



The Archbishop of Canterbury will call for “a resurrection of our common life,” during his Easter Sunday sermon. The message, which will be delivered from the kitchen of the Archbishop’s flat in London, is part of the Church of England’s first national digital service for Easter Sunday. It was recorded on the Archbishop’s iPad.

The Most Rev Justin Welby will be joined by the Bishop of Dover, The Rt Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin, who will read the Gospel as well as his wife Caroline, who will read from the Book of Acts. Bishop Rose will also share how churches in the Diocese of Canterbury are enabling prayer and worship while congregations are unable to gather in church buildings. Theodore Levings, a ten-year-old member of All Saints church in Canterbury will lead prayers. In common with clergy and people across the Church of England, each were recorded at home to observe physical distancing.

The Archbishop's sermon will highlight the astonishing courage of those on the front lines of the battle against Covid-19. "After so much suffering, so much heroism from key workers and the NHS," he will say, "we cannot be content to go back to what was before as if all is normal. There needs to be a resurrection of our common life."

Following familiar elements from an Easter service, including popular Easter hymns such as *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*, to mark the resurrection of Jesus, the Archbishop will give his address and respond to the current uncertainty and acknowledge that, "So many people right across the country are anxious about employment, food, are isolated from loved ones and feel that the future looks dark. People right across the globe feel the same uncertainty, fear, despair and isolation. But you are not alone."

The Archbishop, who would normally preside before a congregation of around 1,500 at Eucharist in Canterbury Cathedral on Easter morning, will go on to root the hope for the UK and the world in the events of the first Easter, two thousand years ago in Jerusalem. "In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have a hope that is surer than stone; than any architecture," he will say. "Even in the dark days of this Easter we can feed on hope. We can dream of what our country and our world will look like after the pandemic."

The service, which marks the biggest festival in the Christian calendar, will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 4, this Sunday 12th March. It will be available to watch on [the Church of England's Facebook page](#) and [website](#) from 9am.

The service will finish with a large national virtual congregation singing *Thine be the Glory*, submitted by BBC Radio listeners in advance.

The Church of England's first national online service, on Mothering Sunday, was [seen and heard by millions](#). Subsequent Sundays have seen the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Manchester lead services from their own homes.

In recent weeks, churches have been adapting to home-led services and events – often through web-streamed acts of worship. In three weeks, national streamed Church of England services have attracted an online audience of more than two million people. This does not include the large audiences watching the more than 3,000 livestream services made available by local churches on [AChurchNearYou.com](#) The site has seen a 35 per cent increase in traffic over the last month.

Meanwhile, some church buildings have been continuing to offer night shelter and foodbank support, as well as meeting the current need as temporary assembly and distribution points for vital medical supplies.

More Information

- Church of England apps have seen an increase in downloads by more than 2,000 per cent in some cases
- The Church has made Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer daily audio services available via social media and on the Alexa and Google Home apps. There has been a 70 per cent increase usage of the Church's Alexa app usage in recent weeks
- More than 1,100 church leaders took part in online training on live streaming and using social media effectively in March 2020
- More than 30 per cent of those watching the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mothering Sunday service were under the age of 34
- Accessibility is key: all Church of England videos have subtitles and as much content as possible is available in downloadable and printable formats

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