

L3

# LAY LEADERS' LITURGY

Worship Resources

Easter 2021 SAMPLE  
YEAR B



# LAY LEADERS' LITURGY

L3 - *Lay Leaders' Liturgy* has been produced to assist lay leaders with planning weekly worship in accordance with the Revised Common Lectionary.

Lay leaders are often short on time and short on resources. The church has an increased reliance on lay leaders to lead weekly services whilst nurturing and growing the faith of those within the community or those new attenders.

Traditional resource material can use language and prayers that are best understood by ordained clergy and regular worshippers. L3 *Lay Leaders' Liturgy* is an easy-to-understand worship resource that provides different sermon material options, so the lay leader has the flexibility to compile their own service.

Material includes, Revised Common Lectionary scripture summaries, Call to Worship, Acknowledgment of Country, creative worship ideas and suggestions, Word of the Day, Reflection and discussion questions, Children's talks, Music suggestions, Blessing and Closing Prayer, and a variety of other prayers and special service inclusions for the liturgical calendar.

MediaCom Education has sought out experienced writers who have practical knowledge leading congregations. Some writers are ordained ministers and others are lay leaders. They all have a heart to support and grow other leaders and have been willing to share their creative gifts and worship planning ideas to resource others.

Use this resource any way you like. Cut and paste sections, use the creative ideas if you have the time and energy to prepare them. Select the prayers you wish to use and sing the songs that are most suitable. There is flexibility to create a service which suits you and your worshipping community.

We hope and pray L3 *Lay Leaders' Liturgy* supports your ministry and deepens the faith of all who hear the Word of God through this resource.

Kind Regards,  
Bindy Taylor  
*MediaCom Education CEO/Pastor*

Good Friday  
2 April  
2021

THEME:  
**Look! What have we done?**

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### Key Scriptures <sup>1</sup>

**Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12:** A song of the suffering servant, who is persecuted and dies for the sake of others (“us”).

**Psalms 22:** A Psalm of lament, grieving the suffering and abandonment of the writer, but celebrating the inevitable rescue that will come, and praising the God who brings this salvation.

**Hebrews 10:16–25:** We have confidence to approach God, because of Christ’s sacrifice for us, and can now live in hope, in intimacy with God, and in love-in-action.

**John 18:1 – 19:42:** Jesus is arrested, tried, crucified and buried – and through it all, reveals the brokenness and lack of integrity of those who face him, while revealing his own truth, integrity and divine character.

#### **Theme: Look! What have we done?**

The suffering of Jesus and his willingness to go to the Cross, in the name of love, demands our attention. As we look to the Cross, we recognise that he suffered and died for us. He was innocent of all that was brought against him, including our sin. What have we done?

#### **Decorations**

The liturgical colour for Good Friday is Black or Red.

Traditionally, no flowers are present, although a single red flower can be laid at the foot of the cross to signify the blood of Christ. A large cross can be draped with a black cloth.

If using Lenten candles, they should be lit prior to the service, including the Christ Candle.

If the children have been preparing a coloured rainbow or flower emblem, this can be displayed.

This service can use the stripping of the altar tradition that many churches use, which leaves the sanctuary completely bare. Some information is provided below.

There are opportunities for two different voices to lead the service, one for the liturgies and another for Bible readings.

#### **Stripping of the altar**

This is an ancient custom of the Church. Congregations mark the way Christ’s life was stripped from him by stripping the altar and church front, of all signs of life and beauty. All ornaments, linens, candles, plants, flowers, and statues are removed and stored elsewhere in the building. Uniting Churches often have furniture dedicated to the glory of God and marked with brass plaques. Items that are too large to move, should be covered with black cloths.

The communion table is washed clean and left bare.

This almost-bare worship space reminds us of the bareness of life without the hope of Christ that we have through his resurrection. The Good Friday sanctuary stands in contrast to the freshly presented church of Easter Sunday, decorated with flowers and in a theme of white and gold colours, with all the iconic symbols of faith present.

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<sup>1</sup> (Summary of readings by John van de Laar, [Sacredise](#))

## Stripping of the Altar

Bonhoeffer story

In the spring of 1943 Bonhoeffer wrote to his friend Eberhard Bethge, "I sometimes feel as if my life were more or less over. . . . But you know, when I feel like this, there comes over me a longing (unlike any other that I experience) to have a child and not to vanish without a trace." By January 1945, he had adopted a fully retrospective view of his own life. He made the telltale gesture of instructing his parents to give away all his clothes, including the salt-and-pepper suit and the pair of brown shoes. According to the witness of the prison doctor before he went to the gallows Bonhoeffer removed his prison clothes and knelt in prayer. On April 9, 1945, the stripping of his altar was completed.

## WORSHIP SERVICE

### Opening

Everyone gathered knows this is the day Jesus died.

A dramatic start to the service could be achieved by showing the video clip "Easter Sunday", which explores the why and how of his death and highlights the resurrection to come. The presence of the resurrection does not detract from Good Friday, because our focus this year is to look at the events of Good Friday and acknowledge our own sin being dealt with by the God who loves us and wishes nothing to separate us from the life giving relationship made possible by Jesus.

#### **Opening Video from Sermon Spice entitled "Easter Sunday"**

The video is available for download purchase at a cost of \$19.95USD from the Sermon Spice website <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/101942/easter-sunday> A separate web license to allow the video to be posted to online worship is also available for purchase.

### Alternate Call to Worship or Opening Sentence

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3: 16).  
Let us worship God on this sombre day

### Music Suggestions

My song is love unknown	<i>Together in Song 341</i>
There is a green hill far away	<i>Together in Song 350</i>
O Jesus crucified	<i>Together in Song 354</i>
Man of Sorrows	<i>CCLI 6476063</i>

### Bible Reading

**Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12**

**A song of the suffering servant**

See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted.  
But many were amazed when they saw him.  
His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human,  
and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.  
And he will startle many nations.  
Kings will stand speechless in his presence.

For they will see what they had not been told;  
they will understand what they had not heard about.  
Who has believed our message?  
To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?  
My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot,  
like a root in dry ground.  
There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,  
nothing to attract us to him.  
He was despised and rejected—  
a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.  
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.  
He was despised, and we did not care.  
Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;  
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.  
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,  
a punishment for his own sins!  
But he was pierced for our rebellion,  
crushed for our sins.  
He was beaten so we could be whole.  
He was whipped so we could be healed.  
All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.  
We have left God's paths to follow our own.  
Yet the Lord laid on him  
the sins of us all.  
He was oppressed and treated harshly,  
yet he never said a word.  
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.  
And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,  
he did not open his mouth.  
Unjustly condemned,  
he was led away.  
No one cared that he died without descendants,  
that his life was cut short in midstream.  
But he was struck down  
for the rebellion of my people.  
He had done no wrong  
and had never deceived anyone.  
But he was buried like a criminal;  
he was put in a rich man's grave.  
But it was the Lord's good plan to crush him  
and cause him grief.  
Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,  
he will have many descendants.  
He will enjoy a long life,  
and the Lord's good plan will prosper in his hands.  
When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish,  
he will be satisfied.  
And because of his experience,  
my righteous servant will make it possible  
for many to be counted righteous,  
for he will bear all their sins.  
I will give him the honours of a victorious soldier,  
because he exposed himself to death.  
He was counted among the rebels.  
He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

NLT

## Prayer

Christ you came to bear the sins of many, our sins.  
You lived a perfect life, and we, imperfect humanity condemned you to suffer and die.  
We come humbly before you to worship you this day.  
You did what we could not do.  
You saved us when we could not save ourselves.  
You saved the world that we are destroying.  
You did not condemn us; you saved us.  
What have we done to you Jesus Christ?  
Here at the foot of your Cross,  
we see the suffering servant that Isaiah prophesied.  
We confess our part in the crucifixion:  
we acknowledge what we have done.  
Created for good;  
again and again we turn away from you.  
We surrender to the easy, but poor choices in life,  
that cause the suffering of others and the world.  
We find ourselves broken and unable to mend ourselves,  
such that injustice and violence and hatred become more powerful in us.  
Yet in the life of Jesus, we discover a different way -  
a way where evil cannot overcome your love.  
A way in which we find your love forgiving, reconciling and transforming us.  
On this day, when we recall Good Friday,  
that terrible and wonderful day,  
We pray that the power revealed in Jesus Christ  
will help us to turn away from sin  
and turn to you.  
In the powerful name of Jesus,  
we pray, Amen.

## Remembering what was done.

### First Bible Reading

#### **John 18: 1-14**

#### **Jesus is arrested**

After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

Jesus fully realised all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them.

"Who are you looking for?" he asked.

"Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.)

As Jesus said "I am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground!

Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

"I told you that I am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." He did this to fulfil his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me."

Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

**Extinguish the first candle**  
**Any flowers and greenery are removed from the church**

## Second Bible Reading

**John 18: 15-18, 25-27**

### **Peter's denials**

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

**Extinguish the second candle**  
**Remove further items from the sanctuary - communion cloths and liturgical cloths**

## Music Suggestions

Bitter was the night  
Above all powers

*All Together Again 135*  
*CCLI 2672885 (YouTube)*

## Third Bible Reading

**John 18: 28-32, 38b-40**

### **Jesus' Trial before Pilate**

Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

"We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.

"Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. (This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.)

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this 'King of the Jews'?"

But they shouted back, "No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!" (*Barabbas was a revolutionary.*)

**Extinguish the third candle**  
**Remove the rainbow / flower made by children during Lent**

## Fourth Bible Reading

### John 19: 1-6

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him."

**Extinguish the fourth candle  
Remove further items from the sanctuary**

## Fifth Bible Reading

### John 19: 17-24

#### The Crucifixion of Jesus

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots."

**The fifth candle is extinguished  
Remove further items from the sanctuary**

## Prayer of Confession - *What Have We Done?*<sup>2</sup>

### Voice 1:

The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed,  
cowering in the realisation that we do not measure up:  
we do not stand firm.  
We see the suffering and find ourselves complicit in its making.  
What have we done O God?

*Silence*

### Voice 2:

We see the degradation of the planet -  
oceans poisoned by plastics,  
marine life strangled by the extravagance and carelessness  
of our living.  
Islands inundated by rising seas,

<sup>2</sup> "What Have We Done?" written by Rev Jennifer Hughes in *Lent and Easter 2018 Resources*, CMLA published by Mediacom South Australia 2018 page 34 adapted

Cities encroach on creatures' natural habitats  
and new viruses invade the world.  
The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed.  
What have we done O God?

*Silence*

**Voice 1:**

We see the pain of those  
who are bullied to the point of desperation,  
driven to suicide and self-harm.  
We know that closed doors and silence  
only permits domestic violence to continue.  
The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed.  
What have we done, O God?

*Silence*

**Voice 2:**

Factories collapse and the clothes on our back find us guilty.  
Racial slurs are shouted, the gaps between the haves and have-nots grow,  
arm-chair opinions are offered on wars fought overseas,  
yet refuge is refused to those who seek mercy.  
The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed.  
What have we done, O God?

*Silence*

**Voice 1:**

Our eyes are open, and as we look,  
we find it too hard to follow Christ to the cross.

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

**Voice 2:**

The cost is too great,  
the weight is too much,  
and we find our faith wanting.

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

**Voice 1:**

We have been silent,  
we have run where we should have stood firm,  
and have burned our heads in the sand  
and preferred the comfort of denial.

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

**Voice 2:**

The crushing revelation of our actions leaves us ashamed

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

## Prayer of Confession - What Have We Done? <sup>3</sup>

### **Voice 1:**

The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed,  
cowering in the realisation that we do not measure up:  
we do not stand firm.  
We see the suffering and find ourselves complicit in its making.  
What have we done O God?

*Silence*

### **Voice 2:**

We see the degradation of the planet -  
oceans poisoned by plastics,  
marine life strangled by the extravagance and carelessness  
of our living.  
Islands inundated by rising seas,  
Cities encroach on creatures' natural habitats  
and new viruses invade the world.  
The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed.  
What have we done O God?

*Silence*

### **Voice 1:**

We see the pain of those  
who are bullied to the point of desperation,  
driven to suicide and self-harm.  
We know that closed doors and silence  
only permits domestic violence to continue.  
The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed.  
What have we done, O God?

*Silence*

### **Voice 2:**

Factories collapse and the clothes on our back find us guilty.  
Racial slurs are shouted, the gaps between the haves and have-nots grow,  
arm-chair opinions are offered on wars fought overseas,  
yet refuge is refused to those who seek mercy.  
The cock crows and we find ourselves exposed.  
What have we done, O God?

*Silence*

### **Voice 1:**

Our eyes are open, and as we look,  
we find it too hard to follow Christ to the cross.

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

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<sup>3</sup> "What Have We Done?" written by Rev Jennifer Hughes in *Lent and Easter 2018 Resources*, CMLA published by Mediacom South Australia 2018 page 34 adapted

**Voice 2:**

The cost is too great,  
the weight is too much,  
and we find our faith wanting.

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

**Voice 1:**

We have been silent,  
we have run where we should have stood firm,  
and have burned our heads in the sand  
and preferred the comfort of denial.

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

**Voice 2:**

The crushing revelation of our actions leaves us ashamed

**Both Voices: Forgive us, O God.**

## Words of Assurance

God looks upon us with compassion and tender love. Knowing what we have done, Jesus has willingly suffered and died and received our guilt and shame, to set us free from condemnation.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:1

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

*For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.*

You are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

## Music Suggestions

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross  
Amazing Love

*Together in Song 342*  
*CCLI 192553 (YouTube)*

## Sixth Bible Reading

**John 19: 25-27**

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

**The sixth candle is extinguished**  
**Black cloths used to cover music space, pulpit and any plaques.**

## Prayers for others

As his life draws near to its end, Jesus cared for those he loved. They had gathered to care for him in his traumatic final hours. This is love, losing our lives' agendas to concern ourselves for the agendas of the lives of others.

We pause now to pray for those, whose care God places upon our hearts.  
God of the living and the dying, draw near to all who are near death this day.

Breathe your comfort and peace into all dying from Covid19 and especially those who are separated from their loved ones.

Embrace those approaching the end of life, after long lives lived well, that they may know they are of value and worthy still of love.

Let all who face early death through traumatic injury or untreatable disease be given courage to face their death with peace and assurance. May your angels touch them with your love and your mercy.

Jesus Christ, our healer, pour out the healing work of your presence upon those who suffer this day with illness, injury and any form of incapacity. Grant wisdom to medical doctors, scientists and hospital workers as they tend the sick and be with Chaplains as they offer spiritual care in hospitals, aged care facilities and hospices. Help restore the mental health of those who can no longer cope and give strategies for new life to those whose mental health needs are greatest.

Holy Spirit of love, hover over us and our families and friends. Bless the people we love and help them trust in you and your grace. Where there are conflicts and misunderstandings, grow communication and reconciliation. Where there are stressors around finance, work, family grow time for people to have rest and for relationships to recover.

Hear these prayers and the unspoken prayers we are often too timid to ask.

Grant us your peace, we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

## Seventh Bible reading

### **John 19: 28-30, 38-42**

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### **The Christ Candle is extinguished**

## Reflection: Why did you have to Die? <sup>4</sup>

### **Voice 1:**

Why did you have to die like that?

### **Voice 2:**

Why did you voluntarily arrange your own suicide?

### **Voice 1:**

Couldn't you have found another way to make your point?

### **Voice 2:**

Why did your story have to end with the pain of nails through your flesh, and the death by inches of slow self-suffocation?

### **Voice 1:**

'A glorious death,' some of them say,  
but I'm certain you didn't think so at the time.

### **Voice 2:**

'To redeem the humanity that you love'  
is what they tell me,  
but surely you didn't have to go to such an extreme.

### **Voice 1:**

'To win victory over evil' is the popular rumour,  
but others have taken a stand for what was good, what was right,  
and they didn't end up on the cross.

<sup>4</sup> Glendon Macauley, *"Dirt, Mess and Danger"* Wild Goose Publishers 2011 page 78

**Voice 2:**

'A sacrifice to the Devil's demands' is the theory.  
But if the Devil could insist on your life,  
then that makes him more powerful than the God fo heaven.

**Voice 1:**

Jesus, why did you have to die like that?  
What was your bright idea and purpose  
when you volunteered to end it all and breathe your last?

**Voice 2:**

Could it be that you were showing  
the extent of your love for us?

**Voice 1:**

Could it be that you wanted to demonstrate  
the length you were prepared to go?

**Voice 2:**

Could it be that, in the end,  
you chose to forget yourself:  
to forget yourself for us;  
to forget yourself for all;  
to forget yourself for me?

**Voice 1:**

What wondrous love is this,  
O my soul, O my soul?  
What wondrous love is this  
that in my humanity I am trying to understand?

**Voice 2:**

Jesus, I'll never be able to understand you.

**Voice 1:**

I'll never be able to come to terms with who you are.

**Voice 2:**

In the face of your love,  
my words are futile and wholly inadequate

**Voice 1:**

In the face of such love,  
perhaps my silence is the only way to respond.

*A SHORT SILENCE IS KEPT*

**Voice 2:**

Inscribed upon the cross, we see in shining letters: *God is love.*

**Voice 1:**

For being who you are and loving me like that,  
blessing and honour, and glory and power be unto you.

## Bible Reading:

### **John 19: 38-42**

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

## Conclusion

We go now into the rest of this day and Easter Saturday mindful of all that Jesus has suffered and endured. Look! What have we done?

In this time ahead, we remember Jesus' words to his disciples in Galilee- "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed he will rise again."

And of course, we hold the truth in our hearts of what God did while Jesus was in the tomb, ready for Easter morning.

*(If there is to be a sharing of refreshments, such as Hot Cross Buns, following the service, the leader can announce that here, along with the any other easter events news, including Easter Day service times.)*

Go into this day, knowing God's love for you is indistinguishable.

### ***The Christ candle is lit***

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3: 16).

**Amen**

*Writer: Rev Sue Ellis*

Sunday  
4 April  
2021  
Easter

THEME:  
**Look! He is not here!**

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## Key Scriptures

**Isaiah 25: 6-9** - The people of God anticipate the promised day of deliverance by God

**Psalms 118: 1-2, 14-24** - This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it

**1 Corinthians 15:1-11** - Paul reminds the people of the resurrection story and of Jesus' appearances, that have led people to be part of the new church movement.

**Mark 16: 1-8** - On Easter morning the women encounter a young man at the tomb where Jesus was laid. They discover he is not there and they flee in amazement and fear, telling no-one of what they have seen and heard.

### **Theme: Look! He is not here!**

This Easter we focus on Jesus not being where we expect him to be. He is not where the women expect him to be - they are told he has risen and left for Galilee. The call to 'Look!' resonates in the Gospel of Mark, which is the main Gospel focus for Year B of the common Lectionary. As disciples, we are commanded to share the Good News of God's love revealed in Christ, so others may come to know Jesus and be baptised.

### **Service Features**

If candidates for **Baptism or Renewal of Baptism** have been preparing in Lent, time will be made available in the service for this to occur. Alternately, a renewal statement of Baptism and Belief is included for everyone to declare.

**Holy Communion** will form part of the service. This can be optional for the congregation.

### **Decorations**

The church can be decorated with fresh flowers, or bush cuttings. It is a fitting time to clean, polish brass plaques and clean silverware.

**The colours of Easter are White and Gold.** Be creative in decorating the church. Perhaps fabric lengths could be draped from a wall cross. Perform an internet search to find pictures of Easter Church decor for inspiration.

A **new Christ candle** is in place.

If the children created a **Lenten Rainbow or Rainbow Flower** (children's activity from Lent 1B), display the completed project and prepare an outline of the Word "Alleluia" across it. Have gold glittery paper with the letters traced onto the back, ready for children to cut out and glue with strong glue to the outlined shapes on the poster.

The poster can be displayed on a side wall during the Easter season.

If your church has a church bell, why not ring it just as the church service is about to commence?

## Call to Worship

A new dawn breaks

**Look! We must hurry to the tomb.**

The heaviness of life weighs us down.

**Look! The stone is rolled away!**

The unexpected alarms us

**Look! Where did we put Jesus?**

We think we know where Jesus is to be found.

**Look! He is not here!**

Look! Christ is risen!

**Look! He is Risen indeed!**

## Lighting the Easter Candle

The life of Christ is the light of all people....*the candle is lit.*

No darkness can put out it.

## Music Suggestions

Christ the Lord is Risen Today

At the dawning of salvation

Hear the bells ringing

Resurrection Shout!

He Lives

What a Beautiful Name it is

*Together in Song 370*

*Together in Song 392*

*Together in Song 389*

*All Together All Right 160*

*CCLI 7133098 (YouTube)*

*CCLI 7068424 (YouTube)*

## Acknowledgment of Country

Welcome to Easter Day at \_\_\_\_\_ congregation.

It is a joy to welcome you on this day of resurrection.

We meet on the land of the \_\_\_\_\_ people, acknowledging their deep spiritual connection to this land. As we pay our respects to past, present and future leaders, we also pray for many days of reconciliation of moving forward together in this land we all call home.

*(Insert the name of the traditional Aboriginal people of the area, or simply use "First peoples")*

Give a special welcome to any baptism or Renewal of Baptism families.

Announce Holy Communion if it is to be part of the worship today.

## Opening prayer

Holy and Surprising God,

you are not always where we expect to find you.

Risen and set free,

we cannot contain you

or limit your being

to fit our earthly comprehensions.

At the same time

you are both near and far,

both joy and challenge,

both certainty and mystery.

As we look to you today,

we pray that we might glimpse your love for us,

see the fullness of the journey to which you call us

and find renewed hope and joy

in being your chosen and anointed people,  
bringing you glory and honour and praise.  
In Jesus' name, we pray, **Amen.**

## Scripture Reading

### Mark 16: 1-8

*Choose a Bible version that uses the word "Look" in verse 6, to help reinforce the theme. This version is GNB. The NRSV and NLT are all suitable. The NIV uses 'see'.*

After the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to go and anoint the body of Jesus. Very early on Sunday morning, at sunrise, they went to the tomb. On the way they said to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" (It was a very large stone.) Then they looked up and saw that the stone had already been rolled back. So they entered the tomb, where they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe—and they were alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here—he has been raised! **Look**, here is the place where he was lain. Now go and give this message to his disciples, including Peter: 'He is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him, just as he told you.'"

So they went out and ran from the tomb, distressed and terrified. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

## Children's Talk

**Preparation:** *A large hollow chocolate Easter egg, that is easily broken to show an empty tomb. The Rainbow or Rainbow flower constructed during Lent, with the stenciled word 'Alleluia' across it. Glittery paper for creating shiny letters to glue to the rainbow/flower. Strong glue and wet sponge to clean up glue splatter.*

Invite the children to tell you about their Easter morning. Encourage stories about finding Easter eggs left by the Easter Bunny.

Take out your large hollow Easter egg, and tell the children you found an Easter egg this morning too, and that there is something about this Easter egg that links it to the Easter story in the Bible.

"I wonder what is inside?" *(Children may suggest more little Easter eggs, or a toy)*

Unwrap the egg. Shake the egg - "could there be anything inside?"

Carefully break the egg open so it falls into halves or with at least one half intact.

*(Broken pieces can be shared when the talk is finished)*

"Well, there is nothing in here? Are you surprised by that? Why do you think it's empty?"

*(Take answers)*

"The egg is empty because it helps us remember that when the women came to the tomb, they found it empty! The Bible also says the women were afraid.

How can emptiness be scary?" *(Take answers)*

"Yes, emptiness can be scary because sometimes when we don't know or don't understand it can make us feel afraid.

But emptiness can also be freedom, freedom to see new possibilities and freedom to live in God's love.

Jesus not being in the tomb means that he is everywhere else—alive on that Easter morning and alive with us today. That makes us joyful and the Easter word for that is Alleluia".

This empty egg is a promise that we have life in and through Jesus even when we die.

Alleluia!

*Take out the rainbow or rainbow flower.*

During Lent we made this rainbow/flower - it too was about God's promises to us.

Today, we will decorate it some more to make the word Alleluia across it.

*Give instructions.*

## Music Suggestions

Alleluia! Christ is risen!	<i>Together in Song 395</i>
Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord	<i>Together in Song 390</i>
Resurrection Shout!	<i>All Together All Right 160</i>
Sing alleluia to the Lord	<i>All Together Now 51</i>

## Dramatic Interlude for 2 voices

*The two readers rush forward with Bibles open, interrupting the service after the song.*

### Voice 1

Before we go any further, I just want to point out that the Bible reading has more verses in MY Bible. It says in double brackets - whatever that means - just after verse 8 and it's called 'A Shorter Ending to Mark'. It reads:

*[[And all that had been commanded to them, they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]]*

*(Looking confused and shaking head) The way those words are written sounds a bit like the Crows players singing the Port Power song (or insert names of local rival football teams) - they sound nothing like what we heard before, do they?*

### Voice 2

No - they sound like something John Wesley *(or insert a local preacher's name)* would say in his sermon.

Anyway MY Bible has an official "Longer Ending of Mark" - and this sounds a bit better than women running away afraid and telling no one what the chap in white at the tomb said - *(to the congregation)* was that Jesus or an angel or what?

Mine has verses 9-20 - that's more like a real Bible reading. Although, it also has those same double brackets - whatever that means.

*[[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.*

*After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.*

*Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

*So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.]]*

## Reflection/Discussion

### - Look! He is not here!

Our Bible study scholars are correct to point out that Mark's gospel has a series of "extra" endings to the Easter story. Tom Wright in his commentary notes that neither ending appears in the best manuscripts and the shorter ending is more of a general statement of Christian faith, written in very formal language, unlike Mark's own writing.

The longer ending looks like a compilation of bits and pieces from the resurrection story from Matthew and Luke's gospels, which were written later in history than Mark's gospel. Both those writers used Mark's story as a source and other sources too. It seems other writers weren't happy with that ending, with the women running away afraid and telling no one.

We can learn something from this for our own discipleship as followers of Jesus. The women come looking for Jesus' body. - then the unexpected happens. They look and see the heavy stone is rolled away. There is no explanation. They look and see a young man dressed in white standing to the side and they are shocked, alarmed - where did he come from? Who is he? The young man tries to reassure them and then says Look! He is not here! - where they expect Jesus to be, he is not. Then he says 'Go and tell his disciples - and Peter - he has gone ahead of them to Galilee; there you will see him just as he told you.' This encounter leads the women to make hast out of there. But they are afraid - their understanding of the world is rocked. Jesus - the miracle worker - the Messiah is not here as he should be. Who would believe such a story? - Luke's gospel calls it, the women's 'idle tale'.

It is a 'hard to believe story' - we see films and TV shows and cartoons where they invent stories like this and we know they are fantasy - but this is not.

To believe this story is to place trust in the promises of God.

To believe this story is to surrender all we know and enter the mystery that is faith.

To believe this story is to give credibility to how those very early Christians in the late second or third centuries saw the Easter story and its significance. What was it that caused them to become such people of love and faith, that they gave their lives for all that Jesus taught and showed?

What was it that enabled them to heal and cast out demons, and to share a story that carried a power of its own, to set people free from slavery.

Christians are people who choose to receive this resurrected life of Jesus for their own.

A life that has power over death, power to set us free from our sins and the sin done to us.

That power is Love - God's love.

This is our truth - God has redeemed our lives and invites all of us to follow the life of Jesus and be filled with his resurrection life, to serve the kingdom of God's righteousness and justice and mercy.

Jesus is often found in unexpected places and among unexpected people.

We always need to Look Carefully - wherever God's kingdom can be seen happening, Jesus is there - not always tucked neatly away in our church buildings, but walking in a Black Lives Matter or Climate Change rally, or holding the hand of a person dying alone, or offering a cup of cold water to a marathon runner, or giving a food voucher to a family under financial stress.

And Jesus also turns up in expected places too - like in this community of faith, where friendships are strengthened, and mission is done together.

Jesus turns up in you and in the person next to you.

In unexpected places. Amen

## Baptism and Renewal of Baptism

*Those who are to be Baptised are brought forward and presented to the congregation and the Order of Service found in Uniting In Worship (located on the Assembly Website).*

*A congregational affirmation of Baptism could also be used, along with the Song "This I believe (The Creed). The song alone does not fully match the Nicene or Apostles Creeds of the Church.*

## Music Suggestions

**This I believe (The Creed)**

*CCLI 7018338 (YouTube)*

## Congregational Reaffirmation of Baptism

*(The full version can be found in Uniting in Worship 2, page 90ff)*

*Water is poured into the baptism font.*

Come Lord Jesus and refresh the lives of your faithful people.

Always remember you are baptised and be thankful.

Today we remember that, from the time of our baptism,  
the sign of the cross has been upon us.

I invite you now to join me in tracing the sign of the cross upon your forehead saying: I belong to Christ. Amen

*The people mark themselves with the sign saying:*

**I belong to Christ. Amen.**

Turn now to those near you and trace the sign of the cross  
on the back of their hand, saying 'You belong to Christ. Amen'

*The people may mark others with the sign saying,*

**You belong to Christ. Amen**

## Prayer

May the Holy Spirit continue to open our hearts and lives  
to the grace and truth we find in Jesus our Lord.

**O most merciful Redeemer,  
friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day. Amen**

## Music Suggestions

Now the Green Blade rises  
Alleluia, Alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord  
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us  
Living Hope

*Together in Song 382  
Together in Song 390  
Together in Song 526  
CCLI 7106807 (YouTube)*

## Dedication of the Offering

On Easter Day, you show us O God that anything is possible.

Receive our gifts of love in the money we offer  
and in the way we use our gifts and graces  
to reveal your love.

Through them, help make what seems impossible to us happen,  
for the sake of all who cry out for justice and help.

In the name of Christ, we pray, Amen.

## Prayers of the People and Introduction to Holy Communion: What are you Looking for?

*(Worship Leader and 3 voices. The voices have with them, a bundle of spices, such as cinnamon sticks, nutmeg, cloves in a wrapper, a loaf of bread for communion, a cup of wine)*

**Worship Leader:** What are you looking for? Who are you looking for? What do you seek?

1. I am looking for direction. I used to know every day where I was going, how my day would be filled, what motivated me, but now, since I lost my job, I feel lost.
2. I seek confidence. The skills and abilities I once had seem to be fading. Some days I feel neglected, useless, and unwanted. I seek purpose.
3. I seek hope for the future. At church we seem fewer and fewer. There seems to be no end to the work, but fewer to do it. We need leadership that will spark us. I look for energy.

**Worship Leader:** We pause to pray for these needs and the voices that cry out for direction, purpose and energy.

*A time of silence is held*

1. I yearn for positive self-esteem, a positive identity with who I am, how I look, what attracts me, and who attracts me. I want to be attractive. I seek to show the world my wonderful self. I am looking for that wonderful self.
3. Laughter and joy. I want to find it in each day.
1. Health. I ache for physical and mental well-being, not perfection, just comfort and the ability to do what I love to do.
2. I seek healing from broken and ended relationships, from divorce, separation, and death.
3. I wish for clarity. I want to hold on to what matters and to know what I can let go of.
2. I am looking for community.
1. We are looking for love.

**Worship Leader:** We pause to pray for the needs of community, our neighbours and ourselves.

*A time of silence is held*

What did you bring? What have you with you that you offer?

2. I bring spices to anoint the dead. We want to always remember those who have gone before us.

**Worship Leader:** *receives the spices and places them on the communion table*) We pause to remember those who have gone before us and all who today are in grief from the loss of a loved one.

*A short time of silence is held*

1. I bring bread for the journey, to nourish and sustain, to gather us around the tables of community.

**Worship Leader:** *(receives the bread and places it on the communion table)* We pause to consider what brings life to us. We remember Jesus, the Bread of Life and we give thanks for God's provision for our daily needs. We pray for the hungry, the thirsty and the sick.

*A short Time of silence is held*

3. I bring the cup of blessing, drink to quench our thirst and give us the knowledge of how to live day to day.

**Worship Leader:** *(places the cup on the communion table)*

We pause to remember how Christ poured out his life  
for the sins of the world

and how his life lives now in us.

We pray for those who struggle to live well

because of natural disasters, pandemics, injury and limitations.

*A short time of silence is held*

We bring before you O God,

our losses and struggles,

together with the losses and struggles of the world.

It is good to come to your table together.

As the women who brought both spices

and heavy hearts to the tomb,

this is the right place for us to come.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen in all of us.

Here in community may you find all you are looking for,

to become for others that unexpected place

where Jesus' love may be found. **Amen**

## Music Worship suggestions for Holy Communion

**Remembrance** (Matt Redman) YouTube CCLI 5484616

**Jesus, you are the bread** (YouTube) All Together All Right 658

**Bread for the World** (YouTube) All Together Whatever 473

**Christ is alive, with joy we sing** (YouTube) Together in Song 393

## Holy Communion

Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed!**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let's give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Thanks and praise, glory and honour

we give to you, most holy and worthy Lord and God.

In time before our understanding,

you created the light that gives revelation to what we see,

In love too deep for words,

you sent your Son Jesus into the heart of your creation.

Fully human, yet divine,

he brought the light of understanding

to us, who are made in your image.

Through Jesus, you bring us the gift of life eternal .  
Dying, he destroyed our death. Alleluia!  
Rising he restored our life. Alleluia!  
And so we praise you  
with the faithful of every time and place,  
joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation  
in the eternal hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

We thank you that you have called a covenant people to be a light to the nations.  
Through Moses you taught us your law.  
Through your prophets you teach us justice.  
Through Jesus Christ you teach us your ways of self-giving love,  
as he gave himself up for us on the Cross.  
In his resurrection, you offer us his life for our own  
and we made alive forever in him,  
finding his presence with us always  
and sharing in his peace.

By water and the Spirit we are welcomed into your eternal kingdom.  
For by grace we are saved, through faith. Amen

## Passing of the Peace

The peace for the Lord be with you  
**And also with you.**

*The peace is passed among the congregation*

## The Narration

We praise God as we remember  
that our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night of his betrayal,  
took bread,  
gave you thanks,  
broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take this and eat it.  
This is my body given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Later, after supper, he took the cup,  
gave thanks,  
and gave it to them, saying:  
Drink from this all of you.  
This is the blood of the new covenant  
poured out for you and for everyone  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.  
Now, with this bread and this cup,  
we do what our Saviour commands .  
We receive his love and redemption.

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come gain.**

Pour out the Holy Spirit on us  
and on these gifts of bread and wine,  
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.  
May we find him here in this unexpected place,  
as we are made one with him and each other  
in his love.

May we feast with him here and now,  
and also at the great banquet with him  
in the kingdom  
on the day to come.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

## Breaking of the Bread

*The bread is lifted and broken*  
The body of Christ broken for you.

**The bread of Life.**

*The cup is lifted*

The life of Christ poured out for you.

**The cup of Blessing**

Then gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Receive this sacrament with joy and thanksgiving.  
*The elements are shared according to custom*

## Prayer to follow

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we thank you that you are here  
in this unexpected place  
and in these elements that we have shared.  
Strengthened by bread and wine and your love,  
we can now worship you  
in the service of your kingdom.  
Where you go, **we will follow.**

Where you stumble, **we will stop.**  
Where we hear you crying, **we will listen.**  
Where you suffer, **we will hurt and care**  
Where you die, **we will bow our heads in sorrow**  
Where you rise in triumph and glory,  
**We will share in your endless joy.**

## Music Worship suggestions

This is the truth we hold	<i>Together in Song 469</i>
Mine eyes have seen the glory	<i>Together in Song 315</i>
O Praise the name	(YouTube) <i>CCLI 7037787</i>

## Sending Forth

*"Don't be alarmed,  
I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.  
He is not here—he has been raised!  
**Look,** here is the place where he was lain.  
Now go and give this message to his disciples:  
'He is going to Galilee ahead of you;  
there you will see him, just as he told you.'" Mark 16: 6-7*

Go, knowing the risen Christ has gone ahead of you  
to whatever awaits you in the future.  
Look for signs of him there,  
among creation and in the people you encounter.  
And as others look at you,  
may they see the Christ.

## The Benediction

The blessing of Almighty God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
remain with you now and forever more.  
Amen.

Writer: Rev Sue Ellis