





KAURIHORE / KAMO
CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz 

kaurichurch@gmail.com 

946 0813 

Sunday 20 April 2025 – Easter Day

Today's service is led by Kimberley Nielsen,
one of our Lay Preachers

Welcome to our service this morning.

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusiveness, Justice, Sustainability.

Sustainability: we care for and strive to restore the integrity of the Earth and all of creation.

Mission Statement: Sharing God's love, creating hope, working for justice.

If you, or someone you know, would appreciate a visit from one of our **Pastoral Network Team**, please speak to the service leader.

Welcome

Kia ora and welcome to our service this morning. My name is Kimberley, and I am one of the lay preachers here at Kaurihohore. Today is Easter Sunday, the day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. I hope that you leave here this morning with a renewed sense of hope in our God who makes all things new.

We begin with relighting the candles that were slowly extinguished over Lent, and lighting the Christ candle to remind us that Christ still dwells among us today.

Easter Candle Lighting

The light which the world tried to extinguish cannot be put out. Today we light the candles again, proclaiming the transforming power of God. As the light returns, we give thanks that God's transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us. Today we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities. We also light the Christ Candle to signify that Christ is alive and living among us!

As we light the candles, we acknowledge that there is still pain and suffering in the world, but we place our trust in God and in the way shown by Jesus Christ. In the midst of darkness, there is light. In the pain of death, there is life. In the face of what appear to us to be overwhelming odds, God is at work in us and in the world, working for justice and peace, compassion and love, and life abundant. Christ is risen; Christ is risen in us, for wherever we gather in his name, he is there.

(All candles are re-lit.)

Alleluia, Christ is risen; Christ is risen indeed!

Call to Worship: A Psalm of Celebration

Though we have known hardship and pain,
though life has not always turned out as we had hoped,
we will stand here and say:

God's steadfast love endures for ever!

Though life becomes more complex,
the deepest questions remain unanswered,
and the mystery of faith deepens, we will say:

God's steadfast love endures for ever!

And though the pain of the world
often seems more than we can bear or address,
we will stand firm in our faith and say:

God's steadfast love endures for ever!

Opening Prayer

We started the week by saying "Hosanna!" We end it by saying "Hallelujah!" Thank you, God, for the good gifts of Easter. Thank you for the hope that comes when the tomb is empty.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed. Amen

[Hymn – This is the Day \(HFTC S.28\)](#)

Prayer of Confession

Living Christ,
Like Mary, we come looking for you amongst the dead,
but we forget that you are found in the ordinariness of real life.
When we fail to see you in those we meet in our everyday life,

**God, open our eyes that we might see,
discard the grave clothes that have bound us,
and breathe afresh your love into our lives.**

Like Peter, we run to the tomb in disbelief that you are not there,
but we miss all the signs of your life along the way.
When we fail to see you in the world around us,

**God, open our eyes that we might see,
discard the grave clothes that have bound us,
and breathe afresh your love into our lives.**

Like Mary, we weep at your graveside for what could have been,
but we fail to recognise you in the present, here with us now.
When we fail to see you in small acts of kindness and glimpses of your
love,

**God, open our eyes that we might see,
discard the grave clothes that have bound us,
and breathe afresh your love into our lives.**

Amen

Words of Grace

Look, God is creating a new heaven and a new earth.
Everything of the past will be forgotten.
God makes all things new.
God makes each of us new.

Thanks be to God.

[Contemporary Reading: Mary Magdelene and the Gardener](#)

From: The Backwater Sermons: Poems by Jay Hulme

[Hymn – Crown him with many crowns \(HFTC 174\)](#)

Reading – Do not be Afraid: The one where death is defeated

*As told by Elizabeth Schrader Polczer, from God's Stories as Told by
God's Children.*

I have chosen to use *God's Stories as told by God's Children* for our
reading today, which includes the following note:

This is the story as it is told in the Gospel According to John. But
there are other versions of this story too: Luke's Gospel says that
Mary Magdelene had other women friends with her when she
arrived at the tomb. Matthew's Gospel says that an angel told them
not to be afraid: "Jesus is risen!" And both Mark and Luke say that

it was the angel (not Jesus) who told Mary to go and share the good news with the others.

As Jesus stories were passed on from person to person, the details of what happened on this extraordinary day were remembered and recorded differently. Soon many were sharing the stories of a great teacher and prophet – God’s chosen one, the messiah – who defeated death....

[apologies, no version available online]

Prayer of Response

Living God, long ago, faithful women proclaimed the good news of Jesus’ resurrection, and the world was changed forever.

Teach us to keep faith with them, that our witness may be as bold, our love as deep, and our faith as true. Amen.

Sermon

Mary ran back to her friends and exclaimed: “I have seen the Lord!”

Mary has had an emotional 48 hours from witnessing the crucifixion of Jesus, to discovering his body missing, through to meeting the now resurrected Jesus in the garden. It is hard to imagine, let alone name, all the feelings she must have had – Fear. Despair. Sadness.

Helplessness. Anger. Grief. Exhaustion. Hopelessness. Confusion. Shock. Joy. Disbelief. Elation.

Maybe some of those feelings are familiar to you. Maybe some of them are ones you long to experience.

As Mike said on Friday, Jesus’s death on the cross means we know, not only that God in trinity is with us in life’s most horrific moments, but that Jesus has lived those moments too. And today, Easter Sunday, Jesus’ resurrection is a reason to celebrate because God has defeated sin and death, and is continuing to make things new.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to join in with God’s salvific work. This is important and necessary work, but it can also feel really scary and be incredibly difficult at times. Luckily, we are not alone – Jesus began this work during his time on earth, and the Holy Spirit continues to help us today. So, I thought I would use our passage this morning to highlight what we can expect when being an active participant in God’s miraculous work of making things new.

John's Gospel tells us that Mary went to Jesus' tomb while it was still dark (20:1). She sees the large stone that had sealed the tomb shut is no longer in front of the door and she panics, not knowing where Jesus is. God's resurrective work begins when we are still in the dark, things can't possibly get any worse, and we have no hope. This is not to say that we should let things run into the ground so that God can intervene (remember the trials of Jesus – you shall not test the Lord your God!), but to recognise that God does Gods best, most awesome, work when it seems that everything has turned to custard.

Mary then gets some of the male disciples to come and have a look, maybe they know where Jesus is? The men come and confirm that yes, Jesus' body is definitely missing, but then they return home, leaving Mary at the empty tomb. Which leads me to my second point: if we want to experience God making things new, we need to stick around. Because Mary stays at the tomb she has an encounter with angels, then is the first to meet the resurrected Jesus. By going home, the men missed out.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out here that the disciples didn't miss out completely. The Bible tells us that Jesus did appear to them later, but I wonder if they were kicking themselves when they realised that Mary was in fact telling the truth about what she had seen.

In a rather embarrassing moment, Mary mistakes Jesus for a gardener. Nadia Bolz-Weber says, "I like to think that Mary Magdalene mistook the resurrected Christ for a gardener because Jesus still had the dirt from his own tomb under his nails."

Jesus continues to surprise by showing up in an unexpected position – Gardeners were low in social standing. God making things new may not look the way we expect it to look or come from the people we thought it would.

Mary mistaking Jesus for a gardener implies dirt – resurrection isn't clean, it can look really messy. To quote Nadia again, "See, God isn't about making you spiffy. God isn't about making you nicer. God is about making you new. And new doesn't always look perfect, with a fabulous new dress, because like the Easter story itself, new can be messy. New still has dirt under its nails."

It is not until Mary hears Jesus' voice that she realises who he is. How well do we know the voice of Jesus? Will we recognise it if he shows up in an unexpected way?

God choosing to reveal the resurrected Jesus to Mary was also somewhat controversial. Carolyn Osiek says, “The empty tomb narratives mean that the least significant members of the community were entrusted with the first Easter encounter and the first mandate to proclaim it, reaffirming once more that the last shall be first and the poor shall be blessed.” We need to stay alert for stories of resurrection, of people, places, and situations being made new, recognising that these stories may also come from unexpected sources.

Nadia, once again, has a great description of this. She says:

...The God of resurrection, the God who brings life out of death isn't satisfied with making you good or nice. If you think that's what resurrection looks like, if you think it looks like perfection and piety and therefore you haven't experienced it, you might be wrong... New looks like recovering alcoholics. New looks like reconciliation between two family members - neither of which actually deserve it. New looks like every time I manage to admit I was wrong and every time I manage to not mention when I'm right. New looks like every fresh start and every act of forgiveness and every moment of letting go of what we thought we couldn't live without and then somehow living without it anyway. New is the thing you never saw coming ...never even hoped for, but ends up being what you needed all along and it happens to all of us. Because God simply keeps reaching down into the dirt of humanity and pulling us out of the graves we dig for ourselves through our violence, our lies, our selfishness, our arrogance, and our addictions. And God keeps loving us back to life over and over.”

Finally, Mary went and told people what she had witnessed. If you have an encounter with the resurrected Christ, or you witness or experience something being made new – tell your friends! Carolyn Osiek says, “The empty tomb narrative is an epiphany story. It is the women’s story, and they are the protagonists, for the story is about how they are changed...”

Whatever big emotions you are experiencing this morning - Fear. Despair. Sadness. Helplessness. Anger. Grief. Exhaustion. Hopelessness. Confusion. Shock. Joy. Disbelief. Elation – Our God is a God who overcame death and makes things new. Just like Mary, may we also be changed through an encounter with the risen Christ, running to our friends exclaiming, “I have seen the Lord!”

Amen.

Hymn – In Christ Alone (Complete Mission Praise 1072)

1. In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

2. In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The love of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

3. There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Held in the saving love of Christ.

4. No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Offering Dedication

Living God, we bring our gifts and our lives before you. May they work together to bring light, love and life to the people of our community.
Amen

Prayer for others

On this day when we celebrate your risen life, O Christ,
we think of all the places and people
who rarely share in that joy
because their own lives are deadened
with the weight of war, of want
and the domination of oppressive powers.
We remember them before you now.

(Time of silence)

May your risen life be known in the places that cry out for life.

**O God, rise in compassion and love,
rise in courage and strength,
rise in justice and truth.**

May we be your risen life in the places we are able.

**O God, rise in our commitment to those who struggle,
rise in our daring to dream for a fairer world,
rise in our faithfulness and hope in the way of Jesus.**

Be alive in us this day and every day, living God,
for we long to be your people, bringing life and love to all people.

Amen

[Hymn – O Love that will not let me go \(HFTC 486\)](#)

Blessing

Go into all the world as those who are filled with the risen life of Jesus Christ and the bearers of grace.

May the wonder of Easter break forth anew in us, in those we love and in all the earth, on this day and in the days to come.

In the name of the Creator, the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit of God.
Sung amen x3