

# The First Communion of Easter

with  
the lighting of the Easter fire

Saturday 4 April 2026



THE CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, SERVING  
CHARVIL, SONNING AND SONNING EYE



*The responses and prayers in **BOLD** type are said by the whole congregation*

*The minister and the people gather outside.*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, on this most holy night, when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life, the Church invites her children throughout the world to come together in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord. We remember his death and resurrection by hearing his word and celebrating his mysteries, confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him for ever in God.

*The new fire is kindled.*

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: set us aflame with the fire of your love, and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*The priest lights the Easter Candle, saying*

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,  
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

*The congregation light their candles.*

*The priest bearing the Candle enters the building and says:*

The light of Christ. Thanks be to God.

*The congregation follow the priest into church and move to their seats and remain standing.*

*The procession of the Easter Candle moves to the centre of the nave where the priest says:*

The light of Christ. Thanks be to God.

*The candles of those around are lit from the Easter Candle and the priest says:*

The light of Christ. Thanks be to God.

*The Easter Candle is placed on a stand in the midst of the building.*

*The Exsultet sung by the choir*

*Please sit*

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

*A reading from the Book of Genesis*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights - the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night - and the stars.

God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

*A reading from the Book of Exodus*

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.'

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth.

As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:  
'I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'

*A reading from the Book of Ezekiel*

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

*At the conclusion of all the readings, the following response is used:*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

## Gloria in Excelsis

*Please stand. We sing the Gloria whilst the candles in the church are lit from the Easter Candle, the lights are switched on and the people's candles extinguished.*

Glory to God, glory to God. Glory to God in the highest.  
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.  
Glory to God, glory to God. Glory to God in the highest.  
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.  
Glory to God, glory to God. Glory to God in the highest,  
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.  
Glory to God, glory to God. Glory to God in the highest.

## The Collect

Let us pray that we may reign with the risen Christ in glory.

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

*We remain standing.*

*Gospel Reading - Matthew 28: 1-10*

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;  
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

**Alleluia.**

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "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: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him.

Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Profession of Faith

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

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

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**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 to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

## 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.

*John 20:19-20*

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

Let us offer one another a sign or a word of peace.

## Preparation of the Table

*A hymn (A&M 216) is sung whilst the table is prepared.*

### **The day of resurrection!**

Earth, tell it out abroad;  
The Passover of gladness,  
The Passover of God.  
From death to life eternal,  
From earth unto the sky,  
Our Christ hath brought us over,  
With hymns of victory.

2. Our hearts be pure from evil,  
That we may see aright  
The Lord in rays eternal  
Of resurrection-light;  
And, listening to his accents,  
May hear so calm and plain,  
His own "All hail!" and, hearing,  
May raise the victor strain.

3. Now let the heavens be joyful,  
And earth her song begin,  
The round world keep high triumph,  
And all that is therein;  
Let all things seen and unseen  
Their notes of gladness blend,  
For Christ the Lord is risen,  
Our joy that hath no end.

Risen Lord Jesus Christ, we believe you, and all we have heard is true.  
When you break bread may we recognise you as the fire that burns within  
us, that we may bring light to your world.

**Amen.**

*Please sit or kneel*

## **Eucharistic Prayer**

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

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.**

Father, we give you thanks and praise through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word, through whom you have created all things; who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour. By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh; as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin, he lived on earth and went about among us; he opened wide his arms for us on the cross; he put an end to death by dying for us; and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life; so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you because you raised him gloriously from the dead. For he is the true paschal lamb who was offered for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has restored to us everlasting life.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

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

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it 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 and gave you thanks; 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, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world; rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we, in the company of St Andrew and all the saints, may praise and glorify you for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us:

**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.**

## **Breaking of the 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.**

## Giving of Communion

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

**We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.  
Amen.**

**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.**

*If you are a communicant member of any Christian Church you are welcome to take communion with us, or if you would prefer a blessing please bring this booklet with you when you are invited to the communion rail.*

*While communion is being taken the choir will sing the hymn 'Ye choirs of new Jerusalem' (A&M 221) and the anthem "The strife is o'er" (Ley)*

## Prayer after Communion

**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.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

*Hymn (A&M 218)*

**Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;**  
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won;  
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
Kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;  
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;  
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing;  
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;  
Life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;  
Make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love:  
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

*Organ voluntary*

