

Apart but Together Worship

Hornsea URC – 4th April 2021 – Lent in plain sight : Stones

Easter Sunday



Welcome

Welcome to our Easter day service for 2021. Today, is a special day! A day of REMEMBRANCE and of CELEBRATION and of HOPE.

Our service today brings to an end our Lent in plain sight series – with the focus for this week on Stones.

On this resurrection Sunday, a stone features heavily in our service as we remember the STONE rolled away from the tomb of Jesus, and we celebrate the fact the tomb was empty! Jesus is alive!

Call to worship

We begin our service with a call to worship for Easter Sunday which many of you may be familiar with. Please respond with the text underlined and in bold :

Hallelujah! Christ is risen

Hallelujah! Christ is risen

He is risen indeed!

He is risen indeed!

Opening prayer

As we come into the presence of our Lord, we come to worship him with our mind, body and soul. As we say a prayer together, we worship with our voices but also recognise that we worship with our body. As such, the prayer will also be signed in British Sign Language with the response of “The stone was rolled away today” – you can respond in words, BSL or both

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#) of Carol saying the prayer and signing the response

Lord Jesus this is the day you rose again

The stone was rolled away today.

The tomb lies empty, the garments neatly folded

The stone was rolled away today.

Now death has no dominion and darkness no power for....

The stone was rolled away today.

Resurrection roll (Part 1)

To help us think about the empty tomb and the stone rolled away here's some instructions to bake a resurrection roll!

You will need :

A part baked roll

Marshmallows

1.5 tsps of butter melted

3 tsp white sugar

1 tsp cinnamon

You can make the resurrection roll as follows :

Here is a *partly baked bun*

It symbolises the tomb in which Jesus was placed. Take the roll and cut it open like a cave (tomb)

The *marshmallow* represents his body.

Roll the marshmallow in the melted butter and then coat it in the cinnamon and sugar mix.

Before he was put in the tomb Jesus body was covered in oil (*butter*) and spices (*cinnamon*).

Then they put him in the tomb.

Put the marshmallow into the bread roll "cave"

To stop anyone getting in and taking his body they put a big stone in front of the tomb.

This *bit of bread* represents the stone. Put the part of bread you cut away earlier back on top of the marshmallow, sealing the "tomb"

Jesus body is now in the tomb with the stone covering it.

Bake this in the oven for 12-14 mins and later we will see what happens and how this helps us think about the Easter story.....

Pebble Art

We had set a task for those that are artsy or crafty to decorate a stone/pebble in an Easter theme and email them in to use as part of the service today. We had a fantastic response. Here are some pictures of what we have been sent...





We see here many different expressions of Easter expressed in the art on these stones.

Easter can remind us of spring – we see flowers, insects

We might think of food – a hot cross bun, or an Easter egg (and the Easter bunny)

We think of new beginnings – a chick, or an egg

We see expressions of the death, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus

All of these pictures can represent HOPE – a new season (spring), new life (eggs, chickens, flowers, insects).

The resurrection of Jesus depicted in the stone rolled away and the expression “He is risen” – this is our ultimate hope – sin and death are defeated – we have a great hope, for this life and the next – we will look at this in more detail later.

We suggested that the stones might be displayed in the garden or left around Hornsea for others to find. Keep your eyes peeled if you are out having a walk.

Hymn

We will sing our first hymn now – a hymn of celebration for this Easter morning:
Christ the Lord is risen today, alleluia – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Easter story

Many of you will be familiar with the Easter story. Last week, Margaret and Heather took us on a journey through Palm Sunday, the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, the last supper and the crucifixion. We have been unable to be together and remember Maundy Thursday and Good Friday due to the Covid situation, but whilst apart, we are together in Christ today as we celebrate his resurrection.

The discovery of the empty tomb is featured in the gospels of Matthew (28), Mark (16), Luke (24) and John (20). Each one has their own approach to describing the events of the day but they all tell the same story. When Mary went to look at the tomb and tend to Jesus' body she did not find what she was expecting!

We are going to watch now a telling of the Easter story by a church in Tunbridge Wells, featuring children as the actors. It is a simple telling of the last days of Christ before his crucifixion and then his resurrection but it brings out our cause for celebration today, Jesus is ALIVE and he loves us ALL.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#) to the video

Bible reading

Our reading today is the resurrection account of Matthew, from chapter 28. You can read the account below, or [CLICK HERE](#) to see a recording of Allan reading the account for us.

The Resurrection

After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

5 The angel spoke to the women. "You must not be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

6 He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. 7 Go quickly now, and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!' Remember what I have told you."

8 So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Peace be with you." They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. 10 "Do not be afraid," Jesus said to them. "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Hymn

We will now sing our second hymn :
Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Resurrection roll (Part 2)

Let's take a look at the roll we baked earlier

Just like happened to Jesus tomb, the stone has been rolled away (*take away the stone from the entrance of the tomb*).

Lets look inside where the marshmallow was representing Jesus body.

The marshmallow is gone, but if you look closely there are still traces that Jesus was there. Some signs of the oil and spices, and even tiny bits of marshmallow, like the burial robes Jesus was wrapped in which were left in the tomb when he rose from the dead.

This is what we celebrate on Easter day

– a stone that was rolled away, an empty tomb, folded grave clothes.

Because Jesus was no longer dead.

He had risen from the dead and was alive again.

Reflection

The first witnesses of the stone rolled away and the empty tomb were women.

They were devout followers of Jesus

who hadn't been able thoroughly to anoint Jesus body

on the Friday evening before the Sabbath began when no work was allowed.

So they hurried to Jesus' resting place

as soon as it was light on the Sunday

to complete the process hurriedly begun on the Friday.

The women had heard an enormous stone had been put in front of Jesus tomb

to stop anyone getting in and stealing his body

and as they journeyed to the place they wondered out loud

"how on earth are we going to get the huge stone moved?".

Everything must have seemed hopeless to them that morning

- their friend and Master Jesus had been horribly executed

and they had no idea how they would even be able to get to Him to pay their last respects.

The stone sealing the tomb must have seemed like a giant full stop to all their hopes and plans

and it must have felt that there was nothing they could do to turn the situation round.

So imagine their surprise, their disbelief,

when they arrived at the tomb and found the stone rolled away

and an angel sitting on top of it.

The Bible doesn't say the angel was blowing bubbles as it sat there on the stone

but I love that extra touch in the video.

It speaks of nonchalance and playfulness

in the face of what had seemed to the women an insuperable obstacle.

With the stone rolled away the women could see that Jesus body was gone

- and the angel reassured them this was not the work of grave robbers as they feared but the mighty resurrection power of God.

What had seemed like a giant full stop to these first witnesses was entirely removed and a new future lay before them.

What they could not do, God did.

Before they arrived at the tomb the women had no idea how, or indeed if, the stone would get moved. As far as we can tell they did not really expect to see their Jesus alive again.

God did far more than they could ever hope for or even imagine.

On this Easter Day we celebrate what God did then.

We say alleluia Christ is risen

He is risen indeed alleluia.

But our faith teaches that the resurrection is not just an event that happened way back then but also a spiritual dynamic that can be at work in *our* lives *now*.

Perhaps if we still our hearts and listen we might hear Him today speaking to us about personal situations which seem hopeless:

Perhaps

- relationships
- Or work challenges
- Or health issues
- Or something else that springs to mind as we pause for a moment to think of any full stops, huge obstacles, we're encountering in our lives.

.....

As Easter demonstrates superlatively our God is a God of surprises and things that seem like dead ends or full stops to us may not remain that way as we invite Him to come and work in and through us.

The *way* God works may be very different to what we expect or pray for.

That was certainly the case for the first disciples.

They hoped and prayed Jesus would not suffer and die but He did.

And they were initially distraught and disturbed that his body had disappeared from the tomb, assuming grave robbers had been at work.

If anything it seemed that things were getting worse not better.

But it was God who was at work, resulting in the stone that was rolled away, the empty tomb, and Jesus alive!

And as God worked then

so He longs to be at work in us, and in the dead end circumstances we may face.

So I invite us to bring to Him the lost causes in our lives,

Any people and situations that seem to us beyond hope.

.....

May the power that brought Jesus back to life

be at work in the things we bring to Him now.

We do not dare to tell you *how* to work dear Lord.

We acknowledge you are the God of surprises

who does far more than we can ever hope for or imagine.
Come in your resurrection power

Roll away the stone we pray.

Hymn

We will now sing our third hymn:

See what a morning – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Reflection : He is risen indeed!

When we think of Easter perhaps we think of spring – the yellow and white daffodils, crocus flowers peeking through the ground, bright-coloured tulips, baby birds chirping from nests, and normally worship services throughout the month, special greetings, and more. A purple sash draped over a cross can be seen at churches and in front yards. The cross reminds us of the importance and meaning of Easter. Perhaps choosing a special outfit to wear to church is on the list of Easter activities. Participating in Easter egg hunts is another way families and friends gather to celebrate. No matter what your tradition, there seems to be a universal saying during Easter, a saying we have already used this morning:

The phrase is 'He is Risen. He is Risen Indeed!'

On Easter Sunday, many Grecians don't just say hello to each other but will greet others with "*Christos anesti*" (Christ is risen), and other Grecians will then respond "*Alithos anesti*" (truly, He has risen), which is similar to "He is risen, indeed."

People in Greece start celebrating at midnight Saturday night (Sunday morning) with cheers of "Christos Anesti," and huge displays of fireworks

What Does 'He Is Risen Indeed' Mean?

Maybe you have said those words to friends, family, and strangers. Maybe you have jotted those words on a card to a friend. When the words, 'He Is Risen' are spoken, they are often echoed by another person saying, 'He Is Risen Indeed.' A smile, a nod of the head, a heartfelt action of acknowledging that our saviour is risen are elements of sharing the love of Christ.

Scripture tells us that Jesus died and was buried and on the third day, He rose from the grave (1 Cor. 15:4). Sharing these words reminds us of the sacrifice Christ made. He conquered death. He lives so that we may have eternal life. Jesus did not stay in the tomb. He rose from the dead so that all who believe may have everlasting life.

Easter is celebrated as we remember the sacrifice made on our behalf. As we busy ourselves with activities surrounding Easter, let us pause and acknowledge the depth of what Jesus experienced and how God gave His Son so we may be saved.

Why is Easter a message of HOPE?

John 3 vs 16 says :

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. "

We remember at Easter that Jesus died – he truly did!

Yet, this was not the end. Sin was defeated. As Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom signifying a new way to have a relationship with God. The old way, through rituals and priests was finished. God instituted through Jesus a way to himself – for everyone.

Jesus rose on the third day. The tomb was empty and the stone rolled away. This means that we can be part of God's family – not just now but for eternity. Christ is our hope not just in life but in death too.

As we come together in Communion we are going to sing a hymn in preparation with these powerful words :

*What is our hope in life and death?
Christ alone, Christ alone
What is our only confidence?
That our souls to him belong
Who holds our days within his hand?
What comes, apart from his command?
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ, in which we stand*

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death*

We give thanks to God for his son, Jesus Christ, our great HOPE, now and forever. Today, Easter Sunday, we remember and celebrate His resurrection. Jesus lives. He Is Risen. He Is Risen Indeed.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the love and mercy that only You can provide. You gave Your Son Jesus to be sacrificed for our sins, so that we may have life eternal with You. Father, we know that our words and actions don't cause You to love us. We are yours and are loved because we are children of God. Thank You for forgiving our sins. Thank You that we can go to You at any moment and know You are listening. The love You have for us never changes, never ceases. When we stray, You search for us. When we return, You welcome us with open arms. Help us to pause and remember the love You give.

May we celebrate Easter and share the good news of the gospel with everyone.

He Is Risen. He Is Risen Indeed. Hallelujah!

In the name of Your Son Jesus. Amen.

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.*

Hymn

As we come now to Communion, we prepare our hearts by singing or reflecting on this hymn:
Christ our hope in life and death – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Communion

In the act of Communion, we share together in faith, love and remembrance. We come together spiritually and as one in the body of Christ. This is an act of **Worship** instituted by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We will break our own bread and drink our own wine, yet, we are one in Christ as communion helps us to remember his birth, death and resurrection.

[CLICK HERE to WATCH/LISTEN/PARTAKE in COMMUNION](#)

Intercessions:

On this day of resurrection let us offer up prayers for others, asking that God may be at work.

We're going to focus on different areas of our world and our lives and in each case you are invited in a moment's quiet to bring before God a particular situation or person that comes to mind.

At the end of each short pause for prayer you can say
"Lord, roll away the stone I pray"

The world
Our country
Our town
Our church
Our family & friends
Those in our prayer book
Any other personal situation

Amen



Lord

Roll away
the stone
we pray

Hymn

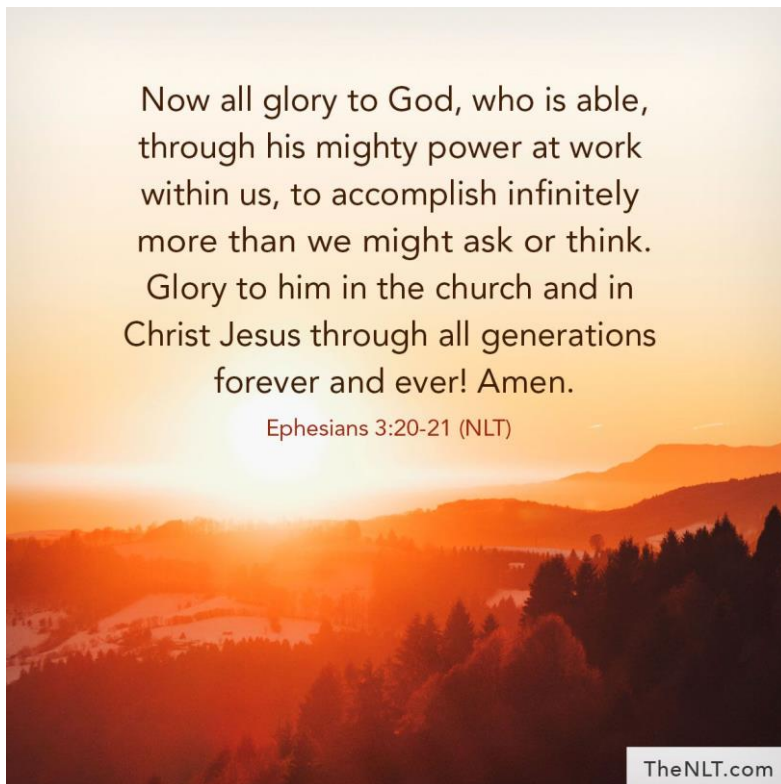
Our final hymn is :

Thine be the glory – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Final Blessing

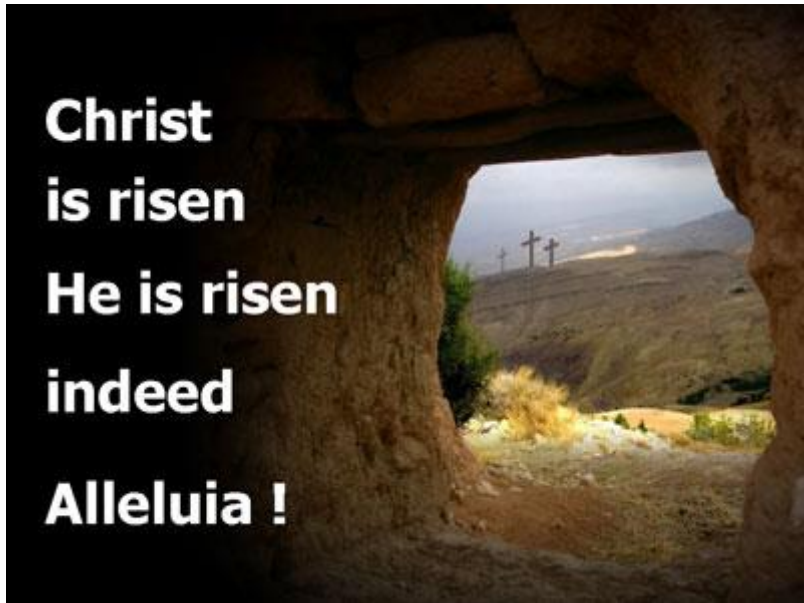
Now all glory to God, who is able,
through his mighty power at work
within us, to accomplish infinitely
more than we might ask or think.
Glory to him in the church and in
Christ Jesus through all generations
forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NLT)



TheNLT.com

**Christ
is risen
He is risen
indeed
Alleluia !**



Amen