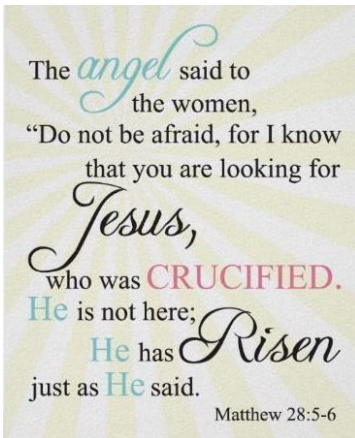




# 'Worship at home' Easter Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup> 2023



As you come to worship this day,  
**light a candle** with hope, for we know...  
that after the night comes a new day,  
after sin comes forgiveness,  
after defeat comes another chance,  
after struggle comes peace,  
after death comes resurrection,  
and the hope of eternal life.  
The light will shine in the darkness,  
and the darkness will never put it out.



## Opening

Do not be afraid, for Christ is risen:

**Christ is risen indeed!**

We come seeking Christ:

**Seek, and you shall find.**

The tomb could not contain him:

**Christ is present with us now.**

He gives us courage and strength:

**In Christ we know**

**joy, hope and faith.**

We rejoice, and give thanks:

**for the power and glory of God!**

## Prayer of Praise

We give you glory and praise, O God, that in the uncertainty and darkness of our lives, we find an unexpected message of joy. "Do not be afraid", we hear, "He is not here; he has risen!" In this timeless Easter message, we find hope, and the opportunity for a new start. We leave behind our broken dreams, our struggles and our defeats, and experience your transforming love that brings new life.

Do not be afraid, for Christ is risen: **Christ is risen indeed!**

## Do you like surprises?

**Reflect on a time when you have been surprised, perhaps when something good has happened unexpectedly.**

You might have been given a surprise party, or gift, or an unexpected act of kindness. Easter is full of surprises. I suspect the women who visited Jesus' tomb that first Easter morning were taken by surprise.

### **Matthew 28:1-10**

*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he*

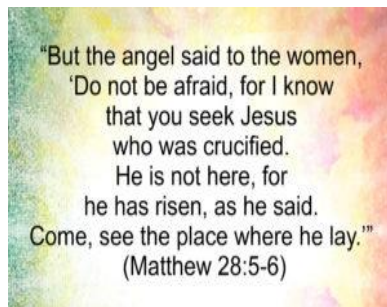
*said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

*New International Version*



We live in a time of fear, uncertainty and turmoil, with threat of conflict, devastating natural disasters, increasing environmental destruction, financial pressures and hardship. It can be difficult to find good news in our world. 2

In their fear, uncertainty and turmoil, the two women at Jesus' tomb that first Easter morning heard an unexpected proclamation of good news, bringing a glimmer of hope that maybe things will be well. We hear that the women hurried away from the tomb, "afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples."



So often, life is unpredictable: many things don't go as we expect. Events take us by surprise, sometimes bringing unexpected good news of great joy. At Easter we celebrate the transformation of the despair and fear of death into the unexpected joy and hope of new life, a new beginning and a new relationship with Jesus the Christ.



In Christ, we are given courage and strength to face the fears of our lives. "Do not be afraid... for Christ is risen." We have the assurance of his presence with us. The good news is that joy can overcome fear, life is stronger than death, love is greater than hate, grace covers judgement, and that the sufferings of this life are transient and do not represent the final reality. While fear and joy, despair and hope, doubt and faith are all a part of our world and our lives, the Easter message is that ultimately joy, hope and faith will prevail. The light will shine in the darkness, and the darkness will never put it out.

### **An Easter Affirmation of Faith**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We proclaim Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One, confessing him as Lord to the glory of God the Father. In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the Church, the Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation.

We acknowledge that we live and work between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which he will bring.

We are a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal; on the way Christ feeds us with word and sacraments, and we have the gift of the Spirit in order that we may not lose the way.

We will live and work within the faith and unity of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, bearing witness to that unity which is both Christ's gift and his will.

We affirm that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified. Together with all the people of God, we will serve the world for which Christ died. And we await with hope the day of the Lord Jesus.

*- Adapted from the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia  
from Uniting in Worship 2*



“Afraid yet filled with joy,” the women ran to tell the others their unexpected good news. As we experience the truth of Christ for ourselves, we too are called to share this good news with others. When we make time

to love each other unconditionally, to feed the hungry, to make friends with the poor, to turn the other cheek, we are sharing good news, bringing joy, sharing our faith, that they too may find courage, and experience hope for themselves.

This Easter, may you hear the unexpected good news bringing healing and hope, and may you be the bearer of unexpected good news to others.

### **Closing**

Do not be afraid, for Christ is risen:

**Christ is risen indeed!**

We go to tell others of the risen Christ:

**To share our unexpected good news of joy.**

The tomb could not contain him:

**Christ is present with us now, and always.**

He gives us courage and strength:

**In Christ we know joy, hope and faith.**

We rejoice, and give thanks:

**for the power and glory of God!**

