

Great Thanksgiving
(Easter)

The risen Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Who was there to wipe away Your tears,
during the dark night of Your soul,
when the world projected all their sins upon Your child?
Who brought peace to Your troubled heart
as You watched with hushed breath
as they beat and mocked Your most beloved?
Who stilled Your anger as soldiers stripped your child of his dignity
and pierced his flesh with nail and spear?
Was it not Your eternal, endless, love that gave You strength?
Was it not Your all consuming compassion that gave You hope?
Was it not Your inclusive, prevenient grace that stirred Your mercy?

You never left Your Child.

You never forsake Your Son.

You were with him and he was with You.

You could not turn Your eyes away even in the face of his pain.

As Your beloved children we know that You have and always will
treat us the same way,
even on our darkest days.

So, we join this day and every day we can with everyone we can throughout the earth to praise
You.

Every moment of every day we desire to join with all the hosts of heaven
and join in their endless song:

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.

You are holy, and faithful and generous, and so is Jesus.
Jesus was born into a time darkness and death,

his parents having to become political refugees to keep him safe.
Jesus was filled with questions and curiosity, enjoying life to the fullest.
His parents struggled to keep him safe.
Jesus ministered to those on the margins of society,
a friend to the friendless,
a kind touch to the untouchable,
always finding the significance in the insignificant.
Christ's family and his disciples struggled to keep him safe.
But Jesus turned his face towards Jerusalem and
fearless like a lamb that is silent as it is prepared for sacrifice.

All Jesus wanted to do was love,
so it is not surprising that Jesus would stun those gathered for Passover
when he cared for them like a slave,
and washed their feet.
New life comes through acts of love.

All Jesus wanted to do was love,
as they remembered the struggles of the oppressed
Jesus took the Passover bread with thanksgiving, saying:
"Take some bread all of you, for this is my body given for you."
New life comes through acts of love.

All Jesus wanted to do was love,
as they remembered the high cost of sin
Jesus took the Passover cup with thanksgiving, saying:
"Drink some wine all of you, for this is the cup of my blood
poured out as a living witness to God's eternal covenant of forgiveness,
a promise to you and to all who will believe."
New life comes through acts of love.

Through these acts of love and so many others by You through Jesus Christ,
we have personally experienced new life and the power of the resurrection.
With all our hearts we seek to proclaim with our love this mystery of faith:

Christ has died;
Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.

Open Tomb, Open Heart
surprise us with this bread and this cup
allow them to be for us the resurrected Christ:
his body and his blood.

Open Tomb, Open Heart
surprise the world with our lives

allow us to become Your church:
the active body and compassionate Bride of Christ.

Open Tomb, Open Heart

allow this Easter to be a surprise:

awaken Your church to new possibilities of forgiveness and understanding;

amaze Your church with insights that bring us to repentance and a humble spirit;

resurrect Your church, allow the deadness of our institution to experience a new life of expanding love.

Christ has risen, Christ has risen indeed.

The Holy Spirit brings new life in all of its abundance.

And You who are Love itself, deserve our renewed reverence for the souls of Your children that we too often call our enemy, empowering us to join with them in singing Your praises forever.

Amen.

Now as those who experience resurrection in new ways every day, let us join with our risen Lord to 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.