**COCU 31A** **EASTER SUNDAY 9:30 AM 2014**

*We begin with lights off, and gradually lights are turned on until all are on for the first hymn*

**Acknowledgement of Country**

*(a lit candle is held by the person saying this text - Candle with Aboriginal material around it, or painted dots on it, or…..)*
Voice 1: Imagine a sacred place that holds the greatest stories of your people. Today, here, we will hear one of our best stories. Today, here, this place could tell us so many stories of life and death and all the mysteries. We pay respect to the first storytellers of this place, the Kaurna people, and their elders past, present and future. May we hold each other’s sacred stories gracefully.
(*Candle* *is placed on table*)

**Introduction**

(*a lit candle is held by each person, standing at lectern)*:
Voice 2:
We are not eye-witnesses to an event, as were Mary and the disciples.
We have not journeyed through a dangerous city to seek answers or consolation.
We have not seen angels gathering at the rim of this day,
or wept in the garden this morning because we could not find Him.
(Candle is placed on the table)

Voice 3: But we are here to attest to a story that has not lost its power during twenty centuries of change and conflict.

We are here because those before us carried this story as if it were precious gold; cherished it as if it were the key to a hidden wisdom.
(Candle is placed on the table)

Voice 4: Sisters and brothers in Christ, take your places here today in celebration and in awe. What you are about to hear again, has the capacity to change the world. Your very presence attests to the rising up of life from the tomb of despair, and to the uncontrollable power of God. It is Easter morning again: and we will celebrate!
(Candle is placed on the table) *Ann Siddall, in Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C.*

Voice 4 continues*…..*Because, Jesus lives! Death could not constrain him.
And he lives in the hearts and minds of all who love him.
**This is the way we will remember him!**

On this day called Easter, we celebrate
the indestructible love and wisdom that
Jesus showed to the world.
**We will gladly follow in his Way!**

We will remember Jesus as we live our lives.
**We will remember him as we forgive,**

**and not hold on to hurts.**

We will remember Jesus as we live our lives.
**We will remember him as we give**

**until it makes a difference.**

We will remember Jesus as we live our lives.
**We will remember him as we resist war**

**and all forms of violence.**

We will remember Jesus as we live our lives.
**We will remember him as we feed the hungry,**

**shelter the homeless and befriend the lonely.**

We will remember Jesus as we live our lives.
**We will remember his faith in a God**

**who loves, forgives and restores our hope.**

We will remember Jesus as we live our lives.
**We will remember his guidelines**

**for life and for loving** *(2012 Easter Liturgy, PCNVic)*

**Song**: Christ is alive

Christ is alive, and the universe must celebrate,
and the stars and the suns shout on this Easter Day!
Christ is alive, and his family must celebrate
in a great alleluia,
a great alleluia
to praise the power that made the stone roll away.

Here is our hope: in the mystery of suffering
is the heartbeat of Love, Love that will not let go,
here is our hope, that in God we are not separate,
and we sing alleluia,
we sing alleluia
to praise the power that made the stone roll away.

Christ Spirit, dance through the dullness of humanity
to the music of God, God who has set us free!
You are the pulse of the new creation's energy;
with a great alleluia,
a great alleluia
to praise the power that made the stone roll away. (Shirley Erena Murray)

**Welcome**

**Prayers of who we are**
Risen life is not what we expect in our world.

On the face of things, life seems to be under threat...

our earth is grieving, our families are fracturing,

and nations are at war within, and between each other.

The light of our hope grows dim.

**We need the heavy stone to be rolled away again.**

We acknowledge the ways we have failed
to honour and preserve life in all its diversity and glory

We acknowledge the ways we have allowed relationships
to become less important than riches or recognition
or the myriad of things that occupy our attention

We acknowledge the ways we have grown blind
to all the signs of risen life that beckon us still.

**We need the heavy stone to be rolled away again.**

Yet still, we long for risen life within us, and between us.

Yet still, we long for love to consume us again and enliven us.

Yet still, we long for hope to enable new possibilities wherever dying and grief hold sway.
**We need the stone to be rolled away again**. *A silence is kept*

**Words of Assurance**

Like our spiritual ancestors and countless generations, we say, Christ is Risen! The stone is rolled away, the tomb found empty. Mary calls out, “I have seen the Lord!”
We have seen Christ, too, in every helping hand, in every heartfelt gift, in every choice to restore life in this world. We are called to this new life, a life of forgiveness and reconciliation. We are renewed to go on, free of unnecessary burdens, our lives telling of love. Walk forward on this journey of faith, knowing you are not alone. The risen life of Christ remains with us.

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

*Mindi Welton-Mitchell,*

**Song:** Love has come again SPG 58?

## Stories from our tradition The Easter Story: Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 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.” So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of 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.”

**The Easter Affirmation**

**Song**: Jesus Christ our living Lord SPG 39?

**Holy communion**

**The invitation**
Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed!**
God is the heart of life.

**And we are the heartbeat.**

Let us celebrate this irrepressible life;

Let us open our hearts to the joy and wonder of infinite possibility, of unquenched hope, of risen life.

**We celebrate, we raise our voices and our hearts**
**in worship and thanksgiving to the God.**
Risen life happened because Christ was first prepared to die.

Defying death, he refused to release his hold on life and love.

So now, following his example, we choose to remember life and life in all its abundance. We remember Jesus, who gathered with his disciples on the night before he died. He took bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: This is my body, broken, so you may know wholeness. Eat it, and remember me.

After the meal he took wine and blessed it. Then he gave it to his disciples saying: This is my very life, poured out so you may be filled up. Drink from this cup, and remember me.

Bread and wine tell a very special story…
about women, about men, about life.
Bread has its beginnings in the earth:
it is gathered, ground and kneaded by loving hands,
tired backs, by sweat of toil.
Bread from field and mill and store.

Bread to break, to give and eat, shared from hand to hand.
Bread that must be broken open, to be used, to feed.
Bread broken to fill emptiness.

Likewise, the wine is of the earth, bitter and sweet.
From vine to glass, given and shared, of people's labour.
Wine of joy and pain, grief and gladness.
Wine that satisfies thirst and enlivens the heart.
*(Ruth Duck. Adapted by Nancy L Steeves)*

May this bread and this juice be for us the life of Christ.
**In all our diversity, may we who share this meal**
**be joined with Christ as one.**

The bread, broken. The life of Christ, broken.
The risen life of Christ now present with us.

The cup, God’s love poured out, that our lives may be filled up.

With bread and juice, you are invited to see, hear, smell, feel and taste the mystery of grace.

*Communion is received.*

*insert blurb in Christmas communion service about everyone welcome and to come forward etc.*

*During serving of communion, a small group may sing eg, ‘Now let the heavens be joyful’ may be sung and/or “Because you live O Christ” (Shirley Erena Murray; tune from the Netherlands) led by a small group and/or For everyone born a place at the table (Shirley Erena Murray)*

**Prayer after communion**
We thank you, O God, for your life, pulsing in creation, revealed in Jesus, renewed in risen life, and available to us now. Thank you for touching us again with your life through bread and the cup; for joining our lives with yours through Jesus; and for renewing risen life through your Holy Spirit. May our eyes be filled with seeing, and our minds with knowing. Amen.

**Song**: Easter Day

(or, For everyone born, a place at the table, Shirley Erena Murray)

*(the offering will be collected during this song)*

Autumn signs with leaves of gold,
dancing free in air so cold;
see the bush and garden bloom;
life has stirred from earth and tomb:
life is breaking through the clay,
rising up on Easter day!

Bursting forth from silken case,

butterflies take flight with grace;

praise their beauty with each breath;

faith is born from change and death:

faith is calling us to pray,

rising up on Easter Day!

Silver clouds adorn the skies,

shining bright as darkness dies;

night gives way to golden dawn;

hope has come in hearts that mourn:

hope is moving stones away,

rising up on Easter Day!

Sing we now with ecstasy,

freed to love so joyfully;

Christ alive in all we do;

love as gift of life anew:

love will ever with us stay,

rising up on Easter Day!

(words: Helen Wiltshire; Music: Norman Inglis)

**Prayer of Dedication**
We give thanks for our life and the courage we are given to live it.

Let our gratitude for life be expressed in our generosity.

Let our faith be expressed in good causes.

Let our belief in the future find full expression

in our daily attitude of mind.  *Francis Macnab/fwb*

**Prayers for others**
Today, right now…
We carry with us the resurrection and the life.
It is in us, if we will.

It’s what we’re given...
To learn to think for ourselves.
To make the hard moral choices and to live for the good of others,
not just for ourselves.

It’s about a life committed to truth.
It’s about a life committed to justice.
It’s about a life committed to love.

Things that are eternal.
Things that never grow old.
Seeking truth.
Doing justice.
Loving others.

And in living such a life right here on this blessed earth,
discovering the wellspring of living water bubbling up inside us.
And our cup running over.
So that as we empty ourselves on behalf of others over and over again,
we always ﬁnd that our cup is mysteriously re-ﬁlled. *David E Grimm*

We pray for those whose lives are diminished in any way and who long for truth, for goodness, for justice, for love, for healing and wholeness…..
*(a silence is held)*

Filled with life:
**we offer ourselves to be life-bringers in the world.**
Touched by risen life:
**we pledge to resist deathliness wherever we find it.**
Filled with hope:
**we embrace the promise of eternity,**

**and the call to make it known at every opportunity. Amen.**

**Song**: Where the Light of Easter Day (Tune: ‘Crusader’)

Where the light of Easter Day
shines through our life, then faith can say,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ is changing all the world
Here is God’s good kingdom!

Where the yeast of love will rise,
bubbling with God’s new enterprise,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ is working through the world
Here is God’s good kingdom!

Where a child can grow in trust,
where there is joy that powers are just,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ will colour all the world
Here is God’s good kingdom!

Where the harvests ripen in peace,
where all the sounds of gunfire cease,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ is healing all the world
Here is God’s good kingdom!

Where the Spirit’s flame burns bright,
where there is truth and health and light,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ will resurrect the world
Here is God’s good kingdom!  (Shirley Erena Murray)

**Words of mission and benediction**

The power of risen life has forever changed who we are, and given us the courage to boldly proclaim a living faith.

Today, we have celebrated new life, new joy, new possibilities.
**We go now - as light-bearers to a world in darkness.**
**We go now - as hope-carriers to a world in despair.**
And as you go,
May God, who comes to us in the things of this world,
bless your eyes and be in your seeing.

May Christ, who looks upon you with deepest love,
bless your eyes and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit, who perceives what is and what may yet be,
bless your eyes and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three bless your eyes and cause you to see.

Jan L. Richardson, *In the Sanctuary of Women*

**We go in the name of Christ, in the love of God**

**and in the power of the Spirit.** **Amen.**

**Passing of the peace**
God’s peace be with you/**And also with you.**

Usual acknowledgements at the end……