



Order of Service
24th April 2022
Second Sunday of Easter

“Clearing the Space”, empty our minds of its busyness, relax, prepare for worship.

INTROIT TIS 771 Now to him who loved us.....

CALL TO WORSHIP.

Heavenly Father we gather as your people here today in this place.

Bless us as we come together to worship you.

Holy God may our hearts be open to hear your word.

Bless us as we come together to worship you.

Gracious Lord may we know your presence among us.

Bless us as we come together to worship you. Amen.

WELCOME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY.

“We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today, the Bangerang Clan and the Yorta Yorta Nation, and we pay our respect to their Elders - past, present and emerging.”

HYMN TIS 121. God himself is present.....

PRAYERS OF ADORATION & CONFESSION.

Eternal God, we lift up our hearts and praise you for the unlimited power of your love in Jesus Christ.

We thank you, we praise you, because he never stopped loving you even when his disciples ran away, and death starred him in the face.

Because he never stopped loving other people even when he was being nailed to the cross.

Because the worst that men could do in sending Jesus out to die could not stand in the way of your love.

Because you showed us the power of your love in raising him from death.

Because of his dying and rising again we know that your love is strong enough to go on loving ‘til the end of time.

Eternal God, we praise you because we know your love must win in the end.

Our Confession.

Risen Lord, we have betrayed you by following our own way

We have denied you by fearing to follow yours.

And we forget how blessed we are with all the gifts of creation.

Lord we are lost. Let your forgiveness find us.

Hold us in your strong arms and give us your new life.

Live in us and with us each day and together we may make a world that is new. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE. God loves us and cares for us. His Son, the risen Christ has died for us that we might have eternal life. Let us live in joy, love and gratitude.

Praise be to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN TIS 693. Come as you are.....



EARLY WORD

BIBLE READINGS:

“Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet

A light to our path”

Acts 5:27-32

John: 20:19-31

“May your word live in us,

and bear much fruit to your glory.”

REFLECTION.

In the early morning, on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene visited the tomb where Jesus’ crucified body had been laid to rest 3 days earlier. And as we know, she found the stone had been rolled to one side, so she ran back to tell Simon Peter and John, and they ran to the tomb & Peter, then John ventured in, saw the grave clothes folded but did not yet understand, and so went back home.

Mary remained & weeping, looked into the tomb and saw two angels sitting where Jesus had been lying.

Distraught, she did not take in what the angel’s message of the risen Lord meant and fled the tomb, only then to come face to face with, as she supposed the gardener, but then on hearing his voice realised it was Jesus. And then Jesus gave her the message to go & tell the disciples that he is alive, and he will go on ahead & meet them in Galilee. The disciples didn’t really believe Mary.

They were too afraid of the Jewish authorities and what they may do to them, so for the disciples it was better to stay hidden behind closed doors.

Later in the day Jesus appeared to the 10 disciples, and as Mary had been, they too were overjoyed to see Jesus alive.

But Thomas was missing!

And when he did return, he made it quite plain that he wouldn’t believe until he saw for himself the wounds in the hands & the feet of Jesus.

Thomas needed to see for himself before he could comprehend the truth!

A week later the disciples including Thomas were still in the house, Jesus came and stood among them again and said, “Peace be with you.” And he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”

This is one week since finding the empty tomb, one week since the excitement of the resurrection- The Lord is risen. One week later, and yet we find the disciples still in the same place, still behind locked doors.

After all the activity in the lives of the disciples while they were with Jesus, all the teaching Jesus did, after all the horrors of the crucifixion of their best friend; low and behold on Easter Day, Jesus appears to them alive. Wow! How overjoyed were they!

One week later the disciples are still behind locked doors!

Where are we one week later? After the period of Lent and Jesus’ journey toward the cross, the contemplation of Holy Week culminating in Good Friday, and then Easter day, where are we? What’s changed?

It didn’t appear much had changed for the disciples!

One week later what has Christ’s resurrection done for us? When I look at my life nothing has changed much- I am still busy- still worried about many things, still grateful for many things in my life; life still seems much the same as it was before. A little like the disciples I think, and perhaps a little like most of us.

Have we heard the story with our hearts or our heads? We hear and or read the story in our head and it perhaps remains a story – but what does it do in our hearts?

We know we are talking about facts. Christ’s resurrection is a big deal. The empty tomb is a life changing event. The resurrection does make a difference in our lives. And it takes time.



By God's grace we evolve into resurrected people through our relationships and the circumstances of our lives. Everyday we are stepping into the resurrected life, and it's not always easy, and some days are very hard.

Let's look at Thomas! Of course, we know Thomas as the doubting Thomas, refusing to believe Jesus' resurrection until he saw the wounds in Jesus hands, feet & side. He was a reluctant missionary to start with, but eventually went to India where he started many Gospel fellowships and to this day there are parts of India that hold dear the relationship with Thomas which has been handed down over the centuries. He was eventually martyred with a spear.

Thomas doesn't display any doubt in these actions, does he?

It took time for Thomas - he grew and changed; the resurrected Lord is real- the empty tomb made a difference. It was not just in his head- but it was in his heart – The doubting Thomas became the confessing Thomas when he exclaimed on seeing Christ's wound; "My Lord and my God!"

"My Lord and my God!" Somewhere between Thomas's doubt and his confession there was a heart moment, a starting place where Jesus entered.

"Easter" is always with us. As we pray, we pray in the name of our risen Lord; as we pray, we pray to our risen Lord; everyday as we pray the risen Lord is foremost in our minds because it is He with whom we are conversing. The Son of God who came to us in human form and died our death in human form.

The good news is – Jesus was raised from death and comes today to us all. The empty tomb is a big deal, the resurrection of Jesus is real, and he comes to us **wherever** we are in our lives. Wherever we are is the starting point for us. Wherever we might be within our daily lives, whether it be pain or joy, celebration or grief, difficulty or ease it is the starting point for Jesus to be in our hearts.

The locked doors behind which the disciples stayed for a while were flung open – the disciples are the early witnesses of Christ's resurrection.

The locked doors of the house could not keep Jesus out – He stood in their midst. He breathed on them – "Peace be with you" he said.

Jesus steps into the midst of our locked rooms too and breathes peace and life into us. He breathes peace and hope into us, he breathes courage & strength into us.

It's the breath of the risen Christ- "Peace be with you" that unlocks and opens our doors. It is the breath of the risen Christ- "peace be with you" that changes our lives, wherever we might be!

Let us pray. Risen Lord Jesus, after your resurrection you returned to your disciples, and you return to us. Breathe on us we pray, your breath of peace, your breath of hope, life, strength & courage, and by your grace may we worship you with our hearts.

We have doubts, as they had doubts. We have fears, as they had fears. We have a yearning to be with you, as they yearned.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come to us in body and blood. Stay with us, even when we fail to stay with you. Return to us as you returned to them. In your love return to us so that we might return to you. Amen.

Let us sing our next hymn.

HYMN: TiS 407 Breathe on me, breath of God.....

OFFERING & DEDICATION: Loving Lord, we bring our gifts and ourselves to you this day. Bless us and the gifts we bring, that they may be used to the greater good for all, and in your service. Amen.

NOTICES OF JOYS & CONCERNS



PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.

Jesus, wounded & risen, we bring to you our prayers for your broken world. We pray for your people in places of war and unrest & especially in the Ukraine; in places of ecological disaster such as the floods in India and here in Australia, in places of famine, and in places where the pandemic is still causing much distress & death.

Wounded Creator, we have seen your crucified and risen love;

Work your resurrection in the lives of your people.

We bring our prayers for your divided church, and we pray for places where wars are raged and your people are left desolate, where ancient hatreds have not been healed by your gospel, and your church is split by faction.

Wounded Redeemer, we have seen your crucified and risen love;

Work your resurrection in the lives of your people.

We bring our prayers for our fractured community, and we pray for those pierced by nails of prejudice and hatred, of neglect and abuse, of indifference and rejection.

Wounded Lover, we have seen your crucified and risen love,

Work your resurrection in the lives of your people.

We bring our prayers for all who are suffering in the pain of injury, illness, confusion, grief, loneliness, hunger, homelessness and with no sense of a future. We bring our prayers of those who are in our hearts, those in our congregation and in our community.

Wounded Healer, we have seen your crucified and risen love;

Work your resurrection in the lives of your people.

We bring our prayers for all who have been witnesses to your love in our communities, and for those who have never seen or believed.

We give thanks for Thomas and all your saints who have known you as the risen Christ.

May we too, recognise you in our midst, and come to the fullness of joy in your presence.

Jesus, wounded and risen, we have seen your crucified and risen love;

Work your resurrection in the lives of your people. Amen.

HYMN: TiS 210 O for a thousand tongues to sing.....

BLESSING: May we go into the week with love and joy in our hearts. May we be filled with gratitude for all that we have, and all that we share.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: TiS 779.

“May the feet of God walk with you, and his hand hold you tight.

May the eye of God rest on you, and his ear hear your cry.

May the smile of God be for you, and his breath give you life.

May the child of God grow in you, and his love bring you home.”

