



Easter 3

Worship@Home April 26, 2020

Preparing for Worship@Home

We invite you to bring a piece of bread to your worship space and place it on the cloth in front of you.

“Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love,

**love one another
deeply from the heart.**

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.”

1 Peter 1: 22-23

Acknowledgement of Country

We give thanks to God for the Land on which we meet. We gratefully acknowledge the First Peoples of this district. We work for healing and reconciliation in this Nation.

Opening prayer

Sit with us,
Jesus of the lonely cross,
while we are apart
from each other.

Surprise us,
Jesus of the empty tomb,
whisper our names
as we keep our distance.

Break through to us
Jesus of the wounded side.
Through our locked doors
come with your peace.

Break bread with us
Jesus of the open road.
Make our hearts burn with love,
open our eyes to your life.

Light your candle



Hymn: Lord of the Dance. TiS 242

I danced in the morning
when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon
and the stars and the sun;
and I came down from heaven
and I danced on the earth,
at Bethlehem I had my birth:

***Dance then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he;
and I'll lead you all where ever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.***

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
but they would not dance
and they wouldn't follow me.
I danced for the fishermen,
for James and John,
they came with me and the dance went on:

Dance then, wherever you may be...

I danced on the Sabbath
and I cured the lame:
the holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped
and they hung me high,
and they left me there on a cross to die:

Dance then, wherever you may be...

Hymn continued P2





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Hymn continued

I danced on a Friday
when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance
with the devil on your back.
They buried my body
and they thought I'd gone;
but I am the dance and I still go on:
Dance then, wherever you may be...

They cut me down and I leap up high,
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you as you live in me:
I am the Lord of the dance, said he:
Dance then, wherever you may be...

¹Sydney Carter

Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19

I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

I love you, because you hear me. I know this: I'm not speaking or crying into an empty nothingness. Because you listen, I can speak to you, so I'll keep on praying while I have breath.

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. Then I called on the name of the Lord:

"O Lord, I pray, save my life!"

I've had tough times. I've been out there on the edge in all sorts of pain. That's when I cried out to you for rescue. You saved me; I know you did because I'm still here to tell the story.

What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

What can I give back to you for all your extravagant blessings? I'll honour you with gratitude in the quiet of my house, and I'll make sure others know that I belong to you.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

As you look on us with love in this life, so you hold us gently through the passage of death; this I know.

O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord.

Just like my ancestors in the faith, I will do your work because you have set me free. I will keep on thanking and blessing you and calling on you by name.

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

Let this affirmation ring out; We belong to the living God! Let it fill the places of emptiness, let it resonate through the halls of power, let it ring over cities and towns and echo through the heavens; Praise the living God!

Read: Luke 24:13-49





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Prayer of confession

Take your piece of bread and break a piece after each part of the prayer - *



God of all our lives,
here from our familiar spaces
we can imagine being on the road to Emmaus.

We can imagine the disciple's pain
and confusion as they walked away from the
city after Jesus' death.
*When we have walked away from hard places
instead of staying in the struggle,
forgive us. - **

We can imagine Jesus walking with them
listening carefully to their stories,
acknowledging their grief.
*When we have chosen not to walk beside
others and acknowledge the reality of their pain,
forgive us - **

We can imagine Jesus's gentle teaching
filling their ears and firing up their hearts
with truth and life.
*When we have not listened for your Word
and paid no attention to the way your work
in our hearts, forgive us - **

At the end of the day Jesus sat at the table
with them and broke the bread. It was in the
breaking that they finally knew who he was.
In our own brokenness Jesus comes to us with
healing and forgiveness, and the power to make
us whole.

***In gratitude for the healing presence of
God with you now, you are invited to eat a
piece of the broken bread and be thankful.***

Reflection

Today Wendy, Jennie and Ian have all
contributed to the reflection; which is attached
at the end of this document.

Wendy – The Empty Tomb

Jennie - On the Emmaus Road

Ian - At the table with Jesus

Hymn: One More Step Along the Road I Go

One more step along the world I go
One more step along the world I go
From the old things to the new
Keep me travelling along with you
***And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.***

Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn.
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me
***And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.***

As I travel through the bad and good
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go
You'll be telling me the way, I know
***And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.***

Give me courage when the world is rough
Keep me loving though the world is tough.
Leap and sing in all I do
Keep me travelling along with you
***And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.***

Hymn continued P4





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Hymn continued

You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me.
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you
**And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.**

²Sydney Carter

Prayers of the People

In prayer we bring to you, God who hears us,
people who are hurting, lost and alone,
whose names we know, and many we don't;

Let your Spirit be a constant companion
to those who are making their last journey of life,
in hospitals or at home. Strengthen and comfort
those who care for them.

Sit at the table with those who occupy this
isolation time alone,
let them know the delight of your company,
and the embrace of your world-wide family
in Christ.

Be a guide to those who find themselves
meandering,
taking paths of trouble and danger,
falling into wells of deep doubt and despair,
wearing layers of anxiety too heavy to bear.

Give hope to those who are away from home,
or who long to travel to be with family far away.
Bless them with connection that fills the
aching spaces,
bless them with courage to see this time
through, bless them with coping and kindness
for themselves.

God of love, Spirit of truth, Christ on the road,
be our companion; in the breaking of the bread,
in the waking from our sleep,
in the living through this time, Amen.

**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.**

Offering

God, who meets us on every journey,
May the gifts we put aside today bring hearts
afire with hope.

*(Talk with your congregation Treasurer this week
how you might arrange for your offering to be
collected)*

Notices

How might you open your heart on the phone,
in a letter, via email this week?

Blessing

Sit with us,
Jesus of the lonely cross
while we are apart
from each other.

Surprise us,
Jesus of the empty tomb,
whisper our names
as we keep our distance.

Break through to us
Jesus of the wounded side.
Through our locked doors
come with your peace.

Blessing continued P5





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Blessing continued

Break bread with us
Jesus of the open road.
Make our hearts burn with love,
open our eyes to your life.

And may God fill us all
with love unbounded
so that we might love each other
deeply, from the heart,
as we are loved.

Peace be with you,
and yours.
Now and always.
May it be so.

Hymn: Now let us from this table rise. Tis 530

Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and live again,
his selfless love has made us whole.

With minds alert, upheld by grace
to spread the Word
in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.

To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

Then give us grace, Companion God
to choose again the pilgrim way,
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

³Frederik Herman Kaan

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

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

¹Used with Permission CCLI 241 739 Sydney Carter 1915-2004. ²Sydney Carter, 1971 Stainer and Bell Ltd: London, Used with Permission CCLI 241 739. ³Used with Permission CCLI 241 739 Frederik Herman Kaan 1929-

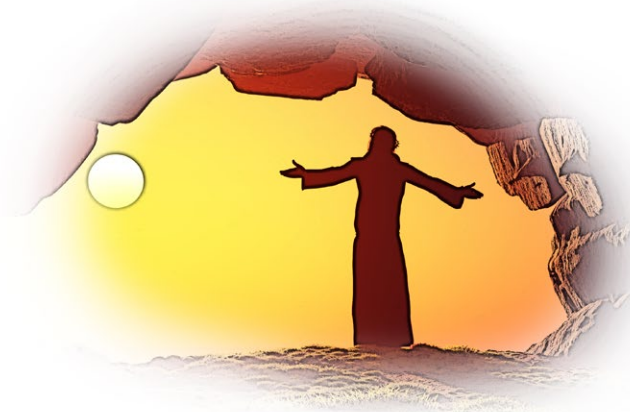




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Reflection from Revs. Wendy, Jennie and Ian



Behold!

**Behold what?
An empty tomb?
Remarkable!**

Yes, a tomb that is empty because life cannot be contained. Because death will always have its way. But then life bursts out, renewed and transformed.

There is no resurrection without death.

Meaning and purpose...gone. Life...gone.
Well what is emptiness and loss then?

Our hands must be truly empty, their grip loosened, in order to reach out and touch the simple shape of eternity. It is only when hope is truly dead and buried that love bursts out (or bursts in). This is when love is born. Unexpectedly. Uncontainedly. Uncomprehendingly. Sensationally. In odd and unexpected places. Sometimes unrecognisably...until it calls our name and walks into our path, shares a meal with us, breaks bread with us, has brekky on the beach or a dinner of fish with us. It takes on our doubts and our fears and walks beside us in the grief

and loss into the new adventure of a different way to be. In this is the reborn and renewed life we call "born again".

Holy one of unexpected and rebirthed places, Remind us again and again of the letting go, of embracing the empty, allowing the death. Sit with us in the garden of all that feels like it is gone, truly gone. Let us hear in the hollow of the empty, your love echoing back to us in newness and refreshment. In this unique and strange time, when themes from the past cannot be reshaped but must be emptied out and begun anew, refresh and recreate us as your church for this time. In the strange emptiness of now, there is a fullness which calls us back to the basics and we hear the primal sound of your Spirit hovering over us. Behold! The Christ, the very Source of Life here with us.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Walking away.

We've all done it. We've walked away when things in our life have got too outrageously tough to bear. It's what we do. Sometimes it's the hard but healthy thing to do, sometimes it's the only thing to do, and sometimes walking away seems right, but maybe it's not...

Walking away is what two disciples are doing in the Gospel reading from Luke this week. They're walking away, away from Jerusalem. They've seen Jesus arrested, tried, beaten, crucified and then his life-less body placed in a tomb. Now they've heard nonsense from some women and had the women's unbelievable claims verified by some men (interesting!) that Jesus' body is not there, that he is alive. Look, can you see them on the road? They are walking away.

Walking away continued P7





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Walking away continued

They're putting it behind them, for some reason, maybe it's respite and maybe it's more permanent than that. Maybe they're going back to somewhere that feels safe and known, whatever it is, they are moving away from Jerusalem and the craziness of the past few days. Then a traveller approaches and joins them, asking what they're talking about, listening patiently to their response. In the conversation that follows Jesus teaches them again, beginning with Moses and expounding the scriptures, but they still don't recognise him, that will come later, at the table.

I'm so glad that those two disciples chose to walk away. I'm so grateful that we can read it in Luke's Gospel. I'm glad because it gives me a story that fills me with hope, every time I hear it. It makes my heart sing to think that when we walk away and turn our backs, when we have to find the exit in a hurry and get ourselves somewhere safe, or when we simply need some space and time to sort out hard and painful things, Jesus gently joins us on the journey. Mostly we don't even recognise him.

May we be wise enough to invite this strange traveller to stay, to join us at the table, until our eyes are open.

At the Table

Here at the table, on this 'indwelling' journey in our lives, we listen into Scripture, where we travellers invite the stranger to our table. We are not sure, like the travellers in this Gospel that it is towards evening, we may have many more weeks of 'indwelling' to go, but these sojourners plead that this stranger stays, as the day is long: *"Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is nearly over."*

That's a beautiful prayer for us this week as we sit down to our evening meals at home to pray a grace that says *"Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is nearly over."*

The remarkable thing in this story is that the happenstance of Jesus walking beside us in our grief and loss only slowly becomes conscious in the characters. For their saddened hearts, warming in the conversation with Jesus, warming as the Scriptures remind them of who their God is and who they are in God, call for more of this communing together: more of this company: more of this hope as the day fades.

And it is as the day fades, and in the twilight of the meal when they recognise what God has been up to with them all along.

Uniting Church minister and theologian Rex A. E. Hunt, notes that this story is characteristic of Jesus' ministry: he is remembered as one who readily accepted invitations to meals as a guest rather than a host, and found the meal table the ideal place to share faith that re-imagined what it is to live faithfully in relationship with one another, in God. He notes:

"Words and food are made out of the same stuff", writes Rubem Alves. "They are both born of the same mother: hunger." For around a meal, food is shared not hoarded, friendships are made and relationships strengthened.

Even though we cannot physically gather around tables after church or for our evening meals, this Jesus who meets disciples locked in a room in grief, who walks alongside saddened friends who seek to leave their pain behind is the same Jesus who at the table becomes known in the breaking of the bread.

