**MACEDON RANGES PARTNERSHIP SERVICE – Easter Day Year B**

**4th April 2021**

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website at

<https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/worship-services> or on YouTube at [https://youtu.be/3C3dl9J4SXw](https://youtu.be/3C3dl9J4SXw%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told to lead you. We suggest reading the passages when suggested below.

If you would like to look at previous videos on our YouTube channel, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb4hzdO-YgzmrIRVC-oby_w>

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge all the First Nations people who have cared for and nurtured the land on which we meet: the Wurundjeri; Woi Wurruung; Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung.

We acknowledge their leaders: past, present and emerging and commit ourselves to the work of reconciliation with all people and with our God.

You are welcome here, as we reflect in different rooms and districts, States and Countries around the world, our spiritual connectedness through Christ Jesus, is remembered.

**WELCOME** & **CALL TO WORSHIP:** by Roddy Hamilton

**Litany of the Dawn**

When the world was young
at that first sunrise
and the new light
held a promise
of new days
and fresh mornings
The Word spoke...

...When the Word spoke
and creation sparked
and the alleluias unfolded
the dawn was set free…

...When the dawn was set free
the trees clapped hands
and mountains bowed
and the birds sang a new song
fresh every morning…

...Fresh every morning
the day holds a hope
that this day is God’s
and this day holds the promise
and this day is a new beginning…

...A new beginning
is the song of the morning
that takes the shadows of night
and paints them gold and green
for the earth rejoices

~ written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on the **New Kilpatrick Parish Church** website. <https://www.nkchurch.org.uk/original-liturgy>

**HYMN: TiS 380 – Yours be the glory**

**THE EASTER STORY:** by Illustrated Ministry

The Easter story begins in such stillness. An early morning. Heavy hearts and slow feet making their way towards an immovable rock. But the women arrive at the tomb only to find out the body, and the story they thought it held, could not be contained. Death burst forth into life! The resurrection is God’s reaching into the world, with a boundless love, to gift us all with new life and a new beginning.

Since this story began to be told, people have told it boldly; the proclamation “Christ is risen!” is met with an affirmation: “Christ is risen indeed!” This call and response can be heard on Easter morning in communities all around the world. When you say it - in just a moment - imagine the voices echoing this good news back to you not just from the corners of your room or sanctuary, but from large cathedrals and remote villages across the globe. And shake off your own stillness, too; reach to embody the scope of this good news. I’ll say, “Christ is risen!” and invite you to respond “Christ is risen indeed!” with the fullness of your voice and your body.

Reaching high up to the sky - like you’re praising God, like you’re surrendering to the wonder: Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Reaching way out to your sides - like you’re sharing your love, like you’re embracing your neighbor: Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Reaching far out in front of you - like you’re being called into the world, called to this very place, in this very moment, to live this good news:

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Alleluia!

This Easter, let the story of resurrection move you. Let it shake you from stillness. Let it open your imagination and expand your hope; let it grow your sense of what is possible, in your life, and in the life of the world. Amen.

**BIBLE READINGS:** Psalm 114, Isaiah 25:6-9, 1 Cor 5:6b-8, Mark 16:1-8

**REFLECTION** by Ps Annette Buckley

I really like Mark’s version of the story of that first Easter morning, ending as it does with “and they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.” Obviously, they said something to someone, otherwise the story would have died with them, and we hear from the 1 Corinthians passage this week that it wasn’t the case. But it’s almost as if the writer of Mark is inviting us in, to imagine ourselves in this part of the story, to wonder what we might do in the same circumstances*. I wonder what they were afraid of? I wonder what we might be afraid of in the same circumstances.*

If what happened in that garden in Jerusalem stayed in the garden, it might have been remarkable enough, but it was up to the disciples to flesh out the meaning of this for their lives. For Jesus’ disciples, it seems to have been a slow process to piece all that together. Certainly, it seems that, despite being told “don’t be afraid” they were in hiding after Jesus’ death, even when they’d heard that he had been raised. It seems that faith in the resurrected Jesus is a continuing revelation, even for those who were immediate witnesses to the events of his life. It’s no surprise that we struggle at times to understand or to live out the call Jesus places on our lives.

*And what difference does the story of the Resurrection make to us in 2021?* Is it just that we are able to say we believe that something mysterious happened 2000 years ago? Or is it living our lives as if the Resurrection of Jesus heralds the kind of world that we hear about from the passage in Isaiah this week? The imagery of this passage is meant to spark our imaginations, and lead us to think about God’s dream for an ideal world. The Resurrection tells us that this world is not only possible, it has already begun. It has been made possible because of what God has done, and it will one day come to be in all it’s glory.

But here’s the rub. Jesus’ life and death and Resurrection are a package deal. In living out his Resurrection, we’re invited to share in the kind of life he lived and sometimes in the suffering he experienced, as well as the joy of Resurrection life. If we follow the call into this kind of life, we have no idea what we’re getting ourselves into. Perhaps this is why the women were afraid, and rightly so. We can’t control what Resurrection life will be like; it almost certainly won’t be like it was before, and sometimes that’s terrifying. But we’re never alone. We have companions on the journey with us, and we have the Spirit and promise of the God who continues to break into our lives, break into our world, in ever more surprising ways. And we’re invited into an abundant life that has room for everyone, and seeks to work for a just and peaceful world here and now, and in time to come.

Christ is risen! Hallelujah!

**TEAM REFLECTION**

**REFLECTIVE PRAYER:**

When everything was dark

and it seemed that the sun would never shine again,

your love broke through.

Your love was too strong,

too wide,

too deep

for death to hold.

The sparks cast by your love

dance and spread

and burst forth

with resurrection light.

Gracious God,

We praise you for the light of new life

made possible through Jesus.

We praise you for the light of new life

that shone on the first witnesses of resurrection.

We praise you for the light of new life

that continues to shine in our hearts today.

We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy,

will live in us each day;

and that we will be bearers of that light

into the lives of others.  Amen.

~ written by the Rev. Michaela Youngson, Superintendent Minister of the Ealing Trinity Circuit of the Methodist Church of Britain. Posted on Preach the Story. https://preachthestory.com/

**SONG: Hope will rise again** by Andra Moran

Alternative: TiS 387 – Christ is alive, let Christians sing

**SENDING OUT AND BLESSING:** by Nathan Nettleton

Go now, glad and rejoicing,
for Christ is risen and has become your saviour.
Set your minds on the things of God
for your lives are hidden in Christ.
Preach and testify that he is the one ordained by God
to judge the living and the dead.

And may God surround you with everlasting love.
May Christ Jesus raise you with him to life in glory.
And may the Holy Spirit anoint you with power to do good.

**OFFERING**

You may like to consider giving an offering to your congregation via direct deposit. Details for each are:

* Gisborne: Gisborne branch, Bendigo bank, B.S.B. 633 108, A/C: 1512 83736
* Romsey: Bendigo Bank, B.S.B. 633 000, A/C: 161501200, Account name: UCA Romsey Uniting Church
* Mia Mia – Kyneton: Commonwealth bank, B.S.B. 063 517, Account no.: 1002 1775