SUNRISE SERVICE FOR EASTER MORNING

Pilgrim Uniting Church

Sunday, April 16th, 6.15am, Pilgrim Plaza
(Sunrise is 6.40am)

followed by a simple breakfast

Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate

Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen

Christ is Risen: The angels of God are rejoicing

Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty

Christ is Risen indeed from the dead,

the first of the sleepers,

Glory and power are his forever and ever

*St. Hippolytus (AD 190-236)*

*Gathered around an open fire outside, waiting for the dawn*

**OPENING WORDS**
There was darkness over the earth before creation:
there is darkness in the womb before birth.
The seed grows in darkness before it meets the light:
there is darkness in the tomb before resurrection.
People of God, he is no longer bound in a tomb, nor one of our own making.
People of God, he is no longer bound, trapped by lies and deception.
He is risen!
**Alleluia! He is risen indeed!**

On this day we bring thanks and praise, O God,

a day that fills us with awe and great joy.

Never again need we search for Jesus

in the places of dead memories and buried dreams,

for now in his risen life, he goes forever ahead of us

to open the gates of justice,
preaching peace and the forgiveness of sins.
**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**THE ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION, JOHN 20:1-18**
Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.
But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."
When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the gospel of our Risen Lord

**Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**SHARING STORIES**

When Stephen Colbert coined the term “truthiness” in 2005, everyone laughed. Few are laughing now. Colbert used the word to mean understanding something to be true because it “feels” right or because our gut tells us it ought to be true. Truthiness means that facts are secondary to emotion and that wishful thinking somehow has the power to bend the truth. The idea behind truthiness is closely related to confirmation bias, the idea that we are more likely to uncritically accept ideas or opinions as true if they tend to reinforce what we already believe. The Oxford Dictionaries’ 2016 “Word of the Year” was “post-truth.” “Post-truth” is defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” In a post-truth world, truth is what we perceive it to be, even if facts say otherwise. Lies are news and the truth is obsolete.

In a post-truth world Christians face a challenge about ‘what is truth’ when our hearts and minds are set on a reality that is different than the rest of the world perceives - about the assurance of the risen life of Jesus in our midst, about discerning God at work in the world around us, and about the dynamic activity of God’s Holy Spirit weaving in and between us.

No amount of post-truth yelling or anger or violence or money or intimidation or denigration or religious chest-thumping or political browbeating can keep this truth down. The truth will out. It will come to light. Truth is like yeast in the dough or the faith of a mustard seed. It may be small but it’s powerful! It is the truth we cradle most dearly as followers of Jesus.

*People share responses and stories…..*

**CRADLING HOPE: selected verses from Isaiah 65:17-25**

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating. No more shall the sound of weeping be heard, or the cry of distress. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by God - and their descendants as well. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**BREAKING THE BREAD OF FELLOWSHIP**

Christ is Risen!
**He is risen indeed!**

Jesus broke bread with his disciples on many occasions.

He broke bread on the eve of his death. He broke bread on Easter Day.

We break this bread as a sign of our fellowship with him, and with each other.
As we share the bread, may we say to our neighbour:
“Peace, my friend - Christ is risen!”
And as we receive the bread, say in a loud voice:

 “He is risen indeed!”

*Bread is shared from one person to the next*

**AN EASTER AFFIRMATION:**
We believe that death is not the end,

but rather a transformation into new possibilities.

Nothing that exists is ever completely destroyed.

A star exploding or a leaf falling:

both offer new possibilities and will 'live on'

in ways unknown to stars and leaves.

Winter gives way to Spring:

what seems lifeless now abounds with life,

new possibilities and delights.

We, too, experience new possibilities arising from our failures

or disappointments or what has come to an end...

We give thanks for all the influences in our lives

that have helped us see beyond the present

and have called us to live in hope and trust

whatever endings we have experienced.

We give thanks for the Spirit of New Life

active in our lives as it was in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Amen. *Adapt.MMorwood*

**WORDS OF MISSION & DISMISSAL**

In this new dawning, God is alive in everything,
and we are filled with joy and excitement at risen life in our midst.
**Jesus is risen! In him is our hope, in life, in death and in all eternity.**
We pray for all who bring your word of life

as a light to those in darkness

For those who bring your word of peace

to those enslaved by fear

For those who bring your word of love

to those in need of comfort.

**Lord of love and Lord of peace, Lord of resurrection life:**

**be known through our lives and through your power. Amen!**

Today the risen One comes to us with the gift of peace ...
May that blessing be with you and remain with you now and forever. Amen.

*A sign of peace is exchanged.*