



**uniting  
church**  
Kiama Jamberoo

**Easter 3**  
**Sunday 26 April 2020**

## ***The Living Christ in our Midst***

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### **We Gather**

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*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.  
It would be appropriate to find a white cloth or scarf to signify the Easter season.  
Start by lighting the candle. The candle helps to centre us.  
Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

### **Introduction**

Christ is risen.

***Christ is risen indeed!***

We continue to gather in our homes, conscious of our brothers and sisters all over the world doing the same. Some are gathering around computer and television screens to worship "online", some will gather with their Bibles and prayer books, some will simply stop for a moment.

And so we take this moment, this time, we set everything else of our "doing" aside, and we still our hearts and minds, seeking the breath of the Holy Spirit as She breathes new life into our lives.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Ancient of Days, [God the Creator], breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have blessed this place through their care and concern.

We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders,  
past and present, and we pray for the future of their communities.  
May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

*(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler, This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.*

### **Call to Worship**

In Psalm 116 we find these words:

<sup>12</sup> What shall I return to the Lord  
for all his bounty to me?

<sup>13</sup> I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the Lord,

<sup>14</sup> I will pay my vows to the Lord  
in the presence of all his people...  
Praise the Lord!

### **Prayer**

Generous God, your people are still scattered and yet we know that as we join in this prayer, we pray with our friends and family in this community and we pray with your faithful people all over the world.

Spirit of God, move in our midst today.  
Reveal the Christ to us as we gather to share in prayer and in reading the Scriptures together. Teach us and send us into your world to share good news of Christ's resurrection with all we encounter.  
Christ is risen!

***Christ is risen indeed!***

**Sing - Shout To The Lord**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_alauL2xKA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_alauL2xKA)

### **Prayer of Praise**

God of the mountains and seas, we praise you!  
Your hands crafted the lands and your love has promised us life in the Risen Christ.  
We praise you!  
You comfort us when we are afraid.  
You give shelter when we are struggling with the world's challenges.  
You are our strength when we are tired.  
We praise you!  
Draw near to us now, we pray.  
Meet us with your grace as we seek to learn, to grow and to share your love with the world we encounter. Amen.

### **Prayer of Confession**

When all seems lost and circumstances leave us feeling empty and afraid;  
God of unwavering hope,  
***may your words of life burn within our hearts.***  
(silent reflection)

When trust seems impossible and our eyes remain tightly closed to the constant breaking in of Spirit;  
God of unwavering faith,  
***may your words of life burn within our hearts.***  
(silent reflection)

When our spirits feel dry and listless and where hurt or resentment creates barriers to human care and friendship;  
God of unwavering love,  
***may your words of life burn within our hearts.***  
(silent reflection)

### **Words of Assurance**

Fellow travellers,  
alive to God's constant word of faith, hope, and love,  
may we journey into life in new ways.  
May we take to heart God's gift of presence, peace, and forgiveness.  
Receive it gladly.  
Live it with passion and boldness.

Christ is risen!

***Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!***

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## We Listen for God's Voice

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*For a video of the Bible reading, Reflection and Prayer for ANZAC Day go to:*

<https://vimeo.com/411295921/582b7573d2>

### **Reading:** Luke 24:13-35

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognising him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' <sup>19</sup>He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' <sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### **Reflection**

Always present God, open our hearts and hands to extend love and grace to those in need, following the example of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for Easter 3, 26 April 2020*

When the Prime Minister announced a few weeks ago that we were no longer allowed to meet in large groups and that we should all stay home, what did you do?  
What did you see happening around us?

There was the panic-buying in the supermarkets.

There were people who gathered at Bondi Beach - forcing the Council to close the beach. And then forcing other Councils to close pools, beaches and playgrounds. Here at church, we needed to notify the various groups that usually meet in our facilities. And we needed to attend to what that meant for us as a church community, particularly in relation to worshiping together and caring for one another.

We all had questions.  
How long will this last?  
What is this virus all about anyway?  
What can and can't I do?

Telling our story to each other is important in helping us to come to terms with what is happening around us.  
Asking questions is also important - as we ask questions together, we begin to put the pieces together.  
But then what do we do?

Let's look again at the story of the disciples on their way to Emmaus.  
Because this story gives shape to the way we work through the events and circumstances that we find ourselves in.

The disciples are walking away from an experience they are yet to comprehend.  
They are talking together about what they had seen and heard.

And then a stranger joins them - and they continue to tell their story together - particularly since this stranger seems to have no clue about what has been happening - there is always one who seems to have had their head in a bucket, isn't there?!

As they tell their story, this stranger helps them to see that all they have seen and heard and experienced, has its echoes in the writings of the prophets.  
They open the Scriptures together and they begin to put together their experiences of the past few days with their understanding of how God is working in the world.  
They make connections between their world and God's story throughout the ages.

When they arrive, they invite the stranger to stay with them and share a meal.  
They offer hospitality.  
And as they share their meal together, as they break bread together, they recognise the Living Christ in their midst.  
And as they recognise the Living Christ, they realise that all along, God's Spirit has been burning in their hearts.

So what do they do? They get up from their meal and head back into Jerusalem, another 7 miles, presumably in the dark, to tell their friends all that they have learned.

So where are we in this story?  
We know how to share our stories - and we need to keep sharing our stories with one another.  
But have we invited Jesus, the Living Christ into our conversations?  
Whether in prayer, or as we open the Scriptures with one another, how might we open our hearts and minds to what God is saying to us?

Do you make time to talk together about how our understanding of faith speaks into our experiences of today? Can we take the conversation further than the fact that there was toilet paper at the supermarket today into a conversation about how we understand what God might be saying to us at this time. *Where are we seeking wisdom?*

Perhaps it is tempting, when we are spending a lot of time with the same people, to think that we have said everything there is to say. Or maybe you share space with someone you wish didn't talk quite so much! This is a great opportunity to have some of those deeper conversations that we seem to never have enough time for - conversations that take us deeply into how our faith speaks to our living and how knowing God makes a difference.

It is hard to share a meal with anyone outside our own households at the moment, but not impossible. You might want to arrange a FaceTime or Zoom time with another household, sharing hospitality and conversation.

I really hope that during this time of slowing down, of taking time out, we will listen deeply for the voice of God and that we will make time to share what we are discovering with each other.

I really hope that we don't come out of this unchanged!

The Emmaus experience also speaks to the way we shape our worship together. Whether we are worshipping at home or together at church, this experience of the disciples is reflected in the shape of our worship.

*We gather and share stories*, praising God and confessing those times we haven't got it right or haven't understood.

*We open the Scriptures* together and seek to understand more fully, making connections between the Scriptures and the lives we are living today.

*We pray* together.

*We break bread* together.

And *we are sent* into the world to share/to tell of our new understandings.

Whether at church or at home, in recognising the Living Christ, a very real presence in our midst, Christ's disciples get up from the table and head out into the world to tell others about what they have seen and heard. Right now, we might not be able to go very far, but we have phones and email and opportunities to remind each other and to tell our friends of the love, grace and hope of God.

Let us pray,

Spirit of the Living Christ, be in our midst today.

Whether gathered or scattered, come amongst us.

Open our eyes and our hearts to your presence.

Change our perspective, break open our lives as we break bread together.

Send us into your world to share your love and grace with all whom we encounter. Amen.

**Listen:** Open Our Eyes, Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r99xVX36CRU>

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## We Respond

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### **Prayer for Others**

*Spend some time thinking about the people around you: who have you noticed this week, who is struggling, who has been a friend for you?*

- *family*
- *friends*
- *neighbours*
- *people who are ill or struggling or lonely*
- *is there anyone you could make a point of contacting this week - pray for them*

*Give thanks for health workers, researchers, government officials - working to provide care, healing and organisation. Pray for them - for strength and compassion.*

*Give thanks for the many essential workers who work to keep our society functioning - teachers, child care workers, grocery workers, truck drivers, garbage collectors, postmen and women. Pray for them - for persistence and courage.*

*Pray for people who have lost their work - business owners, employees, casual workers, the self-employed.*

*Pray for our leaders - for wisdom and courage.*

*Pray for people in other parts of the world where medical facilities are less able to provide care to people who are ill.*

*Pray for the church - that we will learn to be the church even when we are unable to gather. May we be light and life in our communities.*

*As we settle into a new way of being, pray for patience and a deep sense of peace.*

*God of Life - speak to us in new ways, nudge us into new ways of being.*

*Without our regular groups and routines, help us to use our time wisely.*

*May we take time, to listen to you more deeply.*

### **A Prayer for ANZAC Day**

We remember those who served defending freedom,  
their bravery and dedication,  
their patriotism and humour,  
their resourcefulness and hope.

We remember sailors, soldiers and airmen, and their supports who suffer.

In times of quietness,  
some of us remember the sounds of battlefields,  
the hopelessness of defeat and the poverty of captivity.  
We remember those buried in foreign shores, who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We remember Australians,  
from Albany to Atherton,  
from Balmain to Burnie,  
from Gelling to Gawler.

We remember sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers who served in time of war.

Lord, we remember,  
we honour,  
we are grateful for them.

Loving Father, who gives life to all,  
we entrust to your keeping those who have died in the service of this country.  
Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who suffer from the effects of war; grant them your peace and healing strength;  
and for those who in sadness recall lives lost; grant them comfort in the hope of resurrection.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

May we be inspired by the determination of those who have served in the fight for freedom, justice and peace.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Loving Father, have mercy on our broken and divided world.

Give your Spirit of peace to all people  
and remove from them the spirit that makes for war,  
that all may live as members of your family.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.**

UCA Assembly resources:

[https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/Ministries/Defence\\_Force\\_Chaplaincy/ANZAC\\_Day\\_Resources.pdf](https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/Ministries/Defence_Force_Chaplaincy/ANZAC_Day_Resources.pdf)

## Offering

*In responding to what we have read and how we have heard God speak to us, we commit ourselves to breathing life in the world around us.*

*If you make a regular financial contribution to the Kiama-Jamberoo Congregation, consider putting that amount aside now and keeping it safe.*

We pray...

God, you provide for all that we need. All that we have comes from you.

As you shared a meal with your disciples after a long day of traveling, so we share what we have with you. We offer our time, our skills and something of our material wealth and pray that you will guide us to people and places where we can serve and contribute to building a world that reflects your kingdom's life. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

## Notices

*Keep an eye on the website, facebook page and the e-news for updates.*

*If you hear of or notice anyone needing a bit of extra support, please let Kath, Janice, or one of the Elders or Pastoral Partners know.*

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## We Go

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## Sending and Blessing

As you join Jesus on the road,  
as you remain in your homes,  
wherever this week finds you,  
may you be blessed by the love of God the Creator of all that we see and so much more,  
be blessed with the inspiration of the life and words of Jesus,  
and be blessed with the breath of the Holy Spirit as she fills your life with energy and hope.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
**in the name of Christ. Amen.**

Christ is Risen!

**Christ is Risen indeed!**