**Easter calls on onward**

This is an invitation to continue our journey begun before Good Friday. It takes us with Jesus beyond to the cross. During this Covid-19 pandemic, we are not able to walk together physically but we can metaphorically.

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website or on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/45a9Vm-cOwU>.

Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told there to lead you.

We also share a poem by Rev Linda Young, Death and Resurrection – Easter Sunday. Pause between stanzas and remember the stories. Allow God to speak into your story. Listen.

While we focus on the Matthew reading, our readings are:

Matthew 28:1-10

Colossians 3:1-4

Jeremiah 31: 1-6

Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24

**EASTER SUNDAY** Rev Linda Young

Hallelujah He is Risen!

Suffering that did take place

Now is washed away, no trace.

God has triumphed over death

Son of God, rose again.

Resurrection now I see

All the love poured out for me

Love has cast the death a by

All my hopes rise to the sky.

Mercy in my God I know

Reconciled God’s self below

Resurrection, now I see

God’s unfailing love for me.

So how does this play out?

How does it affect my life?

Surely his love follows me

All my hopes are full in Thee.

**SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOUR TO CONSIDER:**

**Describe the hope or joy you have in Jesus at Easter.**

**What does following the Risen Christ mean to you?**

**What is something you are thankful for this Easter?**

**Conclude with a greeting of you, or one or all of your family/household saying either “Christ is Risen!” or “He is Risen indeed!”**

**A REFLECTION**

Alleluia! He is risen!

These words ring out through the ages, bringing joy and hope, as the darkness of Good Friday is overcome by the celebration of Easter morning. The empty tomb is the culmination of the story of Jesus’ life and Passion, announcing that God’s story is always and forever a story of LIFE. The Easter story reminds us that no darkness, no death, no earthly power wielded corruptly, no failure of courage, no betrayal, no sin is greater than God’s capacity to create ever new ways to shed light into the world.

As we sit in our very obvious isolation, in a world fearful of what might happen next, we can very much imagine the fear of the disciples on Good Friday, and the day following. In our current circumstances, there is no guarantee that life will go back to the way it was before. People have died, businesses have closed, people have lost their homes and livelihoods. We might feel very much that we are sitting in darkness, especially as the days lengthen and Winter creeps towards us.

The Easter moment cracks the universe wide open, declaring that the long-awaited new life in God is available to all, here and now. The darkness of any current moment is no indication that God is absent, in fact God may be about to break through the darkness in ways never before considered. Have you seen the stories of communities coming together to support each other, the musician playing her antique cello on her footpath in Brunswick for her neighbours every night, the people giving away rolls of toilet paper when it was in short supply? You may have been one of the people contributing to the outpouring of love and compassion, and you may have been on the receiving end. Love doesn’t die. Love wins, no matter what. This is the hope of Easter for us, especially this year.

Perhaps this re-assessment of what is important will last, perhaps it will fade away when we go back to the new ‘normal’ after this current situation. Those who were witnesses to his resurrection chose to follow the way that he lived his life; a life of compassion, justice, hope and love, grounded in the God who sent him, empowered by the Spirit who inspired him. How will we allow the Easter story to impact on us this year? How will we live into and out of this story?

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

**CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

With the confidence born of Easter day, let us approach the God of grace. Let us pray

People of the church, why have we sometimes looked for Jesus among the dead?

***Because the arrogant still flaunt their power***

***and humble people are downtrodden;***

***Because the rich can pervert the course of justice***

***while the poor must settle for many injustices,***

***and we become weary.***

People of the church, why do we sometimes look for Jesus among the dead?

***Because the world panders to the lusts of the flesh,***

***while the spirit is ignored or suppressed;***

***Because science pretends to have all the answers***

***while the Gospel is neglected or derided,***

***and we become weary.***

People of the church, why do we sometimes look for Jesus among the dead?

***Because death appears to be so permanent***

***and our faith feels so weak and fitful;***

***Because greed and despair seem so powerful***

***and our love and hope feel so fragile,***

***and we become weary.***

People of the church, why in spite of this dark side do you still look for a living Christ?

***Because in some mysterious but sure way***

***his mercy finds us in our wanderings,***

***his grace has forgiven our many sins,***

***his Spirit refuses to give up on us,***

***and something of his love flows through us to others*.**

----- Time for silent prayer----

**FORGIVENESS**

People of God, by grace you are indeed saved, by a faith that is not your own making. It is a gift of God through the living Christ in the fellowship of the Spirit.

Christ is risen!

***he is risen indeed!***

The peace of the living Lord Jesus be always with you!

***And also with you!***

**THANKSGIVING**

With high spirits we eagerly thank you, loving God,

that we have been raised up with Christ

and look for those things that are eternal

We eagerly thank you for bringing life and immortality to light

through the Gospel.

We eagerly thank you for the glorious witness of our living Christ

to your unfailing, overriding providence.

We eagerly thank you

that grace is stronger than evil,

that mercy is larger than suffering,

that joy is greater than grief,

and that love is mightier than death.

All our joyful thanksgiving and loving praise we bring to you,

holy Friend, loving Saviour, and glorious God of eternal Easter.

Through Christ Jesus our risen Lord.

***Amen!***

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**

It was for all people that Christ Jesus died and rose from the grave. Let us pray for some of them.

Most loving God, we bring to you our concern and compassion for those whose lives are subject to acute sorrow, evil or disease. For those who will face an untimely, sudden death, we pray: Victims of war, terrorism, murder, and the Easter carnage on our roads. Living Christ

***comfort and redeem your people.***

For those who are enduring a lingering death: from cancer or aids, kidney or heart disease, or because of inadequate hospital care and inadequate medicinal supplies. Living Christ

***comfort and redeem your people.***

For those who care for the dying and the bereaved: family and friends, nurses and doctors, pastors, counsellors, and funeral directors. Living Christ

***comfort and redeem your people.***

For those who are confronted by blatant evil, we pray: peacemakers and arbitrators, UN workers, peace keepers, aid agencies and prison chaplains. Living Christ

***comfort and redeem your people.***

For those who are must deal with more insidious evil, we pray: teachers and ministers, psychiatrists, censorship boards, mothers and magistrates. Living Christ

***comfort and redeem your people.***

For those who fight suffering, handicap and disease, we pray; hospitals and research facilities, ambulance staff, flying doctors, physiotherapists, community nurses and kindly neighbours. Living Christ

***comfort and redeem your people.***

Great living Lord of love and joy be also with each of us gathered here for this Easter service. You know our needs better than we do. You have answers that do not occur to us. Bless us we pray, that we may not get the answers we want but the help that will lead to your greater glory. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

***Amen!***

**SENDING OUT**

Christ is risen!

***He is risen indeed.***

Now go quickly and share the news that he has risen from the dead and is going on ahead of you where you will meet him in the Galilee of your common, daily lives. O give thanks to our God who is so good,

***Whose love endures forever!***

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Pastor of the church, make you adept at all times in doing the loving thing, working in you that which is a delight to God. And the blessing of God most wonderful, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will be with you now and evermore.

***Amen****!*

*The above prayers are thanks to © B. D. Prewer. The reflection is by Ps Annette Buckley. The poem, Death and Resurrection is by Rev Linda Young*