



# The Church of Scotland

## Weekly Worship

4<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### **Taking part in today's service is**

Rev Lorna Tunstall, Clyne linked with Kildonan and Loth Helmsdale

Elaine Fair- St Andrews Parish Church, Arbroath

Alan Scott – Youth Worker- Partick Trinity Church

Rev Stuart Irvin, St Catherine's Argyle

With music from Ellon Parish Church, YBand, Breathe Project, Aberfeldy and Ferryhill virtual choir

### **Introduction – The Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly**

Hi everybody. One of my favourite sermons of all time is the oft-quoted one which revolves around the line, "It's Friday - but Sunday is coming!"

Of course that beautifully describes the journey through Holy Week - you can't get to Sunday without going through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. But we Christians live in the sure and certain knowledge that Sunday is indeed coming! We are not those who are in despair; we live with hope.

And so here we are on Easter Sunday. It was Friday but Sunday has come! And so today with all God's people, we declare "He is risen! He is risen indeed!"

Let us worship God.

### **Hymn – See what a morning, Ellon Parish Church**

See, what a morning, gloriously bright  
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem  
Folded the grave-clothes, tomb filled with light  
As the angels announce, "Christ is risen!"

See God's salvation plan  
Wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice  
Fulfilled in Christ, the Man  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!



See Mary weeping, "Where is He laid?"  
As in sorrow, she turns from the empty tomb  
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name  
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!

This voice that spans the years  
Speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us  
Will sound 'til He appears  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

One with the Father, Ancient of Days  
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty  
Honour and blessing, glory and praise  
To the King crowned with pow'r and authority!

And we are raised with Him  
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered  
And we shall reign with Him  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

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**Prayer of Approach – Rev Lorna Tunstall, Clyne linked with Kildonan and Loth Helmsdale**

God of majesty and might  
We have come together  
On this day of resurrection  
To rejoice that Jesus Christ is alive  
The tomb is empty  
We thank you that you loved the world so much  
You sent us your beloved son  
Who sought the way of the cross  
So that he might come to all of us  
this Easter morning  
And show us all the way back to you  
Such sacrifice we cannot grasp  
And we can only marvel at a love so big



On this Easter morning  
We lift our eyes to see the risen one  
And to recognise his glory  
Lord God, you have turned our despair into joy  
the sorrow of Good Friday  
that reminds us of all our inadequacies and faults  
has been turned around  
into the joy and forgiveness of this Easter morning  
A forgiveness that speaks of love,  
That demonstrates peace  
And in which we can all find hope

We turn to you on this glorious occasion  
To confess the times when we have allowed the wonderful things you have done  
To slip out of our minds

To confess the times when we have focused on things here on earth  
and not of your heavenly kingdom  
When we have ignored the signs and messages  
You have delivered to us  
And when we forget the power of your holy words  
Forgive us and have mercy on us we pray

Living God,  
Open our hearts once again to receive your grace and rejoice in our salvation  
Help us to walk in that mighty grace  
And tell your good news to the world  
We ask that we might live in the joy  
And grace of Easter Day, every day  
So that we may serve you  
With all our hearts, minds and soul  
As we proclaim - Christ is Risen - ALLELUIA

As we give thanks for the greatest gift of love that is ours through our risen Lord, may we  
join together in the words he taught us to say -



Our Father which art in heaven  
Hallowed be Thy name  
Thy Kingdom come  
Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us today our daily bread  
And forgive us our debts  
As we forgive our debtors  
And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil  
For thine is the kingdom  
The power, and the glory  
Forever – AMEN

### **All Age Talk – Alan Scott – Youth Worker- Partick Trinity Church**

Good morning everyone,  
Happy Easter to you all. Christ has risen just as he said he would!  
Its Easter Sunday 2021, we have all made it to this point through a year of uncertainty and difficulty. There has been so much negativity in this past year but this morning I want to start by getting you to think about some of the things that you have enjoyed about this past year. So let me ask you a question – What are some of the things that you have been excited about this past year? Take a moment to think about this now. You might want to write them down or even type them in the notes in your phone or tablet.

Here are some of the things that I have been excited about this past year:

1. Getting to spend more time with my daughter and getting the unusual opportunity to see her develop in ways I wouldn't have if life was in its normal form.
2. Getting to enjoy the area that I stay in and walking many routes and visiting many parks that I wouldn't normally have had the time to.
3. Being able to have the time with my wife to sit and enjoy our favourite shows or films on, Netflix, Amazon Prime or Disney plus.



4. And lastly witnessing some footballing history throughout the past year, one of which was Scotland finally qualifying for a major championships for the first time in 22 years!

Wow! What a year it's been with so many ups and downs but one thing we can be sure of is that no matter how our lives change we have a God who never changes. Hebrews 13:8 – says that – 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever' and because of this we can be sure he will be with us in every situation that we face and his promises to us are a firm foundation to build our lives on. The Bible also tells us that Jesus brings good from bad situations so that when we face them no matter how hard they are we can be sure God is with us all the way and we are never on our own if we trust in him.

I wonder if I was to ask you a similar question now about Easter what would you say:  
What gets you excited about Easter?

Here are some of the things that get me excited about Easter:

1. Time off work and an opportunity to switch off and spend time with family and friends.
2. Being able to take part in various Easter Activities at home or at church, things like Easter Egg hunts.
3. Getting and giving Chocolate Easter Eggs. It's the only time of year when you can enjoy your favourite type of chocolate in Egg form and it is just amazing.
4. But for me the most important thing has to be Jesus & his death and resurrection. The Easter story changes everything. Jesus the innocent one died on the cross for the sins that he didn't commit. Why? because of his love for each one of us. Then coming back to life again showing us all that he has the power over sin and death and by doing so making a way for each one of us to be friends with God again! Wow! What a saviour! In Matthew 28:5-6 The women who were first to visit the tomb were greeted by an angel who said 'Don't be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.'

Things happened exactly how Jesus said they would. His words can be trusted. So in a world that is constantly changing, that can make us doubt our purpose and can lead us into times of trouble and despair. Look to Jesus, the one who never changes. Who died and rose again so that we could be friends with God again. What an amazing story of the greatest sign of love ever shown to mankind. This Easter remember that Jesus' death and resurrection is something to get really really excited about, because he did it for you.

Let's pray



Lord Jesus we thank you that you love us so much that you came to the earth to die upon the cross. To offer us the chance of being forgiven for the wrong that we have done and making it possible for us to be friends with God again. We also thank you that you want to live life with us every day and that you have an amazing plan for each one of our lives. As we get excited about the Easter Story, help us to share this excitement and joy with others too because it's great news that can change people's lives forever.

We ask all of this in Jesus name Amen

### **Sing - Story of the Cross - Ellon Parish Church**

Words on screen as part of the video

### **Scripture Reading – Elaine Fair St Andrews Parish Church, Arbroath**

The Resurrection

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Then they went home.

### **Hymn- O Praise the name of the Lord, YBand, Breathe Project, Aberfeldy**

I cast my mind to Calvary  
Where Jesus bled and died for me  
I see His wounds, His hands, His feet  
My Saviour on that cursed tree

His body bound and drenched in tears  
They laid Him down in Joseph's tomb  
The entrance sealed by heavy stone  
Messiah still and all alone

O praise the Name of the Lord our God  
O praise His Name forevermore



For endless days we will sing Your praise  
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

Then on the third at break of dawn  
The Son of heaven rose again  
O trampled death where is your sting?  
The angels roar for Christ the King

O praise the Name of the Lord our God  
O praise His Name forevermore  
For endless days we will sing Your praise  
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

He shall return in robes of white  
The blazing sun shall pierce the night  
And I will rise among the saints  
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face

O praise the Name of the Lord our God  
O praise His Name forevermore  
For endless days we will sing Your praise  
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

O praise the Name of the Lord our God  
O praise His Name forevermore  
For endless days we will sing Your praise  
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

### **Sermon --The Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly**

I wonder if you know the panel show “Would I lie to you”? It’s one of our family favourites, and we never watch it without laughing out loud most of the way through the programme. The two team captains, David Mitchell and Lee Mack, they are so quick witted and the repartee fires back between one and the other. If you don’t know the show the concept is very simple, there are two teams and each contestant takes it in turn to relay a situation or a scenario and the other team needs to work out is it true or are they telling a lie.

Well, let me give you an example as if it were me on the show. I would say something like this. “When I was 15 years of age I once went to school in my bare feet” and they would say



“well why would you do that?” I might respond “well the dog ate my shoes” and they would say “did you not have any other shoes?” And I would say “well actually I was in a hurry I was late for school and I didn’t want to be late and I couldn’t find my shoes so I just went straight to school” and back and forward it would go and then they would be asked so do you think he was telling the truth or telling a lie? That’s the concept of the show and it’s great fun.

Well, let me say this on this day of all days the big question is have we been lied to? Are we being lied to? Have all generations before us been lied to about the claims of Easter? That Jesus who died rose again on the third day. Have we been fooled? Have they pulled wool over our eyes? Have we been deluded in believing that? Well that’s what I want to think about today.

Of course, the cynics would say that that’s exactly what’s happened. That we have been deluded and we have fooled ourselves all these years imagining, telling ourselves that Jesus rose from the dead. You see they would suggest that it’s really not much more than wishful thinking. It’s people who can’t handle the idea of nothingness, of meaninglessness. It’s people who struggle to believe that there is just nothing more and that they can’t face the death of loved ones or their own mortality and so we have invented for ourselves the notion that Jesus rose and so that we might too live on after death.

Have we been lied to? Can we believe it?

But hold on a minute, just because we long for something doesn’t necessarily mean that we’ve invented it in our minds, doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s a part of our imagination. We needn’t dismiss things as quickly as all that. Take, for example from the physical realm, we might find ourselves hungry and thirsty and longing to satisfy these desires and do you know what? There is food. There is drink. We can satisfy these desires. Not something that we have just invented. There is a reality to it. Or in the emotional world, we might find ourselves longing to be loved. Well who’s to say that’s just an invention? Actually, there is love, we know that to be true from our experience. So, in the same way, just because we might long for life to be more than simply the three score years and ten that we spend in this earthly realm doesn’t mean necessarily that we’ve invented the concept of life beyond death. Doesn’t mean that we are building on the illusion that Jesus rose again. Who’s to say that there’s not truth in it?

What else have we got in our favour? In terms of believing that it’s true that Jesus rose from the dead. Well of course the gospels and the writings of Paul in the New Testament affirm that many witnessed Jesus, that he was alive and of course the first of those witnesses were women. Each of the gospels affirms as much. Now that’s important in itself. If you were making the story up, you would not have made women to be the first





witnesses. The witness of a woman was not thought to be credible in these days. It would be a wee bit like me, let's say having to go to court, maybe I had got myself in trouble of one kind or another and having to get a character reference from someone. Well listen, I know some disreputable people, people with a long criminal record people with all kinds of cases against them of fraud and deception and such like. That's not the kind of person I would be asking to give a character reference to me. Their testimony would be worthless. In the same way if you had been making the story up that Jesus was alive you would not have made the first witnesses to be women and then of course not just them but the disciples afterwards and over five hundred others who saw Jesus to be alive. Now one or two people you might say had been deluded or even had hallucinated but not that number.

The next thing is this, we know that those disciples were fearful for their lives and that after the death of Jesus, before knowing he was alive that they were huddled together behind locked doors. Yes, fearful for their lives. So how do you explain that they went from that position of cowering themselves in private to being out on the streets of Jerusalem proclaiming that Jesus was alive? How else other than that they had seen it and knew it to be true for themselves. You see the thing is those disciples and those who were around them, within a short few years afterwards were being persecuted on account of their beliefs.

Now, if you knew that it was all made up, that it was all a lie, don't you think you would come clean at the point your life was under threat? I know for myself I'd put my hand up at that point and say "I admit it. We made it up." And yet those men went to their deaths. And here we are two thousand years later and over the whole earth over two billion people believing that Jesus rose from the dead. That life beyond the grave is there and is open to us. Truth stays put. If it's made up, if it's a lie eventually it will be found out. Folks will see through it. Here's truth that has stayed put through all those years. We've got every reason to be confident.

Well, lies may travel more quickly but truth stays put longer and truth can't be suppressed or squashed or done away with. Truth remains. If you go to the history books and to the early days of the Soviet Union, they were determined to do away with religious belief and so believers were harassed, property was confiscated and so on. The USSR became the first state in the world to have as part of its ideological aims state atheism. No more religious faith. And yet of course the Soviet Union came and went but truth remains, and the church continues. And we see the same thing in China and in so many other places. You can't get rid of truth even though it be inconvenient.

You know I have every confidence in these truths that Jesus rose from the dead. From the scriptures, from what has happened through the years and equally so from what I have seen for myself. I wonder if some of you knew the wonderful and much missed May



Nicholson? Gosh May's life was a mess in every possible sense. She was lost in a hopeless world of addiction and hopelessness and then one evening in her despair found herself in a church and encountering Jesus Christ for herself and from that moment her life was turned around and transformed from the inside out. She spent the rest of her life proclaiming the truth of Christ risen. You see, changed lives matter and changed lives can't be explained away by will power. You know, May had tried so many times to sort her own life out without success.

Some of you may know that my own congregation in Arbroath has, for many years now been involved with those who are struggling with addiction and all other kinds of problems and I have seen for myself what happens when there is an encounter with the risen Christ. Now, that can't be achieved by made up stories. Only by the presence of Christ himself, and we've seen many now through the years. Men and women alike who have been freed from the chaos of addictions, from the prisons cells that they were in, to freedom and to life in all its fullness. Jesus is with us even now.

Friends, might we have confidence, might we believe our historic faith, because if Jesus is not raised then our faith is useless and we of all people are most to be pitied. Let us instead be confident that he who died rose again and is with us even now. This is the Easter Good News.

### **Prayer of Intercession – Rev Stuart Irvin, St Catherine's Argyle**

As we share together in the triumphant hope of this risen Christ this Easter Morn let us still our hearts before God in Prayer. As part of this prayer I will lead us in praying for those in our communities and parishes. I will use images from my own Parish and I invite you to use these images to reflect upon your own communities.

Let us Pray

Lord we turn to you, our strength, our hope and our salvation.

Sharing in our homes and with shouts of joy from our hearts as we rejoice in the Easter Hope in which we are united.

Lord, you have indeed done mighty things. What happiness it brings to proclaim this message, what gladness and hope burst forth in you!

Indeed Lord, as we proclaim what you have done, as we tell of it in word, song and deed we pray that the triumphant hope of Jesus would be known in our parishes and our communities.

We pause to pray, thinking together, of the different communities that we represent; asking that the hope of the risen Christ would ring out and be known.

In stillness we pray for those who live in our community.



In stillness we remember those who run business.

Those who keep us supplied with the food we need – whether it is the field of harvest of the frozen food aisle.

Those who educate and who shape the dreams and aspirations of our young people

Those who keep us safe and healthy

Those who help us communicate.

In unity we pray for these our communities asking Lord God, that you might lead us as a community of faith that we might seek Justice and Mercy in our own communities and the world in which we live and that we might walk humbly with you as we live out and announce the wonder of your risen and conquering son. In Christs name we pray. Amen.

**Hymn- Thine be the glory, Ferryhill virtual choir**

Thine be the glory  
Risen conquering Son  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won  
Angels in bright raiment  
Rolled the stone away  
Kept the folded grave clothes  
Where Thy body lay

Thine be the glory  
Risen conquering Son  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won

Lo! Jesus meets us  
Risen from the tomb  
Lovingly, He greets us  
Scatters fear and gloom  
Let the church with gladness  
Hymns of triumph sing  
For her Lord now liveth  
Death hath lost its sting



Thine be the glory  
Risen conquering Son  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won

No more we doubt Thee  
Glorious Prince of life  
Life is naught without Thee  
Aid us in our strife  
Make us more than conquerors  
Through Thy deathless love  
Bring us safe through Jordan  
To Thy home above

Thine be the glory  
Risen conquering Son  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won

**Blessing – The Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly**

We finish today with a word of thanks to all those who have contributed to today's service and to those who have put it together behind the scenes.

So let us go now into the world and let us go as Easter people, celebrating, and with the joy of the Risen Lord to inspire us for all the days to come.

So go now in peace and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be yours today and forever more; Amen.