



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

**Westmead
Uniting Church**



**Parramatta
Mission**



turning from death to life

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/5199089657>

Or Dial in by phone +61 2 8015 6011 Australia

WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Easter Day!

LIGHTING OF THE EASTER CANDLE

Today we light the Easter candle,
proclaiming the transforming power of God.
Today we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities.
Christ is alive and living among us!

The candle is lit

THEME *Turning from death to life*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burramattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The crucified Christ is risen!

The crucified Christ is risen indeed!

The stone has been removed from the tomb
and we may meet the Christ alive in our day.

Death cannot capture the life of God.

It springs forth in every generation,
within the wonder of peace and love.

Its power will always defeat the mighty,
and the song of freedom from the bonds of betrayal
will know no end.

The crucified Christ is risen!

The crucified Christ is risen indeed!

HYMN *Morning has broken* (TiS 156)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=we-n-ZmglT0>

Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall,
sunlit from Heaven
Like the first dew fall,
on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness
where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight,
mine is the morning
Born of the One Light
Eden saw play
Praise with elation,
praise every morning
God's re-creation
of the new day



PRAYER

God of terror and joy,
you arise to shake the earth.
Open our graves
and give us back the past
so that all that has been buried
may be freed and forgiven,
and our lives may return to you
through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Janet Morley, All desire known, 14

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The grace of Christ is alive here and now!
We need not fear that love has died.
It breaks forth again in kindness
every time that we approach in humble faith.
We are forgiven!
Thanks be to God.

HYMN *Christ is alive let Christians sing*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2JEwda8G0U>

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
His love in death shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,
where color, scorn or wealth divide,
he suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died

Women and men, in age and youth
Can feel the Spirit hear the call,
And find the way, the life, the truth,
Revealed in Jesus, freed from all.

Christ is alive! And comes to bring
Good news to this and every future age,
till all creation lives and ring
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

SCRIPTURE READING *John 20: 1-18 (NRSV)*

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken Jesus out of the tomb,

and we do not know where they have laid him."

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple out ran Peter and reached the tomb first.

He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head,

not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away Jesus, and I do not know where they have laid him."

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?"

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen Jesus the Christ"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Response

*O God our nurturer,
may your word live in us.
And colour our living. Amen!*

SERMON

Turning from death to life

HYMN

Now the green blade rises (TiS, 382)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpU01KQIUJM>

(Sung by Steve Winwood)

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth many years has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom we had slain,
Thinking that never he would wake to life again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Up he sprang at Easter, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain;
Up from the dead my risen Christ is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are saddened, grieving or in pain,
By your touch you call us back to life again;
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

OFFERING An offering of our lives and the gifts of creation.

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Rise among us here, O Christ.

Enliven everything we are and do, we pray.

Renew our love for others
so that we can truly love with the world
witnessing in this that you cannot be destroyed
by the powers of this time or any other.

***Take our hands and lead us towards
a life which follows in your footsteps, Jesus Christ.***

Give to us wisdom in walking this way
and preparedness to create, even small echoes,
of your brave and glorious journey.

***As our spirits lift in joy this day,
we hold these people and situations before you:
The people pray***

Bring to life the actions for good
which will make the changes that are needed, we pray.

***Speak through us, O Christ,
that our voices will be raised against injustice.***

Give to us all that we need
to understand how best to work with these longing people.

***Gather us towards all who feel
that no-one cares about them.***

Embrace the ones who believe that life is not worth living
and show us how to transform the deathly forces
which destroy their hope, we pray.

***Shine your risen life before us, Jesus Christ,
so that we may see and know
that you live in all creation in everlasting love.
Amen.***

COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Host of life, You invite us to this table
to share the fragrance of generosity,
***the gift of your life given for us,
the gifts of bread and cup.***

At this table we give thanks
for justice, love, peace and freedom.

***At this table we give thanks
for friends and strangers.***

At this table all are welcome!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

May the God of generosity
and all things new be with you!
And also with you!

We give you thanks, O God, for Jesus Christ!
At Easter we are close to the agony of Good Friday.
To the terrible humiliation and crucifixion of Jesus.
Mocked and driven out,
as your children throughout the world are still hurt
today.
Yet that same agony flowered in joy.
The flower grew in the dark of the tomb
and burst open the rock.

In taking bread and wine,
touching, breaking, pouring, drinking,
we know that we enter the holiest mystery
and that by doing so
our hearts will continue to be changed.

We give you thanks for our life together,
the Body of Christ in this place
which claims in faith, against many a doubt,
that risen life lies in our midst
and will stay with us forever.

And so we praise you
with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with the whole creation
in the eternal hymn :

***Holy, holy, holy,
God of power and vulnerability,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.
Blessed is the One
who comes in the name of our God.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.***

THE INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
“This is my body, which is for you.
Do this to remember me”
In the same way, after supper,
Jesus took the cup and again giving thanks, said:
“This cup is the sign
of my new covenant with you.
Do this as often as you drink it to remember me.”

THE INVOCATION

Be present risen Jesus Christ,
by your Holy Spirit, as you were with your disciples
and make yourself known to us
in the breaking of the bread,
for you live and reign with the Creator
and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever. *Amen.*

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

The bread we break
is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take
is a sharing in the life-blood of Christ.
The gifts of God
for the people of God.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD AND WINE

The body of Christ given for us.
The life of Christ poured out for us.

FINAL PRAYER

God of mercy and amazing grace,
On this Easter morning,
we are grateful for your presence, enlivening us.
*We pray your presence will feed and sustain us
to follow in the way of Jesus, Amen.*

HYMN *At the dawning of salvation (TiS 392)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lUU7r9gisw>

1. At the dawning of salvation;
in the morning of the world,
Christ is raised, a living banner
by the love of God unfurled,
Through the daylight, through the darkness,
Christ leads on his great array:
all the saints and all the sinners
he has gathered on his way.

2. He is risen in the morning,
he is risen from the dead;
he is laughter after sadness,
he is light when night has fled.
He has suffered, he has triumphed,
life is his alone to give:
as he gave it once he gives it
evermore, that we may live.

3. For the glory of salvation
in the dawn of Easter day
we will praise you, loving Father;
we rejoice to sing and pray
with the Son and with the Spirit
Lead us on, your great array,
saints and sinners celebrating
your triumphant love today.

BLESSING

Walk on in grace, for God is with us.

And may this time of Lent bring us closer to God,
the company of Christ bring us nearer to each other
and the leading of the Spirit renew each moment.

Amen.

D McRae-McMahon