

# Easter Festival of Readings and Music

## A Bidding for Easter

My sisters and brothers  
as we celebrate Christ's rising from the dead,  
let us call the whole universe to share our joy.

Out of darkness has come light,  
out of bitter sweet, out of evil good.  
For evil scatters  
shame runs away,  
innocence blooms once more.  
For, we sing in our chains,  
we embrace in our fear,  
we kneel in deep gratitude,  
and we pause in the stillness.

As we hear the story of the resurrection,  
Let us acknowledge we refashion the meaning of words.  
Therefore, in silence and in music, in praise and in prayer  
let us bring before the Source of life and light  
our awe and wonder,  
our joy and laughter  
our thanks and blessing  
our everlasting adoration.

Readings:

1. Genesis 1.1-5 (In the beginning God...created the heavens and earth)

### **Prayer**

Almighty and eternal God  
you created all things in wonderful beauty and order.  
Help us now to perceive  
how still more wonderful is the new creation,  
by which in the fullness of time  
you redeemed your people  
through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

2. Ezekiel 37.1-14 (I am going to open your graves and I will bring you back to the land)

### **Prayer**

Living God,  
by the death and resurrection of your Son  
you have brought us out of sin into righteousness,  
out of death into life.  
Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit  
the will and power to proclaim you in all the world;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

3. Zephaniah 3.14-20 (At that time I will bring you home..when I restore your fortunes before your eyes.)

**Prayer**

O God of unchangeable power and might,  
let the whole world see and know  
that things which were cast down are being raise up,  
and things which had grown old are being made new,  
and that all things are brought to perfection  
by him through whom all things were made,  
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

4. Romans 8.35-39 (We are more than conquerors through him who loved us)

**Prayer**

Blessed are you, O God,  
through the weakness of Jesus Christ  
you have bound us to yourself.  
By his weakness you have given us the victory,  
by his humility you have raised us up,  
by his love you have won for us eternal life.  
Glory and praise to you for ever and ever. **Amen.**

5. 1 Peter 1.3-8,21 (He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ)

**Prayer**

God of our salvation,  
in the time of trial keep our eyes fixed on you,  
that we may always be ready to give voice  
to the living hope in which we are reborn,  
through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

6. Revelation 21.1-7 (I saw...the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God)

**Prayer**

God, source and future of the earth,  
enlighten our hope by the vision of the holy city.  
Be among us as our light and our temple,  
our comfort and our joy;  
we ask this through Jesus Christ  
the pioneer of our salvation,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

7. John 11.17-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)

**Prayer**

Almighty God,  
Your Son came into the world  
To free us all from sin and death.  
Breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit,  
That we may be raised to new life in Christ,  
And serve you in holiness all our days;  
Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

8. Luke 24:1-9 (Why do you look for the living among the dead?)

**Prayer**

Almighty and eternal God,  
the strength of those who believe,  
the hope of those who doubt,  
may we, who have not seen, have faith  
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

9. John 21.1-14 (They knew it was the Lord)

**Prayer**

God of new beginnings,  
we give you thanks for Jesus Christ  
the sunrise of our human race,  
who calls us to share in his eternal banquet.  
Give us grace to hearken gladly to his call.  
we ask this in his name and for his sake. **Amen.**

**An Easter Litany**

In joy and hope let us pray to the source of all life, saying, "Hear us, Lord of life!"

That we may be filled with the joy of Christ's holy and life-giving resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

**Hear us, Lord of life!**

That Christians who are persecuted and oppressed may find fresh strength in the Easter Gospel; let us pray to the Lord.

**Hear us, Lord of life!**

That we may find grace to be subject to one another in Christian love, let us pray to the Lord.

**Hear us, Lord of life!**

That we may find new ways of sharing the goods of the earth with those who lack food, work or shelter, let us pray to the Lord.

**Hear us, Lord of life!**

That through the grace of God the human family will abolish war and destructive exploitation of the earth, that all may live in peace and plenty, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Hear us, Lord of life!**

That those who are sick, weak, and dying may be comforted and strengthened by the power of the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Hear us, Lord of life!**

That God will send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon us, that we may bear faithful witness to Christ's resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Hear us, Lord of life!**

Rejoicing in God's new creation, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

Our Father...

Blessing  
God the Father,  
By whose love Christ was raised from the dead,  
Open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.  
**Amen.**

God the Son,  
Who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory,  
Give you joy as you share the Easter faith.  
**Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,  
Who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord,  
Empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.  
**Amen.**

And the blessing...