

Preparation:

1. Look for signs of new life around you. Perhaps a bird collecting food for its chicks or a blossom filled tree, or a child's painting of a rainbow in the window of a neighbour's house. Focus on something which speaks of new life and new hope. See signs of resurrection as the world comes back to life after the winter.
2. When preparing for the worship, find a place and time where you can be comfortable for half an hour, preferably where you cannot be disturbed. (Turn off the TV!).
3. Place something that speaks to you of hope in a place where you can focus on it.
4. Light a candle/tea light if it helps you to focus. This can mean many things to you but maybe bear in mind the words in John's gospel, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never overcome it.
5. For the hymns, you can sing them if able, or you can read the words out loud – or silently if that seems better – or you may be able to find them on YouTube or elsewhere in the internet.
6. When you are ready, start the service, sit down and notice your breathing. Begin this Sunday (as last Sunday) with a familiar Alleluia! (Eg. The chorus of "Seek ye first" from Singing the Faith (StF 254)

Order for worship on Easter Sunday 12th April 2020



For 5 minute video from Rev Stephen https://youtu.be/CFnD_XcuTQU

Worship with the People of God in Coventry Central Hall

Sing Alleluia eg Chorus of StF 254 “Seek ye first”

Call to worship

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the Lord’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Hymn 298: Christ the Lord is risen

Pray: Risen Christ, you came to Mary on the first day of the week and spoke her name. When she knew you, her heart rejoiced. Jesus, speak our names today, breathe us into life and disperse the shadows and gloomy places in our lives by your glorious light.

Gospel: John 20:1-18

[Mary] turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 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.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (Verses 14b-16)

In this excerpt from John 20:1-18 the moment of recognition for Mary is not visual but it is a movement in her spirit in response to hearing her own name called by someone who speaks beyond her grief, to the depths of her longing. The way in which Jesus calls Mary’s name has a power for her which overturns the knowledge of his death. Only Jesus could have spoken her name in that way. “Rabbouni!” she cries out. Literally, “Teacher!” – Jesus is the one who opens the eyes of all those who follow him. Jesus’ resurrection teaches Mary about the very nature of God, the nature of the

Christ, the nature of her friend Jesus. God reaches out to Mary with an unexpected and seemingly impossible love. A love that speaks her name and touches her heart. The Gospel writer, John, is keen for all of us who read the Gospel to see for ourselves, in the same way that Mary is able to see, and others in the Gospel are able to see, that it is not with our eyes that will discover the risen Christ, but in the breaking of the bread, the catch of fish, the breath of the Spirit. Jesus will call our names in a way that touches the depths of our being so that we too will know the good news. Mary runs to her friends, telling them, “He is alive!” Suddenly despite the isolation they have all experienced, they are not alone.

It is not our knowledge, but God’s knowledge of us, that awakens in us the joyful mystery of the resurrection. And even in the isolation of these days of lockdown, Christ is waiting, maybe unrecognised by us, very close, waiting to say our name, waiting to open our eyes, waiting to wake us from our grief and share an unexpected and seemingly impossible love.

Hymn 293: All heaven declares

Prayers: you may use a response: eg. *Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer***

Pray silently, or out loud, for **people who feel isolated and long for someone who lives them to call their name**. Pray for the **people who live in our communities**, for **the world** and **those who are grieving** in so many countries. Pray for **our church** and the **churches we are connected with** locally and throughout the world, and **pray for yourself** that God’s resurrection life may drive out fear, loneliness and doubt.

Pray the Lord’s prayer (in your mother tongue).

Hymn 313: Thine be the glory

Blessing: Risen Christ lead us on into these days of Easter. Bless us and keep us, shine your face upon us and be gracious to us.

Saviour of the world grant us your peace.