead

Mary ran to the disciples:
'I sought him with tears as one who was dead
But I worshiped him joyfully as the living God.
I was blinded by my tears. Him, I could not see.
But he saw me and spoke my name.
And now I bring you news of the resurrection, for truly
Christ is risen from the dead

We celebrate the death of death,
the destruction of hades,
the beginning of another life eternal.
Our hearts leap for joy,
we praise your name,
the only blessed and most glorious God.
Christ is risen from the dead.

For that saving night was truly sacred,
and this new glorious day, the reminder of the Resurrection;
From the tomb the eternal Light has shone on all
Christ is risen from the dead.
Death has been defeated by death.
New life has been given to those in the grave.

We make our way through the garden into the church, representing the women looking for the body of Jesus. All the lights in the building are switched off. As people enter the building they take an unlit candle, and gather round the central candle.

*A minister lights the Easter Candle. He/she then proclaims
Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!
(repeated, three times)*

Lights are turned on in the church

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

God of glory, by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell.
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

The peace is shared and we go to our seats

Reading

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

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.**

cf 1 Corinthians 15.3-7

Re-affirmation of Baptismal Vows

The ministers and people gather round the Easter candle.

Have you been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?

I have.

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

May God who has given you the desire to follow Christ give you strength to continue in the Way.

Amen.

We come forward to light our candles from the Easter candle

Almighty God,
we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all who have been baptized into your name.
Keep us faithful to our baptism,
and so make us ready for that day
when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

**Defend us, O Lord, with your heavenly grace,
that we may continue yours for ever,
and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more
until we come to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.**

Thanksgiving for the Resurrection

You descended into the deepest pit of the earth,
and shattered the eternal bars that held the fettered, O Christ,
and on the third day, like Jonah from the whale,
You arose from the tomb.
Christ is risen from the dead.

Having kept the seal on the stone intact, O Christ,
You rose from the tomb,
And you have opened for us the doors of Paradise.
Christ is risen from the dead.

O my Saviour, the slain and living Sacrifice,
when, as God, You, of Your Own will,
offered up Yourself to the Father,
You did raise up with Yourself the whole race of Adam,
when You rose from the tomb.
**Christ is risen from the dead.
Death has been defeated by death.
New life has been given to those in the grave.**

Hymn of the Resurrection

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One.

We worship Your Cross, O Christ,
and we glorify Your holy Resurrection.

For You are our God, and we know no other beside You;

We call on Your name.

O come, let us worship Christ's holy Resurrection,
for, behold, through the Cross joy has come to all the world.

Ever blessing the Lord, we sing of His Resurrection;

For, having endured crucifixion,

He has destroyed death by death.

We extinguish our candles

Intercessions, including Lord's Prayer

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.

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:
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

No more we doubt thee, glorious prince of life;
life is naught 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:
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

An Easter Sermon preached by John of Chrysostom

If anyone is devout and a lover of God, let him enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival.

If anyone is a wise servant, let him, rejoicing, enter into the joy of his Lord.

If anyone has wearied himself in fasting, let him now receive his recompense.

If anyone has laboured from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If anyone has come at the third hour, with thanksgiving let him keep the feast. If anyone has arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss. If anyone has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near without hesitation. If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let him not fear on account of his delay. For the Master is gracious and receives the last, even as the first; he gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, just as to him who has laboured from the first. He has mercy upon the last and cares for the first; to the one he gives, and to the other he is gracious. He both honours the work and praises the intention.

Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and, whether first or last, receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you ascetics and you negligent, celebrate the day! You that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast, rejoice today! The table is rich-laden; feast royally, all of you! The calf is fatted; let no one go forth hungry! Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness.

Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death has set us free. He that was taken by death has annihilated it! He descended into hades and took hades captive! He embittered it when it tasted his flesh! And anticipating this Isaiah exclaimed, "Hades

was embittered when it encountered thee in the lower regions."
It was embittered, for it was abolished! It was embittered, for it
was mocked! It was embittered, for it was purged! It was
embittered, for it was despoiled! It was embittered, for it was
bound in chains!

It took a body and, face to face, met God! It took earth and
encountered heaven! It took what it saw but crumbled before
what it had not seen!

"O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory?"

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown!

Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is risen, and life reigns!

Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb!

For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-
fruits of them that slept.

To him be glory and might unto ages of ages. Amen.

Conclusion

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**He has given us new life and hope by raising Jesus from the
dead!**

God has claimed us as his own.

**He has brought us out of darkness! He has made us light to the
world!**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.