

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW022)

**Easter Day:
“Jesus is Alive!”**

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EASTER DAY: JESUS IS ALIVE!

Service Aims:

To celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead and that because of this: i) our sins can be forgiven, ii) we can know God as Father and iii) we have a future hope.

Notes:

- 1) The service works well with a visual aid of a tomb (created out of chairs and blankets)
- 2) If your church has Holy Communion on Easter Day, you could run this service up to the end of Talk 3 moving into the Peace.

Biblical Reference(s):

John 20:1-18, 1Corinthians 15:6, Acts 10:34-43, Ephesians 2:8-9

Outline of Service:

Welcome:	Short welcome
Opening Drama:	“Where’s the body?” (based on John 20:1-10)
Opening Praise:	“Alleluia, Christ is Risen.....”
Opening song(s):	<u>Song(s) celebrating Jesus’ Resurrection</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	Sherlock Holmes investigates “The mystery of the missing body” part 1
Drama:	“Mary encounters Jesus” (Dramatized John 20:11-18)
Interview:	Sherlock Holmes investigates “The mystery of the missing body” part 2
Talk 1:	The Resurrection of Jesus demonstrates that Jesus is who He said He is; the Son of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you believe it?”
Creed:	Credal statement or renewal of baptism vows
Song:	<u>Credal song</u> (See Appendix 1)
Link:	So what does the Resurrection of Jesus mean for us?
Reading:	Acts 10:34-43
Talk 2:	i) Our sins can be forgiven
Response:	Confession and “Washing away of sins” activity
Talk 3:	ii) Jesus has made it possible for us to know God as Father
Song:	<u>Song thanking Jesus for the cross</u>
Link:	iii) A new world has begun with Jesus as Lord. We have a future hope.
Film Song:	“There is a Day” - Lou Fellingham (Phatfish)
Prayers:	Using 2 pray-ers and ending with the Lord’s Prayer
Summary:	Summarize the main points of the service
Final songs:	<u>Song(s) celebrating Jesus’ Resurrection</u>
Blessing:	Final blessing and giving of Easter eggs!

Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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Before the service:

Create a large “tomb” at the front of the church – see **Appendix 2**

Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the Easter Day service.

Opening Drama:

As the opening welcome concludes, Mary crashes dramatically into the church shouting: “*Peter, John....Jesus’ body is gone*” which then leads into a simple drama (see **Appendix 2**)

Opening Praise:

You may follow the drama with:

- an informal prayer of praise
- or the following Easter acclamation.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Opening Songs:

Song(s) celebrating Jesus’ Resurrection as per **Appendix 1**

Warm up:

The Warm up is a monologue given by the detective “Sherlock Holmes” as he looks at the clues to try and solve “The mystery of the missing body.” (see **Appendix 3**)

Drama:

The drama can be found in **Appendix 4** and is a dramatized version of John 20:11-18.

Interview:

The detective “Sherlock Holmes” conducts a very short interview with Mary and hears her testimony thereby solving “The mystery of the missing body.” (see **Appendix 5**)

Talk 1:

This talk would benefit from some Power Point slides of the main points with relevant pictures and words.

On Good Friday Jesus was crucified on a wooden cross.

- He died and was buried and placed in a tomb,
- but Jesus didn’t stay dead.

The good news that we are celebrating today is that Jesus was raised to life on the very first Easter day.....and He is alive today!

Jesus’ Resurrection demonstrates that Jesus is who He said He is.

- **Jesus is the Son of God.**
- Do you believe that?

We have just seen our very own Sherlock Holmes investigate all the different possibilities that could have happened to Jesus' body after it went missing from the tomb,

- and the only possibility that makes sense is that Jesus was resurrected.

Not only that but the Bible tells us that over 500 different eye-witnesses (1Corinthians 15:6) saw Jesus alive in the 40 days after His Resurrection before He went to be with His father in heaven.

Jesus was dead.

- Jesus was buried,
- but now Jesus, the Son of God is alive.
- Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father and is reigning as Lord.
- Do you believe it?

Creed:

At this point in the service you could incorporate either a **Credal statement** eg:

Let's be still for a moment as we think about how we are going to respond to Jesus and what we truly believe. PAUSE

Christ has died,
Christ has died,

Christ is risen,
Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.
Christ will come again.

I believe, Alleluia!
I believe, Alleluia!

or renew Baptism vows.

Let's be still for a moment as we think about how we are going to respond to Jesus and what we truly believe. PAUSE

Do you turn to Christ?
I turn to Christ

Do you repent of your sins?
I repent of my sins

Do you renounce evil?
I renounce evil

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the One for whom we exist?
I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?
I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church

This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Song:

Credal Song as per **Appendix 1**

Link:

So what does the good news of Jesus' resurrection mean for us today?

- Let's find out as we have our Bible reading, which is part of a sermon that Peter, one of Jesus' disciples gave in the house of a man called Cornelius.

Reading:

The reading is Acts 10:34-43 and can be read by children, young people or adults from a modern version of the Bible.

Talk 2:

You will need a large bowl of warm water that you have lightly coloured red with a few drops of red food colouring, a black pen and a piece of dissolving paper.¹

Jesus being raised from the dead means that: **our sins can be forgiven.**

- Luke, who wrote the book of Acts said that *"everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through His name"* (Acts 10:43)

When we were first created by Father God, He made us for a life giving relationship with Himself,

- but we have often turned away from Him and rejected His love. (*Write the words: "Not loved God" on the dissolving paper with the black pen*)

He also made us to have relationships with other people but we have often failed to really love members of our own family,

- other children at school,
- other colleagues at work,
- our neighbours and so on. (*Write the words: "Not loved others" on the dissolving paper*)

Not only that but we have often rebelled against God's holy laws,

- choosing hate instead of love,
- lying instead of truth,
- greed instead of sharing,
- selfishness instead of serving and so on. (*Write the words, "Rebelled against God" on the dissolving paper*)

Look at the mess that these sins have made of my nice piece of white paper.

- Sadly the same can be said about our lives.

¹ You can purchase "dissolving paper" from Amazon at www.amazon.co.uk by putting the words, "dissolving paper" into the search bar.

Sin messes things up and stops us from having a relationship with our holy Heavenly Father,

- and the problem is that there is nothing that we can do about it.

Some people think that they can earn Father God's forgiveness for the wrong things that they have done by doing lots of good works,

- but the Bible tells us that this isn't possible. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

However, Father God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to be our Saviour....

- When Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, He paid the price for everybody's sins in one amazing act of self-sacrifice.

Death couldn't hold Jesus in the grave and on Easter Day Jesus was resurrected.

- The good news for you and for me is that if we come to the living Jesus, believing that He died for us, we can be washed clean of our sin and given a new life.

Who would like to come and see what happens to my piece of paper that is covered with sin? (*Receive volunteer*)

- Let's put this paper into the bowl of water.....which is coloured red to remind us of Jesus' blood shed on the cross. (*Put paper into bowl of warm water*)

What has happened to the paper?

- It has all gone hasn't it?
- The sin has all been washed away.....

That is an illustration of what happens when we come to Jesus asking for His forgiveness.

- He washes our sins away, forgiving us and giving us a completely fresh start.

How many of you would like a fresh start today?

- Let's come to Jesus and receive the forgiveness that He earned for you and for me, and which cost Him so much.

Response:

You will need some large bowls of warm water that have been coloured red set up on tables at the front of the church and a small piece of dissolving paper with the word "SIN" written on it in black pen for each member of the congregation.

We are going to pass around some pieces of paper now. (*Distribute the pieces of dissolving paper to everyone*)

- Please take one each.

As you look at the word "Sin" on your paper, ask the Lord to show you any sins that He wants you to specifically confess to Him and turn away from. PAUSE

When you are ready, come and place your paper in one of these bowls of water.

- Watch the paper as it dissolves.....
- and thank Jesus that He died for you so that your sins can be forgiven.

Once people have finished dissolving their papers you may want to pray a prayer like:

Father thank you for your promise that when we confess our sins to You, You are faithful and just and forgive us our sins and wash us clean again.

Thank you that you do this because Jesus has paid for our sins in full. Amen.

Talk 3:

For this part of the talk you need three pieces of A4 paper. One piece has the word, "God" on it, another has the word, "Jesus" on it and the other has the word, "Person" on it. Loop some string through the papers so that you can hang them around your volunteer's necks. You also need a large piece of material that can be ripped down the middle. Make a small rip at the top of the material in the middle so it is easy to rip apart fully.

I need 3 volunteers to come and help me with this next part. *(Receive 3 volunteers)*

- One of you is Father God, one of you is Jesus and one of you is a person.

We have just heard that the Resurrection of Jesus means that we can be forgiven our sins.

- Not only that but the Resurrection of Jesus also means that we can enjoy the relationship with our Heavenly Father that we were created for,
- but which we lost through our sin.

Imagine for a moment that this is Father God. *(Place a label saying "Father God" around one of your volunteer's necks)*

- Now imagine that this is a person.....someone like you or me. *(Place a label saying "Person" around one of your volunteer's necks)*
- Father God made us for relationship with Himself *(Get the volunteers to have a hug)*

But when we chose to sin, our relationship broke down because Father God is holy. *(Move the 2 volunteers apart facing the congregation with a large chasm between them. Invite 2 people to hold a large piece of material between the 2 volunteers, separating them, like a wall.)*

Imagine now that this is Jesus. *(Place a label saying "Jesus" around one of your volunteer's necks)*

- Unlike us, Jesus never sinned and was always in perfect relationship with Father God. *(Stand Jesus next to Father God and get them to hold hands.)*

When Jesus died, *(Get Jesus to hold out their hands as if on the cross, while still holding onto Father God's hand)* something incredible happened inside the Jewish temple.

The large curtain that symbolically kept people separated from the presence of God was ripped from top to bottom like this. *(Rip the curtain in two from top to bottom and drop it onto the floor)*

- Now it is possible for men and women to have relationship with Father God because the barrier caused by sin has gone.

So when you or I come to the Risen Lord Jesus, asking Him to forgive us our sins, *(Turn the person towards Jesus)*

- not only are we forgiven, *(Jesus takes hold of the person's hand in their other hand)*
- but Jesus makes it possible for us to **know God as our Father** and to be part of His family. *(Jesus brings the person to Father God and the person then holds hands with Father God)*

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can live the life that we were originally created for.

- That is good news isn't it?
- Let's stand and thank Jesus for the cross and the life that He has brought us.

Song:

Song thanking Jesus for the cross as per **Appendix 1**

Link:

Not only did Jesus rise from the dead on that very first Easter morning,

- but He has opened the way for a new world where He reigns as Lord.

One day all of God's people will be given new resurrection bodies in order to share in that new world.

- This is the Christian hope.
- Watch this and be encouraged.

Film Song:

The film song is: "There is a day²" sung by Lou Fellingham and which can be found on YouTube at www.youtube.com

Prayers:

You may choose to use 2 children/young people/adults to pray alternately the prayers below:

Let us pray:

- 1) We praise You Jesus that You, the Son of God, are the Lord of Heaven and earth and we worship You on this Resurrection Day.
- 2) We praise You Jesus that on the cross You paid for our sins in full so that we may be set free to know our Heavenly Father's love.
- 3) We praise You Jesus that You defeated death making it possible for us to live with You forever.
- 4) We praise You Jesus that Your life within us can change the world. Keep us faithfully following You. Amen.

Finish by saying the Lord's Prayer together.

Summary:

Today as we have celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus we have discovered that:

- Jesus is who He said He is; the Son of God.
- Our sins can be forgiven.
- We can know God as our Father.
- We have the hope that one day we too will be given resurrection bodies so that we can live with God forever.

Final Songs:

Songs celebrating Jesus' Resurrection as per **Appendix 1**.

² You can find the song, "There is a day" on YouTube by putting: "Lou Fellingham (Phatfish) - there is a day" into the search bar.

Blessing:

As we leave today, with our hearts rejoicing in Jesus' resurrection, and all that this means for us, let us go into the world to share the good news with others.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

You may wish to follow the blessing by giving out small Easter eggs to members of your congregation!

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. Ideas include:

- Christ is Risen (Chris Rolinson © 1989 Thankyou Music)
- Come people of the risen king (Keith & Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend © 2007 ThankyouMusic)
- Crown him with many crowns (Matthew Bridges & Godfrey Thring)
- God's not dead (Greg Leavers, Peter Horrobin © 1986 Leavers, Greg, Horrobin, Peter)
- Here's a song bursting out (Matt Redman and Alan Price © 1998 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Jesus Christ is risen today (Samuel Arnold)
- Jesus we celebrate your victory (John Gibson © 1987 Thankyou Music)
- Let everything that, everything that (Matt Redman © 1997 Thankyou Music)
- The splendour of the King (Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Ed Cash © sixsteps Music)

ii) Credal Song. Ideas include:

- I believe in Jesus (Marc Nelson © 1987 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- I believe there is a God in heaven (Dave Bilbrough © 1991 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- This I believe (The Creed) (Matt Crocker and Ben Fielding © 2014 Hillsong Music Publishing)
- We believe in God the Father (Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music)

iii) A song thanking Jesus for the cross. Ideas include:

- I will worship (David Ruis © 1991 Shade Tree Music)
- Salvation belongs to our God (Adrian Howard & Pat Turner © 1985 Restoration Music Ltd)
- Thank you for saving me (Martin Smith © 1883 Curious? Music UK)
- Thank you for the cross (Graham Kendrick © 1985 Thankyou Music)
- Thank you for the cross (Darlene Zschech © 2000 Darlene Zschech / Hillsong Publishing)
- Thank you Jesus (author unknown)

iv) Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. Ideas include:

- And he shall reign (Graham Kendrick © 1993 Make Way Music)
- Bless the Lord O my soul (Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman © 2011 Thankyou Music)
- In Christ alone (Stuart Townend & Keith Getty © 2001 Thankyou Music)
- In him I have believed (Kate Simmonds © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- Jesus isn't dead anymore (Alan Price © 1994 Song Solutions Daybreak)
- Let no one caught in sin remain (Christ is risen) (Matt Maher & Mia Fieldes © 2009 Thankyou Music)
- Our God is alive (Becky Drake © 2007 Song Solutions Daybreak)
- Sing a song of celebration (David Ruis © 1993 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- The greatest day in history (Ben Cantelon, Tim Hughes © 2006 Thankyou Music)
- There's a place where the streets shine (Paul Oakley © 1995 Thankyou Music)
- Thine be the glory (Edmond Louis Budry, George Frideric Handel, Richard Birch Hoyle)
- We want to see Jesus lifted high (Doug Horley © 1993 Thankyou Music)

Appendix 2 – Opening Drama – “Where’s the body?” Based upon John 20:1-10

Cast: Mary, Peter, John

Props: “Tomb” created at the front of the church using stacked chairs in a semicircle and covered with grey blankets. Inside the “tomb” is a table covered with a grey blanket on which are 2 white pieces of sheeting; one for wrapping around Jesus’ body and one for wrapping around Jesus’ head.

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(Mary enters dramatically, crashing into the church and shouting from the back in total panic:)

Mary: Peter..... John.... Jesus’ body is gone....

(Peter and John join Mary at the back of the church)

Peter: What’s going on Mary?

Mary: Oh Peter, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don’t know where they have put him!

John: Come on Peter, let’s go and see what’s going on

(Peter and John run to the “tomb” at the front of the church with Mary lagging behind. John arrives first and bends down to look in. Peter then arrives and goes straight into the “tomb” but Mary stands outside it.)

Peter: Where’s Jesus gone?

Mary: Where’s His body?

(John goes into the tomb to join Peter. Mary sadly walks away. John very slowly picks up the white sheeting that was wrapped around Jesus’ body and holds it up, examining it in silence. He puts it back then slowly picks up the white sheeting that was wrapped around Jesus’ head and holds it up, examining it in silence. He puts that back and says slowly and wonderingly)

John: Jesus is alive. Yes, He really is alive. It is just as He said.
Come on Peter, we need to go and tell the others.

(John and Peter run back down the aisle of the church)

Appendix 3 – Monologue - “The mystery of the missing body” Part 1

Cast: Sherlock Holmes

Prop: You may wish to equip Sherlock with a magnifying glass and a deerstalker hat!
The words of this script can be put on a clip board for Sherlock.

Beforehand: Make 4 clues that say the following:

Clue 1: “But when the soldiers came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” (John 19:33-34)

Clue 2: “That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders.” (John 20:19 - New Living Translation)

Clue 3: “Then Simon Peter came along behind John and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.” (John 20:6-7)

Clue 4: “The angel said: “Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.”” (Mark 16:6)

Hide the 4 clues in the tomb for Sherlock to find. Number them so that the right clues are read at the appropriate time.

.....
(Enter Sherlock Holmes who stands at the front of the church centre stage)

Sherlock: Good morning to you all. My name is Sherlock Holmes and today I have a very big mystery to solve.....it is my biggest mystery yet and it is the mystery of....wait for it.....the missing body.

Last Friday, by all accounts Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. After He had died his body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in cloths and laid in a tomb.

A large stone was rolled in front of the entrance of the tomb and a seal was put on the stone. This tomb was then guarded night and day by Roman soldiers.

When a woman called Mary went to the tomb this morning, not only did she find the stone rolled away from the entrance, but Jesus' body was gone.

So what has happened to Jesus' body?

Bodies don't simply disappear.....I need to find out what happened to it and I need your help *(Speaking to the congregation)*

The first possibility is that Jesus didn't really die on the cross and that in the coolness of the tomb He revived, pushed the stone away and escaped.

How many of you think that's what happened to Jesus' body?

Let's have a look for clues. *(Sherlock enters the "tomb" and finds clue 1.)* Here's one. *(Holds up clue 1)* Who would like to come and read it? *(Volunteer reads clue 1)*

Hmmm....thank you. Roman soldiers knew how to crucify people. If they thought he was dead, Jesus was dead. Not only that but blood and water flowing from Jesus' side after He was speared, is medical proof that Jesus was dead.

Let's think about another possibility. Perhaps Jesus' disciples came in the night and stole Jesus' body.....yes that must be it.

How many of you think that's what happened to Jesus' body? Let's see if I can find any more clues. *(Sherlock enters the "tomb" and finds clue 2.)* Here's one. *(Holds up clue 2)* Who would like to come and read it? *(Volunteer reads clue 2)*

It sounds like the disciples were terrified and were hiding. They wouldn't have risked their lives to break a Roman seal and fight off the Roman guards to try and take Jesus' body. No....that's not what happened.

Perhaps grave robbers came and stole the body.....yes that's the most likely thing.....

How many of you think that's what happened to Jesus' body?

Perhaps I can find a clue that will lead me to the grave robbers. *(Sherlock enters the "tomb" and finds clues 3 and 4.)* Oh look I have found a couple of clues. It won't be long now until this mystery is solved. Who would like to come and read our third clue? *(Volunteer reads clue 3)*

You know grave robbers wouldn't have gone to all the trouble of taking Jesus' body and leaving the cloths behind because the cloths were the most valuable thing in the grave.....so we can't pin this mystery on them. This is getting odder and odder.

How can a body simply disappear leaving the grave cloths in place?
Perhaps our final clue will solve this mystery. Who would like to come and read it? *(Volunteer reads clue 4)*

An angel appearing to a woman saying that Jesus has risen from the dead!
Now that I don't believe.....that is too fantastic.....

I mean....if I am going to believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, then I need to speak to someone who has actually seen Him alive. Excuse me folks while I go and see if I can find an eye-witness.....although I am not very hopeful. Perhaps the mystery of the missing body is one of those mysteries that I will never solve.

(Exit Sherlock Holmes)

Appendix 4 – Drama - “Mary encounters Jesus” (John 20:11-18)

Cast: Mary, Jesus, Narrator

.....
(Enter Mary who stands by the tomb in distress)

Mary: Oh Jesus....where have they taken you?

Narrator: As Mary wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the foot. They asked her why she was crying.

Mary: They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put Him.

(Jesus appears behind Mary and Mary turns towards Him, keeping her face down)

Jesus: Why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?

(Mary turns to face the tomb, with her back towards Jesus and says:)

Mary: Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him and I will get Him.

Jesus: Mary

(Mary turns to face Jesus and says:)

Mary: Rabboni.....teacher....

(Mary holds onto Jesus and then Jesus says to her very gently:)

Jesus: Do not hold on to me.....but go and tell the good news to my brothers

(Mary runs down the aisle of church shouting:)

Mary: Jesus is alive.....Jesus is alive and I have seen Him.

(Jesus exits)

Appendix 5 – Monologue - “The mystery of the missing body” Part 2

Cast: Sherlock Holmes, Mary

.....

(Enter Sherlock who stands by the tomb)

Sherlock: I gather that we have a witness who claims that she has seen Jesus alive. Oh here she is.

(Enter Mary who joins Sherlock)

I gather from my sources that you have seen Jesus alive today.....is that true?

Mary: Yes it is true sir. I have seen Jesus this very day.....it is really amazing. On Friday I watched as they crucified Him then laid Him into the tomb. Today Jesus met me outside the tomb and talked with me.

Sherlock: So it was definitely Jesus that you spoke with?

Mary: Yes sir it was. He even called me by my name. I must go now and tell the good news to everyone.

(Exit Mary)

Sherlock: I am struggling to understand what this all means, but it is looking like Jesus died, was buried and then was raised from the dead. Another big mystery solved by the great Sherlock Holmes.

(Sherlock takes a bow then exits)