

**St Alkmunds Easter Sunday 5 April 2026 ... Revd Beverley Jameson**  
**Matthew 28.1-10; Acts 10:34-43**

**PRAYER**

Father may these spoken words be faithful to the written word and lead us into the living word, Jesus Christ our Lord - Amen

**SERMON**

So there you are, locked in a small room with several of your friends. It is hot but the windows are closed, the shutters bolted. Through the dimness and the streaks of brightness you see your friends, silent, worried, sad. Images come rushing back to you the garden, the soldiers, the fight, which he stopped, the dragging through the streets in the middle of the night, the priests and their trial, the Romans and their trial, the flogging, the brutality, the final journey through the streets to the hill, the nails, the cross. You lift your head and gaze at your friends. Like you they are afraid. They are recognised as companions of an executed criminal. Perhaps they are also to share his fate. From being the toast of the town, heralded throughout the city and invited into numerous homes, you are hiding in fear of your life.

Suddenly there are footsteps on the stairs, Everyone holds their breath. There is a hammering on the door, which overwhelms the hammering in your heart. The women rush in, excited, babbling, laughing. They shout that they have seen an angel and were told Jesus was risen and then they had seen Jesus **alive** Are these women mad! Did they not see the nails hammered into his flesh? Did they not see the cross hoisted high above them? Did they not feel his blood dripping on their faces? Did they not hear his cry of anguish? Did they not see the spear enter his side? Did they not see....The women are being hushed but they refuse to calm down. You move away from them, "He has risen" you snort. Then a doubt, a hope enters your heart and you wonder "He has Risen?"

Our reading from Matthew describes how Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. Soldiers are guarding the tomb, perhaps to prevent robbery or perhaps as crowd control, but one thing is for sure, no one would have interfered with the tomb, Jesus was dead and buried. Suddenly an earthquake moves the stone sealing the tomb and an angel of lord appears and says *Do not 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 Then go quickly and tell his disciples:*

What mixed emotions the women may have experienced, fear at the angel appearance, fear for their own safety, wonder and amazement at the angel's words. I do not know what the women felt but it's obvious what the guards felt, they were white with fear. The angel invites the women to see the place where Jesus lay; they probably helped lay him there, following his dead and lifeless body from the cross.

Jesus had spoken of his own resurrection at various stages in his ministry but no one had really comprehended what he was saying. Resurrection in that time was what God would do the end for all the righteous dead. Although people could speak of a prophet like Elijah returning for the dead they meant that some someone would come who would embody the spirit of, the same fiery prophesy. No one had ever dreamed in their wildest imaginings that a living person could be killed stone dead and raised again to new bodily life. So the women hurried away from the tomb, still full of mixed emotions afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus alive before them, greets them and they fall to their knees.

Now it is important to remember that women in those days were very much second class citizens. The opinion counted for nothing and they were thought of unreliable witnesses in a court of law. But it was women that Jesus appeared to first and foremost, women who were regarded as inferior that he gave the privilege of being first to see the resurrection. They are also given the responsibility to be **PTO**

the first to spread the news of his resurrection to others, to those men locked in the darkness of that room, lost and afraid, locked in the darkness of their souls. The women worship Jesus not so much because he had come back to life but that his resurrection vindicates all that he had said and done during his ministry. He was, without a doubt, the messiah, the son of God.

And what happens to those men huddled anxious and despondent locked in the darkness of that room, lost and afraid, locked in the darkness of their souls? They spread the good news throughout the far reaches of the Roman Empire.

In our reading from Acts Peter is in Cornelius house, a Gentile, and explains the Good News started with God it was his message of peace sent to the people of Israel through Jesus Christ, who brought peace between God and humanity. But now, Peter says Jesus is Lord of all, beyond the Jewish nation, to everyone, including Gentiles. Peter gives a summary of Jesus ministry from Galilee to the country of the Jews and finally Jerusalem and his death but the emphasis is that God raised him to life. This was no ghost. No spirit, but a living breathing Jesus who ate and drank with his companions. Everyone who believes in him is forgiven, is given a second chance. Our salvation is through Jesus. What a different Peter from that frightened man locked in the darkness of that room, lost and afraid, locked in the darkness of his soul.

2000 years later, this Easter Sunday, I wonder, are there some of us in a metaphorical darkened room? There may be times in our lives where we feel locked in the darkness of a room, lost and afraid, locked in the darkness of our souls. This is not an easy world to live in. There is death and destruction all around us and this year of all years the conflict in the middle east is forefront of my mind - Iran Gaza Isreal West Bank Lebanon. But let us not forget Ukraine parts of Africa Venezuela

Yet there are other pressures upon us - at work, at home, with our friends. Making ends meet is difficult enough but now we face increased costs due to the war in the middle east. Do we worry about the future? Are we racked with guilt, with shame for something we have done, or have not done? For something we have said, or did not say? Are we worried about the ones we love?

For us the light has **not** gone out of our world. We are not in darkness. For if we let Jesus in to that darkened room, if we open that door light floods in to brighten our world. Whatever trials may be before us, whatever situation we may find ourselves in, whatever sorrow and remorse we feel, if we look to the future with anxious eyes, If we are afraid, Christ rose from the dead to forgive us, to love us, to give us the strength and the courage to face whatever may befall us.

Just as he commanded the women who saw the resurrected Christ first to tell the good news, Just as Peter and those other men locked in that darkened room went out into the known world to spread the news of Jesus Christ we are also given the responsibility to spread the news of his resurrection and the salvation he brings to others, to everyone but especially those who may be locked in the darkness of a room, lost and afraid, locked in the darkness of their souls.

He asks that we proclaim this good news on this Easter morning, to tell the world that Jesus is alive, here today, our Lord and Saviour

He has risen,

He has risen

He has risen indeed

AMEN