



St Stephens Williamstown Uniting Church in Australia
Service of the Word at Home - during Coronavirus Lockdown
Second Sunday of Easter 19th April 2020
 Prepared by Rev S. Juliette Maua'i



(No Communion)

Place a cross and Bible on a table (if possible) on top of White/Gold cloth (or similar) which is today's Liturgical Colour. Prepare reflective music, hymns, songs to play as you feel prompted.

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Song: Joyful, joyful we adore you...

Call to Worship

adapted from Psalm 16

Keep me safe, my God.

For you are my Lord!

I will sing praise to our joyful Easter God

Lord, you are my portion and my cup!

I will keep my eyes always on you, Lord.

Come fill me with joy in your presence!



Opening Prayer

Holy God,

You have transformed the impossible into resurrection reality.

You have given us new birth into a living hope: alleluia!

You have called us out of the tombs we inhabit into an undreamed-of tomorrow.

we praise you for this day!

Come, Risen Christ,

in newness and hope on this Eastertide day. Amen.

Song: Christ the Lord is risen today... (*Choose your hymn/song to play and sing along...*)

Prayer of Confession

Redeeming God,

with you there is always more life, more hope, more joy.

In our doubt when we fail to recognize you at work in our lives, **Lord, have mercy!**

When fear impairs our faith, and our eyes and ears and hearts do not know you, **Christ, have mercy!**

When anger and sorrow stop us from doing the risky work of love, **Lord, have mercy!**

Words of Assurance

Within every grain of doubt, there is a tree of life and hope.

When our faith falters, failing to see the presence of the Holy among us,

God takes our faith and transforms it,

patiently showing us the many ways Christ walks among us

Look! As close as your own beating heart,

and in the eyes of your nearest neighbour,

grace abounds at the heart of all life.

You are all God's children, loved without condition,

go in that peace. **Amen.**

Song: Jesus is Lord of all the earth...



Reflection: Will you believe in Jesus' resurrection when death comes to you or your beloved?

In this week's passage from the Gospel of John 20:19-31 we find "the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews." Care must be taken that we do not use "for fear of the Jews" as a basis for anti-Semitic views. But I wonder if we might rephrase the evangelist John's words as, "for fear of what I believe"! Perhaps then, it would place us with "Thomas, who was called the Twin", and we would not be too critical of this disciple of Jesus.

Moreover, and again in contrast with her male disciples, Peter and the one Jesus loved in John 20:1-18 last Sunday on Easter Day, and with our doubting Thomas in today's reading, Mary Magdalene certainly gets another tick of approval in my book for her belief in Easter Sunday's resurrection! But what of you my friends? Are you Mary or are you Thomas? Is your 'faith' fixed in concrete or bound by your isolation and situation. Is your 'faith' open to the promises of God through Jesus' resurrection?

I was reminded and prompted to ask myself at the sad news received last Easter Sunday evening of the passing of my Mother, if my faith is still open to the promises of God through Jesus' resurrection as I sit with mixed feelings of sadness and deep joy!

Sitting in the reality of Corona virus restrictions and torn by this reality that would nullify my flying to NZ because I would still not be able to be present to say one last goodbye. So, on Monday morning I penned my last conversation which I now share:

"In memory of our dearest Mum...thinking of all my five sisters (plus me) and our late brother John; Mum's 27 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren..."

Easter Resurrection Sunday we rejoice with God, that His beloved Son Jesus, has been raised and is with the Father!

Yesterday afternoon after my worship service from home, I FaceTimed with sister Sulu and our dear Tina (Mother), Mauaiseaso or Seaso, and said to her at the end of our conversation, as I looked at her beautiful, beautiful face, "I love you, Mum"! I waved and blew her a kiss and said to my dear sister, Sulu, we will talk again. It was to be my last conversation and the last time I would say "I love you, Mum", as she looked at me and we both said goodbye, as Mum was called to be with her Lord and Saviour yesterday evening.

Thanks be to God...that our dear Mum was called to rest on Easter Resurrection Sunday! Rest in Peace and in the eternal Love of God, Mauaiseaso Palelei Maua'i."

Melissa Bane Sevier wrote: "Growing is sometimes difficult and painful, because it often requires us to let go of something we've believed or held dear for a long time." <https://melissabanesevier.wordpress.com/2017/04/17/making-space-in-our-souls/>, and in my journey this week as my sisters and families prepare to lay our dear Mother to rest on Saturday, amidst the Stage 3 Corona virus restrictions and lockdown, I am comforted by the promises of God in the resurrection of Jesus, his Son, and the promise of eternal life beyond death! **Thanks be to God!**

Call for Offering

Easter teaches us that laughter and love are at the heart of God's work. Joyfully we are able to give knowing that our gifts will help others to see the blessed miracle of God's creative joy.

Offertory Prayer

Loving God, can a laughing prayer be lifted up to you this Eastertide?
Can our gifts, given with love, be transformed like echoes of grace,
blessing all who receive?
May it be so, through the power of your Holy Spirit,
and may our lives speak of a joyous God, full of Easter surprises. **Amen.**

Benediction

Follow now the new path Christ has opened up for us.
An inheritance that can never perish; kept in heaven for you who in faith are shielded by God's power
Easter!
Christ is Risen!
May you dance an alleluia dance,

and sing a resurrection song.
Laugh with God and let joy reside in your hearts always. **Amen.**



May the Peace of the Lord be always with you!

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