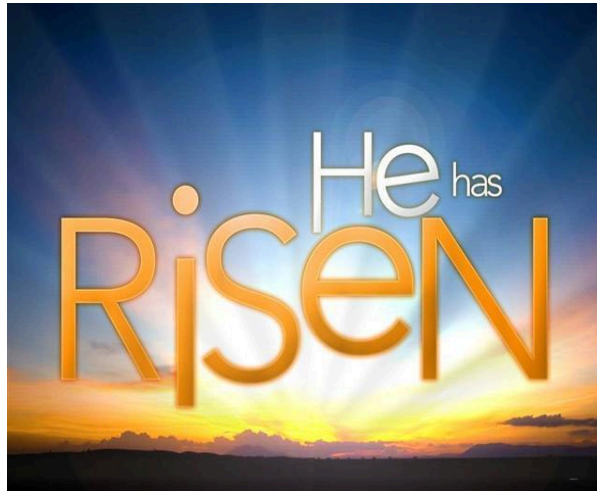


Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service with Communion 10:30AM 19th April 2026
Jill Bird leading & Simon Bird preaching
www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk
Find us on Facebook @Abbey Baptist Church, Reading



We come once more to celebrate this season of Eastertide. We proclaim together.

**Christ is risen. He is risen indeed
Christ has risen from the dead, he is alive for evermore**

HYMN MP 689

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 songs of triumph sing,
for her Lord now lives; death hath lost its sting.
No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is nought 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.

Colossians 2.6-7 So then, just as you received **Christ Jesus as Lord**, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Bible Reading 1. John 20.24 – 31

Jesus said to Thomas 'Stop doubting and believe'. Thomas cried out ' My LORD and my GOD'

Jesus we acknowledge you truly as our LORD and GOD. May we put you in that highest place over our lives this morning as we stand and sing this next hymn AMEN

Hymn BPW 384 *An offering will be taken during the following song.*

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
For by His power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!

Praise Him with 'Hallelujahs', for Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from His throne eternal
in flesh He came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From Him all life proceeding,
yet gave His life a ransom thus setting us free.

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
from death He rose and all His foes shall own His name.
Jesus is Lord! God sends His Holy Spirit
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

FAMILY TIME Faith Hope and Love

He is Lord, He is Lord He is risen from the dead And He is Lord
Every knee shall bow Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord

He's my Lord, He's my Lord. He is risen from the dead and he's my Lord
My knee will bow, My tongue will confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord

The teenagers and children will leave for their groups)

BIBLE READING 2 Colossians 1. 1 - 14

SERMON Being filled with Christ - Colossians 1:1-14

We are following a series on Paul's letter to the church in Colossae. Paul's **reason for writing** is that there are false teachers trying to lead them astray (2:8). Paul does not address the false teaching directly, rather he gives loads of good teaching that Christ is supreme. We do not need Christ + something, but to have Christ as all we need. Paul's **goal** for the letter may be summarised in 2:6-7: he wants them to become mature, based on being rooted in good teaching about Christ.

As Paul starts the letter he does not address the false teaching, but first builds a relationship with them and encourages them. It is a masterful model for any leader approaching people in a difficult situation. I shall look at the steps he goes through.

Paul first **gives thanks and prays** for them (3): in fact the whole passage is his prayer. It is a good strategy for any of us in approaching a difficult issue. Thanksgiving and prayer are wonderful weapons (if I can use that word) to open up any situation. Thanksgiving changes our mindset, and prayer gives an opening for God to act.

Then Paul, as wise leader, **notices what is good**: I wonder what we at Abbey think is good about our fellowship? What Paul notices is **their faith and love, inspired by hope** (4-5). As Zoltan said last week, he names what God is already doing, so this encourages them that they are on the right track.

We had a series on 'we are family' last year, and our questionnaire this year showed we are a loving fellowship, with a welcoming atmosphere and sense of belonging. This has been especially important for many of us recently arrived in the country. This is not just being nice to each other; it is the Spirit at work, creating fellowship (koinonia).

And we do have faith. It is shown by many being involved in our fellowship activities – connect group and bible studies, and our outreach activities – toddlers, children's work, Reinspired, B4N. This shows we want to follow Jesus. Also, in these difficult times we find comfort in prayer. We may think faith is weak, but we do seek to follow Jesus.

The Gospel message that Epaphras brought, told them they have the hope of heaven. Being sure of the future is a solid ground for faith and love in the present.

I hope you can see that faith, hope and love are beautiful characteristics to have, both for ourselves and for us as a group. Faith means we have a sense of security and purpose in life. Love means we know love from God, and are enabled to show this to one another, so our lives are enriched. Hope means we can overcome fear and depression and can face both tomorrow and the ultimate future with peace. If our lives are marked with faith, love and hope, and the other fruits of the Spirit like peace and joy, I would say our lives are blessed. What more would we really want in life. This is the 'Good Life.'

These characteristics are attractive to outsiders and will draw outsiders to Jesus. He said people will know they are my disciples by their love (Jn 13:35). In their testimonies, you will have heard many of our asylum seekers being attracted to Christianity because of its lovely teaching and lifestyle, in comparison to what they have seen in Islam. So this morning, I would encourage anyone not a Christian and still seeking, to explore further and enter this life of faith, love, hope and everything good. You become a Christian by believing the gospel message, which I mention next.

Paul goes on and reassures them **the message they received is the true gospel message** (5-8). It is very easy for new Christians especially to be swayed into following some persuasive new teaching. No, the true message is about Christ and that is all they need. It is the only good and powerful message.

The gospel message came from the time Paul spent in Ephesus, where he taught for 2 years and all Asia heard the word of God (Acts 19:10). We at Abbey, through good teaching handed down through the centuries, have the bible translated and in our hands, so we can be sure we have received the true gospel too.

Looking at Acts 19 (about Paul's time in Ephesus) shows us the characteristics of the true gospel and apostolic faith, we see: a bible teacher corrected, Paul leading 12 to faith and ensuring they received the Holy Spirit and tongues and prophecy were in use. There was evangelistic preaching in the synagogue, followed by 2 years of solid teaching as mentioned, and there were miracles, healing and deliverance from demons accompanying Paul's ministry.

Paul's prayer continues (9-14), and this builds relationship, as they can feel the intensity of his prayer and his desire for them - that is to **become mature and holy**. Paul wants the best for them: they will live well, be fruitful, endure and be thankful (9-14). This is more of the 'Good Life.'

In the letter we read that Jesus has the fullness of God living in him (1:19), the Colossians have been brought to fullness (2:9) and here his prayer is for them to be filled (2:9). We start our Christian lives based on Christ, coming by the gospel message and apostolic teaching, and it continues, not Christ + something, but everything we continue to need is with Christ.

The wrong teaching that came to Colossae gives false ways of advancing in the Christian life (secret teaching, useless religious rules, short cuts to holiness, second blessings for the initiated). But we are supposed to grow in our Christian faith, and there are no secret paths. We have come to fullness in Christ, but we need to step more into it. For example, in believing in Jesus we have been given the Spirit, but we need to receive the Spirit into our experience, then go on asking to be filled with the Spirit.

His prayer starts by asking God to fill them with knowledge of his will (9). I have found that victory in the Christian life comes by knowing what Christ has done for us, our status in Christ and then walking into this as an inheritance (just like God delivered the Israelites from Egypt and gave the promised land as an inheritance, but they had to enter in and fight for it). So we are not to think of ourselves as 'just forgiven sinners.' We are this, but we are holy, loved, children of God, seated in heavenly places and we are to walk into our inheritance.

In closing, we have seen Paul's masterful introduction. He approached a difficult situation in prayer; he built relationship and encouraged the Colossians. We too can be encouraged because we too show the fruit of faith, love and hope. He showed them they have received the true gospel message, and do not need to look to false teaching. We too have the true gospel and because of this we can grow to maturity in Christ.

I believe following Jesus is the Good Life. I encourage anyone wavering or not a Christian to explore this. Our closing song sets out that knowing Jesus is the greatest thing we can find in life. 'You're my all, You're the best, You're my joy, my righteousness, And I love You, Lord.' Use this as a prayer to seek him, 'now my heart's desire is to know you more.' For those of us who do follow, our prayer is 'Oh, to know the power of Your risen life.'

HYMN MP 799

All I once held dear, built my life upon
All this world reveres, and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing You, Jesus Knowing You
There is no greater thing You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness And I love You, Lord

Now my heart's desire is to know You more
To be found in You and known as Yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life
And to know You in Your sufferings
To become like You in Your death, my Lord
So with You to live and never die

Communion

Our Father in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread.

For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord forgive us your people for taking your daily bread so lightly – we are so full of ourselves and the other ways we try to fill ourselves up; we have so little room for you. We do want you to be so much more. Help us to empty ourselves of everything except you LORD JESUS.

So as we come to communion we come as 'US', your people here at Abbey. We come together to be rooted, built up and strengthened in our faith as we take again of the daily bread – your body and blood. Teach us to eat and drink every day, that everyday we would be people of faith, hope and love and overflowing with thankfulness. Meet with us now in this special meal we pray.

On the night before his death, Jesus had a meal with his friends.

He took a loaf of bread and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and gave it to his disciples.

He said, **Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.**

Jesus took the cup of wine; and after giving thanks, gave it to them and said,
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, remember me

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup we **proclaim** the victory of JESUS' death and resurrection over our own souls, over each other and over all spiritual evil forces around us. We look to the day LORD JESUS when you will return and the victory will be complete for ever and ever AMEN

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth, and the only life: grant us to walk in his way, rejoice in his truth, share his risen life and overflow with thanksgiving AMEN

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION Polly and Thomas

Gracious and merciful Lord, giver of faith, hope, and love, Your holy name is worthy of all praise. We thank You for Your boundless love, for through Christ we are chosen, redeemed, and reconciled to You. We confess that we are weak and sinful, with nothing to boast of; our faith is Your gift, and apart from You we fall. Thank You for the cross and the resurrection, which give us the assurance of salvation and the hope of eternal life. In this dark world, help us to shine as Your light.

Amen.

Lord, we pray for Your Church. Grant our minister, Zoltan, wisdom, strength, and clear vision to lead us faithfully. Help us to love one another, to confess our sins, and to support each other in prayer. By Your Spirit, unite us, shape us to be more like Christ in humility and truth, and make us a people who live out faith, hope, and love. May Your name be glorified in our church and in our lives.

Amen.

Lord, we pray for the young people in our community and nation. Draw them to know You early in life, that they may discover true purpose and meaning in Christ. Protect them from the influence of gangs and violence; restrain every force that seeks to destroy order and bring harm. Raise a generation that walks in Your light and lives for Your glory.

Amen.

On 7 May, as voters choose their councillors, we pray for Your guiding hand over the election. Grant wisdom to the people and raise the leaders after Your own heart — men and women of compassion and strength who will serve the public faithfully and selflessly.

Amen.

We pray for all nations torn by war. Have mercy on the suffering people, bring comfort to the broken, and draw near to the grieving. Especially, we ask for Your mercy upon the United States and Iran. Soften the hearts of their leaders, guide their thoughts and decisions according to Your will, and let Your purpose be clearly seen even in these uncertain times.

In Jesus' precious name we pray, **Amen.**

Hymn BPW 332

1. All for Jesus, all for Jesus! This our song shall ever be:
you our only hope, our Saviour, yours the love that sets us free!
2. All for Jesus: you will give us strength to serve you hour by hour:
None can move us from your presence while we trust your grace and power.
3. All for Jesus-you have loved us, all for Jesus-you have died,
All for Jesus-you are with us, all for Jesus crucified.
4. All for Jesus, All for Jesus All our talents and our powers
All our thoughts and words and actions All our passing days and hours

5. All for Jesus, all for Jesus This the church's song shall be,
Till at last his people gather, one in him eternally.

BENEDICTION Colossians 2.6

May we all have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. May we continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith and overflowing with thankfulness by the power of the risen and present LORD Jesus. Amen

THE GRACE

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, Amen.

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Events to highlight next week:

Tuesday 21 st	8.00 Zoom prayer meeting
Wednesday 22 nd	10.30 Renew cafe
	12.00 Bible study
	2.00pm God loves you series 2 God knows you
	2.00pm First Steps Iranians
Thursday 23 rd April	10.30 Toddlers
Friday 24 th April	4.30 Table Tennis
Sunday 26 th April	10.30 Worship Colossians series 3
	12 noon Connect group leaders meeting

Sunday May 10th Church meeting after morning service

QR Code for Financial Offering:

