

*Mount Eliza Anglican Church – Easter Sunday Holy Communion – 12 April 2020*

GREETING

Christ yesterday and today,  
**the beginning and the end,**  
Alpha and Omega,  
all time belongs to him,  
and all ages;  
**to him be glory and power,**  
**through every age and for ever. Amen.**

This is the day when our Lord Jesus Christ was raised gloriously from the dead, crushing the power of sin and destroying the sting of death. Throughout the world Christians celebrate the mighty power of God as Christ calls us out of darkness to share in his marvellous light. May we, and all Christ's people, shine as lights in the world to the glory of God the Father.

*The candle is lit.*  
May the light of Christ, rising in glory,  
dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Christ is risen!  
**He is risen indeed!**  
The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

*let us pray*  
**Holy God,**  
**As we gather for worship, may our eyes be alight with the glory we have seen in Christ, and our hearts aflame with resurrection joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

Dear friends, in baptism, through the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, we have died and been buried with Christ, so that we may rise with him to new life.

Now let us confess our sins and renew the promises made in our baptism, when we rejected the devil and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully as members of his holy catholic Church.

Lord God, your son Jesus came to reconcile us to you and to each other.  
Forgive us when we cling to our resentments.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, your son Jesus emptied himself for us.  
Forgive us when we are full of ourselves.  
Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, your son Jesus laid down his life for his friends.  
Forgive us when we cannot let go.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

In renewing our baptism vows, I ask you:

Do you believe in God the Father, who made the world?

**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed our human race?

**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

**I believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore, I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

**I come to Christ.**

May Almighty God,

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed- upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Christ, you are risen with the sun;

you are light in our darkness,

warmth in our cold.

You are peace and hope and joy,

for you went willingly to death.

You turned defeat and failure to victory for all.

You live eternally, and with you live the millions, living and dead, who trust in you.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

#### **READINGS:**

##### *Canticle of the Risen Christ*

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us:

so let us celebrate the feast,

Not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness:

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ once raised from the dead dies no more:

death has no more dominion over him.

In dying he died to sin once for all:  
in living he lives to God.  
See yourselves therefore as dead to sin:  
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Christ has been raised from the dead:  
the first fruits of those who sleep.  
For as by one man came death:  
by another has come also resurrection of the dead;  
For as in Adam all die:  
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

**GOSPEL READING - Matthew 27:62 - 28:10**

*Let us pray,*

*May the words of my mouth, the meditations of our hearts,  
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our rock and our redeemer. Amen.*

***A meditation - in the tomb***

*Close your eyes and relax.*

It's dark. It's silent. You are limp, unmoving.

You were defeated, destroyed, ruined: crucified, dead, then buried.

That was then: and now is nothing - empty - still - lifeless.

Your muscles aren't moving. Your mind is empty.

You stay like this for several minutes.

And then now, just barely, you feel a tiny urge, just a little impulse.

It's like a tiny, tiny flame, smaller than a pilot light on a stove.

The urge gets stronger and stronger, the flame gets brighter and hotter inside of your body.

You feel it!

You stand up and go to the stone that has sealed you in the dark tomb.

You feel the stone against your hands and you push; you lean into it with your chest and arms.

You feel the weight, the pressure, in your upper body.

Just as the stone begins to move, you open your eyes and see the light.

You take a deep breath of the fresh air.<sup>i</sup>

***Disruptive change***

What specifically happened to Jesus' body is left to our imaginations.

But something had changed, more than just something.

Matthew, in the similar vein that he wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus, also writes about the resurrection accompanied by earthquakes, strange and unexpected appearances - here an angel of the Lord with the appearance like lightning, his clothing white as snow.

For Matthew, the events over the Friday to the Sunday were not just of the everyday variety, even in the Roman Empire. These events were earth shattering.

Yet, particularly the event of Good Friday was everyday business for the Empire. Which is frightening, when it comes to be the 'norm'.

But this time, a man called Jesus, called by many the Christ, was not only involved, but its victim.

This man, of whom it was said the Spirit of God dwelled fully in him, was at the mercy, or lack of it, by his own nation's leaders and the Empire.

And all creation reacted to the crucifixion with earthquakes, darkness blotting out the sun,

the ripping of the temple curtain  
and bodies of the saints breaking out of their tombs.

Matthew has been fond of pointing to Scripture, that is the Hebrew Scriptures,  
we call the Old Testament,  
of how they are being fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ.  
The word of God does not remain silent, nor inactive throughout these events.  
Perhaps these saints whose tombs were opened, who were raised,  
and were said to enter the holy city and appear to many *after the resurrection*,  
were a witness to the word of God fulfilled in Christ Jesus,  
perhaps they were from Scriptures past, rising in witness.  
Although this small piece was recorded in the previous chapter during the crucifixion,  
it is after the resurrection that they were seen.  
So who were these saints?  
Again it is left to our imagination to imagine their part in this whole upheaval.

### ***People around the cross and tomb***

Among the people at this time were Jesus' disciples who fled,  
even before the trial had begun.  
There was Joseph of Arimathea, who courageously asked for Jesus' body  
in order to place in his own tomb.  
He risked not only the displeasure of Rome,  
but also the wrath of his colleagues on his nation's council.  
There were the women who followed Jesus from Galilee,  
who not only kept vigil during the crucifixion, but also at the tomb,  
again a courageous action.  
And there were Jesus' opponents, of the nation and Empire,  
who kept a strict eye on the proceedings  
and made sure his tomb was not only sealed but watched,  
watching, so much watching.

And then, when it is opened, it is empty.

Jesus has been raised, but not by going out of the tomb.  
Here was the place where he lay,  
*but he is not here,*  
the angel said to the women.  
*He goes ahead of you, to Galilee, there you will see him.*  
Tell his disciples!

And then Jesus himself appears, and reiterates the message to the women.  
*Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, there they will see me.*

Why this reiteration?  
And why do the disciples need to be told?

Where are they?  
Scattered, hiding, afraid, guilty, remorseful, in despair.  
Tell my brothers ... that phrase has the overtone of healing and reconciliation.  
These disciples who deserted and betrayed, are nonetheless, still Jesus' brothers,  
and he forgives them and wants to see them.  
Resurrection sends Jesus back into the world.  
It also sends us, without fear now for all that has happened,

we seek the crucified One who is now raised up in glory and hidden in our midst.

'Jesus will not be found in tombs or any place that is ruled by violence, self-satisfaction, greed or any institution that deals in death and lies.

Jesus is now found out in the world, specifically in the places of 'Galilee', among the poor, the workers, those struggling for a way to survive in an unjust world, our neighbours, believers and unbelievers alike, whom we have known and who have known us always. We will see him there.'<sup>ii</sup>

### *Explaining the resurrection*

Bishop William Willimon once said,  
'There are so many ways to *explain* the resurrection.  
The point is, we can't explain the resurrection.  
The resurrection explains us!'

Resurrection explains a faith that is able to traverse death's dark valleys and come up the other side into new life.  
This is the Christian motif, through death to life.  
To not be afraid, but to go forth in peace.

Peace is the undeniable presence of the Risen Lord.  
Peace, which is not as the world gives,  
but peace that knows what sin and evil can do, the scars it leaves behind,  
but also to know the life that is unquenchable within  
and the Spirit that is irrepressible and indestructible.

Resurrection is the power of God that raises us up again, and again.  
St Paul testified to this when he wrote to the Corinthians about his afflictions:  
*we are perplexed but not driven to despair;*  
*persecuted but not forsaken;*  
*struck down but not destroyed;*  
*always carrying in the body the death of Jesus,*  
*so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.*<sup>iii</sup>

Resurrection means that forgiveness is unlimited, that grace is inexhaustible, that new beginnings are possible for any of us at any time.  
Resurrection means that there is hope for all.  
No one is ultimately lost.  
The invitation to repent (to turn) and come home is never withdrawn.  
Resurrection means that love will eventually gather up into the arms of God every thing and every one.

For Christ is risen!  
**He is risen indeed!**  
**Amen.**

## INTERCESSIONS

*With Fear and Great Joy* by Rebekah Pryor

God in Christ:

Word

Breath

Resurrection body –

You make us in your image and call us, time and again, back to life.

At Easter and with each new day, give us courage to look for you – as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary did – in all the places, all the conversations, all the difference. And where the view of you is obscured, help us to remember the words of Jesus: “Do not be afraid... I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Today, we pray for Christian communities everywhere, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus: for our own presently dispersed community, and for those ordinarily separated for fear of religious extremism and racial intolerance. Keep us all in your hope. Bring us all to new life.

With fear and great joy:

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God in Christ:

Radiant

Revelation

All in all –

You walk with us into truths too great for us to enter into on our own.

Amidst the clamour of news and streams of social media, open our ears and eyes to true things: in ourselves, our homes, our work and community places, our relationships with neighbours and close ones. Today, we continue to pray for those in Australia and around the world whose experience of the present pandemic is exacerbated by the effects of drought, flood, fire or deep poverty. And, where people, young and old, are also displaced, homeless or unemployed, shelter them, sustain them through the generous provision of others, and bring them safely into fair, hope-filled futures.

With fear and great joy:

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God in Christ:

Past

Present

Ever attending –

You listen to the cries of all creation and sing us, with all the saints, into healing.

As we feel the cooler air and shortening days of the season, watch the earth adapting to changing conditions, notice ourselves moving in or out of different capacities, remind us that you are ever-present. You are present with those among us who are sick, grieving, in need or in trouble at this time. You know their names. We name them quietly now...

With fear and great joy:

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We ask all of this in the name of Christ, risen indeed.

Amen.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are yours now and for ever. Amen.

#### GREETING OF PEACE [PRIEST]

Christ is risen. Alleluia!  
The peace of the risen Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

#### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.  
Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

#### HOLY COMMUNION

*O loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Thanksgiving, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son, we offer you praise and thanksgiving. Even though we are dispersed from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Salvation we pray that you will unite us with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us.*

The Lord be with you,  
**And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts;  
**We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, good Father to us all, your face is turned towards your world. In love you gave us Jesus your Son to rescue us from sin and death.  
Out of love for us he accepted death and,  
lifted high upon the cross, he drew the whole world to himself; the tree of shame became the tree of glory.  
Where life was lost, there life has been restored. Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks.  
He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'



After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died,  
Christ has risen,  
Christ will come again.**

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us: Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power, are yours forever and ever. Amen**

#### THE BREAKING AND SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread:  
**so may your Church be gathered  
from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

#### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Eternal God, giver of life,  
in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.  
May we who celebrate this holy feast  
walk in his risen light  
and bring new life to all creation.

**Living God,  
make us apostles of the risen Christ.  
Give us joyful hearts, words of hope,  
and grace to recognize the Lord Jesus when he meets us,  
wherever we are on the road.**

#### BLESSING

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him  
in his risen life  
and the blessing of God  
our Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life  
be with you always.  
**Amen.**

#### DISMISSAL

We go in peace of Christ. **Alleluia! Amen.**

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<sup>i</sup> Jim Burklo, 10/4/14; <https://progressivechristianity.org/resources/easter-meditation/>

<sup>ii</sup> Megan McKenna; Lent Sunday Readings; (Veritas 1997) p.196

<sup>iii</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:8-10