



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Reading: John 20:1-18

This reading could be done dramatically by a storyteller embodying a creative use of your space. A door could offer a dramatic entrance or be like the door to an empty tomb, for example. If you are brave, you could narrate from memory.

Light the candle.

Christ is risen: **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded land and waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Christ the Lord is risen today TiS 370

OR: Joyful the morning TiS 383

OR: At the dawning of salvation TiS 392



Prayer

Extraordinary, overwhelming
God of love and life,
we gush in our praise today;
not because we ever deeply understand,
but because we know enough
to feel the deep touch of your salvation.

In all our denials,
in all our fears,
even when we flee
you call us to life.

We expect to offer spices and embalm you
and you shock us into life
where it can't possibly be.
We wonder how we will move the rock
and you already clear the path
to salvation.

And so we gush in our praise
and wonder
and awe,
hoping to grasp
the depth of this day,
shouting out words of delight
that Christ is risen.

Even when we fail to understand,
even when we fail to see,
even when we are called by name,
we know somewhere deep within
that this changes everything.

As the scriptures open your story,
as we encounter you on the way,
as we hear the proclamation
of Mary and the others that they
'have seen the Lord',
so join us in your glorious mystery:
life beyond death,
hope beyond despair,
salvation in the name of Christ.

We gush again in our praise
for Christ is risen:
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Weekly Worship. Easter Sunday 2024. A Worship Resource from Friends of the Fig Tree.



Uniting Church in Australia
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Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Acts 10:34-43

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting

Rev. Jennie Gordon

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!
I wonder what we expect when we arrive at Easter morning? We might gather early, at a dawn service, or later in the morning, or even in the quiet of the evening. Whatever time we come, what expectation do we bring with us?

I remember my granddaughter's face when she first encountered living, moving, breathing, stomping elephants. Earlier this year, we were at the Melbourne Zoo, and she had just turned 2 years old. We'd been showing her elephants in books, and she had a stuffed toy elephant that she loved, and now we were going to see them at the zoo!
But here, face to face with the vastness of the beasts,

she was terrified. She couldn't look at them. Frozen with fear, she cried to be picked up and comforted. Whatever she was seeing, however magnificent, was not what she expected.

The company of women; Mary, Mary and Salome, who walk to the tomb to anoint Jesus for proper burial at the end of the gospel of Mark, come when the Sabbath has ended, very early, when the sun has risen. They bring spices, anticipating that they will encounter the body of Jesus. They talk on the way about logistics, about who will roll the heavy stone from the tomb's entrance, expecting it to still be sealed as they had left it.

What they find is that the stone is rolled away, and they enter the tomb. Given that the tomb is open, their expectations may have changed quickly. Maybe now they are becoming concerned, wondering if someone has taken the body of their beloved. No wonder then, they become alarmed. They are alarmed because before them is a young man, dressed in white, who speaks to them. He tries to calm their alarm. He tells them he knows who they are looking for and that Jesus, who was crucified, has been raised and is not here – see, the empty place where he was laid. It seems that they don't take in the directions to 'go' and 'tell'. They can't. They are frozen with fear. No matter how magnificent this outcome is, it's not at all what they expected. They flee in terror

Reflecting continues



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Weekly Worship



Sunday March 31, 2024

Reflecting continues

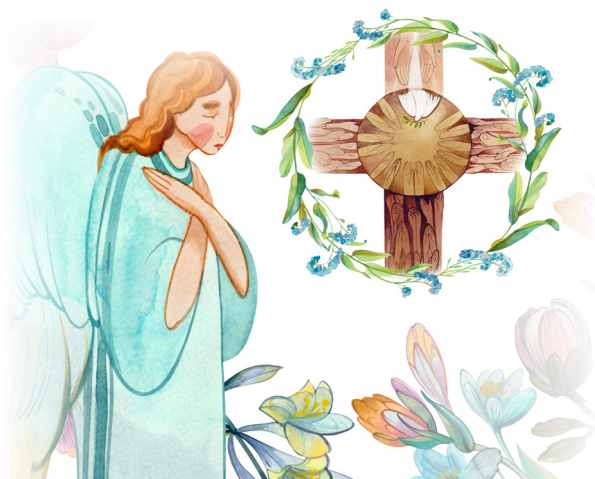
and amazement and say nothing. The last word of the gospel of Mark, of this ending anyway, is the word – afraid.

For my granddaughter, every image of an elephant is now connected to the experience of that first encounter. Now she'll visit them in the zoo, for a short time anyway. She still loves them but maintains a certain wide-eyed concern in their presence. She's coming around to seeing the magnificence of the beasts.

Do we ever come around to really seeing the magnificence of the resurrection? Did that first company of women; Mary, Mary and Salome ever recover from their fear? Whatever we expect to encounter as we approach the empty tomb, it will rarely be what we find, because, like them, we expect so little.

Is it possible that this God, who raised Jesus from the dead, has given us a glimpse of a love that holds us in life even beyond the rupture of death? Is it possible that as we encounter the emptiness of the tomb, we recognise the absence as a wholly holy presence, breathing peace into every living thing in our world? Is it possible that we might see this day as a new beginning, a new and magnificent invitation to 'go and tell'? Perhaps. But it might take us a little getting used to. Like the women, we might need a space of silence, because, given the whole immensity of this magnificent new reality, we may well be afraid.

(hold a time of silence)



Singing: Now the green blade rises TiS 382

OR: *This is a day of new beginnings* TiS 653



Offering

In all we offer, join us to the good news of the risen one, God of Jesus Christ. Bless these gifts that they may bring life and salvation to all in need. Bless us as we seek to live out your life and salvation. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Notices

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day.

April 4 is the International Day for Mine Awareness.

April 7 is World Health Day.

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

God of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray for a world desperate for some good news where life and salvation have their way.

We pray for places of conflict and war where life is under constant threat. We pray for those who feel that all hope is gone. We pray that your good news might offer renewal where there is darkness, that your salvation may move people to break cycles of conflict and war, and ensure aid gets through where conflict continues.

We pray for those dear to our hearts who struggle and are in need of hope. May the overwhelming love of God through Jesus Christ touch us and those we love in life-giving ways.

Prayer continues

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Prayer continues

We pray for your church, in need of your life and salvation. We pray that this day deepens us on our journey with the risen Christ, enlivening us in his way, equipping us to be people of light and life in his name.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

The 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 forever. Amen.**

Blessing

Siblings in Christ,
go now in joy
for light shines in the darkness,
life has found a voice
Christ is risen: **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

The blessing of God go with you
and be blessing to all you meet.

In the name of our God:
Creator,
Redeemer,
and Sustainer. Amen.

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**Singing:
Christ is alive!
Let Christians sing
TiS 387**

OR: Yours be the glory TiS 380



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