

Cooma Anglican Easter 2025

19 April: 9.30am Bredbo, 5pm Numeralla

20 April: 8am Christ Church, 9.30am St Paul's, 1130 Nimmitabel, 3pm Adaminaby

21 April: 9.30am Yallambee, 1030am Hudson House

TIS 380 - Yours be the Glory, Risen Conquering Son

1 Yours be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes, where your body lay.

Refrain:

Yours be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory over death you've won.

2 See, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord is living, death has lost its sting. [Refrain]

3 No more we doubt you, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without you: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors through your deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to your home above. [Refrain]

Old Testament - Isaiah 65.17-25

¹⁷ "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people;
the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

²⁰ "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not live out his years;

the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child;
the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

²¹ They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

²² No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat.
For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people;
my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.

²³ They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them.

²⁴ Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Psalm 118.1-2, 14-24

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

² Let Israel say: "His love endures forever."

¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!

¹⁶ The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"

¹⁷ I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.

²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.

²² The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;

²³ the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.

New Testament - 1 Corinthians 15.19-26

¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Gospel - John 20.1-18

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still

lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

TIS 390 Jesus is Lord of all the earth

Refrain: Alleluia, Alleluia, Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to His Name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth
He is the King of creation. *Refrain*

Spread the good news o'er all the earth.
Jesus has died and has risen. *Refrain*

We have been crucified with Christ.
Now we shall live forever. *Refrain*

God has proclaimed his gracious gift,
New life for all, Alleluia. *Refrain*

Come let us praise the living God,
Joyfully sing to our Saviour. *Refrain*

Sermon - Witnesses to the resurrection.

Do you know there were over 500 witnesses to the resurrected Jesus? Paul tells us in his first letter to the church in Corinth that the risen Jesus appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve and then more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom were still living when Paul wrote. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Our gospel reading today tells us about the first people who knew that Jesus had risen, Mary Magdalene and other women, as well as the apostles Peter and John (although Peter and John didn't actually see Jesus until a little later.)

We don't know a whole lot about Mary Magdalene prior to Jesus's resurrection, although she was one of a group of women in the group with Jesus, and Luke 8 tells us she was delivered of seven spirits. There were actually quite a few Mary's - it was a very common name, so she may be mentioned more but not identified as Magdalene. She was actually the first to see the risen Jesus, although Paul doesn't mention her in his list. You shouldn't think he is being misogynistic in this, he was just the product of his time. In the first century, women were not considered valid witnesses. So it is telling that Mary was the first witness - not because she was unreliable, but because that wasn't important to the early Christians, they were just certain that Jesus had indeed risen. It was only later, many, many years later, that people began to doubt.

Getting back to our reading, John said Mary went to the tomb in darkness. She probably wasn't alone, as Matthew, Mark and Luke say that other women were with her as well. They went in the darkness because they were scared - of the authorities who had just arrested and executed their friend, and they were wondering how to get into Jesus's tomb because of the stone they knew was blocking it.

Matthew's gospel tells us that when they arrived at the tomb, there was a violent earthquake, and an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

Then the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

So Mary Magdalene and the women were scared and unsure of themselves. But she was full of joy that Jesus had been raised, and desperate to share the news with the other disciples. Mark says the women were trembling and bewildered, they were crying. Mary was so unsure of herself that when she actually saw the risen Jesus, she couldn't recognise him - she assumed he was a gardener and begged him to tell her where Jesus was. Then there was the breakthrough she had hoped beyond hope for - he simply said her name and she responded 'rabboni' - teacher, or more specifically 'my teacher' - a personal and respectful term, from a culture where the relationship between teachers and their disciples was often extremely close and personal - my dear, my beloved teacher. She desperately wanted Jesus to be alive, wanted to be sure, but couldn't be until Jesus spoke to her that way.

For John and Simon Peter, the journey was different. They heard from Mary, and in their headstrong way, had to check it out for themselves. They ran to the tomb, but boys being boys, made a race out of it. As we know, the victors write the history, and John wrote that he won the race to the tomb, although he stayed outside the tomb regaining his breath when Peter, headstrong as usual, launched right in. Peter obviously hadn't seen any of those detective shows where the officious officer keeps everyone away from the crime scene so they don't lose the vital evidence. No, Peter just barges in and sees the strips of linen lying there,⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.

For John and Peter there is no worrying, no wondering. The evidence they see is enough for them. They saw and believed, although, quite tellingly, John says they did not understand - they did not understand from scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead - they just knew he had risen, and so they went home to where they were staying.

And so, we see two different ways of coming to belief in Jesus.

Mary and the women were wary. They doubted and questioned every step of the way. Their emotions jumped from crying to joy and back again from moment to moment, and Mary so desperately wanted Jesus to be alive and wanted to be sure, but couldn't be until she heard Jesus say her name. Yet, once she was sure, she raced off to share her joy with the others.

John and Peter on the other hand were headstrong - racing in to check out the evidence for themselves, seeing enough to believe, but without fully understanding, and then just going home to where they were staying.

Just like these witnesses, each of our journeys to faith is different. As much we would like there to be, there is no standard model. Some are emotional, some are intellectual. Some involve long periods of searching, of questioning, and some bluster into faith on the first hint of evidence. For some it is a very personal journey, and for others it is a journey made with another or with a group. Some come to believe and just go back to their previous lives, back to where they are staying, and for others it changes everything - nothing is ever the same again.

When Mary fully understood that it was her friend, Jesus, raised from the dead and standing before her, Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

And so for each of us, no matter how close, how intimate that first experience of true fellowship with Jesus, we cannot expect to hold on to Jesus in the same way - we have to go back to where we are staying. The truth remains, Jesus is alive, and the love he has for us continues, but we have to continue in this world until he returns or we go to be with him. We need to use this time, as Mary did, to share the good news with our friends, to share the message that Jesus is alive, that we have seen the risen Lord, and they can too, and one day ascend with him to their Father and your Father, to eternal life with their God and your God.

Take the time after the service to share your faith journey with that of your friends, and with that of Mary and John. Share your joy in the risen Christ, and in the eternal life you will have with each other, with Jesus, with God the Father, and with the Holy Spirit.

Will you share that joy today?