An Act of Spiritual Communion

A resource for Christians in the Anglican Tradition who are prevented from gathering for the Eucharist.

Notes: how to use this service



1. The service is designed to be used easily by one person. If there is more than one person participating, either everyone present may join in with all the words, or the words may be divided up into different sections. If so, it is wise to work out before starting, who is doing what.
2. Consider how you have set up your space: check you are going to be free from interruptions. You may wish to light a candle, if it is safe to do so. Some may wish to play some music before the service and at the end. Take time to be quiet before you begin and read the service in an unhurried way.
3. The sections in italics are rubrics: these explain what needs to happen at various points.
4. Spiritual communion: involves using your imagination. Imagine yourself taking the bread and drinking the wine at communion. As you do, express, in your heart, your desire to be united with Christ through his sacrament. Don't rush this moment as it is the highlight of the service.
5. Give yourself some time for silent prayer at the end.

The Preparation

As the deer longs for the water brooks,
so longs my soul for you, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God;
when shall I come before the presence of God?

(Psalm 42:1, 2)

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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 Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession and Words of Comfort

If we say we are without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us;
If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just
will forgive us our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1: 8, 9)

A period of silent recollection follows.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Hear the words of comfort our Saviour Christ says
to all who truly turn to him:

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish
but have everlasting life.

The Collect

Let us pray.
O God, who on this day,
through your Only Begotten Son,
have conquered death
and unlocked for us the path of eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Word of God

FIRST READING *from the Acts of the Apostles 10:34, 37-43*
Peter addressed Cornelius and his household:
'You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus

went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses - we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead - and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

This is the Word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING *from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians 3:1-4*
Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed - and he is your life - you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

This is the Word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

READING from the Gospel according to John *20:1-18*

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. **2** So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." **3** Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. **4** The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, **7** and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples returned to their homes.

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look[a] into the tomb; **12** and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. **13** They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." **14** When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." **16** Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew,[b] "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" **18** Mary

Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord, thanks be to God.

The Apostles Creed may be said

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ, hear our prayer O heavenly Father …

Merciful God, we pray for the many people who have contracted the coronavirus in the UK and other parts of the world. Bring comfort to those grieving loved ones who have died and peace to those worried, fearful and uncertain as the virus spreads. We also pray for governments and authorities who are developing strategies to contain and deal with the virus and those in the health services who may be risking their own lives to care for sick patients.

Help us all to be responsible in the things that we do in our lives to prevent the spread of the virus by taking heed of the recommended precautions and avoiding situations which may make things worse.

Lord in your Mercy, Hear our Prayer

We celebrate the glorious resurrection, may our Easter exhilaration continue throughout the rest of our lives and show in the way that we live it out.

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

We pray for a world that recognises Jesus as Lord and imagine how changed it would be; free from hatred, violence, poverty and injustice; a place where all would live together in love and harmony. That would be heaven here on earth.

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

We pray for families, friends and neighbours who have not yet recognised that Jesus died and rose again for everyone. Help them to see and realise the possibilities that accepting him into their lives will bring, not least the promise of life beyond the grave.

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Just as the stone of Christ’s tomb was rolled away so roll away the stones of illness, despair, worry and fear and pour the light and joy of his resurrection into our lives.

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Lord, your love reaches beyond the grave to raise your son to a triumphant resurrection.

When we fear our death and the death of those we love: strengthen us in the knowledge that Christ has gone before us to reign with you, crowned with glory and

honour. We pray for those departed this life that they too may be raised with Christ

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

May we go from this Easter Day service rejoicing, determined to live a resurrection life and show the world that we are your disciples.

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

Spiritual Communion

Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in the grave, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Psalm 139: 7-10

Jesus says,
Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking;
if you hear my voice and open the door,
I will come in to you and eat with you,
and you with me.

Revelation 3:20

Lord our God
you prepare a table before us
and, although we cannot be present at your Holy Eucharist,
by your grace, open our hearts to receive
the gift of your Son, the Word made flesh:

who, on the night that he was betrayed
took bread, and gave it to his disciples, saying
take, eat, this is my body which is given for you,
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper, he took the cup
he gave it to them saying,
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 in remembrance of me.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us
that, though separated by distance,
we may still, through faith, be partakers in the benefits
of Christ's offering of his body and his blood.

This we ask, through the same Jesus Christ
our Saviour. Amen.

The following prayer may be said

Most merciful Lord,
your love compels us to come in.
Our hands were unclean,
our hearts were unprepared;
we were not fit
even to eat the crumbs from under your table.
But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation,
and share your bread with sinners.
So cleanse and feed us
with the precious body and blood of your Son,
that he may live in us and we in him;
and that we, with the whole company of Christ,
may sit and eat in your kingdom. Amen.

A time of silence follows, as each person present makes their own spiritual communion with God.

The period of spiritual communion concludes by saying

As Jesus has taught us, so we say with confidence:

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.

The following prayer may also be said

Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Conclusion

'Remember, I am with you
to the end of the age,' says the Lord.

(Matthew 28:20)

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.

We go in the peace of Christ
Thanks be to God.