



St Stephen with St John Westminster

Eastertide



Introduction to the Season

The Great Fifty Days of Eastertide form a single festival period in which the tone of joy created at the Easter Vigil is sustained through the following seven weeks, and the Church celebrates the gloriously risen Christ:

Triumphant in his glory now,
his sceptre ruleth all,
earth, heaven and hell before him bow,
and at his footstool fall. (Fulbert of Chartres)

Early Christians gave the name Pentecost to this whole fifty-day span of rejoicing, which Tertullian calls 'this most joyful period'. It is sometimes also called 'Great Sunday'. In those places where the custom of lighting the Easter Candle at the beginning of Easter is followed, the lit Candle stands prominently in church for all the Eastertide services. The Alleluia appears frequently in liturgical speech and song; Morning Prayer begins with the traditional collection of Pauline texts known as the Easter Anthems, and white or gold vestments and decorations emphasize the joy and brightness of the season.

On the fortieth day there has from the late fourth century been a particular celebration of Christ's ascension. He commissions his disciples to continue his work, he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then he is no longer among them in the flesh. The ascension is therefore closely connected with the theme of mission. The arrival of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost completes and crowns the Easter Festival.

The minister welcomes the people

Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Jesus Christ Our Lord.
Amen.**

Entrance Hymn

The Introduction

Remain standing as the minister says

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

Alleluia Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Invitation to Confession

In baptism we died with Christ,
so that as Christ was raised from the dead,
we might walk in newness of life.
Let us receive new life in him
as we confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Or

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

Like Mary at the empty tomb,
we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Like the disciples behind locked doors,
we are afraid to be seen as your followers.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Like Thomas in the upper room,
we are slow to believe.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Or

We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

The Absolution

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

The Collect *for the Day*

The children and young people are welcome to leave for Sunday School.

All sit

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm or gradual hymn

The words to the psalm may be found on your white pew sheet.

Second Reading

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

All sit

Sermon

Profession of Faith

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Respond to the words 'Lord in your mercy' with 'Hear our prayer'
Ending with:

Merciful God,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace

Offertory Hymn

A collection will be taken during the Offertory Hymn for the work of this church.

Those who give regularly through our Planned Giving Scheme by Standing Order may wish to place an Offertory Card into the collection plate as a symbol of their giving.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
almighty and eternal Father,
and in these days of Easter
to celebrate with joyful hearts
the memory of your wonderful works.
For by the mystery of his passion
Jesus Christ, your risen Son,
has conquered the powers of death and hell
and restored in men and women the image of your glory.
He has placed them once more in paradise
and opened to them the gate of life eternal.
And so, in the joy of this Passover,
earth and heaven resound with gladness,
while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation
sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died
he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, 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.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together
for that day when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Stephen,
St John and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ,
and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours,
O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
**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.**

All remain standing

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

Agnus Dei

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

All are invited to receive communion

If you would like to receive a blessing, please bring this Order of Service with you

During Communion *the choir sing an Anthem*

Communion Hymn

Post Communion Prayer

The minister prays the post communion prayer followed by:

**Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you
our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

The minister gives any notices

Final Hymn

The Dismissal

Final Blessing

The minister gives the final blessing followed by the words

**Filled with the Spirit's power,
go in the light and peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Organ Voluntary

Everyone is welcome to stay for tea and coffee after the service.