



Church at Home 5 For Abridge Easter Day

Sunday 12th April 2020



*On the first day of the week the disciples went to the tomb, and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Luke 24: 1
Jesus Christ is risen today. Alleluia!*

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fourth week of church-at-home in Abridge. Easter Day is the time when as followers of Jesus we celebrate with joy the truth that 'we are an Easter people and Hallelujah is our song'.

On Good Friday we remembered, some of us, with Hot Cross Buns, the crucifixion of Jesus.

Yesterday was a strange day, when we recalled that the world held its breath.

And today we rejoice that the tomb is empty, and that God raised our Saviour from the dead.

Just a thought: if you're on your own for this act of worship, you might like to arrange to contact a friend and share this time over the phone line?

1. We hope you have your personal church-at-home space as some have been doing over recent weeks. Today in addition to a cross or another Christian symbol, a candle, and a Bible, perhaps you will have the palm cross from last week and an Easter egg. You may have an Easter Garden. Traditionally Easter Day is a time when flowers, especially white lilies are displayed in churches as a way of thinking of those dear to us who have died. So, if possible, why not place a flower on the table, even if it isn't a lily, and when the time for prayer comes, remember those no longer with us?

2. Today's Bible readings are: **John 20: 1-18** and **I Corinthians 15: 12-20**

3. A prayer as we join with all those meeting in their homes at this time...

Thank you, O Christ, for breaking the bonds of sin and bringing us into fellowship with the Father.
Thank you, O Christ, because you have overcome death and opened to us the gates of eternal life.
Thank you, O Christ, because where two or three are gathered in your name you are with them.
Thank you, O Christ, because you always live to make intercession for us.
For these and all the blessings of your mighty resurrection we give you thanks.

4. The story of the first Easter morning can be found in all four of the Gospels. Each bears the distinctive and unique hallmarks of eye-witness testimony. What they have in common is that early in the morning the tomb in which the crucified Jesus had been buried was empty, and that He appeared to some of His followers. In John's account it is still dark and there is a chill to the air when Mary finds that the stone has been rolled away from the tomb. In shock, she runs to tell Peter and John what she has discovered. They run to the tomb and look inside for themselves. When they return to their homes, Mary stays in the garden. She sees two angels and then finds herself speaking to Jesus, whom she believes to be the gardener. It is when He speaks to her by name that she knows it is her risen Lord. She wants to touch Him and to stay there together, but He tells her to pass on a message to His followers. This she does, with the immortal words, 'I have seen the Lord'. This is the message that has been passed around the whole world until this day. And we are among those receiving it afresh today.

5. **Read the passage in John 20 slowly**, and then, with the Bible still open, ask yourselves....

I wonder which part of the story most catches your attention?
I wonder which part puzzles you?

I wonder which is the most important part of this story?
I wonder which part was especially for you this morning?
I wonder how this story might connect to what is happening in our world today?
I wonder how God can use this story to inspire and encourage us and those dear to us?

7. To help you explore the story further, there is a further reflection sheet and also all-age activities, that you might like to use, if you have access to the Internet. You can find these resources on the websites of the two churches and here are the links:

www.lambournechurch.com

www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org

9. For our prayers, and in the light of the resurrection of Christ, let us remember:

Those known to us personally who have died in years past; those Christians who suffered death and loss in Sri Lanka on Easter Day last year; those mourning the death of loved ones through the Corona virus; those who are suffering with the virus and those anxiously waiting from afar; children who are bewildered and anxious at what is happening; medical and the front-line staff in this pandemic; all those behind the scenes searching for vaccines, working out and implementing government policies and planning strategies; all those around the world who are suffering, often without the resources that we tend to take for granted. Finally pray for your own family, and also name before God each member of the church family to which you belong. Here is another prayer you might like to use:

O God, our Father, we thank you that the risen Lord Jesus is with us and will never leave us.

May we find in and through Him courage, endurance and cheerfulness to live with our situation.

Give to all who tend the sick, skill on their hands, wisdom in their minds and gentleness and sympathy in their hearts and may they feel the support of all our prayers.

Help us not to worry too much but to leave ourselves in the hands of all who care and held by your ever-loving hands.

Lord Jesus, come to us and to our loved ones, and our sisters and brothers in Christ worldwide, at this time, on Easter Day, bearing us up in your love and hope Amen.

End with our family prayer, The Lord's Prayer.

10. You might like to try and sing one or both of the traditional Easter hymns that are particularly popular on Easter Day, and there are links to singing of them . They are *Jesus Christ is risen today* and *Thine be the Glory*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMwPEmUMP7U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPjTfw4a2ZE>

End your time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of The Grace, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village.

* And don't forget that there are Church services available on whatever is your radio station of choice, with Songs of Praise on BBC 1 at 1.15pm today from Glasgow Cathedral.

* Finally, you might like to continue the habit of placing a candle safely in your window at dusk as a sign that we are praying for this country at this time. During the week you might like to share what you have done this morning with others. Do let your friends in Abridge know we are praying for them and ask them if they have any specific prayer requests.

* Don't hesitate to contact the church leaders, if you would like to have a friendly chat or want to pass on some news for us all.

Nick - 01992 814 426. **Roger** - 01992 815 838. **Keith** - 020 8504 9168

Right is a photo of Sam's church-at-home space
Do send your own photos in to us

