


ORDER OF SERVICE

Easter Sunday, 12 April 2020
Arusha Community Church



Let the morning bring me
word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go,
for to you I entrust my life.

Psalm 143:8

In these trying times, we worship at home, confident that the love embraced as a congregation will sustain us while praying alone or in small groups. As always, we are one in the body of Christ.

Scripture, hymns and rites for this celebration are provided below. For those with internet access, videos with music, vocals and lyrics can be viewed by clicking on the blue hyperlinks.

A small amount of bread and wine, or grape juice, is needed for communion. If you wish, sit in comfortable chairs around a coffee table. Place a cross on it and light a candle.

GATHERING

Prelude Meditation: "Amazing Grace" near Charing Cross Hospital in London

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqffNOw9jMQ>

In this clip posted several days ago, angelic voices emanate from a place of monstrous despair. Awestruck neighbors slowly, silently dare to unlock their doors. Can it be true?

Easter Proclamation: Acts 10:34-43 read aloud by first reader

We begin with testimony from the apostle Peter, his eyewitness account of our redemption.

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ - he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

This is the Word of our Lord.

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

Penitential Rite: Confession by all, with words of absolution by service leader

Like banquet guests washing their hands, we pause to examine our hearts and remove the stain of sin.

ALL: **Most merciful God, we confess that we cannot free ourselves from sin's power. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole hearts. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may want to do your will. Help us to walk in your ways, that people may see our good works and glorify your name. Amen.

L: God is merciful, and has given his Son Jesus Christ to die for us. For his sake, God forgives us all our sins. To all who believe in Jesus Christ, he gives power to become the children of God, and gives them his Holy Spirit.

Gathering Hymn: MP 453, "Up from the Grave He Arose"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oN77HjfAc8k>

Some will recall this hymn by Robert Lowry from childhood. Sensory memory is a powerful stimulator, so feel free to sing your own Easter favorite here instead.

1. Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus, my Savior;
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus, my Lord.

*Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And He lives for ever with His saints to reign:
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

2. Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus, my Savior;
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus, my Lord.

Up from the grave He arose...

3. Death cannot keep its prey,
Jesus, my Savior;
He tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Lord.

Up from the grave He arose...

Up from the grave He arose...

THE WORD

We read John's Easter morning story in two parts, with a psalm verse recited by all between them.

Opening Prayer: Led by service leader

L: Heavenly Father, open up our eyes in wonder. Send now your Spirit to unclog our ears, that we hear the amazing grace of our salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: **Amen.**

Gospel, Part I: John 20:1-10 read aloud by second reader

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Responsorial: Psalm 143:8 read aloud by all

ALL: **Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.**

Gospel, Part II: John 20:11-18 read aloud by second or third reader

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?"

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

Celebration Hymn: "Broken Vessels" (Amazing Grace)

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

This popular hymn by Hillsong Worship was introduced to the congregation several months ago.

In lieu of a sermon today, try to imagine what Mary Magdalene might have been thinking as you sing. Everything Jesus had tried to teach us suddenly became very real. Listen for her echo in the tears.

"I can see You now. I can see the love in Your eyes."

1. All these pieces, broken and scattered
In mercy gathered, mended and whole
Empty handed, but not forsaken
I've been set free; I've been set free

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me, oh
I once was lost, but now I am found
Was blind but now I see
Oh I can see You now...
Oh I can see the love in Your eyes
Laying Yourself down...
Raising up the broken to life*

2. You take our failure; You take our weakness
You set Your treasure, in jars of clay
So take this heart Lord; I'll be Your vessel
The world to see, Your life in me, oh

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound...
Oh I can see You now...
(Instrumental Bridge)
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound...
Oh I can see You now...*

SHARING

Apostles Creed: Read aloud by all

In response to word of God's unfailing love this morning, we declare what we know to be true.

ALL: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Communal Prayer: Shared by all

God hears the cries his children. We offer him thanksgiving and praise. We bring the burdens of those who suffer and mourn, those who hunger and thirst for what is right, begging for his providence.

If speaking aloud, conclude with, "Lord in your mercy," so that others can add, "hear our prayer."



Pray in your own words

- *for a rapid end to the spread of corona virus Covid-19*
- *for all who are sick and the many who serve them*
- *for ACC family members and friends far away*
- *for any other concerns on your heart*

Thanksgiving Hymn: MP 1291, "Jesus Paid It All"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Htiug1xe4v8>

Another standard known to many, written by Elvina Hall in 1865. This contemporary version includes a breathtakingly beautiful chant at the bridge between second refrain and third verse.

1. I hear the Savior say,
'Thy strength indeed is small.
Child of weakness, watch and pray;
find in Me thine all in all.'

*Jesus paid it all,
all to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.*

2. Lord, now indeed I find
Thy power and Thine alone
can change the leper's spots
and melt the heart of stone.

Jesus paid it all...

*Oh praise the One
Who paid my debt,
And raised this life
Up from the dead.*

*Oh praise the One...
Oh praise the One...
Oh praise the One...
Oh praise the One...
Oh praise the One...*

3. And when before the throne
I stand in Him complete,
'Jesus died my soul to save,'
my lips shall still repeat.

COMMUNION

Holy Communion: Led by service leader

Jesus instructed us to recall the fulfillment of his promise to save us when sharing this meal.

L: Let us pray. Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world, you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his Holy Supper.

ALL: **Amen. Come Lord Jesus.**

L: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat: this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this is remembrance of me."

ALL: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Distribution of bread and wine

L: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

ALL: **Amen.**

L: Let us pray:

ALL: **We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Affirmation Hymn: "Build My Life"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZW4_8_zCBE

Affirmation comes from the Latin verb affirmare, to make steady or strengthen. If you are not familiar with this hymn by Pat Barrett, simply listen and reflect on the lyrics. All are based on scripture.

Worthy of every song we could ever sing
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe
We live for You, oh, we live for You

Jesus, the name above every other name
Jesus, the only One who could ever save
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe
We live for You, we live for You

Holy, there is no one like You,
there is none beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder and
Show me who You are and fill me with Your heart
And lead me in Your love to those around me

Jesus, the name above every other name...

Holy, there is no one like You...

And I will build my life upon Your love

It is a firm foundation

And I will put my trust in You alone

And I will not be shaken

And I will build my life upon Your love...

Holy, there is no one like You...

And I will build my life upon Your love...

SENDING

Easter Sequence: Victimae Paschali Laudes, read aloud by all

Since the eleventh century, Christians have recited this text, one of four sequences still in use today. We complete our celebration by proclaiming it in union with God's people throughout the world.

ALL: **Let Christians offer sacrificial praises to the Passover victim.
The lamb has redeemed the sheep:
the Innocent Christ has reconciled the sinners to the Father.
Death and life contended in a spectacular battle: the Prince of life, who died, reigns alive.
Tell us, Mary, what did you see on the way?
"I saw the tomb of the living Christ and the glory of his rising,
The angelic witnesses, the clothes and the shroud.
Christ my hope is arisen; into Galilee, he will go before his own."
We know Christ is truly risen from the dead! To us, victorious King, have mercy!
Amen. Alleluia.**

Closing Prayer: Led by service leader

L: Heavenly Father, we put our trust in you alone. Let your Spirit steady us in difficult days ahead.
May our witness to your love be a light to those in darkness. We ask through Christ our Lord.

ALL: **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: WOV 678, "Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia" (Mfurahini, Haleluya)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVG096v1MJw>

Written in Swahili by Bernard Kyamanywa and loosely translated by Howard Olsen, this traditional Tanzanian hymn is known to many in both languages. Sing joyfully in either.

1. Christ has arisen, alleluia!
Rejoice and praise Him, alleluia!
For our Redeemer burst from the tomb,
Even from death, dispelling its gloom
*Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy;
Death's fearful sting He has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!*
2. For three long days the grave did its worst
Until its strength by God was dispersed.
He who gives life did death undergo,
And in its conquest His might did show.
Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy...
3. The angel said to them, 'Do not fear.
You look for Jesus, who is not here.
See for yourselves the tomb is all bare;
Only the grave-clothes are lying there.'
Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy...
4. 'Go spread the news: He's not in the grave;
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus' redeeming labors are done.
Even the battle with sin is won.'
Let us sing praise to Him with endless joy...
5. Christ has arisen, He sets us free.
Alleluia, to Him praises be!
Jesus is living! Let us all sing:
He reigns triumphant, heavenly King.
Let us sing praise to him with endless joy...
 1. Mfurahini, haleluya,
mkombozi amefufuka.
Amefufuka, haleluya,
msifuni sasa yu hai.
*Tumwimbie sote kwa furaha.
Yesu ametoka kaburini.
Kashinda kifo, haleluya;
Haleluya, Yesu yu hai.*