

New Beginnings

Easter service

This booklet contains hymns, readings and prayers that form a special Easter service emphasising the importance of bringing new life and hope to those in need. Please use your favourite ideas to create a service your congregation will enjoy.



Dates for your diary

Sunday notice	Feb 15	Ask your congregation to take part in FAST.PRAY.GIVE.
Lent begins	Feb 18	It's Ash Wednesday today – countdown to Easter begins
Six Sundays during Lent	Feb 22, Mar 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29	Promote Lent for Shelter in your Sunday services and ask your congregation to write a prayer for homeless families
Palm Sunday	Mar 29	Today is the last Sunday to add your congregation's prayer to your prayer village.
Last Supper	Apr 2	Final opportunity to complete your Easter service and take time to pray about Jesus' crucifixion.
Good Friday	Apr 3	
Easter Sunday	Apr 4	Jesus rises! Hold your Shelter Easter service and bring new hope for Britain's homeless families.

Let us bring new hope to those facing homelessness and bad housing this Easter

Opening hymn

Christ the Lord is risen today

Greeting

Welcome on this joyous Easter Sunday! We meet today to celebrate the resurrection of our saviour Jesus Christ, whose eternal sacrifice gives us new hope and new life. On the cross Jesus broke the power of sin and death and has given our broken world new life and hope. We stand together as witnesses to the power of His love for us and we proclaim...

Leader: Christ has risen.

All: He has risen indeed! Alleluia!

Introduction

Today's service is in support of Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity. The terrible toll bad housing puts on families, especially their children's health and education, cannot be ignored. So, as Jesus' sacrifice brings us new life, we hope the donations we give at the end of this special service will create a new beginning for these families.

Hymn

Crown Him with many crowns

Reading

Jeremiah 31.1-6

Creed

Let us declare our faith in the risen Lord: Jesus died for our sins
As it says in the scriptures,
He was buried
He was raised to life on the third day
Afterwards he appeared to his followers,
And to all the apostles,
This we have received and this we believe.

Prayer

Dear Lord, As we rejoice in you on this Easter Sunday, Help us to experience your New Life that transforms and makes all things new, You have no hands to work except ours, Help us to see the need to care particularly for Britain's homeless families. We lift to you the work of Shelter and ask that those who seek help may find good provision and a listening ear.

Reading

Colossians 3.1-4

Hymn

Thine be the glory

Easter service talk

Use Sharon & Mike's story as an example of a child that needed, and was brought, a new beginning.

- Talk about how, through the support and help of others, a situation that was thought to be hopeless was turned around, and now the young child can look forward to the future full of hope.
- Have a member of the congregation give their testimony about what 'new life in Christ' means their life. New life in Christ means we serve Him. The case study from Shelter could be used. It tells of a life turned around by caring.

Sharon, Mike and three year-old-Freddy

This family were evicted after Sharon was too ill to work and help Mike pay the rent on their house. They were moved around by the council firstly into emergency interim accommodation, then again, and finally into a cramped hostel. Freddy witnessed violent disputes in the block due to overcrowding – seeing things that a little boy should never have to see. As he was sharing one bedroom with his parents, there was nowhere to play and he found it difficult to sleep. The council then planned to evict the family from the temporary accommodation as they were deemed 'intentionally homeless'.

Thankfully, Shelter was there to answer Sharon's call for help. We wrote to their local council to prove the validity of her long-term illness. In response the family were granted a permanent housing association flat. This safe, secure home gave Freddy a new beginning full of hope for the future, but it was only possible because of donations from people like you.



What we do

Every 11 minutes, another family in Britain is made homeless. Every year, thousands come to us for help.



We run a free national helpline open all year round



We provide practical housing advice online



We offer face-to-face support services up and down the country



And we stand up in court for people who face losing their home.

Collection

Take the collection to support Britain's homeless families and set a target of how many families your church want to give a new beginning this Easter:

£250 could fund 10 helpline advisers for an hour, helping 24 families keep the home they love

£188 could fund a helpline adviser for a day, helping 18 families find somewhere safe to stay for the night

£100 could fund a helpline adviser for four hours, helping 10 families about to be evicted



*Shelter helped us find somewhere we could call home.
- Emily, Chris and Baby Jack.*



*You protected me from dangerous living conditions
- Mary*

Hymn

To God be the glory

Closing message

In these difficult times, many families are struggling to make ends meet. Talk about how losing your job can cause terrible hardship for many families, sometimes even leading to homelessness. Now, more than ever, people are looking for hope and the chance for a fresh start. Churches need to continue to find ways to help, including supporting charities like Shelter, who are on the front line in the fight to relieve the terrible suffering caused by bad housing and homelessness. The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest source of hope. When Mary Magdalene came into the garden, she had no hope. Her world had fallen apart – and then she met with the risen Lord!

Christians bear witness to the life-changing experience of meeting with Jesus and at Easter time God challenges us to love and serve others in need. Happy Easter!



Hello, I'm Thomas, and I'm the Faith Fundraiser at Shelter.

If you need collection envelopes, or more copies of this service sheet, please call us on **0344 515 2040**, email faith@shelter.org.uk or visit shelter.org.uk/faith. Please make cheques out to 'Shelter' and post to Thomas Micklewright, 3rd Floor, Shelter 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9HU.