



Order of service  
Date: Sunday April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Easter Sunday

**We acknowledge that we are worshipping on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung people, of the Kulin nation, and pay our respects to elders past and present.**

Today like last week, I send you an order of service to help you work through the material better. I am including all the bits in the one document, so you don't have to chop and change from one to the other. It is kind of a long document as it contains everything, even the preaching if you choose not to watch the video of that or can't. It will not be quite the usual kind but have elements you will be familiar with.

I will give instructions in red for when things best happen. Remember you will need to read it on your computer to follow the links.

If however you just want to work through the material in your own way please feel free. A reminder you will need speakers to hear audio. And PLEASE call me or email me if things don't work.

Now let's get down to it.

**Opening video** (You will need to open the previous video you downloaded and play it here before you do anything else. If you choose not to or can't play it, then say the following:)

Jesus is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Alleluia!

*Let's sing. TIS 380, "Yours be the glory." The words are below to sing without music or click on the link to go to the audio. You will need to flick back to this to read the words.*

1. Yours be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
endless is the victory over death you've won;  
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes, where your body lay.

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

2. See, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;  
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;  
let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,  
for the Lord is living, death has lost its sting.

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

3. No more we doubt you, glorious Prince of life;  
life is naught without you: aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conquerors through your deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan to your home above.

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

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

The shadows have gone and the day has dawned!

**Alleluia!**

The stone has been rolled away and Christ is alive!

**Alleluia!**

Our sorrow is turned to joy!

**Alleluia!**

Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

## **Opening prayer**

God,

It is Easter Day. The day of days, for people like us all around the world.

But God, can we be honest with you.

This Easter, today, it doesn't feel like Easter, the day of days.

We know we should shout and sing Hallelujah, but it doesn't want to come.

This thing happening all around us, is keeping us in a state of what feels like constant Good Friday.

Good Friday dying isn't going away.

And hallelujahs seem too hard.

But we know we have to try.

God,

Today we will hear your story, giving us the words, again,

Do not be afraid.

A message from an angel and Jesus your beloved,

Asking us to not be afraid.

So today, maybe more than any other Easter Day, God

We must sing hallelujah.

Even if today we feel we can't sing it for new life;

Or we can't sing it with a sense of hope;

Or we can't sing it because we are sad;

Then maybe it is enough to sing and say-

Don't be afraid?

We can say hallelujah to that.

We can say praise the lord, hallelujah,  
 Because we are given your word, to not be afraid.  
 And this year, maybe that's enough.  
 Maybe this year is a "good enough Easter"  
 When we praise you, who stills our fear amidst a day  
 that keeps on being Good Friday.  
 Fear cannot drive you out, because you promised, promised,  
 To be always here.  
 Today, if nothing else, we will get up,  
 And not be afraid.  
 Hallelujah.  
 Amen.

**EARLY WORD** – Good news. Bad news.

(Press CTRL and left click on the below link and it will open up your web browser and go straight to the YouTube clip. Just press play and enjoy.)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeghL5Uye\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeghL5Uye_A)

(After you have watched the clip work through the below)

Question – What things did notice in this story?

What was the difference between how the rabbit saw things and how the mouse saw things?

In *Good News, Bad News*, Rabbit and Mouse are two friends who see everything from a different way. Rabbit sees everything as an opportunity and even a rainstorm is good news in his eyes. On the other hand, Mouse sees everything as a disappointment. The rainstorm and fresh apples are bad news to Mouse. This goes on until something happens that changes Mouse's perspective and he begins to see things as good news.

On Easter Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and Mary show up at the tomb expecting to find Jesus' body, but instead they find an empty tomb and an angel saying "Do not be afraid" (v5). These women see the empty tomb as bad news. They are afraid and confused about what happened to Jesus' body. It is definitely bad news to have lost his body. The angel changes their minds. The women learn that Jesus is alive, and has gone ahead of them. No longer does an empty tomb serve as a disappointment, but for Mary and Mary Magdalene the empty tomb is now full of possibilities and hope. This is good news!

**Sing:** He is risen.

(This is a new one I've been saving up, though it is not a new song. It is a fun song by Colin Buchanan, who used to present on Playschool. It has a decidedly country

feel about it, so feel free to line dance to it. Words and link below. Open the song and come back to these words)

### He is risen

1 Sunday morning the women come  
To the grave of the crucified Jesus  
The stone is rolled away  
They hear the angel say:

*He is risen, Hallelujah  
He is risen, Hallelujah*

3 Two brothers walking the Emmaus  
road

Talking to the crucified Jesus  
When he broke bread they knew  
All Jesus said was true.

*Because  
He is risen, Hallelujah  
He is risen, Hallelujah*

2 Peter hurry, Peter run  
To the grave of the crucified Jesus  
Strips of linen, an empty tomb  
But Peter you will see him soon

*Because  
He is risen, Hallelujah  
He is risen, Hallelujah*

4 So brothers, sisters raise your voice  
In praise of the glorified Jesus  
He crucified our sin  
And we will rise like him

*He is risen, Hallelujah  
He is risen, Hallelujah  
(Repeat twice)*

### READING

Our reading today is Matthew 28:1-10. Below is the text or you can follow on in your own bible.

*After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." <sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

**PREACHING** – Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid!

*(Text supplied below. No video today)*

Greetings!

This is Jesus first word in Matthew's gospel after he has risen.

The women go to the tomb. There's an earthquake, an angel rolling the stone out of the way. The guards pass out, the angel speaks to the women – Do not be afraid. They run off to tell the disciples what they saw. On the way, Jesus meets them and says – Greetings!

There is no, *“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”* Or *“What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?”* Or even, *“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?”*

For Matthew, it was a simple – greetings; hello; how ya going; g'day. Then comes – Do not be afraid.



The phrase – Do not be afraid – appears in all these texts as seen in this image. In fact, the phrase appears 365 times in the whole bible.

That's enough for once every day. Every day, every year. Do not be afraid.

Either that's good news every day, or...

Well let me put it this way.

When someone says – Do not be afraid – they say it either to calm your fears about something which need not be feared; or to let you know that they are there to comfort you so don't be afraid; or they say it because there really is something to

be afraid of and they are convincing you and themselves to try and not be afraid.

I wonder which of these the angel, and Jesus are trying to convey?

I wonder if it is possible for all three to be in play at the same time?

I wonder if this talk of not being afraid is even an issue for us at Easter?

I mean, there are clearly things in life we fear.

But let me backtrack a little, for any visitors this morning I should say that we have been exploring the theme this Lent, “Get up and do not be afraid”, taken from the transfiguration story from Matthew, when Jesus touches the cowering disciples, and says these words to them. We have been considering this theme throughout Lent in regard to the particular passages each week. Each week we have been encouraged to get up and not be afraid in reference to a variety of situations and circumstances. Today, Easter Sunday 2017, we are continuing to think on this theme, not the least because the phrase “do not be afraid” appears twice in this reading from Matthew this morning.

Which brings me back to the issue of our own fears, and on this day, with particular reference to this resurrection story.

Which kind of begs the question is there anything about resurrection, a person rising from death, that causes us to be afraid?

I mean, how did he do that?

Wait, no, not Jesus. I mean that guy there on the telly.

Ok, not there as in here on the telly right now as you read.

I mean the guy on the telly I was watching as I am, was, writing this.

Penn and Teller Fool Us. You know, the show where magicians try out their acts before the famous Las Vegas magicians act, Penn and Teller, in order to try and get a spot in their show.

And that guy is good, he certainly fooled me. How did he do it.

Ahh, magic. It is an enticing art. And it is all about misdirection.

You know there are those who reckon that is what happened with the whole resurrection thing – misdirection.

Look over here, now look back there. Ooh, didn't see that coming did you.

And did you see what I just did.

I misdirected you from the issue at hand, just when I was getting to the core of the issue.

Resurrection? What are we afraid of? Or concerned about? Or critical of?

Or suspicious of?

And you know what?

I'm going to misdirect you again, but this time you will see it happening.

I don't intend to convince you of the resurrection this morning.

Either you believe it, or you don't, or you believe some version of it.

And my going on about it won't convince you about what I believe.

You, all of you reading this this morning, believe different things about what we do on Sunday mornings.

And frankly, I am not concerned about what you believe.

Although I do have a proviso about that statement.

I'm not concerned about what you believe about resurrection, so long as your belief is authentic and not arrogant, does no harm to others, and in no way, condemns the beliefs of others.

And, most importantly, that your beliefs lead you to a compassionate engagement with the world.

Frankly, whatever else we make of the resurrection, one of its most significant consequences is that it insists on what we do with our beliefs.

*What was very hard for Christ's followers, and frankly us, to realize is that God was doing something totally new.*

*They were expecting restoration of the old order of things.*

*God was bringing resurrection and a totally new order into being.*

*In some ways, the disciples still hankered after the fleshpots of Egypt. They were hoping for the establishment of a kingdom that looked very much like the roman empire only with them in power.*

*God was bringing a totally new kingdom into being – a kingdom in which justice and righteousness reigns, in which the poor are fed and the captives set free, in which the sick are healed and abundance comes for all people.*

*How often do we miss the ways of God because we are looking for restoration of the old rather than resurrection of something totally new?*

*How often do we cling to old expectations and struggle to embrace the new ways of God? (Godspace: A community blog)*

This is really what the resurrection asks of our beliefs.

And this is the key issue for our church right now.

Not whether we believe in a particular view of Jesus resurrection, but whether we can embrace the possibility of our own (the church's) resurrection and not look for restoration of the old.

Whether we can let go of old expectations and embrace wholly new ways.

You see that is why the angel, why Jesus tell us – do not be afraid.

Because they know there is something much better awaiting us.

*So, why do we—like them—despite the witness of Scripture, tradition, and our life of worship and service, still come to so many situations looking for death when we have been promised life is waiting there for us?*

The next question is even more important.

*The question this Easter season is not so much how will we view the resurrection but how will we enable others to enter into resurrection life? What will we do in this season of resurrection to help bring it into being? (Godspace op cit)*

Well, maybe it will be answering the door.

*It's an angel at your door with a delivery. (Very appropriate)*

*"Don't be afraid. He has been raised from the dead and is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him. This is my message for you." Sign here. Or rather let me take a photo of you for our records.*

*The angel's work is done. And now yours begins. Will you sign for the good news, unwrap it, and live by it?*

*Will you sign for the good news that your future is a series of situations, whether garden bowers or graveyards, where Christ awaits you to meet defeat with victory, to meet disappointment with hope, to meet death with life?*

*(Alyce McKenzie, Progressive-Christian)*

*Resurrection is not a departure from God's way with us...but an affirmation that this is the way God is and was.*

*The one who meets us is the one who carries in his being the marks of his passion and the being and becoming to go with it. (Loader)*

This is what any belief we hold about the resurrection must reflect – the risen Christ always remains the crucified Christ.

*We don't always know we're waiting for something not in our hands,  
that has already happened,  
unknowingly included in a procession toward someone who's already here.  
Only later, not on this day, do we know,  
we're not waiting for a future;  
we're watching God unfold. (Pastor Steve)*

Friends – Get up and do not be afraid. He is not here. He has been raised. Come, or better, go, or for now, stay, and see the places he is...unfolding. Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

We have seen our God! By God's grace and in God's own holy love, we turn our hearts to the divine that surrounds and upholds us.

Yet we are called, not merely to see our God, but to help make our God visible in this world: to do the work of love put into action in service to the Body of Christ.

And so, we pray for all for whom crucifixion still seems

a clearer reality than resurrection;

for those who are hungry, or unsure when and where their family's next meal will be,

**All: help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are ill or in pain especially in regard to the Corona virus, and those who struggle still to receive adequate care,

**All: help us to be your light, O Christ.**

**One:** For those who are living with mental illness, who suffer all the more from stigma and shame and social exclusion,

**All: help us to be your light, O Christ.**

**One:** For those who work long hard days for inadequate wages, and for those who will not give up a bit of comfort so that all might have justice,

**All: help us to be your light, O Christ.**

**One:** For those who are living in places of violence and fear, where families have been torn apart, and trauma is a way of life,

**All: help us to be your light, O Christ.**

**One:** Help us to learn that even in the midst of despair, there may be love; even in the midst of fear, there may be comfort; even on Good Friday, even when it last too long, there is the seed of Easter Day.

May we nurture God's light and God's love into this world that is in desperate need of healing. May we be the active promise of new life in this community, and the blessing of God's love and grace to all who are in need.

May we receive the Good News: Christ is Risen!

Love has conquered death! and return to the work of discipleship with joyous hearts and praising hands.

Now, in a time of silence, let us offer our own particular prayers that sit deep within.  
(Silent prayer)

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer, and hear the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**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**

## **BLESSING –**

Go in peace to love and serve our living Lord.

Go in the power of Christ's resurrection! Alleluia!

Let it be that your life will be a blessing for you and for others:

a holy place: a sanctuary where God abides,  
leaning in to hear your laughter and your lament,



gathering up your tears of sorrowing and rejoicing,  
singing to you in comfort and in challenge,  
working always to create again and anew.  
People of God, Christ is risen, do not be afraid. Amen.

**Final Song.** TIS 720- Halle, halle. (get the drums and percussion if you feel inclined)

Halle, halle, halle, lu-jah!

Halle, halle, halle, lu-jah!

Halle, halle, halle, lu-jah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!