

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Happy Easter everybody. My apologies that this weekly email is coming to you rather later on the Sunday than I usually aim for - a side effect of the very lovely thing of there having been a number of services over these last few days, and it has been great to see quite a few of you at some of those. The video this week is just of the Gospel reading and Sermon and a blessing, filmed in the vicarage garden, but we will be back to having a full online service next week. Attached is the text of that sermon as well, and also the weekly newsletter.

<https://youtu.be/FTubuR2sAA8>



## Easter Day 2021

A reading of the Easter Gospel (Mark 16.1-8)  
and a reflection from Revd John.

[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/FTubuR2sAA8)

I hope and pray this Easter season will be full of the joy that God has brought to the world in raising Jesus from the tomb and bringing us all the gift of life.

With every blessing

John

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## Easter Sermon 2021

### Mark 16.1-8

There are many Hollywood movies that have been either rescued or ruined by the practise of test screenings. This is where an invited audience, carefully selected to reflect the demographic of those at whom the film has been targeted, watch a preview of the finished film and pass their comments on it, before it is released into cinemas (remember those?). Depending on the comments received, a final edit will be made, perhaps with minor changes, sometimes with a drastic overhaul. The place at which a major rewrite is most likely to be made is around the ending. To put it bluntly, most test audiences like a happy ending, or at the very least, a simple,

straightforward cut one that they can understand. They don't want to leave the screening feeling down or confused.

The trouble is, that desire for a simple, happy ending does not always fit with the story that has gone before, or with the artistic vision of the screenwriters and director. So there are cases where an artificial "happy ending" is cobbled onto a film in a way that really doesn't work; it may please the crowd in the short term, but it won't stand the test of time and repeated viewings in a way that the more complex, nuanced director's cut would have been able to do.

So the question today is, what sort of an ending is Easter? Is it, as some ways of telling the story can make it seem, an arbitrary happy ending, tacked on as a final reel, contradicting everything that has gone before? "Good Friday, the day that seemed to be end of the story, can be consigned to history. Jesus is risen. Everything is all okay."

Well, no. I don't believe it is that kind of an ending. Firstly, because the resurrection is not an add-on to the story of Jesus, but the event to which the whole story had been pointing all along. Jesus had kept saying to his disciples (if only they would listen) that he would be rejected, suffer, be killed and then be raised to life on the third day. This was always the ending that the director had in mind. But secondly, this is not the simple happy ending, that makes the suffering that has gone before irrelevant or forgotten.

In fact, in St Mark's Gospel, we have an ending that would probably never have got past the scrutiny of the test screening. There is no joyful reunion of Jesus and his friends. There is no triumphant celebration of a victory over his enemies. Where does it end? With the women, who had gone to the tomb and found it empty, being told the good news that Jesus is risen, but responding to that message with terror. "They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

You can imagine the reaction. Is that it? Does this story really end on a note of fear and silence? No, this won't do. It's too downbeat. It leaves too many loose ends.

And indeed, it seems as if Mark's Gospel did receive that kind of reaction. At least two alternative endings were written, that would end on a much more positive note; but neither seem to have been the work of the original author. Maybe there's another ending that has been lost; but more likely, what we have is what Mark wrote. This is the director's cut, the version the author intended. "They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

Thankfully, classic movies like *Casablanca* and *Brief Encounter* were made before the trend for test screenings, or else their perfect, bitter-sweet endings would never have survived. The lovers would have walked off into the sunset together and all lived happily ever after. And thankfully Mark's Gospel has survived, with its enigmatic and challenging ending. Because unlike the simple happy endings, in which all the loose ends are tied up, an ending like this makes clear that there is work still to do. The encounter with the risen Jesus lies ahead. The task of witnessing to him and his kingdom go on. In fact, maybe Easter Day isn't an ending at all, but a new beginning. It is early on the first day of the week. Morning has broken, and a new day has dawned. The last week, and the last year, with its heart-breaking stories of suffering and loss, have not been wiped out and

forgotten; but neither are they the endings that we feared they might be. There is hope. There is life. There is joy in this new beginning. Alleluia!

### **Keep Singing from Sarah**

Hello everyone!

We hope you are all keeping well.

Please find below a selection of Hymns and songs for Easter Sunday

348 - Jesus Christ is Risen Today (Red 77, Orange 348) [Jesus Christ is Risen Today \(EASTER HYMN\) arr. Jeremy Bankson - YouTube](#)

672 - Thine be the glory - [Thine Be The Glory - YouTube](#)

667 - The Strife is O'er ) [King's College Cambridge Easter #15 The Strife is O'er Vulpus \[2011\] - YouTube](#)

475 - Now the green blade - [Now The Green Blade Riseth - YouTube](#)

754 - Ye choirs of new Jerusalem - [🎵 Hymn | Ye choirs of new Jerusalem | with LYRICS - YouTube](#)

Some extra music!

All heaven declares - [All Heaven Declares - Robin Mark - YouTube](#)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven - [LUX EOI-ALLELUYA! ALLELUYA! - YouTube](#)

Lift Thy Glad Voices - [Lift Your Glad Voices by Oasis Chorale - YouTube](#)

Love's Redeeming Work is done - [Love's redeeming work is done, a cappella mix - YouTube](#)

know that my Redeemer lives - [I know that my Redeemer liveth \(Handel\) | boy soprano Aksel Rykkvin \(11y\) & Magne H Draagen \(organ\) - YouTube](#)

Risen Lord Barry Rose - [Risen Lord - YouTube](#)

In resurrectione tua - [Taizé - In resurrectione tua - YouTube](#)

Although another unusual Holy week we have made the best of things in our house and have been extremely lucky to have been able to do some garden visits with our parents/grandparents and also get all of them vaccinated for the second time. This feels like a good milestone!

The girls have enjoyed their first week of Easter holidays and made some lovely treats for us to eat over the upcoming weekend. Emily has also taken delivery of both a pasta maker and an ice cream maker (late birthday gift arrivals) so we are hoping to try these out too. Its a special treat to be able to have these and fingers crossed we can find/make up gluten free recipes that will work

Thank you again to all who have been in touch, we hope to see some of you soon and send lots of thoughts, prayers and best wishes to those who we are still unable to see.

And from all of us we wish you a very Happy Easter!

Lots of love, Sarah, Tom, Emily and Phoebe xxx

