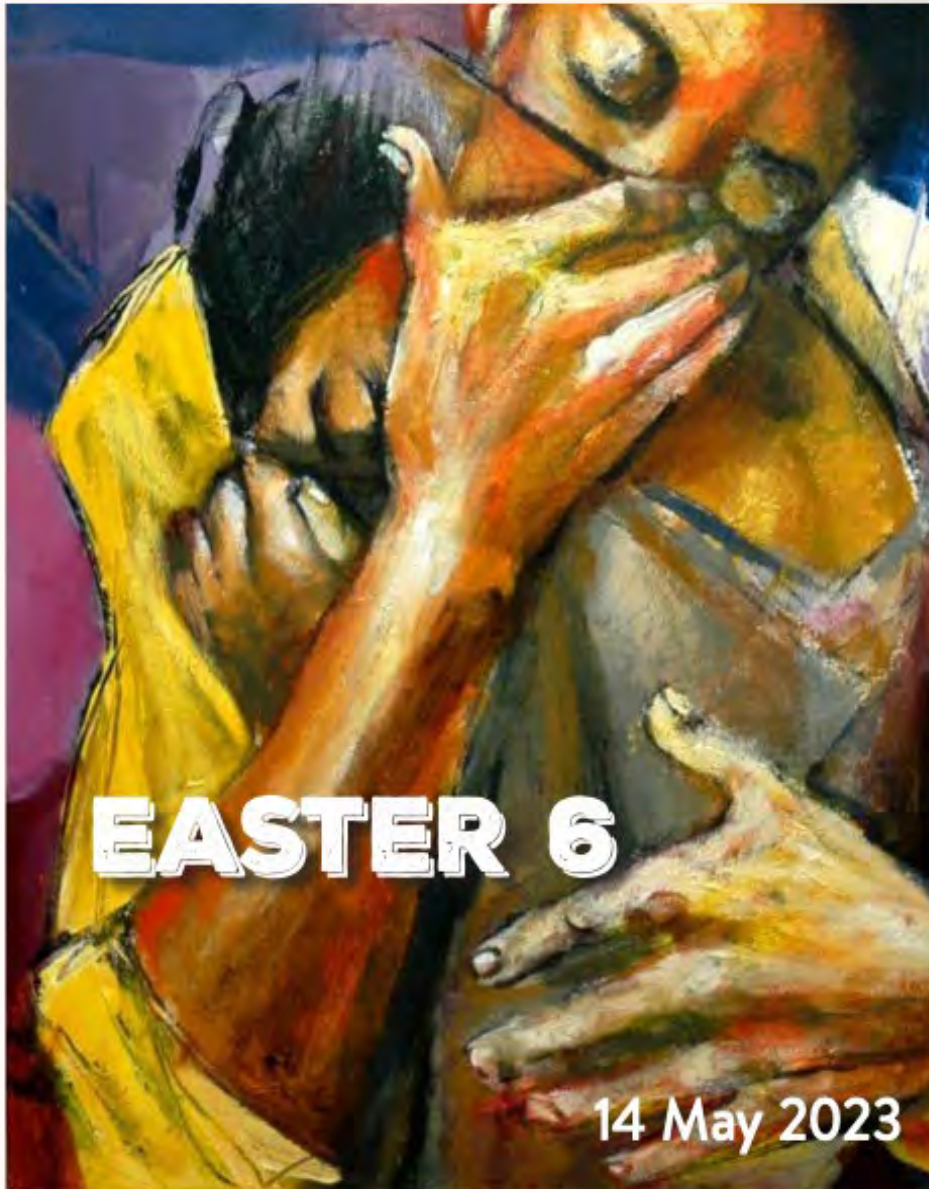




**uniting
church**

in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church



EASTER 6

14 May 2023

WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together on this sixth Sunday of Easter!

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Today we light the CHRIST candle,
proclaiming the transforming power of God.
Today we celebrate:
Our mothers and the beckoning SPIRIT on the journey of truth and love.
Christ is alive and living among us!

The candle is lit

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.

Today we particularly celebrate all the Indigenous mothers since the colonisation of this country: their brave, courageous, persistent, generous care for their families, communities and nations; their unceasing work for justice; we honour their tears, losses as they carry the ongoing trauma they face, the joys they experience.

SONG

Paul Kelly & Dan Sultan - *Every Day My Mother's Voice*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3OI0kzSXOE>

Every day the sun comes up
Like the day before
Every day I fill my cup
Stand up straight
and walk through the door
Every day my mother's voice
Talks to me
Every day I make my choice
What to do and how to be
Every day I build my life
On her sacrifice
Every day I face my strife

But I know where to go for advice
Many roads I could have gone down
Many, many ways to disappear



Now I've got a dance
and I've got a song
They can't take that way away from me
(Every day Every day Every day)
Every night the stars come up
Just like the night before
Every night I drain my cup
Lay me down and close the door

Every day I hear the sound
Of her voice right by my ear
So clear, so clear
She taught me to be strong
I guess I got lucky

CALL TO WORSHIP

God with a mother's heart, You shepherd us
through life's wintry terrain as your loved children.

You comfort and hold us

In your warm embrace.

When we are hurt your arms enfold us.
When we are afraid your wings protect us.
When we are hungry
You feed us with the bread of life.

God with a mother's heart,

Your love surrounds and supports us.

God eternal and loving one,
God with a mother's heart,

We thank you this day,

For being part of our family.

Christine Sinde, godspace.msa.com



HYMN "I Am That Great and Fiery Force" (Tune: 'Duke St.' 88.88)

I am that great and fiery force sparkling in every thing that lives; in shining
of the river's course, in greening grass that glory gives.

I shine in glitter on the seas, in burning sun, in moon and stars.
In unseen wind, in verdant trees I breathe within, both near and far.

And where I breathe there is no death, and meadows glow with beauties rife.
I am in all, the spirit's breath, the thundered word, for I am Life.

Hildegard of Bingen, 12th Cent.

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PRAYER

How can we ever understand the mystery of Your love, O God?
How can we ever estimate the value of Your compassion and mercy?
***In our weaknesses and brokennesses, in our strengths and wholenesses,
we find the touch of Your support and creative energy.***

In our fears and suffering, in our joys and pleasures, we find the moistness of Your tears

and the percussion of Your laughter.

In our failures and despair, in our successes and dreams, we find the comfort of Your forgiveness and the inspiration of Your Spirit.

These are gifts beyond measure!

You are the home we long for, the family where we discover that we truly belong
the hearth where we are warmed and renewed

***We respond with gratitude and our commitment to live in truth and to love each other.
Amen.***

(Adapted: Sacredise.com)

HYMN *She sits like a bird (TiS 418)*

- 1 She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters, Hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
She sighs and she sings, mothering creation, Waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

- 2 She wings over earth, resting where she wishes, Lighting close at hand or soaring through the
skies; She nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder, Nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

- 3 She dances in fire, startling her spectators, Waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness
reigned; She weans and inspires all whose hearts are open, Nor can she be captured, silenced or
restrained.

- 4 For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence, Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key opening the scriptures, Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

John L Bell & Graham Maule

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SCRIPTURE READINGS **John 14:15-21** (Inclusive Text)

Jesus said to the disciples: 'If you love me, keep my commandments.

'I shall ask the Parent God who sent me, who will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows this Spirit; but you know the Spirit, because the Spirit is with you and shall dwell within you. 'I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 'In a short while the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. 'On that day you will understand that I am in my Parent God and you in me and I in you. 'They who receive my commandments and keep them are the ones who love me; and they who love me will be loved by my Parent God who sent me, and I shall love them and show myself to them.'

RESPONSE

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

REFLECTION

SONG

A new commandment (TiS 699)

A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.

By this will others know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another;
by this shall all know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.

(Sing twice)

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OFFERING

Receive these our gifts, O God.

We place them in your hands and ask you guidance
As we use them to bring compassion into the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER FOR MOTHERS' DAY

O God,

Both mother and father for humankind and creation!

We are grateful and thankful today for mothering,

For the feminine touch of parenting,

For the special connection of mother and child,

And thankful for all the women in our lives,

Who offer care, comfort, encouragement and support.

We are grateful for the self-sacrifice of love that is given,

And we offer our love in return.

We remember the mothers who are.

We remember the mothers who have been and are gone.

We remember the mothers who can't be.

We acknowledge that mothering is hard,

And not all are able to do so as they would like.

We acknowledge that we all fall short in life and love,

And that mothers are no exception in this.

However, today, we honour mothering,

Especially those who give of their best.

We pray for mothers all

And those who offer mothering

beyond the circle of bloodlines and family.

For mothers and motherers we pray.

Amen.

(Source: Jon Humphries, Prayers that Unite)

HYMN *God of the Women (Tune: TiS 547, Slane)*

God of the women who answered your call, Trusting your promises, giving their all,
Women like Sarah and Hannah and Ruth — Give us their courage to live in your truth.

God of the women who walked Jesus' Way, Giving their resources, learning to pray,
Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and more — May we give freely as they did before.

God of the women long put to the test, Left out of stories, forgotten, oppressed,
Quietly asking: "Who smiled at my birth?" — In Jesus' dying you show us our worth
God of the women who ran from the tomb, Prayed with the others in that upper room,
Then felt your Spirit on Pentecost Day — May we so gladly proclaim you today.

O God of Phoebe and ministers all, May we be joyful in answering your call.
Give us the strength of your Spirit so near, That we may share in your ministry here.

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WHEN I NEED A FRIEND Cold Play, *When I need a friend*

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

Holy, Holy
Dove descend Soft and slowly
When I'm near the end
Holy, Holy
Dark defend Shield me, show me
When I need a friend

Slowly, slowly
Violence, end Love reign o'er me
When I need a friend

"When I Need A Friend" was written by Chris Martin, lead singer of Cold Play, when inspired by sacred music and a desire to write a song for his mother.

BLESSING

May you live this day Compassionate of heart
Gentle in word, Gracious in awareness
Courageous in thought Generous in love.

(John O'Donohue)