

**Surf Coast Uniting Churches
Easter Day**



Hymn 370 Christ the Lord is risen today

Christ the Lord is risen today:

Hallelujah!

Let the whole creation say:

Hallelujah!

Raise your joys and triumphs high:

Hallelujah!

Sing now, heaven, and earth reply:

Hallelujah!

Welcome

May the worship bless you on this wonderful Easter Day



Acknowledgment

This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people, traditional custodians of this land under God.

We commit ourselves again to working for reconciliation in this land.

Call to Worship

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Easter Prayer with responses

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Risen in quiet and mysterious darkness
before the chorus of the dawn
Alleluia

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Risen with glory, and grace in reserve

and authority beyond measure
Alleluia

Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed!

Risen to prove that violence is no solution
to offer us peace and life in all its fullness
Alleluia

Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed!



Easter Prayer ©T. Lyndon
Cartoon Leunig (Used with permission)

Lord on this day of joy, we give thanks to you for loving us so much you died for us
Now you have raised up by God and we thank you Lord
for raising up all of us from our Good Fridays
We thank you for making us a healed and forgiven people of God.
You have shown us love and set us from all darkness and evil
Because of you we do not live in our yesterdays and Good Fridays
Your love has raised us up into your light, joy and peace
Because of you we see God and the power of God's love moving in our lives,
defeating all fear, violence and darkness in the world, in the universe.
Lord, we give you thanks for your great love for us and all the universe
We may not understand everything
We may not see everything
but we know deep down in our heart and soul, you have risen
We know the stories and testimonies from all times and places,
from many different people, from witnesses over the centuries
and we are convinced you have risen.
Your teachings convince us you have risen.
All the love, light and joy we have witnessed in the loving actions of others
tell us you are here amongst us
You are our morning star.
You have risen in our hearts and have transformed our lives
We see you Lord with the eyes of our heart, know you are our Lord
We will follow you all the days of our life
We will love others as you love us
We give you our thanks and praise Lord
for your steadfast love and faithfulness to us. Amen

Prayer of Confession

We are invited to bring all that's on our hearts to the Lord in this moment of silence and to ask for healing, forgiveness and the grace to forgive others.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us

"Our sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God.

Hymn 380 Yours be the glory

*Yours be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won.*

Reading John 20:1-18

20:1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

20:2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

20:3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

20:4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

20:5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

20:6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,

20:7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

20:8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed,

20:9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

20:10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

20:11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb,

20:12 and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

20:13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

20:14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

20:15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

20:16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

20:18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Young at Heart

Easter symbols quiz.

What do you know about our Easter symbols?



Hymn 382 Now the green blade rises

*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.***

John Macleod Campbell Crum 1872-1958 alt.

Easter Day Sermon

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen



I was thinking yesterday: How can I find Easter? I'm still stuck in the pain of Good Friday. I'm still stuck in my yesterdays. It's only been three days since Good Friday.

In today's gospel it's still dark, it's before dawn and Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb and finds it empty. She panics and runs to tell the disciples someone has stolen the body of Jesus.

Peter and the other disciple who Jesus loved run to the tomb. Peter goes in first and sees its empty and the linen burial cloths. The other disciple who Jesus loved goes into the tomb and believes. They both don't understand and they return home. We don't know what they feel.

We can only wonder about the disciple who Jesus loved. Why did he believe? Perhaps he remembered Jesus words, 'I will be raised up after three days.'

Mary returns to the tomb. She is grieving deeply and thinks "they" have taken stolen the body of Jesus. In her grief she doesn't see the angels in the tomb. She doesn't see Jesus. Her grief has blinded her.



It is not until Jesus calls out her name, that she sees him. That she calls him “teacher”. Jesus asks her not to touch him. Why? Was he so different? Did something happen when Mary finally saw Jesus? By the time she met with the disciples and declared: *I have seen the Lord*, she has changed from a woman who was fearful and panicked, from a woman who was blinded by grief, from a woman who saw Jesus as her teacher, to a woman who knew she had seen the Lord.

What was it like to see the Lord?

Artists over the centuries have tried see the Lord and portray him and have created images according to their culture and perspective.



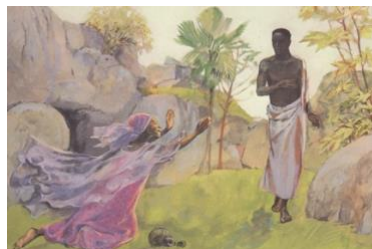
This is a Byzantium Jesus; a mosaic created in Italy in 547 CE. He looks like a Roman.
This is a painting from 16th Century Belgium. Jesus has white skin.

What do you see in your heart when you pray and want to know Jesus?
What images do you know of, that helps you see Jesus?

Easter raises a lot of questions.

Perhaps some of us are like Mary Magdalene. Still stuck in our yesterdays and Good Fridays. Blinded by grief over the hardships and suffering we have experienced along our life journey. It’s not easy to move into a new mindset, a new way of seeing life.

Mary missed out on seeing angels because she was stuck in her yesterdays and blinded by her grief.



Something happened to her when Jesus called her name. It awakened an inner joy, like this African Mary is experiencing. She is filled with Joy when she sees Jesus.

Do we need Jesus to call out our names, before we recognise God with us. Perhaps Jesus calling Mary's name helped her move on somehow and recognise Jesus as God with us and see and know Jesus, as not just a teacher but as the Lord.

Do we need God to call our name before we can let go of the past and move on? Do we need to be known by God and realise we are known, loved, and accepted for all that we are and will be before we see the Lord?

Mary Magdalene has been labelled as many things, by western churches, as a sinner, with many demons, who has made mistakes. Yet, it was Mary who Jesus God chose to reveal himself to and she was the first to see him risen, as Lord. She was the first to say to the other disciples: *I have seen the Lord.*

The Orthodox churches see Mary differently. She is remembered as a powerful teacher in the early church, a saint, a wealthy businesswoman and there are icons of her holding an egg.

Like Mary, we can move from the grief of our Good Fridays to the joy of seeing and knowing the risen Lord.

Peter, seemed to be practical, a thinker who needed to be convinced. He saw only linen cloth in the empty tomb. He didn't understand in the beginning. He needed time and to see the risen Lord, to be convinced. Perhaps it takes time to see Jesus and know him in our heart.

The other disciple who Jesus loved, is not named. Perhaps this is for a reason. Perhaps it is to draw us all into the gospel and help us enter the story. Perhaps we are the other disciple who Jesus loved. We do not fully understand, and we have not seen the risen Jesus, yet we believe.

Perhaps like Mary, we are changed over Easter and move from our Good Fridays to the joy of Easter and believe in its new beginnings, deep down in our heart.

In a world where there's so much unbelief and so little peace, our faith in the risen Jesus sustains us and gives us courage, strength and peace.

We need an anchor in this world of fear, despair, struggle, troubles, violence, injustices and war. God is that anchor, offering us light, love, peace, joy, stability, and love.

We have the stability of a rock where we have the unshakeable belief God is with us and will keep us anchored and strong.

We have peace in our soul, which cannot be found in today's world. Peace that offers deep rest for our soul.

We have joy that helps us see clearly where we are grateful for our Lord and our loved ones and all we are given. Joy and gratefulness are good for our soul.

We need to feel accepted and known by God, and our loved ones. Unconditional love sees us. Often, we look in the mirror, and we don't see ourselves as God sees us. We are hard on ourselves for some mistake way back in the past and we forget the Easter message about new beginnings and God loving us. It's wonderful to be accepted and loved. Set free from guilt and shame. We are raised up from the darkness into the light. Jesus came to love us, not condemn us.

Love is the most powerful force in the world. Love overcomes all darkness and evil. If we have love in us, we have God in us. Each of us is Spirit filled. That means God's love has been poured into our hearts and continues to fill us and we are raised up into the love of God, from all our Good Fridays.



This wooden statue of the risen Jesus greets people at reception at the hospital in Geelong known as St John of God. St John of God was a poor Portuguese soldier and Shepherd who later in life founded an order of brothers who cared for the sick in countries around the world. If you look closely one of eyes is damaged and a fingertip is missing. Its rather battered and well loved, like most of us. It greets people coming to hospital, most of whom are facing a crisis because of health issues.

There are times in our life when we face Good Friday moments.

Today reminds us that Jesus continues to raise us up and offer a way forward where we can leave the darkness behind. We can embrace new beginnings and new life.

The Lord be with you

Moment of quiet reflection

Offering

Lord, giver of every good thing, we bring to you our lives, gifts and resources for the building up of your kingdom and church. We give thanks for blessings and transformation that come through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

Prayers of the people

Prayers for peace, for the world and the cost of living, for leaders of all nations, for those who are grieving and suffering from health issues

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

Communion

Sharing and notices

Sending

Lord of life, you walk this journey with us and through us

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Journeying within, and wrestling with the world

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Lead us to risk, to grow, and to tread the path you have opened for us

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Let us rejoice that everyplace is your place

Lead us Lord, lead us on

Hymn 376 I know that my redeemer lives

*I know that my Redeemer lives -
what joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
he lives, my everlasting Head.*

*He lives, to bless me with his love:
he lives, to plead for me above;
he lives my hungry soul to feed;
he lives to help in time of need.*

*He lives, and grants me daily breath;
he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives, my mansion to prepare;
he lives, to lead me safely there.*

*He lives, all glory to his name;
he lives, my Saviour, still the same;
what joy the blest assurance gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives!*

Samuel Medley 1738-99