

## **Easter is going to be very special this year**

Easter is going to be very special this year. There will be no lighting the Easter Fire outside the church door and no carrying of the Paschal Candle through the church to its stand beside the altar. There will be no Dawn Service on the beach to rejoice at the rising sun. Why?

We all know why; it is because we have been isolated from one another, many of us confined to our homes, in order to escape a plague that is devastating the world. Covid-19 !

Let us remember that our Easter Resurrection festival closely corresponds in date with the Jewish Feast of Passover. The Death of Jesus and his Resurrection as Christ our Lord took place at the time of the Passover in Jerusalem. His Last Supper with his disciples in the Upper Room was, perhaps, their sharing of the Passover *seder* meal.

Jews celebrate the Passover each year to commemorate the circumstances of their ancestors in Ancient Egypt. On that first “pass – over” night, each family was sequestered in its home. No one was permitted to step outside. Outdoors, an angel of God swept through the land, but in each Jewish home there was light and hope. The next morning, the Jewish people left for the Promised Land. (You can read this in Exodus, chapter 12.)

How shall we celebrate this Easter without the *ekklesia* – those who have been “called out” by God?

There is something we can do to remember Passover and Resurrection, whether we are at home alone or with our family or a companion. Let us take a candle and, as we light it, say “The Light of Christ; thanks be to God.”

Let us take a plain wafer biscuit or a small piece of bread (or whatever is convenient) and, before eating it, try to picture in our minds that Upper Room where Jesus took bread and gave thanks; then he gave it to His disciples and said, “This is my body, given for you”.

Then let us give thanks for the piece of bread or biscuit and “take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for us, and let us feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving,” (Book of Common Prayer, 1662)

And let us keep silence for a while, with God.

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How long will it be before we are together again in communion at Holy Communion? We do not know; no-one can tell us. The future seems to be swallowed into a great fog of uncertainty. The world which we knew only a few weeks ago is gone; perhaps never to be quite the same again.

Yet there is One Who is faithful and sure in every time, in every circumstance. Resurrection puts past and present into perspective. It says there is something beyond today's headlines.

In the meantime, we need healing – not only from aches and fevers and infection in our lungs, but for our souls, so that we can face the world once more with joy and confidence, with optimism and courage, with Resurrection faith.

Without Resurrection, could there be a Christian people? Could there be any freedom at all in the world? Could there be hope for a better future? And hope is something we all need right now.

Living Christ, you are risen from the dead!

Love reigns!

You are life stronger than death;

raise our eyes to see you as the new day dawns. (NZPB)

And all the people replied; Amen.