



Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Welcome to the Week After... What has stayed with you from Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Easter morning? Is there an image, a thought, a blessing that has enlivened your soul? Light the candle and give thanks.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Call to worship

Gathering God; Source, Son and Spirit, we come to you with the light of Easter sunrise still full on our faces, with the mystery of the empty tomb still fresh in our souls, with our ears still full of the sound of you calling our name.

Meet us here, the week after, meet us in our doubting with your outstretched arms of welcome and proclaim peace. Rest on our gathering, inspire our action and bring us closer to you, in the name of the risen Christ, Amen.

Acknowledging

As we are gathered by God, we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet. This land and her people have known the Creator's presence from time before time. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging and commit ourselves to walk together in justice and peace.



Singing: Now the green blade rises TIS 382

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain, wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain: love lives again, that with the dead has been:

Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain, thinking that he never would awake again, laid in the earth, like grain that sleeps unseen.

Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Up he sprang at Easter, like the risen grain, he who for the three days in the grave had lain, raised from the dead my living Lord is seen:

Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain, then your touch can call us back to life again fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.

¹John Macleod Campbell



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Second Sunday of Easter

Sunday April 11, 2021

Prayer

This prayer is based on Psalm 133

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

We delight in our shared life, God of all, in the joys of singing and celebrating together in the delight of deep listening and conversation in the comfort of a friendly cuppa and chat.

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

We give thanks for the freedom to be here, to feel safe in the company of others, to be known or becoming known, to be valued for who we are, this abundant anointing cascades over us.

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

Even if no one here knows our name, you do, and your blessing falls equally on us all, as we lean into life together and find our unity in you.

In this time of quiet we bring our thankfulness for the people around us, in worship and in life...
(time of quiet)

From 1 John 1:8 we read: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

God with us, you are present behind the locked doors of our lives. You know our fear, our absence, the tricks we have developed to hide our woundedness and the questions we are too afraid to ask.

Forgive us. Help us to see more clearly the ways we avoid meeting you, the times our doubt keeps us away from you, the fear we have of being vulnerable to you and to others. Bring us to a place of truth, with ourselves, with each other, and with you. We ask this for the world, for our church, for each other and for ourselves.
(time of quiet)

From 1 John 1:9 we read: If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We are known, loved, called to life and forgiven!
Thanks be to God, Amen.

Listening

Read: John 20: 19-31
For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**





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Reflecting

Rev. Ian Brown

The tomb is empty, Christ is risen, death has been defeated, love wins, the victory is ours, and nothing on earth will ever be the same again. Yes?

Welcome to the Week After. The week after euphoria. The week after triumph. The week after Easter egg hunts, trumpets, flowers and alleluias. This is the point in the church year when we take a good, hard look at God's post-resurrection world and think, "Now what?"

I don't know about you, but I am absolutely relieved by the Gospel reading from John this week, because it reminds me that the resurrection story honours our questions. The Week After has always been murky and complicated.

So today, two ways that I think the Gospel reading reflects what real life looks after the empty tomb. Firstly, Jesus's wounded body reminds us that some hurts are for keeps. Some markers of pain, loss, trauma, and horror leave traces that no amount of piety will take away. I will never be a person who didn't crash a motorbike and needs to do back exercises everyday. The story talks about Jesus' scars, after Easter. It's gory detail, but thankfully it's real - it doesn't gloss over the reality of pain, the ongoing reminder of the damage, that some of the effects will go on, even on the other side of the tomb.

The fact is, newness and growth occur slowly. I've never experienced instant transformation. Changes that matter have always come sideways, slowly and often without my understanding. Anyone who has battled an addiction, or lived with a chronic illness, will remind us of the ongoing nature of the journey of transformation.

Secondly, Thomas. He wasn't different to the other disciples, he was missing. Wherever he was, I think he's included in the gospel to help

us out. Thomas is the bridge for us readers. He's the one between those with the first hand experience and the rest of us.

No matter how enthusiastic the recounting of the story from the others was – if you've missed Jesus, missed the rebirth of hope, then the path to catching on is a more difficult one. But to his credit, Thomas turns up with his questions!

That's a great example! Even with his questions, he comes back to the community. And having questions, having a different experience to others; not having it all sorted out is no reason to leave the community of Jesus followers. In fact it's probably the best reason to be in it!

John is making the point with this story that it's often in the community and with the help of others, that we meet the risen Christ.

John tells us a few surprising things about the disciples. On this Easter day in the evening, Jesus arrives among them and gives his peace. He breathes the Spirit on them. And if that's not enough, John includes Jesus giving the 'great commission' – "as the Father sent me, so I send you."

So what about for us, what does it say to you and me and our church? Firstly, the scarred, wounded, risen Christ stands with the rest of us scarred folk and is real in identifying with us. Then Thomas is a powerful reminder of the importance of asking questions and persevering until you get an answer! We may have to wait and struggle longer, but we all share this in common; it's precisely the stuff of faith.

John at least seems confident that he has given us enough for just such a faith to be born. That's why he says, "Now listen, friends: I've left out a ton of stuff. Jesus said and did lots of other amazing things that I just haven't gotten around to even mentioning. But what I have given you is enough. Read it and believe!"

Amen.





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Responding: Prayers for the World & Community

God of the risen Christ, as we pray again for the community on this side of Easter we remember a world that in many ways is scarred and wounded, and in need of hope and real change.

As we pray we remember again that as the risen Christ had scars and wounds, you identify with each of us in our struggles.

We pray that your love and hope be known in our community - in places where jobs and future remain uncertain through pandemic and other forces; in places where grief is known and where loved ones are missing.

We pray for our country as difficult questions are being asked about patterns of behaviour and toxic work cultures, where women and men are asking those in power difficult questions and shining the light into dark places.

We pray for a world that continues to bear grief and loss through COVID-19, and particularly for those places struggling for just access to vaccines.

May powerful questions continue to be asked for the sake of justice. May the hope of the risen Christ bring real change and shine the light in places needed. May the community of Christ be that hope in streets, towns and cities over the world.

We pray now for people and places close to us, that the light of Christ may bring life and hope.

As our questions and prayers are heard, we offer the prayer Jesus has 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 for ever.
Amen.**





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Passing the peace

*A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."
- John 20:26*

Peace be with you, **and also with you**

Offering

**Bless these gifts, and bless us
with the same spirit
that was with the early church;
of one mind and soul,
holding things in common
and leaving no one in need.
May these gifts and our lives
bring life to all. Amen.**

Notices

UnitingWorld's 7 days of Solidarity;
A Celebration of our Global Neighbours,
runs from April 18 - 25th. Are you in?
<https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/7dos>

Singing: This is a day of new beginnings TIS653

This is a day of new beginnings,
time to remember, and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing,
laying to rest the pain that's gone.

For by the life and death of Jesus,
God's mighty Spirit, now as then,
can make for us a world of difference
as faith and hope are born again.

Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,
step from the past, and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt and grieving,
seeking new paths, and sure to find.

Christ is alive, and goes before us
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.

²Brian Arthur Wren





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Blessing

Go before us, living God,
and show us how to share your life
with those we meet.

Each new day as we walk beside you,
guide our feet and guard our hearts,
show us the beauty of our shared brokenness
and shape us into vessels of your peace.

Go in the company of the Spirit of peace,
to love and serve God,
in the name of Christ, Amen.

Presbytery of Gippsland
Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon
pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com

Contributors this week:

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown,
Wattlebird Ministry Team, Warragul.

Liturgy: Rev. Arnie Wierenga
& Rev. Jennie Gordon, Presbytery Ministers.

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