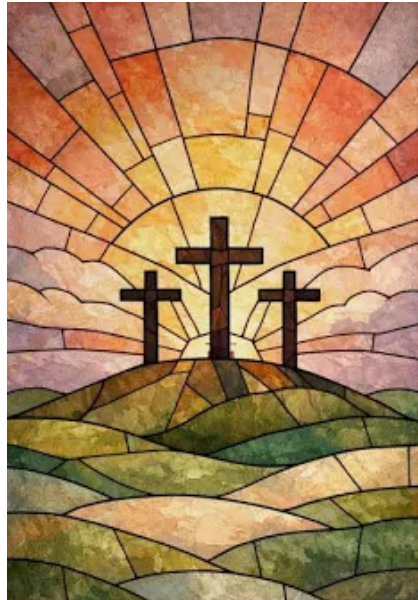


Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading
Easter Sunday Worship Service with Communion
10:30AM 5 April 2026
Selina Chan leading & Rev. Dr. Zoltan Biro preaching
www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk
Find us on Facebook @Abbey Baptist Church, Reading



THEME: Matthew 28:1-10; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Good morning, dear brothers and sisters. Last Sunday Zoltan our Minister has reminded us that God is the giver of every good thing, and we need to trust God's provision and to acknowledge Him through generous giving.

Today is Easter Sunday. Let's celebrate as Jesus Christ has risen. Zoltan will share with us the importance of Jesus' resurrection, as it symbolises our Lord's victory over sin and death, as well as offering us the hope of eternal life.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is Risen.

He is Risen indeed!

Because Jesus lives, we are resurrected.

We gather today on Easter Sunday, like the early church,
we break bread together and proclaim the Lord's death until He returns.

**We rejoice in the victory of our risen Christ,
and our hearts are filled with thanks.**

Come, let us worship our glorious God and let's celebrate together!

We will rejoice in our mighty Lord! Amen.

MP 99:

Come on and celebrate!
His gift of love, we will celebrate -
The Son of God who loved us
And gave us life.
We'll shout Your praise, O King,
You give us joy nothing else can bring;
We'll give to You our offering
In celebration praise.

Celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.
Come on and celebrate,
Celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King!

PATRICIA MORGAN & DAVE BANKHEAD © 1984 KINGSWAY'S
THANKYOU MUSIC.

Come on and celebrate,

FAMILY TIME

*(*An offering will be taken during the following song, after which teenagers and children will leave for their groups)*

HYMN

*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 the 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.*

1932 English translation by Richard Hoyle of the Swiss
hymn written by Edmond Budry in 1903

PRAYER

Almighty God, our Risen King,

Fill us anew with the joy of Easter!
We come before You with hearts overflowing with praises.
We rejoice in Your mighty victory over sin and death.
Here we celebrate together the success of your redemption plan,
a victory that belongs to every believer.
Let us proclaim, in one voice, that Jesus is Lord! Amen.

BIBLE READING 1: Matthew 28:1-10

BIBLE READING 2: Acts 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

SERMON: A Life of Celebration: Rejoicing in the Success of Each Other

Good morning, Abbey family,

Christ has Risen...

He has risen indeed!

Today we gather not only to celebrate Easter morning but to complete a journey. Over these weeks we've been learning the spiritual habits that help grow what God has planted in us. And today, on Resurrection Sunday, we reach the final movement.

- We began with **inner growth**: prayer, scripture, fasting, and reflection.
- We stepped into **outward growth**: simplicity, solitude, service, submission.
- And now we arrive at **corporate growth**: life together in fellowship, worship, generosity and today we conclude the series with the topic of celebration.

It's no accident that we end here.

Because *celebration is the fruit of all the others*. You don't celebrate seeds. You celebrate what has grown. It is interesting that when our children were growing up Marta and I didn't notice it that much. I mean we realised that we have to buy bigger clothes, but growth happened slowly, unnoticeably. But when they met the grandparents, they immediately noticed it and said to them "Wow, you have grown..." Our hair and nail grow slowly, and only after several weeks we notice that we need to do something about it.

Growth happens all the time, but we didn't realise it, because we weren't paying attention.

Spiritual habits train us to *notice what God is growing*, both in ourselves and in each other.

1. From shared grief to shared joy (Matthew 28:1-10)

In Matthew 28, the women go to the tomb full of grief. They expected death. They prepared for loss. But they left with great joy, because of what God has planted in seeds of promises and sacrifice has burst into life through the resurrection.

But, have you noticed something else. The joy of the women did not stay private. The angel urges them to "*Go and tell my brothers.*"

Resurrection joy *moves outward*. This is the Easter celebration, not quiet happiness, not internal peace, but a shared joy.

Anecdote about the Minister who goes Fishing on a Sunday instead of church...

Think about the best news you've ever received, a birth, an engagement, a recovery. Do you whisper it? Do you keep it to yourself? You couldn't. Joy naturally looks for someone else to share it with. That is how resurrection joy works.

But celebration mustn't be only at weddings or births, or engagements, or anniversaries! Celebration needs to become a habit. Habits Matter, because they give life a momentum, they pull us through difficult times. Prayer teaches recognises that God's is with us. Scripture teaches us to listen to God. Fasting focuses our attention, while reflection brings us into line with His heart. Because the danger is that, if we are not spiritually aware, we will miss reasons to rejoice. There is a lot of bad things in our world today, a lot of things we should be sad, but if we only focus on them, we will lose our joy, we won't be able to celebrate and we will become sour... Here is a new word for some of you: grumpy.

God may be resurrecting something right in front of us, and we'll walk past it like it's nothing.

Before-and-After Photos (Object Lesson)

If I only showed you the "before" photo, you'd feel sad, but when you see the "after," you feel relieved, maybe even ready to celebrate. The Christian life is full of "after" stories. Two But if we don't remember the "before," we won't recognize the miracle.

2. Celebration Requires Community (Acts 20:7-12)

In Acts 20, believers gather to break bread. Yes, it's worship. Yes, it's fellowship. But it's also celebration. They are making room in their lives, not just for God, but for each other. As Paul is leaving the next day, he keeps on teaching the church at Troas, until someone dies. *I want to reassure you, that none of my sermons killed anyone yet* 🙏.

But in this coming together where our outward habits matter most deeply. *Simplicity* frees us from comparison. *Solitude* heals our need for approval. *Service and submission* train us to lift others instead of ourselves. Without these habits, celebration becomes hard or even impossible. Let's be honest. You cannot celebrate someone you are secretly competing with.

The Ovation Test

Here's a simple test of our heart: when someone else succeeds, do you clap, or do you compare? Comparison kills celebration. But resurrection has the power to replace competition with gratitude.

3. The Table as Corporate Celebration (1 Corinthians 11)

One of the best symbols of community coming together is communion. When we come to the Lord's Table, we both remember and proclaim.

- We proclaim that death did not win.
- We proclaim that grace is still enough.
- We proclaim hope together.

This is *corporate celebration at its deepest level*.

One Loaf, Many Hands (gesture toward the bread.)

One loaf. Many hands. Different stories. Same grace. If we can celebrate Christ's victory together surely we can learn to celebrate Christ's work in one another.

Dear Abby family, hear this clearly: We are resurrection people, for us **Spiritual growth is not complete until it becomes shared joy.**

What God grows in you is not just for you, it is for the body, and when it grows, the whole church should rejoice. Remember the family time: Yes someone scored the goal, but everyone joins in the celebration...

In church we should be like supporters in a stadium: When one rises, we all rejoice. This Easter, the resurrection reminds us: God is still bringing life out of death. Still growing seeds into fruit. Still at work in each of us. So let us be a people who: notice growth, affirm it, celebrate it. Like the women at the tomb, may we leave with great joy, not only because Christ is risen, but because His risen life is at work among us. **Amen.**

HYMN

The splendour of a king
Clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice.

He wraps Himself in light,
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

*Chorus: How great is our God
Sing with me
How great is our God
And all will see
How great, how great is our God*

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
Beginning and the end
The Godhead Three in One
Father, Spirit and Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb

Chorus

Name above all names
Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing
How great is our God

Chorus

Chris Tomlin/Ed Cash/Jesse Reeves CCLI Song
#4348399

COMMUNION

Invitation

As we come to this table, we are reminded that this is not the table of Abbey Baptist Church, nor is it the table of the Baptist Fellowship of Great Britain. It is the table of Jesus Christ and as such all are welcome.

On the day of his resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, but they did not recognize him.

Later while he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. May Christ's presence be made known to us in the breaking of the bread.

Prayer of Confession

God of grace - despair, pain, and fear are part of life, and sometimes we let them guide us. Sometimes we let them hold us back from living your way, and we lose sight of your strong love. Help us be a brave and holy people, living beyond fear. Teach us to trust in your steadfast love. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

This is the good news: God raised Jesus from death, turning sorrow into joy and despair into hope.

Hallelujah!

The peace

Christ's peace be with you,
Christ's peace within you,
Christ's peace behind you,
Christ's peace before you,
Christ's peace beside you,
Christ's peace to win you,
Christ's peace to comfort and restore you.
Christ's peace be with you,

And also with you

Let us greet each other with signs of the peace of Christ.

Remembering and Braking bread

As we gather at this table, we remember a story told mere days ago and yet also an age ago. We remember that Jesus gathered with his closest friends in an Upper Room to share the feast of liberation. And while sharing the ancient story of freedom, he called them to remember the promised freedom of God's Kingdom.

We remember that at that table he took the bread, gave thanks for it, blessed it, broke it and passed it among them saying: "This is my body, broken by and for the world. Whenever you eat it remember me."

Then later he took the cup of wine, blessed it and passed it among them saying: "This is the cup of the New Covenant, sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink it remember me and look toward the fulfilment of God's Kingdom."

And so we will take the bread and pour the cup and we remember with hope.

That on this Easter Day we share in the Banquet of Freedom to celebrate Life Victorious!

Serving Bread and Wine

Prayer After Communion

May we who have tasted new life
and drunk the new covenant
and stood by an open tomb in awe,
may we, who are blessed,
become a blessing for each other,
for ourselves, and for the world. Amen.

Hymn MP 1072:

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm,
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all,
Here, in the love of Christ, I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross, as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied,
For every sin, on Him, was laid;
Here, in the death of Christ, I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world, by darkness, slain,
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave, He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of Hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ, I'll stand!

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PRAYER OF INTERCESSION (Angel Yu)

Heavenly Father, we lift up Iran and the whole Middle East to You. Some reports say over 1,900 people have been killed in Iran, with fighting spreading across the region We pray for peace in the Middle East and other places of conflict. As tensions rise and military conflicts bring humanitarian

concerns, civilian casualties, and economic instability, we ask for Your mercy. Help nations to exercise restraint and seek peaceful solutions.

Lord, may you protect civilians, refugees, and all who are suffering, and comfort those who have lost loved ones, bring healing to the wounded and hope to those who are afraid. May you grant wisdom to world leaders so they may act with justice and compassion. We also pray for global economic stability. In times of rising oil prices and inflation, provide for families and bring stability to nations.

Lord, we also pray for the United Kingdom during this time of social division and political tension. As recently protests reflect concerns about racism, division, and anti-migrant sentiment.

Lord, we ask You to bring unity to the country. Remove hatred, racism, and violence, and help people respect one another. We pray for peaceful dialogue between different groups and communities. May you give wisdom to government leaders and those in authority, that they may promote justice, harmony, and peace in society.

Lord, we pray for our Iranian brothers and sisters applying for settlement visas in the UK, and for Hong Kongers applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Lord, please remove obstacles, shorten waiting times, and grant smooth approval. Give us peace, patience, and assurance while we wait. May Your favour be upon us, and may the future be secure.

Father, we lift up Hong Kong to You. As new national security enforcement rules bring concerns and uncertainty, we pray for freedom and justice in the city.

Lord, may you grant wisdom to authorities and leaders as they make decisions. Protect Christians and churches, and strengthen believers to stand firm in faith. We pray for peace and stability in Hong Kong, and that Your hope and righteousness may be seen.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Jesus' great love and for dying for our sins. We ask for forgiveness and help to walk in Your ways.

Lord, draw us close to Jesus, transform our hearts, help us love You and one another, and give us courage to share Your good news, that more people may be saved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

HYMN

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!
Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

BENEDICTION

Now may our God of all hope,
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead,
fill you with the joy and power of resurrection.
May the new you go forth rejoicing in the success of one another,
celebrating every victory won in Christ,
and proclaiming the good news that the Lord is risen!

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.

Today after the service - Easter lunch

Notices overleaf

Events to highlight next week:

Easter Monday 6th April Between 12.00 noon and 6pm housewarming party at Zoltan and Marta's. If you have not already done so, please let Zoltan know if you would like to come as they are barbecuing food.

Tuesday 7th April 8pm Zoom prayer

Wednesday 8th April 10.30 Renew

Thursday 9th April 10.30 Toddlers

Friday 10th April 5.00 Table Tennis

Sunday 12th April 10.30 **Worship - Spring Series**
Rooted in the risen Christ: A series on Colossians
Introduction to the series: Christ in Colossae
(Colossians 1:1-2; 4:7-18)



on leaf restarts with a 6 week course called **GOD loves you**
Pick up a flyer to ask a friend

noon **First Steps Sunday class** restarts with Lesson 1 Great time to
out being a Christian - let Angel or Stephen know you would like

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