

Easter– greater than Covid

The doors are closed– not locked like in a cell,
but shut to keep a virus out and people in,
We watch the numbers– night in and night out and we
wonder– will this unseen thing reach into our lives?
Our anxiety increases and our social connections are
restricted– where are you O God? Where are you?
And then we hear the words of scripture-
'Why are you looking for Him here?'
For Christ is greater than any power on earth– greater
than a virus, greater than death itself.

And he is risen.

He, who was dead,

He who was buried,

He is alive.

So lift your eyes and see the One
The One who was dead– who is risen
Lift your eyes and see the truth
God is greater than closed doors
God is love– and you, yes you are loved.

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Easter Sunday

12th April, 2020

Westmead Uniting Church

A congregation of Parramatta

Mission



28After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."

CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome to all who worship on this glorious day. There is no isolation with Christ– all are welcome– and all are able to Worship free from fear and free from anxiety.
Come and worship God.

SONG Christ the Lord is Risen Today AHB290(i)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzy7jFNUc3w>

'Christ the Lord is risen today,'
Sons of men and angels say
Raise your joy and triumphs high:
Sing, O heavens, and earth reply:

Lives again our glorious king;
where, O death, is now your sting?
Once he died our souls to save;
where's your victory, O grave?

Love's redeeming work is done;
fought the fight, the battle won;
vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ has opened paradise



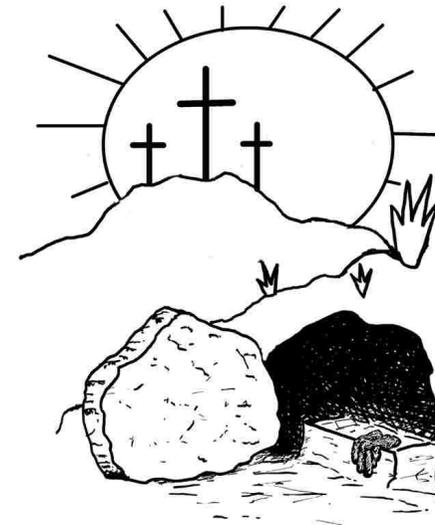
BLESSING

On this glorious day when we remember Christ's resurrection,
May the blessing of God the Creator incite in you and excitement
for life,

May the blessing of Christ the risen One, give you hope

And May the blessing of God the Spirit dance with you and give
you courage for all that lies ahead.

Blessing– Father, Son and Spirit, Creator,
Redeemer and Sustainer
be with you all this day and all days.



THE PEACE

The peace of the risen Christ be with you.

And also with you.

OFFERING

During this time of Covid 19 everyone is encouraged to continue to put aside their offering. This will be brought together at some point in time to assist in the continuing costs of the ministry of Westmead.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Loving God, we thank you for this Easter Day - with its promise of new life, and new opportunities. Use us, and our gifts, to love and to serve you, and to witness to Christ whom you have raised, and in whose name we pray. **Amen**

HYMN “Thine be the glory...”

Thine be the glory, risen, Conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o’er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes, where Thy Body lay.

***Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o’er death hast won.***

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing,
For the Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life:
Life is nought without Thee: aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors, through Thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

Demond Louis Budry, 1854-1932; tr. by Richard Birch Hoyle, 1875- C.C.L.I. No. 237097

Soar we now where Christ has led,
following our exalted Head;
made like him, like him we rise:
ours the cross, the grave, the skies
Words: Charles Wesley 1707-88 C.C.L.I. No. 237097

PRAYER

Easter God,
we bring you our praise and our thanks.
You take the pain of our Good Fridays,
the watching of suffering and the waiting for death,
and transform our helplessness
into the fragile beginnings of hope.
You take the bleakness of our Easter Saturdays,
the weariness of defeat and desolation,

and transform our despair
into the will and courage to go on.
You take the grieving of Easter Sunday morning,
the fearful approach to the tomb,
and transform our bewilderment
into the breathless excitement of new life.

⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving God, it would be so easy to turn away from you when we cannot meet and we cannot be encouraged through others. Yet we know that you are with us no matter who is around us and no matter what others may say or do.

You are the one who knows our deepest desires and the deepest disappointments. We confess you as Lord of our lives— but too often we come back and become Lord of all.

We confess you as God of creation— above and beyond our understanding, yet we want to understand all about you and restrict who you are to our own understanding.

We want to connect with others, and when we can't and have to stay at home, we get frustrated. Yet when we do get the opportunity to connect with others— we often struggle to express our faith well— in what we say and what we do.

God of Grace, you know us and yet you still love us. On this day when we are reminded that your power is even greater than death, we seek your forgiveness. Help us to forgive ourselves, and help us to forgive others.

We ask this in the precious name of Jesus— risen Lord, **Amen.**

Remember this— that in Jesus Christ— our sins are forgiven,
Thanks be to God.

SONG TiS 376 I know that my redeemer lives

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQ4P28k1VMY>

I know that my Redeemer lives –
what joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
he lives, my everlasting Head.

For wounded souls and bodies we pray; those in hospitals and clinics, those who watch by their beds, and those who are grieving and waiting for funerals later in the week.

Come living Christ,

Come among us with rest for the weary and peace for the distraught..

For our own loved ones we pray, some with faith and others on the fringe, those who are strong and others who are weak, some who are confident and others who are riddled with anxieties, those close at hand and those who are far away in body or spirit.

Come living Christ,

Come among with that grace which shows its perfection in human weakness.

Amen! Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Amen!

And now, let us join with the Christians of all nations in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples as we say in our first language or the language of our heart

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

As we forgive those who sin against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

Forever and ever, Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Throughout the church, across the world, please loving God, may the message of the living Christ penetrate beneath the level of familiarity, and begin to awaken that which is lost and dying within the human spirit.

Come living Christ,

Come among us and make all things new.

For brilliant thinkers we pray, those whose thoughts divert them into doubts and enigmas that leave a genius confused while little children dance freely into your kingdom. We pray especially for those scientists working on vaccines and better detection of the Covid 19 virus— and for the countless engineers working on ventilators and other machines to help the world in this pandemic.

Come living Christ,

Come among us with the priceless gift of faith.

For confused minds we pray, especially for all who experience anxiety at this time. For those who are struggling, and for the people seeking to strengthen the resilience of people in all parts of society.

Come living Christ,

Come among us with truth that sets prisoners free.

For people who make bad choices and who seek to make an apology in how they live their life now— and for those who struggle with forgiving others or forgiving themselves.

Come living Christ,

Come among us with your light and make us see.

For thirsty minds we pray, those who are awakening to questions previously ignored, or who need a deeper experience of God to meet them in their lives.

Come living Christ,

Come among us with waters that bubble up with eternal life.

He lives, to bless me with his love;
he lives, to plead for me above;
he lives my hungry soul to feed;
he lives to help in time of need.

He lives, and grants me daily breath;
he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives, my mansion to prepare;
he lives, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name;
he lives, my Saviour, still the same;
what joy the blest assurance gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives!

Words Samuel Medley/Music James William Elliot C.C.L.I. No. 237097

READINGS

Acts 10: 34-43

³⁴Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained



by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Colossians 3: 1-11

¹So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life.

⁸But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION *Alleluia— ‘I found my keeper!’*



SONG **TIS 225 My heart and voice I raise**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcgW6wS5niY>

My heart and voice I raise
to spread Messiah’s praise,
Messiah’s praise let all repeat:
the universal Lord
by whose almighty word
creation rose in form complete.

A servant’s form he wore,
and in his body bore
our dreadful curse on Calvary:
he like a victim stood
and poured his sacred blood
to set the guilty captives free.

But soon the Victor rose
triumphant o’er his foes
and led the vanquished host in chains:
he threw their empire down,
his foes compelled to own
o’er all the great Messiah reigns.

With mercy’s mildest grace
he governs all our race
in wisdom, righteousness and love:
who to Messiah fly
shall find redemption nigh,
and all his great salvation prove.

Hail, Saviour, Prince of Peace!
Your kingdom shall increase
till all the world your glory see,
and righteousness abound
as the great deep profound,
and fill the earth with purity.

Words Benjamin Rhodes/Music Glaz traditional melody C.C.L.I. No. 237097