



Easter 2

Worship@Home April 19, 2020

In the evening of that first day, the disciples were locked in fear.
Quite literally locked in a room.
Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you"
"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Locked in fear.

Locked in.

Locked

In fear.

Fear



We come to worship, grateful of Easter mercies
We come to our dwelling tables, our dwelling chairs,
our worship place in gratefulness
for the mercies of God amongst us:
for the presence of Jesus:
the life of the Spirit:
with us
in our homes.

Opening Hymn of Praise TiS 381 This Joyful Easter Tide

This joyful Eastertide
away with sin and sorrow;
my love, the crucified
has sprung to life this morrow:

***had Christ, that once was slain
ne'er burst his three-day prison
our faith would be in vain
but now has Christ arisen
arisen, arisen, arisen.***

My flesh in hope shall rest

and for a season slumber
till trump from east and west
shall wake the dead in number:

had Christ, that once was slain...

Death's flood has lost its chill
since Jesus crossed the river.
Lover of souls, from ill
my passing soul deliver:

had Christ, that once was slain...





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**George Ratcliffe Woodward 1848-1934 alt.
241 739 241 739**

George Ratcliffe Woodward was an Anglican priest: he played the cello and the euphonium, (sometimes in processions?), and liked bell ringing and bee keeping. And he wrote poetry. This hymn is his most popular, but perhaps not known so well known in Methodist traditions.

Acknowledgement of Country

The First peoples of this place know something that we, who came later, may not understand. We therefore open our doors to the Elders past and present of the First peoples, as an act of reconciliation and healing in our Nation.

Opening prayer

Present Jesus
In our homes, appear.
Present Jesus
In our hearts, appear.
Present Jesus
Though our locked doors, appear.

We open our hearts and minds to trust
you with our lives,
with all we hold dear.
We hold out our hands to you and open them,
releasing our fears and hopes into your great
mercy and love.
We hold out our hands to you,
to be grasped by you and held within your
great mercy and love.
We hold out our hands to you,
to be led by you in your ways of life and peace.
Amen.

Prayer of confession

Present Jesus,
God of all Mercy,
Spirit of Life
For where we have locked our door: we are sorry
For where we have locked others out: we are sorry
For where we have locked ourselves in: we seek
your presence.

Hear these Words of Resurrection

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me,
so I send you.”
“Reach out your hand and put it in my side,
do not doubt but believe”
“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet
have come to believe”

**Sin is forgiven:
Peace rests in us,
Thanks be to God.**

**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.”**

Psalm 16

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
*Reach out and wrap your arms around me God,
because I need to shelter from whatever
threatens me.
I feel secure and safe in your embrace.*

**I say to the Lord,
“You are my Lord,
I have no good apart from you.”
As for the holy ones in the land, they are
the noble, in whom is all my delight.**
*I’m telling you; I belong to you and find your
goodness in everything.
I can see the light of your life in those around me
and that makes me smile.*





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Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

Other people turn in different directions for comfort and get into all sorts of trouble.

I won't go there or do that.

I will hold fast to you with both hands; you provide all that I need.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;

I have a goodly heritage.

What a life I have received and lived already, fenced and fed

in the pleasant paddocks of your protection!

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

I keep the Lord always before me;

because he is at my right hand,

I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my

soul rejoices;

my body also rests secure.

In the daytime you are my wise guide,

in the night you are steady, as close and constant as my heartbeat.

I follow you in all I do, you are my stable strength, and so...

my whole being dances with unrestrained delight, singing songs of celebration and I sleep tight, safe in your shelter.

For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.

You show me the path of life.

In your presence there is fullness of joy;

in your right hand are pleasures

forevermore.

You don't let me go, you don't abandon me to the deep darkness, instead you light the way I walk, and are my constant companion on the track, and that's amazing, marvellous and miraculous, always and ever, Amen.

The Reading

John 20: 19-31

**For these words of Faith,
and Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God**

Reflection

The reflection from Rev Ian Turnnidge is attached to the end of this document

Hymn 152 Joyful, Joyful

Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, God of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the dark of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heav'n reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
singing bird and flowing fountain
call to praise you joyfully.

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
well-spring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest.
You our Father, Christ our brother,
all are yours who live in love;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to your joy above.

¹Henry Van Dyke





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God of Compassion hear my prayer:

Prayers of the People

Think about what locks you might have keys to. What locks are there in your house and car?

On my key ring there are keys to various doors and my mailbox and my car. Think about what gets locked in and what gets locked out. Locks represent fear of some sort. Yet we are told not to be afraid, "Peace be with you".

Let us hold this image as we pray.

My heart is bursting with thankfulness that Jesus is Risen and is present to me just as truly as he was present with his disciples in the early daysand forward through all generations.

We are called to love and follow you Jesus. What does that mean for right now? As you were sent, so we are sent. Here in this time of 'retreat', speak to my heart of your call on me. What is mine to do? How can I love you in Truth if I allow fear and doubt to stop me closely following your leading and your example?

Holy God, the Gospel today speaks of fear and of being locked in. We are so often locked in fear and inaction. I am mindful today of those who are shut down, closed, shuttered, some through fear and anxiety, others through loneliness and isolation. Some are locked in by living circumstances, others by violence or addiction. Some folks are powerless to change their lives and others make their decisions for them, sometimes for good but other times for ill. In particular today I pray for

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Peace IS with us dear Holy Spirit. You dwell in me, in us. Sometimes I know the reality of this peace and other times you prickle me into action. The church looks quite different at this moment to how it did as we came into this New Year. Teach us how to be Peace in the midst of the turmoil...how to be Peace to our friends and neighbours while we are distanced. We are your flesh and blood Body in the place you have put us. Teach us Holy Spirit...teach us what is worth our holding tight to and what is worth us letting go. Teach us to more closely love one another, not holding onto the forms of worship but the worship itself.

In the pattern of Death and Resurrection, The Crucified has sprung to life! Liberating One, imagine all those locks in my life bursting open and creating freedom and releasing Life. I pray this liberation for all people. Your Kingdom Come!

**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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Offering

Open your hands before God. Let us pray together.

Lord, need surrounds us. There are so many people around us doing it tough. Take what we have to offer, our tithes and offerings, our hearts of love, our strengths and our challenges. Use us to bring your Kingdom, to bring justice and mercy to others.

Use whatever means you have chosen to gift your church and your community.

Notices

Our doors may be shut but our hearts are open for business!

Blessing

Peace be with you as you go into your day and into your week.

Be the KEY that unlocks, opens and releases.

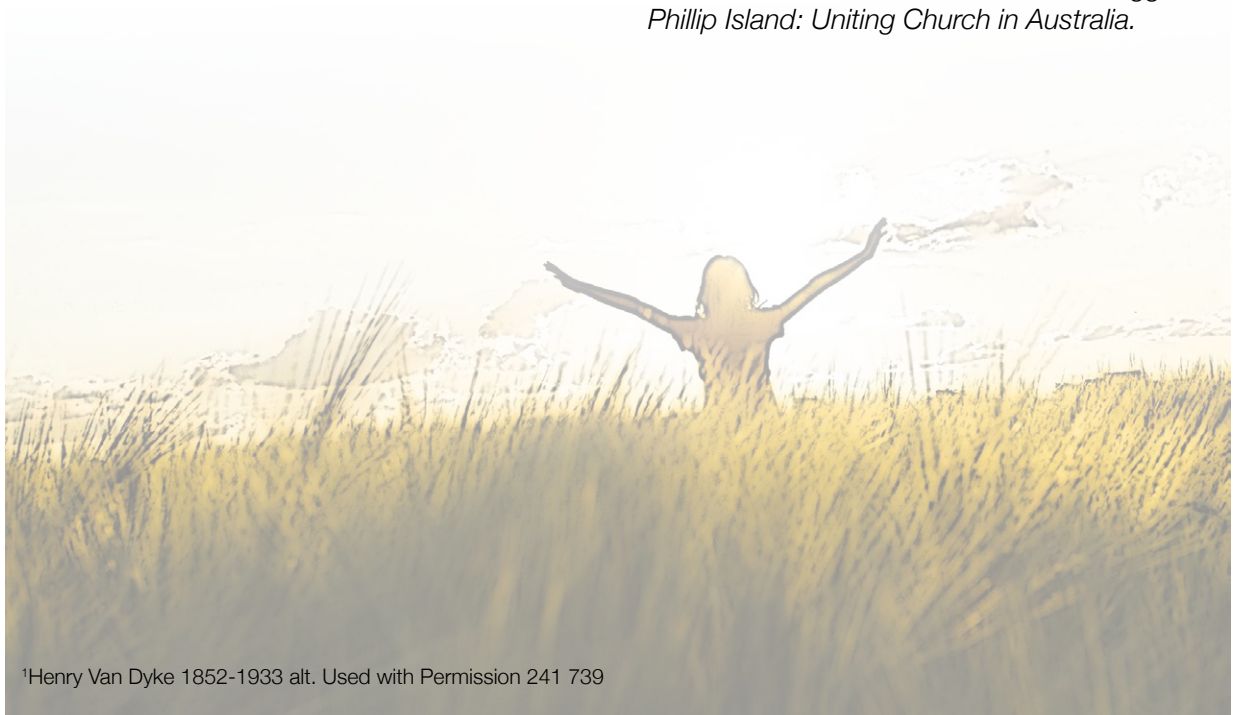
Share your heart's liberation in whatever ways you can.

Remember to laugh and enjoy whatever you can of life's little moments.

Notice the little things and share them with others. Breathe peace and know joy in the celebration of LIFE, of LIGHT and of LOVE.

Today's service has been prepared by Rev Jennie Gordon, (Psalm), Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson, Prayers and Blessings, and Rev. Ian Turnidge opening liturgy and reflection.

Shearwater Congregations: Toora: Fish Creek: Foster: Tarwin Lower: Inverloch: Wonthaggi: Phillip Island: Uniting Church in Australia.



¹Henry Van Dyke 1852-1933 alt. Used with Permission 241 739

Worship for You @ Home: Easter 2. Uniting Church in Australia, VicTas, Presbytery of Gippsland



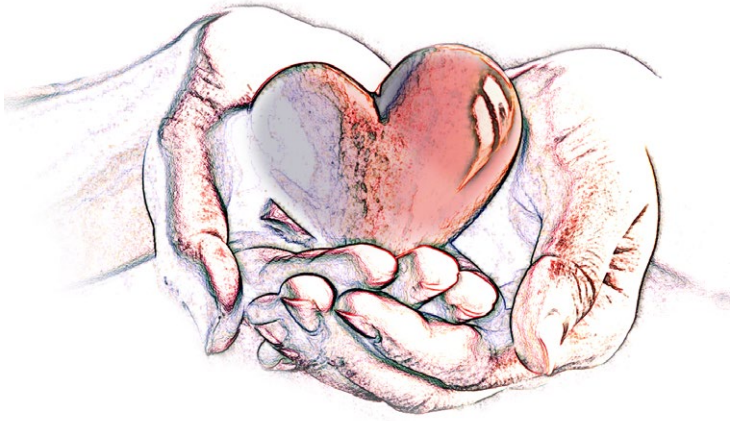
Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Reflection from Rev. Ian Turnnidge



What does it take to unlock a door?

The doors to the heart, where have we bolted them shut?

What does it take?

How do these heart doors get locked?

I've been thinking a lot about doors and locked doors and shut doors, firstly because they are in our Gospel story: twice. The fearful disciples are gathered together after the brutality of the crucifixion: once on what we know as Easter day, the third day: and again, a week later.

I've also been thinking about doors because you and I are behind closed doors as we seek to protect our community in these weeks and possibly months of staying at home. We are all at home, and there is a real element of fear, as we watch the news from communities in the world devastated by the pandemic.

Behind our doors, life continues on in a new kind of normal: restricted socialising, restricted contact, not only with neighbours and friends, but also with family. For the disciples in this story, the new normal had not yet emerged. Mary's account doesn't seem to have made any impact on them. "I have seen the Lord" has fallen on hearts damaged and broken after such public violence and shame. The word that she tells them from Jesus "Go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" have not yet taken any meaning in the disciple's grief and fear.

How are you going at managing your fear in this pandemic? What steps have you taken to help you manage? Fear can take on very subtle mannerisms in our day-to-day living. Fear can make us shrink back from life. Fear can make us withhold from those we love and trust. Fear can make us absent from relationships we value, but with whom we withdraw ourselves from.

When my father was making his journey to his death he was desperate for some truth to address the fear those around him would not speak. When his sister arrived from Perth to see him and stay for what was to become his last few days, in a quiet moment he asked me, "How long is she here for?" I don't know, I replied. "Well I want to know, how long is she here?" he demanded. I said that she had brought with her carry-on luggage and she didn't have a return ticket. He seemed satisfied, and relaxed a little. Even in his own fear, even he could not ask the question the lies at the heart of is fear: "How long have I got?"





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Fear can ask questions, and fear can refrain from asking.

- I need help.
- I'm not doing OK.
- I'm a bit blue.
- I'm going crazy here at home?
- I'm not coping.
- I'm lonely.
- Can I open that door with somebody?

Can we open that door to Jesus, whose words to us all are "Peace be with you"?

So much has been made of Thomas in this Gospel, who was so clear about what he needed in order to believe: but so little of the other elements in the story:

- Receiving the Peace of Christ
- The gift of the Holy Spirit breathed upon us
- The gift of offering and receiving forgiveness.
- The advice on those things we retain, the gift of letting go of all that is broken in us, in our world, in our relationships
- The Invitation of Jesus to come close to his wounds: not the be afraid of them.
- The invitation to come into relationship again in belief.
- To receive the blessing, and know it and live it: that we are the blessed ones who believe all these generations later.

What does it take to unlock a door?

Where we have bolted our own doors shut, what does it take to open them?

How do these heart doors get locked?

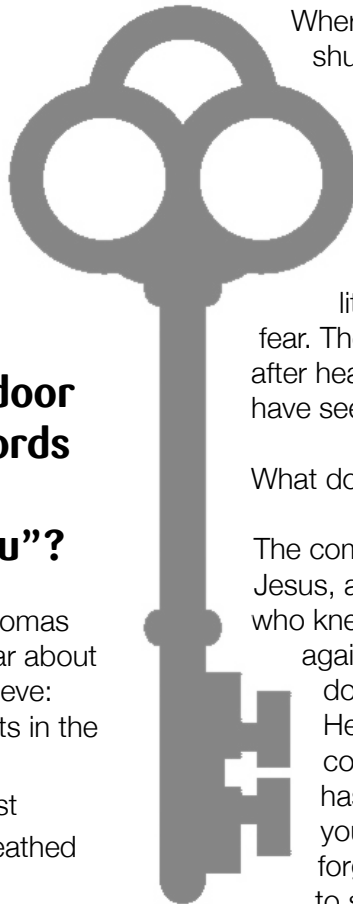
The disciples too, even after hearing Mary's words, had quite literally locked themselves down in fear. Thomas had bolted his heart shut, even after hearing his brother's words to him, "We have seen the Lord."

What does it take to unlock a door?

The comforting thing in this story is that Jesus, after the resurrection, comes to those who knew him, loved him, and grieved him again. He comes to us, through those doors we have locked and offers peace. He comes unbounded by human constraint, physical limitations, as he has come to all believers for all time—you and I included—with peace and forgiveness and the power of the Spirit to share: even when we have locked ourselves in.

In our current circumstances, as we remain safely at home, I am sure many of us will begin to feel the fear and effects of isolation. How you experience that will be unique to you. And how you manage that will take some changes to your normal:

- You might need to overcome the reluctance to use the phone; intentionally call a couple of people each week and see how they are.





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- You might choose to write some letters to people you miss: pull your un-used cards from the desk drawer and write a letter or two.
- You might choose to start a long overdue indoor project. (cleaning out the linen-press is one I need to achieve...and the second drawer of the kitchen too!)

But most importantly there is an opportunity to foster dwelling in the presence of that peace which Jesus brings in times of fear. You might like to do that through our “Worship at Home resources”. Perhaps there is a way you might make notes of the words and phrases you feel as you read the Sunday Bible readings and pray with them later on, or take a prayer from the resource and pray with it each morning at your kitchen bench.

So perhaps we don't need to worry too much about what it takes to open a door.

**Even in our fear,
Jesus comes to us.**

- In this Season of Easter, let us remain in the peace he brings to us by attending to these matters of the heart.
- In this Season of Easter, let us receive again the Holy Spirit he breathes over us.
- In this Season of Easter, let us dwell in that blessing he brings us all

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

