

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2025:** Easter Sunday

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.*

**Theme for today is "He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!"**

**Lent liturgy**

Alleluia, Alleluia! is our story and our song

*Give us this day our daily bread that our cup overflows with enough to share...*

That our souls proclaim the greatness of the Lord, that our souls overflow with a story to tell.

*Give us this day our daily bread that our cup overflows with enough to share...*

With words and gifts and smiles and songs, with Hallelujahs echoing from our souls.

*Give us this day our daily bread that our cup overflows with enough to share...*

That we may sit and stand and walk as stories are shared and truths revealed that we may listen and hear and speak and sing and shout.

O Lord our God, our Lenten journey has ended, our Easter journey begun.

**Nourished by our journey, let us share and tell your living, loving stories, we pray.**

**Alleluia, Alleluia for Christ is risen, Alleluia!**

**Hymn StF 298 H&P 193**

**Christ the Lord is risen today Alleluia!**

**Opening prayers:**

Glory to you, O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

If we have fallen into despair, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have failed to hope in you, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have been fearful of death, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ, **Lord, forgive us.**

*Silence*

May the living God raise us from despair, give us victory over sin and set us free in Christ. **Amen.**

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

**Hymn StF 309**

**See what a morning, gloriously bright**

**Bible readings:**

**Isaiah 65: 17-25**

**1 Corinthians 15: 19-26**

**Luke 24: 1-12**

**Reflection**

*We are very privileged to have Rev Helen Hollands the chair of the East Anglia Methodist Circuit preaching in the central Norfolk Circuit today at our Hingham Church. Helen has agreed to share an Easter Day reflection for our worship at home.*

Many of you will be familiar with C S Lewis' Narnia stories and remember that towards the beginning of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', Lucy, the youngest of the family, stumbles into the magical land of Narnia through the back of a wardrobe. Narnia is covered in snow, and she meets Mr Tumnus, a fawn, who takes her home for tea. They share stories and eat crumpets together by the fire, Mr Tumnus, who was going to betray her, thinks better of it and rushes her back as quickly as he can. Lucy is excited to share her story but her tale seems fanciful and childish to her



older siblings and despite Lucy's protests they refuse to take it seriously. She is silenced until the truth dawns on them when they discover Narnia for themselves. Until then, poor Lucy's story is disregarded as an idle tale.

In Luke's account of the resurrection the women who discover the empty tomb go to tell the disciples what they have seen and heard. In all the gospels, the women are the first witnesses to the resurrection. At the time, women's testimony could not be accepted and was easily disregarded. Perhaps it isn't a surprise that the disciples thought their words an 'idle tale' and were inclined to take no notice, the Good News and NIV translations say that the disciples thought it was 'nonsense'. I think they simply could not believe it. How can the tomb be empty, how can they believe Jesus is alive when they all know he has been killed so publicly? How could these things possibly be true? Rather like Lucy's siblings in the Narnia story they have to experience it for themselves.

The passage makes me wonder who we silence in our world today. Whose voices are quieter rather than louder? Could it still be women, particularly those who have experienced violence? Could it be those who are enduring conflict, being bullied or are disabled in some way? Are some disregarded because they are too young? This is a reminder for us to listen carefully, because God may not speak to us as we expect or through the people we expect. God's way is often not our way. We must take care with who we believe and what we believe in.

The invitation to believe in the resurrection is an invitation to be astonished. We are reminded that God works through those who are open to love and new possibilities. Maybe this was true of the women who gathered at the tomb that first Easter morning, Mary, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the other women. We are told that they remembered Jesus' words that he would rise again on the third day and the truth dawned on them. Just now in the world we know that there is so much conflict, hurt, and unspeakable violence. Are we still open to being astonished by love and to speak of it? Are we open to living the resurrection life? In the words of the poet, G. M Hopkins, we pray that God continues to 'easter in us'.

We say, Alleluia! Christ is risen. Happy Easter to you all.

Helen Hollands

**Hymn StF 311 H&P 208 The day of resurrection**

**Prayers of Intercession for Easter Day:**

In the power of the resurrection, we offer our prayers to God.

Let us pray.

Remember, O Lord, in your love the Church throughout the world . . . those recently baptized and confirmed . . . those who minister to others . . .

*Silence*

May your whole Church know your power and be a sign that Christ is risen.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love the world you have made . . . those who seek a fair and proper use of the world's resources . . . those who strive for justice and peace among the nations . . .

*Silence*

May the whole earth be transformed by mercy and rejoice in hope.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who suffer . . . the victims of violence and injustice . . . those who mourn . . .

*Silence*

May all in need find comfort, strength and freedom in the living Christ.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who have died: those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone.

*Silence*

May all your children receive grace and light according to their needs and come at last to share with all the saints in life eternal.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...**

**Hymn: StF 313 H&P 212      Thine be the glory**

**Closing blessing –**

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**