



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on Easter Sunday, March 31st 2024 at 10:45, meeting at Bethesda Chapel.

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Our Easter service today is being led by Alec, before it starts we watch a Cityalight video: Jesus is alive. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-7OIOsdU7I>

There is now a hope that lasts beyond our days
for the One that once was buried lives again;
now the tomb is bare and empty, and the stone is rolled away
praise the Risen One who overcame the grave.

All you broken hearted, all you worn and weak,
come find living water, everlasting streams
to the wandering spirit, lost and searching
wanting something more.

Find the Risen King who overcomes the world

**Let there be dancing in the darkness and let our song break through the night;
lift your voice and sing that Christ is King for Jesus is Alive.**

No more condemnation, no more doubt and fear,
for our sin and shame, they have no power here.
In His resurrection, perfect love has set the captives free -
praise the Risen King who stands in victory.

Let there be dancing in the darkness...

Hallelujah, death is undone, Hallelujah, Jesus has won
Hallelujah, we overcome Oh in Jesus, oh in Jesus.

Let there be dancing in the darkness...

Authors: James Tealy, Jaywan Maxwell, Jesse Reeves, Michael Farren, Niki Shepherd, Tiarne Tranter CCLI SONG # 7121850
Copyrights © 2018 BEC Worship (Admin. by Essential Music Publishing LLC) WriterWrong Music (Admin. by Essential Music Publishing LLC) CityAlight Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) Farren Love And War Publishing (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) Integrity's Alleluia! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) My Eleiht Songs (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.) CCL No 5664

Opening greeting and response:

The Lord is risen, **he is risen indeed!**

We joined together singing : (played by Trevor, Kate and Judith)

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia! Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia! Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia! Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia! Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia! Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia! Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia! Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia! Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia! Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia! Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

Authors Charles Wesley, Lyra Davidica CCLI SONG # 27965 Copyrights Words and Music: Public Domain CCL No 5664

Bible reading Shirley John 20, 1-36

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. 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!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter 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. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

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

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." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

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."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

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

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.'"

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.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Purpose of John's Gospel

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe [b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Time to sing again:

Wonderful grace that gives what I don't deserve,
pays me what Christ has earned and lets me go free.

Wonderful grace that gives me the time to change,
washes away the stain that once covered me.

**And all that I have I lay at the feet
of the Wonderful Saviour who loves me**

Wonderful love that held in the face of death,
breathed, in it's final breath, forgiveness for me.
Wonderful love who's power can break every chain,
giving us life again, setting us free.

**And all that I have I lay at the feet
of the Wonderful Saviour who loves me.**

Author: John Pantry CCLI SONG # 306624 Copyrights ©1986 HarperCollins Religious (Admin. by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)
CCL No 5664

Alec: Jesus is alive

Alec encouraged the children to come to join in a treasure hunt, looking for easter eggs, resulting in them having an egg and a balloon, before sharing :

JESUS IS ALIVE

It's really dramatic.

On the day of his crucifixion Jesus cries out once again, gives up his spirit and dies. At this very moment, exactly then, the curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. This curtain had separated the holy place from the inner holy of holies inside the tent of meeting. It had hidden a holy God from sinful people on the outside. But the death of Jesus made the way open to God from the mess we had made of our lives. Hallelujah!

The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of their tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

After the day of rest there was a violent earthquake as an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

Wow! Breaking news! A field day for social media. Cameras and reporters everywhere.

Those who had covered the arrest, the trial and the crucifixion of Jesus were probably taking a day off-and now this. What has happened now?

Jesus lives. Jesus is alive. He had died but now he lives.

The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. If Christ has not been raised we are still dead in our sins. The Apostle Paul passes on what he heard as the most important thing ever; that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures and that he appeared thereafter to many people.

A lawyer called Frank Morrison started out to prove that Jesus had not been raised from the dead. He knew full well that this is the key to our life of faith. He wanted to put an end to uncertainty and empty speculation. At the end of his research and study which he had duly carried out as a lawyer with attention to detail, with exactness and with precision he wrote this book, 'Who moved the stone?' He had begun his work as a non-believer but finished it as a believer in Jesus because he realised that the truth is that Jesus had died and had been raised from the dead.

DAFFODIL EVENT

(This was when Alec surprised everyone by eating a daffodil - **Don't try this at home, they are toxic**)

After his resurrection Jesus appeared on many different occasions to the women after they had been to the empty tomb, to Mary Magdalene, to Simon Peter, to Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus, to ten disciples and others (not including Thomas), to eleven disciples (including Thomas), to seven disciples while fishing, to Apostles on a mountain in Galilee, to James who was a sceptic, to Apostles on the Mount of Olives, to 500 believers at the same time and Saul (a sceptic) on the road to Damascus.

(The daffodil eating was then explained, as Alec asked if someone who was not present was told he'd eaten a daffodil, would they believe it - and of one person said it, perhaps not, but if more say so, then it is more likely to be believed - so 500 seeing Jesus alive is powerful)

Jesus is really alive.

The author of life had been crucified. But through the Spirit he was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. What an important message for the whole world today!

This is really powerful.

The word used by Paul for the power of the gospel is dynamis. Sounds like dynamite doesn't it. The gospel is powerful, explosive, opens hearts and minds, destroys enemy strongholds, equips for ministry and for spiritual life. But it is also steadfast and sure, a fixed element in our life as a church and as individual believers. The superglue of the gospel, a strong defence against the enemies of our Lord, against lies and deceit.

Jesus is alive through the power of God shown in the resurrection.

As the scripture teaches us, let's have nothing to do with those who have a form of godliness but deny its power.

Christ is alive forever. Christ is the decisive answer to the chaos of our upside-down world, to the predicament, to the condition of, to the situation in our individual everyday lives.

We then watched a song on the screen, with some joining in:

Man of sorrows, Lamb of God by His own betrayed:
the sin of man and wrath of God has been on Jesus laid.

Silent as He stood accused, beaten, mocked, and scorned,
bowing to the Father's will He took a crown of thorns.

Oh, that rugged cross, my salvation where Your love poured out over me.

Now my soul cries out, "Hallelujah, praise and honour unto Thee"

Sent of heaven, God's own Son to purchase and redeem
and reconcile the very ones who nailed Him to that tree.

Oh, that rugged cross...

Now my debt is paid it is paid in full, by the precious blood that my Jesus spilled.
Now the curse of sin has no hold on me whom the Son sets free oh, is free indeed.
Now my debt is paid it is paid in full...

Oh, that rugged cross my salvation...

See the stone is rolled away behold the empty tomb,
Hallelujah, God be praised, He's risen from the grave!

Oh, that rugged cross my salvation....

Authors: Matt Crocker / Brooke Ligertwood CCLI SONG # 6476063 Copyrights©2012 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia (Admin. by Hillsong Music Publishing UK) CCL No 5664

Alec: Living a new life in Jesus

WHAT THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION MEANS FOR US IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

Lets go back to the resurrection morning.

The darkness which had surrounded Mary as she had gone to the tomb early in the morning was felt by the disciples. They had a real sense of lostness and darkness which wasn't about to be removed by some kind of illusionary feeling of hope. It was going to take something very, very special to see them changed.

It's clear that whatever hopes and dreams they'd shared had now been crushed; they had been broken as a result of the crucifixion of their master. They had already begun to speak in the past tense. One of them said "We had hoped that he was the one to save Israel." Of course, they had already concluded that clearly he hadn't been, for surely no Messiah would have died such a death nor have been buried away from sight. We find them in no-man's land going nowhere.

They had lost their leader and teacher. One of them might have said, "Well, do you remember how excited and hopeful we were when he walked on the water?"

Someone else says, "Do you remember what a disaster it was when we began to tell those mothers to take their children away because we wanted Jesus to have some peace? And then he told us off and said, 'No, the children should come to me.'"

Someone else says, "Do you remember when we came back with lunch, and he was seated with that woman at the well?" "Oh, yes," said somebody, "what a day that was!"

And someone says, "Well, you know what I remember? I remember at the tomb of Lazarus. I remember coming up on that scene and seeing him weep."

But now the disciples of Jesus are experiencing death, loss and disillusionment, the removal of their hopes and dreams and they are incapable of thinking clearly or acting to get out of their situation, to move forward or to move on to a different way or level of living.

In moments of brutal honesty, we're forced to admit that with all of our best endeavours, we cannot create life out of death. We are unable to bring order out of chaos. We might think of how God has led us in the past and in all honesty admit that we struggle to see how he is working in our lives today in the face of pain and discomfort, sorrow and loss, uncertainty and the lack of the will and strength to go on.

The risen Jesus himself steps quietly into this situation of fear and anxiety, into this daily experience of uncertainty and simply not knowing. He doesn't make a big fuss. He doesn't make a media spectacle out of it. He simply comes into the situation and he is there with the disciples, there with us.

Don't be alarmed said the man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side of the tomb. But the women tremble and are bewildered. They are scared and don't know what is going on and are basically incapable of coping with either their thoughts or their feelings in the new situation.

When Jesus met Mary she told the disciples but they did not believe Jesus was alive.

When Jesus appeared in a different form to two of the disciples walking in the country Mark says they reported it to the rest but they did not believe them either.

And the hymn says only believe and you shall see that Christ is all in all to me.

"Jesus came and stood among them." He is Emmanuel, God with us. He will never leave us or desert us.

He embraces us in our need. And he says to His disciples, "Listen, you can touch me, and you can see who and what I am," appealing to their senses of hearing, of seeing, of touching.

The real gladness that the disciples finally felt would not be found simply in the awareness of the fact that he was no longer dead, but far more, that by his resurrection he comes now to give the peace that comes through his blood shed upon the cross. In other words, the peace with which he greets them is the peace given to forgiven people. "On the cross he sealed my pardon, paid the debt, set me free."

Without knowing the living Jesus, without believing in the reality of the resurrected Jesus we have a kind of dispeace. We have a lack of or complete absence of peace.

We lock ourselves away in our own space. We barricade the emotional door. We put the shutters down on our feelings and thoughts for others. In our fearfulness and in our anxiety we paint a dismal picture of uncertainty and hopelessness, even of a complete lack of orientation and sense of direction in our behaviour and in our lives.

But you see this is where the Easter message fits. Everyone, every day and in every way.

It is the Easter message that holds the answer to our dispeace. Because the resurrection doesn't simply mean that there is a Jesus, there is a Christ, who defeated death one day long ago and far

away, but what it says is this: is that Christ is alive forever, that Christ is the decisive answer to the chaos of our upside-down world, to the predicament of our individual lives.

Jesus says, "In me you may now have peace." Peace because God has accepted my death as payment for messing up my relationship with him and our originally God-given lives. We no longer need to fear. He is with us; He is our peace.

You see, this is the Easter message. It is this message that holds the answer to our dispeace. Because the resurrection doesn't simply mean that there is a Jesus, there is a Christ, who defeated death one day long ago and far away, but what it says is this: is that Christ is alive forever, that Christ is the decisive answer to the chaos of our upside-down world, to the predicament of our individual lives.

We move from fear to faith. We move from faith to forgiveness.

So, the fear that the disciples experienced, and the faith that was then restored, was not as a result of an idea but as a result of the presence of the risen Christ. And then came the forgiveness that they were not only to experience but to share with others.

The disciples were transformed through the life of Jesus in them and through being continually filled with the Spirit of God. A completely ineloquent, rough speaking Galilean fishermen preaches the Word and leads thousands to faith. All the Apostles apart from John lose their earthly lives whilst holding firm in their faith. Only Jesus in us can keep us faithful. Only the Word in our hearts can make our lives fruitful. Only the Spirit in our hearts can strengthen and enable us in all the many and various trials we face.

May we live and work each day in the power of the resurrection of our risen Lord.

We joined in song, played by Trevor, Kate and Judith:

How great the chasm that lay between us, how high the mountain I could not climb.
In desperation, I turned to heaven and spoke your name into the night.
Then through the darkness your loving kindness tore through the shadows of my soul,
the work is finished, the end is written: Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Who could imagine so great a mercy? What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory to wear my sin and bear my shame.
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven, the king of kings calls me His own:
beautiful saviour, I'm yours forever: Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free!

Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me!

**You have broken every chain - there's salvation in your name,
Jesus Christ, my living hope.**

Then came the morning that sealed the promise, your buried body began to breathe:
out of the silence, the roaring lion declared the grave has no claim on me.

Then came the morning that sealed the promise your buried body began to breathe -
out of the silence, the roaring lion declared the grave has no claim on me -
Jesus, yours is the victory, whoa!

Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free

Authors: Brian Johnson, Phil Wickham CCLI SONG # 7106807 Copyrights ©2017 Phil Wickham Music (Admin. by / Small Stone Media BV, Holland (Admin. in the UK/Eire by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)), Simply Global Songs (Admin. by / Small Stone Media BV, Holland (Admin. in the UK/Eire by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)), Sing My Songs (Admin. by / Small Stone Media BV, Holland (Admin. in the UK/Eire by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)) Bethel Music Publishing (Admin. by Song Solutions Living Hope Lyrics © Bethel Music Publishing CCL No 5664

Our Prayers were led by Becky:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come before you on this Easter Day with a grateful heart, thanking you for the sacrifice of your son Jesus Christ and for the hope that his resurrection brings me.

I rejoice in the victory over death that he has won for me, and I celebrate the new life that I have been given through him.

I ask that you fill me with the Holy Spirit that I may live out the truth of Easter every day.

Help me to walk in the light of your love, to share your grace with others, and to be a reflection of your glory to the world.

Lord I pray for those whom are hurting this Easter, for those who are struggling with illness, loss or loneliness.

May they find comfort and hope in the resurrection of your son and may they know that you are always with them.

As I celebrate this day, I remember that Easter is not just a one time event, but a daily reality for me as I put my trust in you. May I never lose sight of the wonder of your love and may I always live in the joy of Easter.

Thank you Jesus, for the sacrifice you made for me, for taking my place on the cross and bearing my sin. Help me to live in the freedom and forgiveness that you have won for me.

In the quiet moments, as we gather together this sacred Easter Sunday morning we dedicate this time to you. May our worship and devotion be pleasing in your sight as we honour the resurrection of your son Jesus Christ. May this morning be a time of deep connection with you as we surrender our lives afresh to your will. Help us to leave behind the old ways of sin and enjoy the new life you give us in Christ. May this morning be the start of a renewed commitment, to walk in your ways and live for your glory.

Help us to examine our hearts, renew our faith, and deepen our commitment to living as disciples of Christ. May the light of your resurrection shine brightly within us, guiding us in all we do.

We pray this morning, Heavenly Father for the world. We hear day after day of all the atrocities taking place. We hear on the news about the cruel loss of lives. Adults and children being torn apart from each other. Starvation, loss of homes and basics like food and water. Lord God, our hearts are broken when we could hear of such cruelty, I cannot imagine how you feel. You created this wonderful world for us to live in, it truly must break your heart. Please send us a miracle that can put an end to this fighting and conflict and war.

In particular, Lord we think about all the young people, hardly in their teens, still at school who just think it is normal to be carrying knives and weapons of destruction. It seems like normal life for them to take drugs and defy all the rules. While life is improved for many by the use of the Internet and mobile phones et cetera, it has made life a lot simpler for trouble lovers. It seems they know their ways around the media better than their parents. There is easy access to harmful ideas and how to obtain things even giving ideas.

Please dear Father in heaven, please let your precious name become more meaningful. Let respect and loyalty and friendship and sympathy be recognised for the very meaning they

represent - trust and love and friendship, let the words be understood for what they say. Teach all of us to show respect and dignity to those around us, help us to befriend the lonely, let the lonely or confused or sick respond to our offers of help and support. We ask you, Heavenly Father to give us the right words to say, words of encouragement, praise gentleness, help us to be your eyes and ears your lips. Help us to know what to say and do. We want to do this for you heavenly Father, especially after what Jesus has sacrificed for us. Please give us opportunities to please you in this way. It is the most amazing feeling to know you are there for us every minute of every day. You can make this happen, Lord ,you can change the hardest hearts.

Fill our Church here at Bethesda, fill it with love and laughter and singing, praising your holy name. We all pray when we need to even the weakest ones of us. Please answer our prayers now please, Lord. Help us to live in harmony together.

Lastly this morning we remember each of our church members who are poorly at this time. We don't need to name them individually as you know immediately who they are. We will pray now for a couple of minutes for whoever is in our hearts, and needs care right now. Please put your loving arms around each and everyone of them and give them peace. You know Lord, without prompts from us. You know their needs, please just give them peace in their hearts.

(Silence)

Thank you to our deacons and leaders and Alec our Pastor Please give them strength and encouragement in the coming weeks. I pray all these things in Jesus name amen.

We lifted our voices in song again, with our closing, offertory Hymn:

Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Saviour,
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 forever, with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!**

Vainly they watch his bed, Jesus my Saviour,
vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave he arose.....

Death cannot keep its prey, Jesus my Savior;
he tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave he arose....

Author: Robert Lowry CCLI SONG # 27783 Copyright: words and music Public domain CCL No 5664

Alec closed in prayer, and we said together:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.