

**EASTER SERVICE 2021 – SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH & SHEPPARTON RURAL  
CONGREGATIONS**

*The Lighting of the new Easter Candle and the procession*

*The candle is lit in the narthex*

The light of Christ rises in glory,  
overcoming the darkness of sin and death.

*Responses, three times during the procession*

The light of Christ

***Thanks be to God!***

The Easter Declaration:

The Lord is Risen.

**Christ is risen!**

Hymn: 362 (TiS) 'Jesus Christ is risen today'.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

Declaration of Forgiveness:

Doxology:

The young church: 'Mary and the Gardener' (ppt – presentation)

Readings: Isaiah 25: 6 – 9, Mark 16: 1 - 8

Hymn: 361 (TiS) 'The day of resurrection!'

Sermon: 'Where did the risen Christ go?'

The gospel of Mark tells us that on that first Easter morning, women went to the tomb to pay their last respect to a dead Jesus. They were surprised to find that Jesus is not there, but a young man dressed in white was. He told them, "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified? Well, he is not here. He is raised. He is going ahead of you to Galilee."

- Why isn't he going to the palace to see Pilate? To tell him that it is judgement time.
- Why isn't he going to the temple to tell the religious leaders that they got it wrong?
- There is no one in Galilee but his family and the few that followed him.
- He returns to those who disappointed him. To his betrayers. To us!

- The good news of the resurrection is both an empty tomb and the presence of the risen one among us.
- The message of the resurrection is not that 'Because we die, we shall one day return to life. It is, though we were dead, Jesus returned to us.
- The product of the resurrection of Christ is the church – that proclaims, 'Christ came back to us!'
- Easter is a reminder that the Christian community, the church, is a choice that the risen Christ has made to come back to us.
- Christians are not people who don't simply know something the world does not yet know or believe something that non-Christians don't yet believe.
- We are the people who have had something happened to us that the world appears not to have yet experienced.
- The implications: When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we look up and find that we are not alone. There he is walking with us.
- When we come to some dead end in life, we look over and there he is awaiting us. When we give up, give in, and in despair we find him near us!  
**Amen.**

Hymn: 519 (TiS) 'And now, O Father, mindful of the love'.

#### HOLY COMMUNION

Narrative of the Institution of the Lord's Supper:

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you.

**And also, with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Thanks, and praise, glory and honour are rightly yours, our Lord and God, for you alone are worthy. In time beyond our dreaming you brought forth light out of darkness, and in the love of Christ your Son you set man and woman at the heart of your creation.

You loved the world so much that you sent your only Son to bring us eternal life. By dying he destroyed our death, by rising he restored our life.

And so, we praise you with the faithful of every time and place, joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation in the eternal hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

We thank you that you called a covenant people to be a light to the nations. Through Moses you taught us to love your law, and in the prophets, you cried out for justice.

In the fullness of your mercy you became one with us in Jesus Christ, who gave himself up for us on the cross. You make us alive with him, that we may rejoice in his presence and share his peace.

By water and the Spirit, you open the kingdom to all whom believe, and welcome us to your table: for by grace we are saved through faith.

Consecration of the elements:

Pour out the Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Make us one with him, one with each other, and one in ministry in the world, until at last we feast with him in the kingdom.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, in your holy church, all honour and glory is yours, Father almighty, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

The breaking of the bread:

Lamb of God:

Jesus, lamb of God,  
**have mercy on us.**

Jesus, bearer of our sins,  
**have mercy on us.**

Jesus, redeemer of the world,  
**grant us your peace.**

Distribution of the elements:

Notices and Concerns:

Offering:

Prayers of the People:

God of the bright and morning star, God of the rising sun, God of darkness banished, we thank you. For empty tombs, thank you. For disciples running with good news, we thank you. For your presence, alive, powerful, resurrected: thank you. We celebrate your victory over death, over all the powers that would defeat us.

Help us to grasp resurrection; to understand its power, to see its force at work in our world, overturning evil empires, changing the hatred within us, moving the world slowly, forcefully, bending us towards love and truth.

On this day of gladness empower us to be your witnesses, proclaiming good news. Good news in our kitchens and living rooms, good news in the offices and workshops, good news in the fields and factories. Help us to be that good news, walking with humility on this good earth, caring gently for all people, living hopefully into your kingdom.

Today we think and pray for all who are grieving, for the sick and the dying, for places in the world that are torn apart by war and bloodshed.

In this world of broken hopes and dreams, we catch sight of your coming kingdom, in the person of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns in us now and forever.

**Amen.**

Hymn: 380 (TiS) 'Thine be the glory'.

Blessing:

May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

778 (TiS) 'Shalom to you now'.