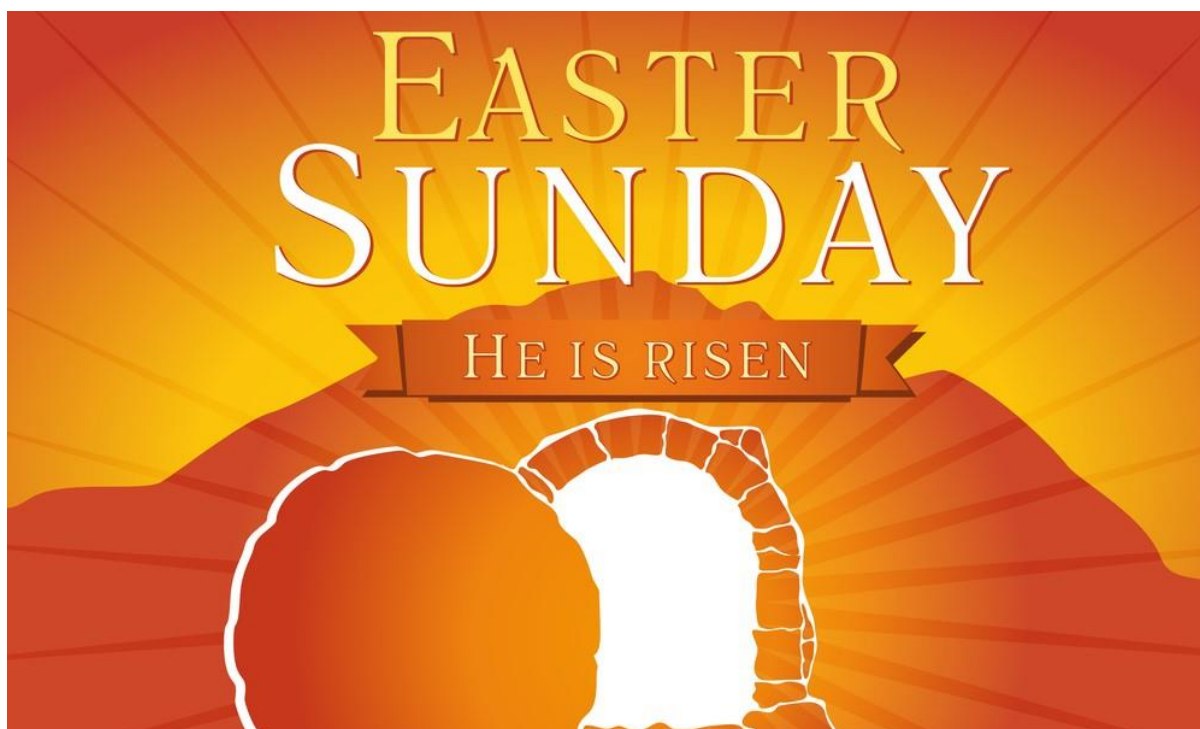


Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

04/04/2021 -- Easter Sunday

The Biggest Surprise Ever!



Today is our EASTER zoom

“Church & Chat”

A short church reflection with a hymn, reading, (children’s activity), prayer, “thought for the week” and then a time to chat.

If you need help to join please ask any deacon

All lockdown services can be found at: www.mbccs.co.uk

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.
1 Thessalonians 5:4

Good morning and welcome to Our Easter Sunday message.

Our first hymn for today is: "He Lives!"

[He Lives! \(I Serve A Risen Saviour\) - YouTube](#)

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near

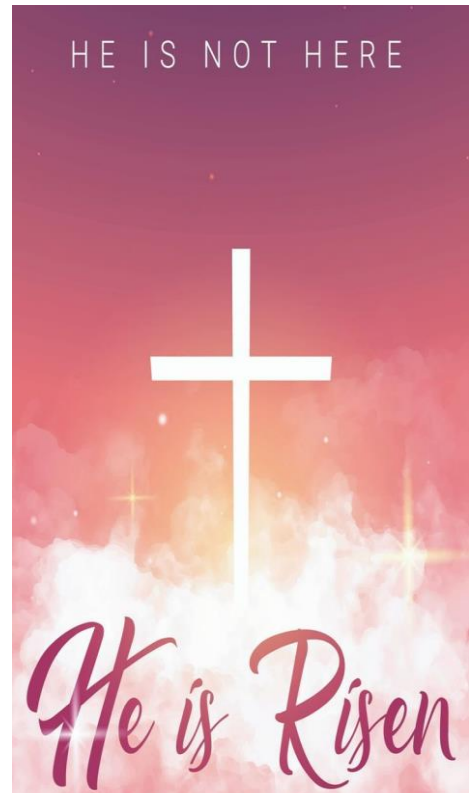
He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

In all the world around me I see His loving care
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair
I know that He is leading, thro' all the stormy blast
The day of His appearing will come at last

He lives! He lives!

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian! Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find
None other is so loving, so good and kind

He lives! He lives!



The reading today is Mark 16:1-8 [Mark 16:1-8 NIVUK - Jesus has risen - When the Sabbath was - Bible Gateway](#)



When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, 'Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?'

⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."'

⁸Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

The Biggest Surprise Ever

Today is Easter Sunday, a day that as a Christian is one of the most important days of the year. The day when we remember that after Jesus died on the cross to bear all our sins, He rose so we all can enjoy eternal life. But what a surprise that first easter day must have been.



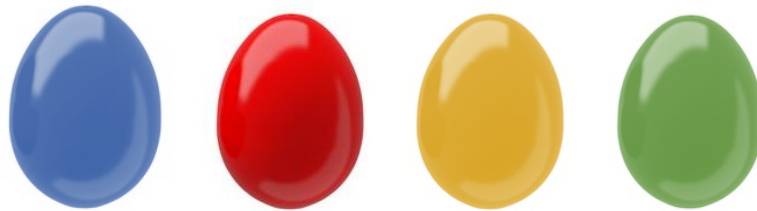
Have you ever played with a Jack-in-the-Box? I'm sure you have. The Jack-in-the-Box has been around for hundreds of years and most children have either had one or played with one. When I was a child, the Jack-in-the-Box was one of my favourite toys. I can remember sitting and turning the handle, waiting for the moment when the lid would open and Jack would pop out. Even though I knew what was going to happen, I was always surprised, and perhaps even a little frightened, when Jack popped out of the box. The Jack-in-the-box reminds of that first Easter.

Early in the morning, on the Sunday after Jesus was crucified, two women went to the grave where Jesus had been buried. When they arrived, they found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance and the grave was empty. They were extremely surprised to find an empty grave and wondered what had happened to Jesus, even though Jesus had told them this would happen.

While they were wondering about this, suddenly, two men in dazzling bright clothes appeared to the two women. Now they were not only surprised -- they were also afraid. The men spoke to the women and said, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here, he has risen just as he told you he would."

When the women heard these words, they remembered that Jesus had told them that he would be crucified, but that he would rise again on the third day. Now they were no longer surprised at finding an empty grave. They rushed back to tell his disciples -- and everyone else what they had seen.

Easter never seems to stop with the surprises. I remember the excitement of easter eggs when you would open the chocolate egg to see what was inside, I often found more chocolate, which my brother loved, sometimes there were sweets which I preferred and sometimes there was a treat.



The surprise of Easter can hopefully be seen by the surprises in my four easter eggs.



Inside the first egg is a cross. The cross reminds us that Jesus willingly carried his cross to Calvary to die for our sins. No one told him he had to do it, he did it because he knew that was the only way that we would ever get to heaven. God loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son so that we could have everlasting life.

Inside the second egg are three nails. They remind us that Jesus was nailed to the cross. The nails that they used to nail Jesus to the cross weren't little nails like these. They were great big nails. Can you imagine the pain he must have felt? He suffered great pain as the nails were driven into his hands and feet. He suffered the pain to pay the price for our sins.



Inside the third egg is a stone. The Bible tells us that after Jesus died, they placed his body in a tomb and put a huge stone over the entrance. On Sunday morning, the two women went to see the tomb and the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was open. The stone reminds us that even a huge stone could not keep Jesus in the grave.

That brings me to the last of my eggs, the one with the biggest surprise in it.



My fourth egg is empty. That is the greatest surprise ever. The Bible tells us that when the two women went inside the tomb, it was empty. Jesus was not there. At first the women thought that someone had stolen the body of Jesus. But inside the tomb was an angel who told them, "He is not here. He is risen, just as he said he would. Come, see the place where he lay." The empty egg reminds us that Jesus' tomb is empty. He is risen, just as he said he would.

The Jesus we serve willingly took up his cross, but he could not be held on the cross by the nails, and he could not be kept in the tomb by a stone. He is risen and lives in heaven with God, his Father. The Bible tells us that everyone who believes in him, will join him in heaven.

Some surprises, like playing with a Jack-in-the-Box, or seeing what is inside the egg make us happy, but the best reason we have to be happy today is that the grave is empty, Jesus is alive, He has risen and is the reason we celebrate EASTER.

Our final hymn for this today is "He Arose!" [Up from the grave He arose - YouTube](#)

Low in the grave He lay
Jesus my Saviour!
Waiting the coming day
Jesus my Lord!

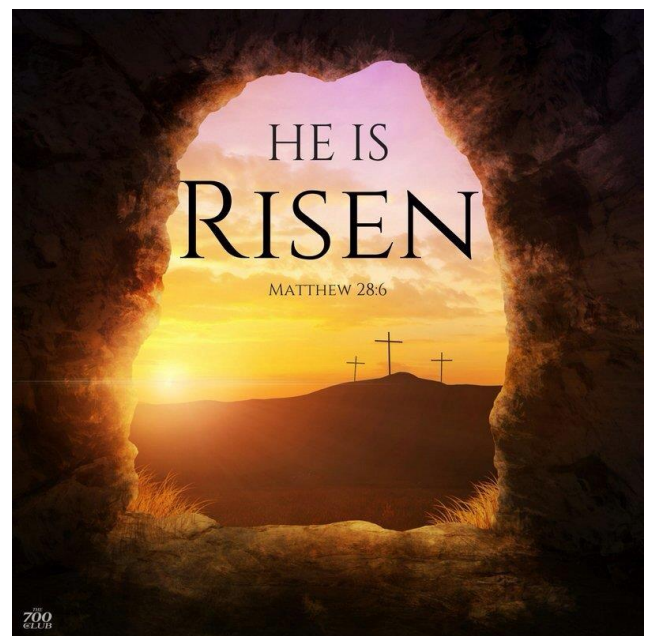
Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes
He arose a Victor from the dark domain
And He lives forever with His saints to reign
He arose! (He arose)
He arose! (He arose)
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed
Jesus, my Saviour!
Vainly they seal the dead
Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose.....

Death cannot keep his prey
Jesus, my Saviour!
He tore the bars away
Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose....



Prayer:

We thank you, Father, that you loved us so much that you sent your only Son to die for our sins. We are thankful that his story does not end with his death, but that we serve a risen Saviour! In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen



CAN YOU GUESS WHO I AM?

Draw a line from the clue to the person it describes.



Mary Magdalene

I was crying, but then I heard Jesus say my name and saw Him standing in front of me!

I was guarding Jesus' tomb. When I saw the angel, I got very scared.



Simon Peter



Angel

Jesus asked me if I loved Him three times - and I said "Yes".

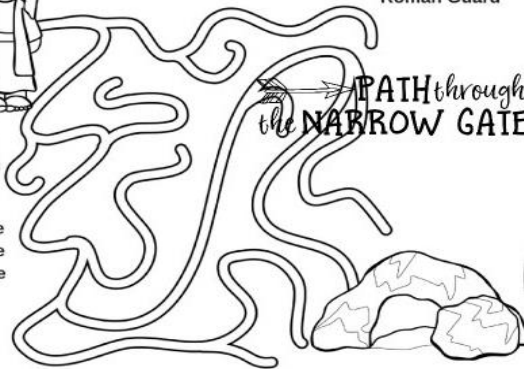
I told the women, "Do not be afraid; Jesus has risen from the dead!"



Roman Guard



Can you help the disciples and the women get to the empty tomb?



**MAY GODS BLESSING SURROUND YOU
EACH DAY
AS YOU TRUST HIM AND WALK IN HIS WAY;
MAY HIS PRESENCE WITHIN
GUARD AND KEEP YOU FROM SIN.
GO IN PEACE, GO IN JOY, GO IN LOVE!**