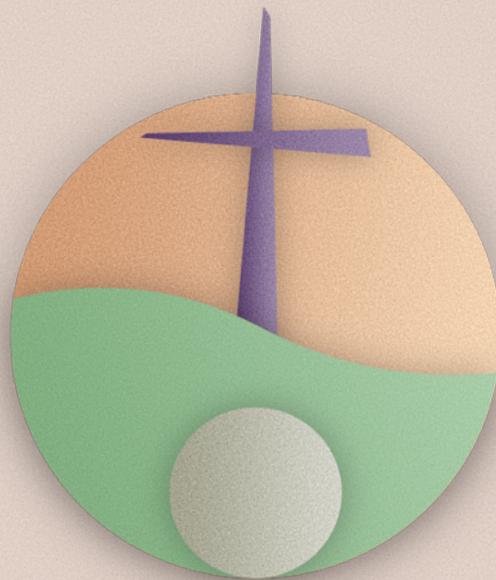


# Church Together

**Easter – Words Of Surprise and Elation**

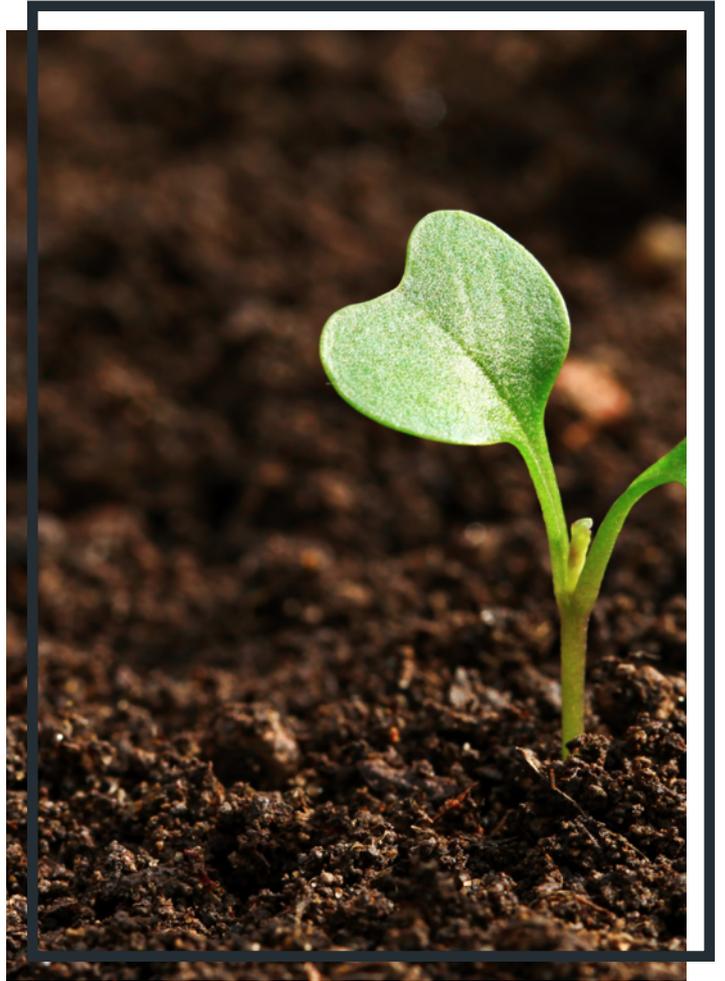
**17th April 2022**



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# Song Suggestion

An Easter Hallelujah



# Welcome

Welcome to Church Together.

**No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together.**

This service is an Easter Celebration Service.

It is a reflection on some of the words that were said during the events of Jesus' resurrection. The service will include Communion.

On this special Easter Sunday Celebration Service we will be looking at: **John 20 v. 1 - 18**

The theme for today's service is: **Easter - Words Of Surprise And Elation**



# Call To Worship

## **Psalm 27 v. 1 & 4 NLT**

The Lord is my light and my salvation – So why should I be afraid?

The Lord protects me from danger – So why should I tremble?

The one thing I ask of the Lord – The thing I seek the most  
Is to live in the house of the Lord All the days of my life,  
Delighting in the Lord's perfections And meditating in his  
Temple.

# Prayer For Easter Sunday

Jesus Christ is alive in the midst of his people here today! Lord, we pray this day that you would help us to be sensitive to your presence; give us ears to hear your word; give us hearts to feel your love; give us minds to understand your truth; give us wills to practise what you preach; and all to your glory, we pray!

Thank you Lord for giving us new life, strengthen us in our loving, and help us to see your way in life. Refresh us today, we pray, our tired lives, releasing us from all that hinders us in our growth with you and guide us to a new peace that is only found in you.

Lord Jesus, on this special day, introduce us to God the Father, encourage us grow to be more like you, and help us to continue to praise you all the days of our lives.

**Amen**

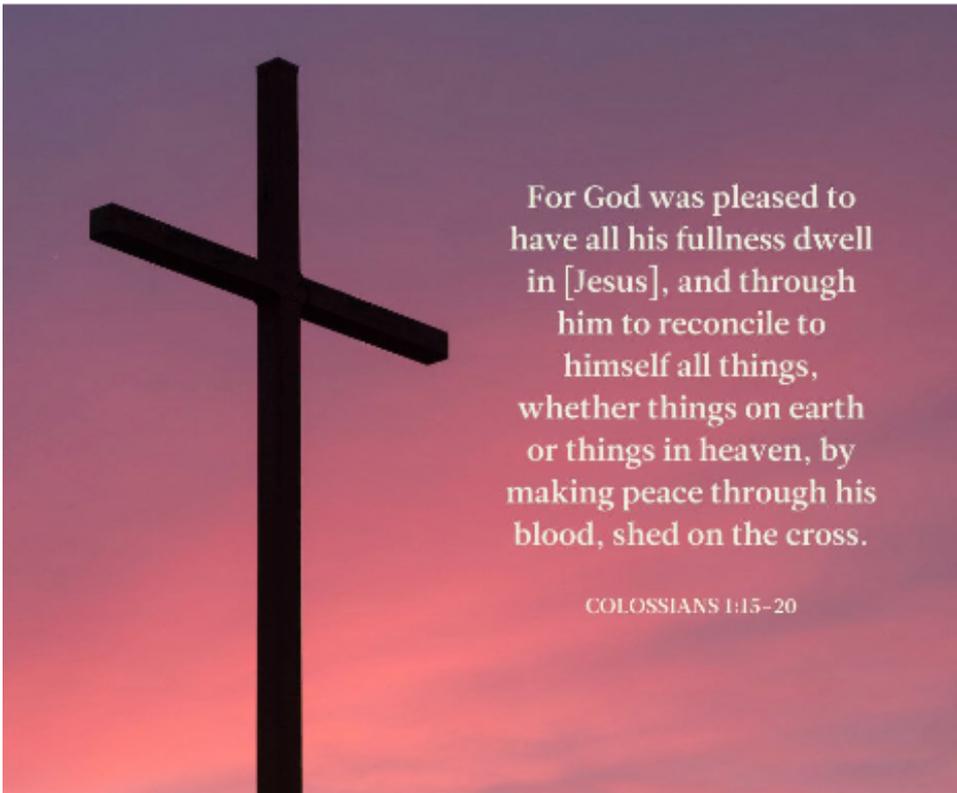
# An Easter Egg Illustration

Have an Easter egg in colourful packaging like the one above available to show the congregation. Hide it in the room where adults and children will worship together. Invite all the children to hunt for something you have hidden (**The Easter Egg in our case**). As a clue, tell them it is something that everybody associates with Easter. When the egg has been found, and the children have retaken their seats, open it with great excitement – only to discover that it is empty.

Compare this disappointment with the shock that Mary and Peter must have felt on first discovering that the tomb in which Jesus had been laid was empty. They thought that the authorities, who had been cruel to him in life, had been even more callous in death.

What they did not realise was that something had happened overnight which was to change their disappointment to joy completely and for ever. That is what we will all celebrate this Easter Day.

Turn the disappointment of finding the empty egg - box into joy by giving everyone a tiny foil - covered egg to eat.



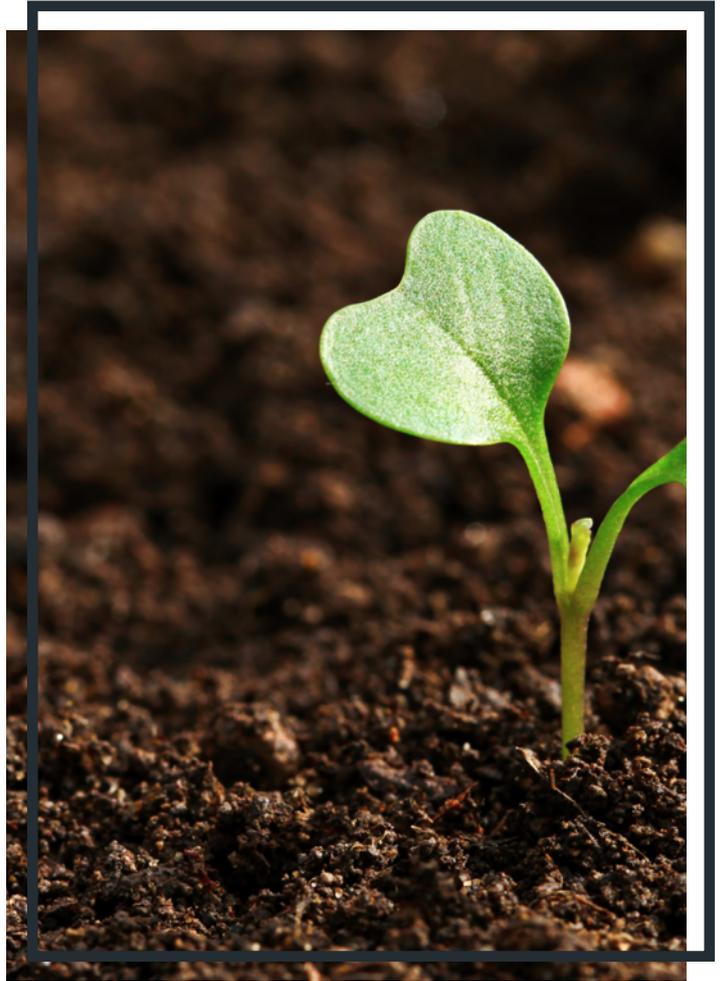
For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

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# Song Suggestion

Low In The Grave He Lay



# Communion

Today is a Sunday when we would normally share communion together. We come together today remembering the love and sacrifice that Jesus made on the Cross for our sins and for our forgiveness. We gather together here in Church or at home as the body of Christ in order to share the bread and the cup together.

We are able to do this by getting a small glass of red juice (**fruit juice, squash etc.**) and a small piece of bread and 'sharing these elements' at a time that is convenient to you.

**(Normally as a church we will do this during the service at about 11.30am.)**

Our normal practice is to say these words:

For I received from the Lord what I pass on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, (**you might like to pray at this point**) he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' (**this is the time to eat the bread**). In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' (**now is the time to drink the cup**). For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## **1 Corinthians 11 v. 22 - 26**

If you would like to do this today with us, if you are at home, then please do so, and may the Lord's richest blessings be with you today.

# Bible Reading

## **John 20 v. 1 – 10 NIV**

### **The Empty Tomb**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter<sup>7</sup>came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

## **John 20 v. 11 – 18 NIV**

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the

head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

# Easter Quiz

## Questions:

1. What was the Jewish feast which was being celebrated the week Christ was crucified?
2. When Jesus entered Jerusalem during what is known as His Triumphal Entry, what animal was He riding on?
3. Why is the Sunday before the resurrection called Palm Sunday?
4. Which disciple cut off the ear of the high priest's servant in an attempt to protect Jesus from being taken as a prisoner?
5. What was the name of the high priest's servant who had his ear cut off by the disciple and subsequently reattached by Jesus?
6. How many times did Peter deny Christ after the abandoned the Lord?
7. How many pieces of silver did Judas trade the life of Jesus for?
8. How did Judas identify Jesus to the soldiers?
9. In repentance Judas returned the money to the priests that he was given as the price of betrayal of the Lord and then did what?
10. The priests took the money that Judas had returned to them and did what with it?
11. Who was surprisingly released before Pontius Pilate sentenced Jesus to death?
12. What did Pilate's wife counsel him to do concerning Jesus?

13. A man named Simon was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus. In Mark 15 we are told the names of Simon's two sons. What were their names?
14. What was the inscription above the cross?
15. Can you quote 4 of the 7 statements recorded in the Bible that Christ said from the cross?
16. Following the statements of Jesus on the cross, there was a statement by a Roman soldier concerning Christ. What was it?
17. What happened in the Temple as a sign that the death of Jesus had made way for the individual believer to approach God?
18. When Jesus died there was darkness in the land. How long did it last?
19. In John 19 two men helped prepare the body of Christ for burial. One is said to have been a secret disciple and another secretly came to Jesus early in His ministry to ask question. Who were these men?
20. Who was the first person to see the risen Christ?

## **Answers**

1. Passover (Luke 22 v. 1)
2. A young donkey (Matthew 21 v. 1 - 7; Mark 11 v. 1 - 7; Luke 19 v. 28 - 35; John 12 v. 12 - 15). In eastern tradition it was customary for a king going to war to ride a horse. Yet when the king was at peace he would ride a donkey. The symbolism is the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, was coming for purposes of peace between God and man.
3. When Jesus entered into Jerusalem at the beginning of the Passion week, the people welcomed Him as king and Messiah. They covered the road with their garments

and palm fronds as a symbol of their worship and acceptance of Him as king (Matthew 21 v. 8; Mark 11 v. 8; Luke 19 v. 35, 36; John 12 v. 12, 13).

4. Peter (John 18 v. 10)

5. Malchus (John 18 v. 10)

6. Three times (Luke 22 v. 54 - 57; Mark 14 v. 69, 70; Matthew 26 v. 73 - 75; John 18 v. 13 - 27)

7. 30 (Matthew 26 v. 15)

8. By giving Him a kiss (Matthew 26 v. 47 - 49).

9. Hanged himself (Matthew 27 v. 3 - 5)

10. Bought the potter's field with the money which is where strangers were buried (Matthew 27 v. 6 - 8).

11. Barabbas (Matthew 27 v. 15 - 26; Mark 15 v. 6 - 15; Luke 23 v. 18; John 18 v. 40)

12. To leave Jesus alone because He was a just man. She had a bad dream concerning the Lord and she probably felt it would bring bad luck on the household of Pilate (Matthew 27 v. 19).

13. Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15 v. 21)

14. 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews' (Luke 19 v. 19). It was written in three different languages according to John 19 v. 20: Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

15. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'. (Luke 23 v. 34)

'I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise'. (Luke 23 v. 43)

'... Woman, he is your son'. . . . 'She is your mother'. (John 19 v. 26, 27)

'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27 v. 46; Mark 15 v. 34)

'I am thirsty'. (John 19 v. 28)

'It is finished'. (John 19 v. 30)

'Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!' (Luke 23 v. 46)

16. 'Truly this was the Son of God' (Matthew 27 v. 54).

Slightly different statements, but the same idea are found in Mark 15 v. 39; Luke 23 v. 47.

17. The veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27 v. 51).

18. Three hours (Matthew 27 v. 45; Mark 15 v. 33; Luke 23 v. 44 - 45). From 12.00pm to 3.00 pm.

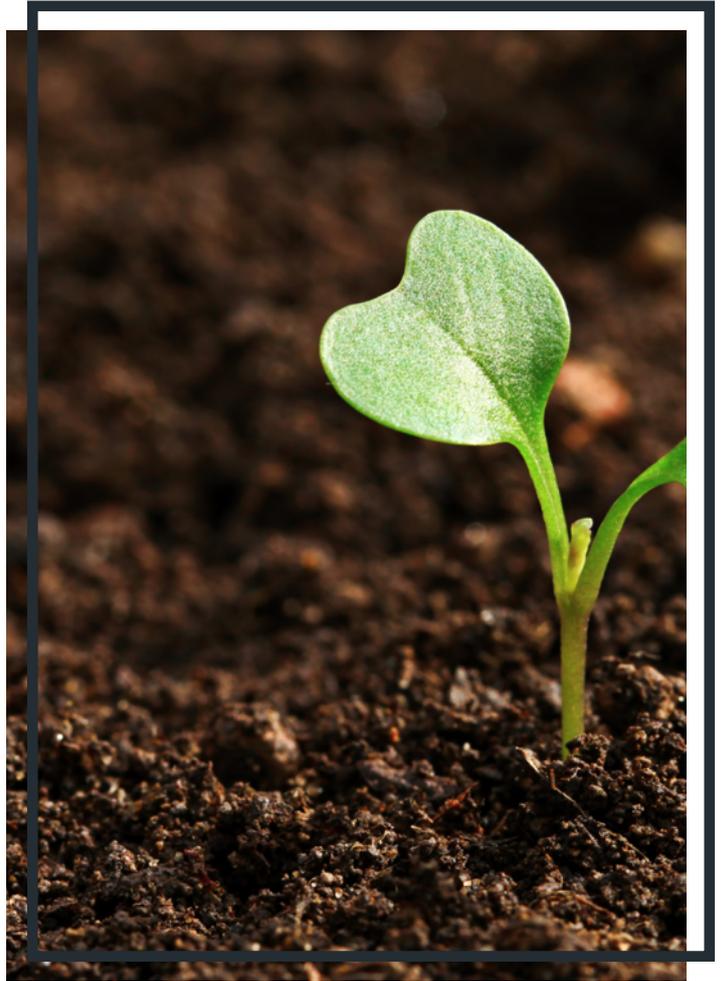
19. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John 19 v. 38 - 42). Interestingly, these two men did not follow Jesus as He travelled through the region, but they were there when all the outspoken disciples had abandoned the Lord.

20. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16 v. 9)

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# Song Suggestion

See What A Morning



# Church Together Thought

Mary Magdalene heads to the tomb before sunrise. Jesus has suffered a brutal and humiliating death, and she is dragging herself through the valley of the shadow of death. Why was she going to his tomb? The answer is simply, to anoint the body of Jesus with oil. To touch him one last time. She has been awake for hours and feels compelled to say a final farewell one last time. But when she arrives, the stone is no longer covering the entrance to the tomb. Bewildered by what she discovers, we are told that she runs away. She finds Simon Peter and the other disciple and tells them what she has found. They race to the tomb and Mary follows. The two disciples see that the body of Jesus is missing and we are told that they returned home. However, Mary remains in the garden crying. Inside the tomb are two angels and they say to Mary, 'Why are you crying'?

John in this Gospel doesn't spell out Mary's full response, but we can probably fill in

some of her thoughts and some of her feelings. Maybe her thoughts and feelings were: 'Why am I weeping? Because my heart is aching – the one who always knew the right thing to say to lift my spirits is gone. Why am I weeping? Because I'm confused and disoriented – the one who helped me make sense of things is no more. Why am I weeping? Because I'm furious! Injustice and cruelty win again, and I am sick of it! Why am I weeping? Because I feel so lonely – the one who made me laugh and think, the one who supported me and gave me confidence, the one who made me want to do the right thing has departed. Why am I weeping? Because the one who gave me hope that what is ahead will be better than what is, has been snatched away and I doubt that I can go on without him'.

The passage though tells us in **John 20 v. 13** that her reply was simply: 'because they have taken away my Lord . . . and I don't know where they have put him'. It is unclear why the angels asked Mary why she was crying. Perhaps Mary looked as if she were about to explode from all the grief raging inside and the angels' question was an opportunity for Mary to unload her jumble of thoughts and feelings and tears.

Thankfully, the angels who spoke to Mary did not try to slip away from her grief by saying something trite. They didn't just pat her on

the shoulder and say in a voice brimming with distain, 'There, now, everything will be just fine'. When Mary made her way to the tomb before dawn, she assumed she would find the body of Jesus wrapped up tightly in the burial cloths, but his body was missing. After Mary alerted Peter and the other disciple, they raced to the tomb to make sense of what Mary had told them, but as we are told they left.

We know that on the Friday afternoon when Jesus was killed, his disciples fled and went into hiding afraid that the authorities would come after them next. Yet within a short time of abandoning Jesus – and in Peter's case, even denying that he knew Jesus – something life – altering transformed them. Something filled them with such courage that nothing could deter them from proclaiming that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Most of the original 12 disciples would eventually be persecuted and killed for their tenacious faith in the resurrection. What could have so radically transformed them, if not appearances of Jesus after he died?

On that first Easter morning, as Mary stood outside the tomb, her eyes blurred with tears, a voice from behind her pierced her sobbing cries. We are told in **John 20 v. 15** that Jesus gently spoke to her, when he said: 'Why are you crying . . . who are you looking

for’? Assuming it must be the gardener, Mary replied: ‘Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him’. Then, Jesus simply replied and said: ‘Mary’! Her reply was: **‘Teacher’!**

On seeing his presence and hearing those words spoken to her, Mary was filled with hope and joy, surprise, and elation. The risen Lord Jesus would appear to the disciples and many other followers assuring them that the Creator of heaven and earth is a God of resurrection who loves us not only in this life, but also in a continued existence beyond death; and it is that love which will triumph over everything.

In **1 Corinthians 15** Paul speaks of God transforming our physical bodies to imperishable spiritual bodies so that we can live forever in God’s kingdom. In **1 Corinthians 15 v. 51 – 58**, we read: ‘51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. 53 For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

54 Then, when our dying bodies have been

transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

“Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

56 For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. 57 But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless’.

Paul wrote: ‘Where, O Death, is your sting?’ ‘Where, O Death, is your victory’? And the answer is, ‘Not here’. We will keep choosing and must keep on choosing life, and we will move ahead in our faith in the One that will, one day, banish all death forever, the day when we will meet Jesus face to face and know that all of this life’s sadness and failings are behind us, and love has won once and for all.

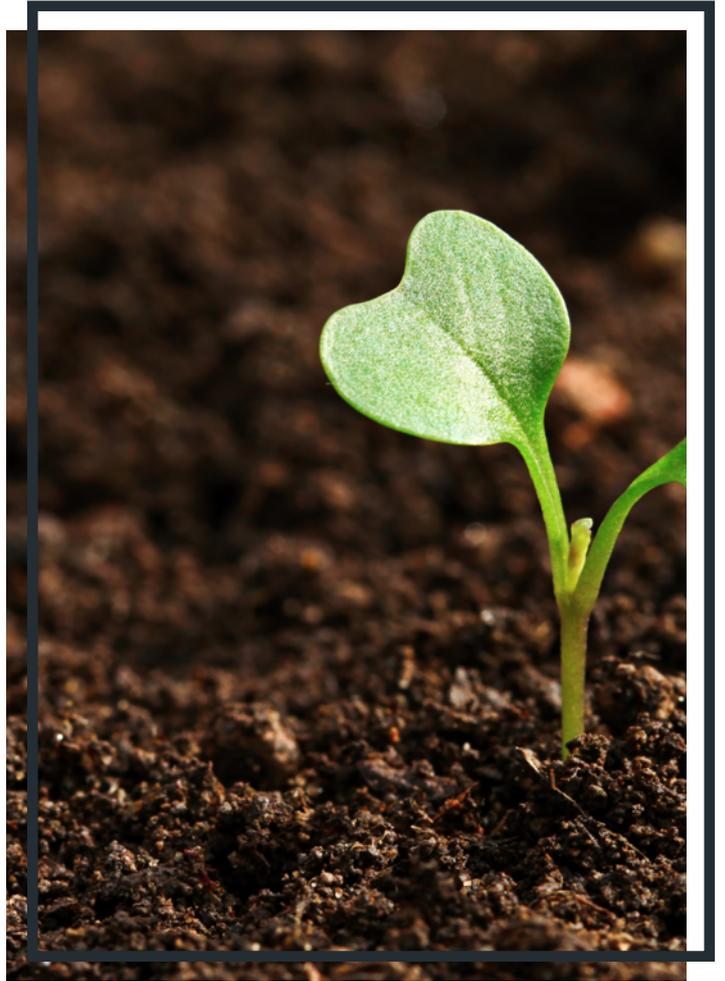
This is why we gather in worship at Easter, to rejoice that the One who bolsters us and holds us together in our times of pain, our times of trial and our times of grief, will resurrect us to new life in God’s eternal kingdom; that should be enough for our words this Easter Sunday to be words of surprise and elation in what Jesus has done

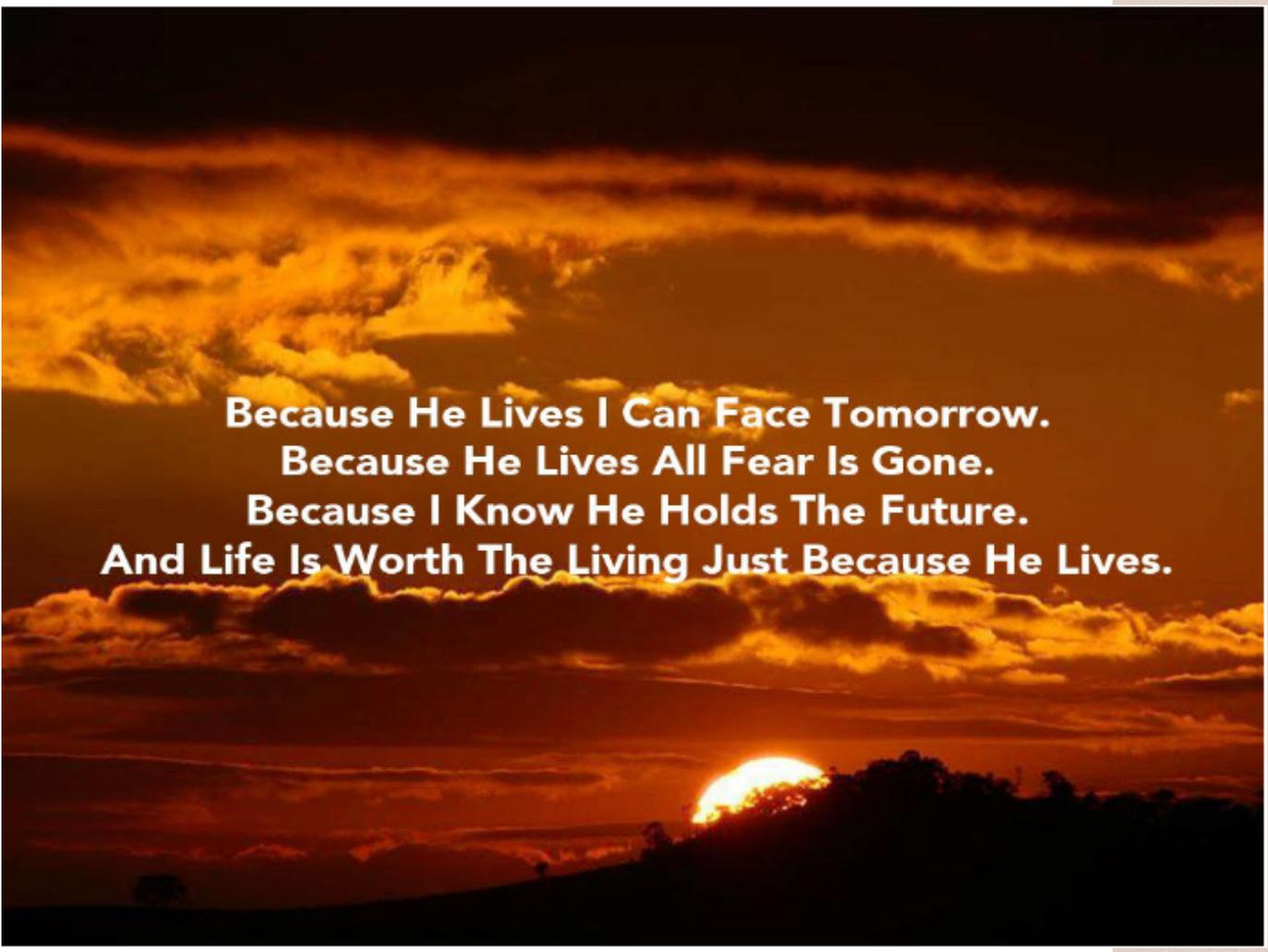
for us all.

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# Song Suggestion

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today





**Because He Lives I Can Face Tomorrow.  
Because He Lives All Fear Is Gone.  
Because I Know He Holds The Future.  
And Life Is Worth The Living Just Because He Lives.**

# Prayers Of Intercession

We rejoice today, Lord Jesus, in the great triumph which you won on the cross at Calvary. When you died on the cross, everyone thought that you had been defeated. All the hopes and dreams of your followers seemed ended. But now we know that they were wrong! The empty grave announced your great victory. Death had been conquered and sin broken, and you had risen! Thank you for doing that for us. Show us what this can mean for us so that we are able to share the full joy of your resurrection life with others that we meet.

**We ask this in your precious name, Risen Lord Jesus.**

Thank you Lord Jesus that on this Easter Day we can join with members of your family across the whole world in offering you praise and adoration. We cry out with all those who worship you that you are alive, powerful and victorious. We rejoice that in Jesus all that separates and injures and destroys has been overcome by what unites and heals and creates. Lord we want to be counted as your friends this Easter.

**We ask this in your precious name, Risen Lord Jesus.**

Loving Lord Jesus, on this joyous Easter morning, we remember that you promised to be with us always. You are present in times of happiness and times of sorrow. Be

with those who need you the most today, those who have lost loved ones, those who are unwell, those who grieve. Guide us we pray, that when we turn to you for help, that we may hear you speak to us clearly and so act upon what it is that you direct us to do.

**We ask this in your precious name, Risen Lord Jesus.**

Lord Jesus, on this your Resurrection Day, you promised to never leave us, you sent your Holy Spirit to be with us. Help us this day, to recognise when your Spirit is at work within us. Let the power of your Spirit flow through us that we may come alive in Christ on this Easter morning. Give us strength beyond our own, and enable us to witness for you wherever we may be this day.

**We ask this in your precious name, Risen Lord Jesus.**

We thank you this day Lord Jesus for all that you grant to us. Grant us the gift of wisdom, grant us the gift of healing, grant us the gift of prophecy, grant us the gift of your eternal love. May these gifts enrich the world in which we live and encourage us in the work of being your followers in these days.

**We ask this in your precious name, Risen Lord Jesus.**

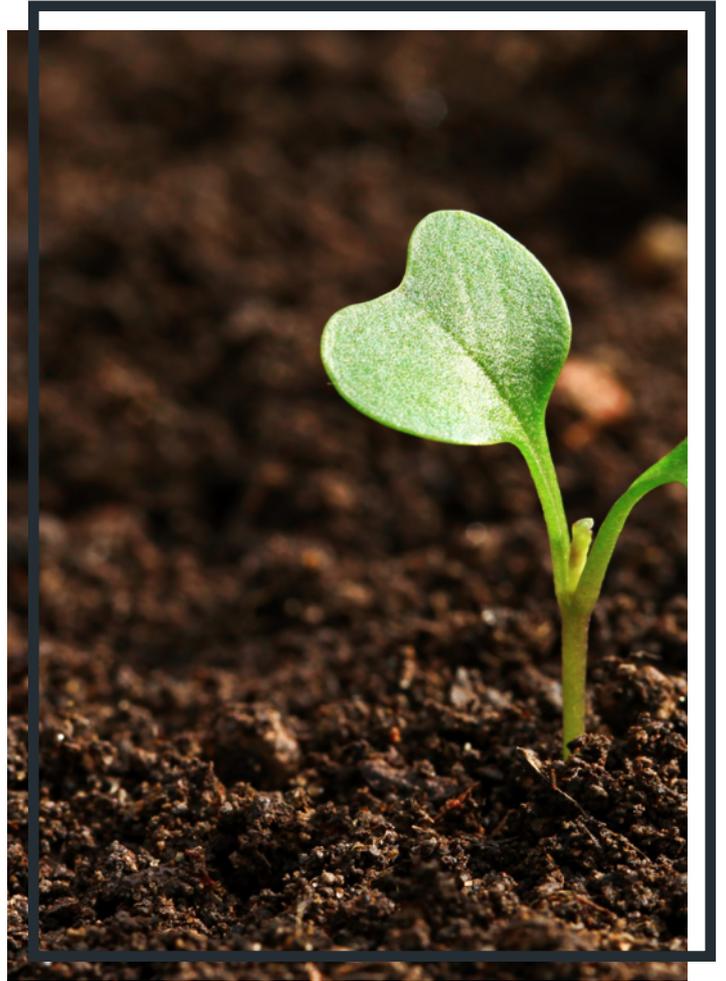
Finally, Lord help us to celebrate that you are not dead, but very much alive. We cry out this day that Jesus Is Alive forevermore; Halleluiah, what a Saviour.

**Amen**

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# Song Suggestion

Thine Be The Glory, Risen  
Conquering Son



# Blessing

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In this glorious Easter Day, May we go from this place Where we have worshipped, Knowing the blessing of God, Through Christ, By the power of your Holy Spirit, Until you come in glory once again.

**Amen**