

SERVICE FOR EASTER SUNDAY

GUIDED

to the

CROSS

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NEW LIFE



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COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/open-tomb-sunrise-grave-clothes-three-2120187641](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/open-tomb-sunrise-grave-clothes-three-2120187641)

- This **Theme Verse** is read aloud by the pastor at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that,
just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4*

- The **Processional Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Diademata SMD, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Crown him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon his throne;
Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns
All music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless king
Through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of love.
Behold his hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified.
No angels in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bend their wond'ring eyes
At mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of life,
Who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife
For those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
Who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring
And lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of heav'n,
Enthroned in worlds above,
Crown him the king to whom is giv'n
The wondrous name of Love.
Crown him with many crowns
As thrones before him fall;
Crown him, ye kings, with many crowns,
For he is king of all.

- The **Invocation and Call to Worship** (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 51-57) are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Christ is risen!

C He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

P The apostle Paul writes, "In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

C For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

P We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

C **For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.**

P When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

C **'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'**

P The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

C **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

P Christ is risen!

C **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

- The **Confession and Forgiveness** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Let us confess our sins to God and ask his for forgiveness.

C **Almighty God, in Christ Jesus we have been raised to new life, but we often turn back to our old ways. We follow our own selfish desires instead of walking in the ways of our Lord. We listen to the temptations of the world instead of gladly hearing your Word. Have mercy on us, and forgive us. Lead us by your Spirit to walk in newness of life.**

P Jesus suffered and died on the cross to take away our sins. He was raised in triumph over death. In him we have forgiveness and life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C **Lord Jesus, set your cross before us and lead us to walk in newness of life.**

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P Jesus our Savior, risen Lord, we rejoice in the victory over sin, death and Satan that you have won for us through your death and resurrection. In baptism, we were buried with you and raised to walk in newness of life. We look forward with joy to your return on the Last Day when we will be raised in glory as you were raised. Until that great day, lead us to grow in faith through the study of your Word and to reflect the light of your love to the people we meet each day. Make us bold witnesses for you so that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, others will come

to know and worship you as Lord. Mighty, conquering Savior, hear our prayer and accept our praise. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Auf, Auf, Mein Herz 76 76 66 66, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Awake, my heart, with gladness,
See what today is done;
Now, after gloom and sadness,
Comes forth the glorious sun.
My Savior there was laid
Where our bed must be made
When to the realms of light
Our spirit wings its flight.

The foe in triumph shouted
When Christ lay in the tomb;
But lo, he now is routed,
His boast is turned to gloom.
For Christ again is free;
In glorious victory
He who is strong to save
Has triumphed o'er the grave.

This is a sight that gladdens—
What peace it doth impart!
Now nothing ever saddens
The joy within my heart.
No gloom shall ever shake,
No foe shall ever take
The hope which God's own Son
In love for me has won.

- The **Children's Sermon** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Happy Easter! Today we are celebrating Jesus' resurrection. On Easter morning we use a special greeting. First, I say, "Christ is risen!" Then you answer, "He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" Let's practice that, and everyone in church today can join in! (*Practice the greeting.*)

We know that Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins. His body was taken down from the cross. He was buried in a cave that was a tomb or grave. A big stone was rolled in front of

the cave-tomb to seal the door shut. But on the third day after Jesus died, on the first Easter morning, women who believed in Jesus went to the tomb. What did they find? (*Let children answer.*) The stone had been rolled away. The tomb was open and empty! An angel told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead! Then the women saw Jesus himself! The Savior was alive! Jesus came to his followers many times after that to prove to them that he was alive.

Jesus' resurrection becomes our new life when we are baptized. (*Point to the baptismal font, or take the children to the font.*) When we are baptized, we are united to Jesus' death and resurrection. His victory over death becomes our victory too. We have new life in Jesus! We believe in Jesus and we follow him and want to live as he did, by showing kindness and love toward others. We want others to learn about Jesus so that they will believe in him too. Through faith in Jesus, we have new life now and forever!

Let's pray: Jesus, you died and rose from the dead to save us. Help us to follow you every day. Amen.

Let's practice our Easter greeting again. Everyone can join in! (*Repeat the Easter greeting.*)

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 35:1-8, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

- The **Epistle Reading**, Romans 6:1-4, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life..

- The **Gospel Reading**, Matthew 28:1-10 is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Duke Street LM, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

I know that my Redeemer lives;
 What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
 He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
 He lives, my ever-living head.

He lives to bless me with his love;
 He lives to plead for me above;
 He lives my hungry soul to feed;
 He lives to help in time of need.

He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly friend;
 He lives and loves me to the end;
 He lives, and while he lives, I'll sing;
 He lives, my Prophet, Priest and King.

He lives, all glory to his name!
 He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
 Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:
 I know that my Redeemer lives!

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ Grace, mercy and peace to you, my dear Christian friends. Today, we celebrate Easter, the day of resurrection of our Lord. Today, we remember where we have been, focused as we have been these last many weeks of Lent on the cross of Christ. But we also take a turn now past the cross and go to the open tomb where Jesus arose to give us new life.

Easter is celebrated in the spring every year and not by mistake. It arrives at a time when flowers are blooming, grass is growing, trees are budding. New life is sprouting up in nature all around us. And new life is sprouting up in us spiritually this day because Christ has risen to new life for us.

We are forgiven by Christ; we are renewed in our love for God; we are refreshed with the sure hope that we, too, will rise one day, as Jesus has today, to join him in heaven, where new life will spring forth eternally for us all.

The turning from the death of the cross to the life of the open tomb is depicted in the Bible when it says that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb on Easter morning “while it was still dark” (John 20:1). We, as the people of God, are moving “out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

What does new life look like for the women at the tomb? As the Bible tells us, it is earth-shaking. There was an earthquake at the tomb. It is powerful. The heavy stone at the entrance to the grave is easily rolled away. It connects heaven to earth. An angel appear before them to tell them that Jesus is risen. New life is a little scary at first for the women, but the angel assures them that they should not be afraid. The risen Jesus himself stands in the midst of the women, newly alive, and their initial response is to take hold of him and worship him.

What does our new life in Christ look like guided by what happened on that first Easter? As people guided by Easter, we are a people filled with the light of the Lord. We are people whose foundation is rock-solidly based on the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are a people who are no longer afraid of the future because we know the future belongs to Jesus. We are a people who reach out to be with Jesus and who seek to hold on to him to help us in our lives. We are a people who worship and praise our Savior for the life he now gives us to lead. We, like the women at the tomb, are compelled to go forth and tell people that Jesus is alive, and he is alive in each one of us.

Easter energy makes it possible for us to greet each new day with confidence that the Jesus who went to the cross and grave for us will guide us on to witness to others about what we have seen and heard and experienced regarding our living Lord so that they can see, hear and experience Jesus too.