

Whitehorse Uniting Church  
Sunday 14 April 2024 - Nunawading  
Order of Service for Easter 3<sub>B</sub>



**Processional TIS 693 Come As You Are** written by Sr Deidre Brown tMt video

*(the Bible is brought in and the candle lit as we sing)*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZ\\_XiYJKnQM&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZ_XiYJKnQM&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=30)

## Gathering

Through the rough and the smooth times,

***you gather us in, saying peace...***

from different cultures, stories, status and wealth,

***you gather us in, saying peace...***

with different abilities, strengths and failings,

***you gather us in, saying peace...***

together we are your children, gathered in love

## Acknowledgement Of Country and First Peoples

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples whose relationship with the land is central to their spirituality. We particularly acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of The Kulin Nation, their elders, past, present, emerging, and their stewardship of the land upon which we meet throughout the ages. They have never ceded their sovereignty of the land and we commit ourselves to work towards healing and reconciliation

## Prayer of Praise

**'The Life That Is Truly Good'**

*Written by John van de Laar, © Sacredise.com, <https://sacredise.com/the-life-that-is-truly-good/> Free to use with accreditation*

You alone know, O God, the depth of the longing in our hearts;

the intensity of the thirst in our souls,

**and in answer, you have come to us,**

**lived among us,**

**taught and healed us,**

**demonstrated what the good life looks like;**

**then died, to reveal the value of this life you offer**

You alone know, O God, what we need to satisfy our need,

to lead us to the life we instinctively seek,

**and in answer, you have opened the door to life for us,**

**constantly whispered to us of your love and grace,**

**gently nudged us in the direction of our best life**

And so, now, as you come to us again,

as your life is proclaimed to us again,

**we praise you Risen and Living One,**

**for the truly good life we find in you. Amen**

**TIS 382 Now the Green Blade Rises** written by John MacLeod Campbell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVduV0ustWw> from BBC Songs of Praise

## Reaffirming Our Journey Of Faith

### 'Committing To Life'

Written by John van de Laar, © Sacredise.com, <https://sacredise.com/committing-to-life-2-2/> Free to use with accreditation

At a time like this, when the triumph of death seems inevitable  
and the suffering around us makes us want to turn away,

#### **we commit to resurrection:**

in the secret chambers where power-brokers meet,

#### **we commit to making the voice of life and justice heard;**

in the crisis moments when quick decisions must be made  
that hold human lives in the balance

#### **we commit to making peace and co-existence the challenge we raise;**

in the forgotten corners where the powerless and poor  
daily walk the valley of the shadow of death,

#### **we commit to equity, compassion and giving;**

in the dying places on our planet where human carelessness and consumption  
have threatened the survival of all

#### **we commit to simplicity and sustainability**

As you stand among us now, Jesus,  
in your resurrected glory,

#### **may we know the power of your life;**

#### **may we turn away from death;**

#### **and may we become agents of resurrection,**

**where ever we find ourselves. Amen**

### Readings: NRSV

*Scripture quotations from New Revised Standard Version Bible, © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved*

#### **Luke 24: 36b-48**

36b ... Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

#### **1 John 3: 1-7**

1 See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 3 And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 4 Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

### Choir "Whispering Hope"

*Music & Lyrics: Septimus Winner 1827-1902, Public Domain*

### Sermon - Peace be with you

A young woman, Jill, was passionate in wanting to help young children and their families. She ran an after-school program and in it she built a close connection to one young boy in particular. She was invited to a meal at his home

one day and so brought flowers. When she arrived, the young boy met her at the door and told her she could not come in as his mum was drunk. The young woman froze and didn't know what to do. She quickly handed the boy the flowers and proceeded to leave. She left feeling helpless and guilty that she should've done something to help, that she let the boy down. She had come wanting to be a positive influence and to make a further connection that may have helped the family.

Later, in reflecting on the situation, Jill recognized that she had encountered the mother in a degraded state. She became aware of the shame of the boy and his mother. She questioned, how can she bring hope and be a blessing in the midst of such degradation?

With further thought, she began to wonder about her understanding of her faith. For Jill, the Jesus she knew was someone of joy, blessing and beauty. How can such a one encounter such degradation and shame? She continued to wonder if she had ever heard or noticed Jesus in states of degradation.

Jill remembered then the stories of the cross, Jesus touching lepers and being accused himself of being a drunk. She gradually realised that her understanding of Jesus and her faith needed to change and grow. Her experience had challenged her faith and invited new insight.

As Protestants, we don't like images of a distorted or degraded Christ. We like to emphasise the victory of the resurrection, the life given to the dying and the healing offered to the sick. We look to the Christ who fixes our failings and overcomes our despair.

When we hit the hard times, we cry out to the victorious Christ, the risen one and we become blind to the crucified suffering Christ standing beside us speaking quietly, soothingly to us, "peace; peace be with you."

The reality is it is hard to learn and hear God when fear dominates. So in this space we see that Jesus comes, recognises our fear and seeks to gather it in compassion. The crucified one understands. The crucified one does not expect us to respond the "right way". The crucified one knows we need to learn and grow.

This is what we encounter even when we read the resurrection stories. Jesus constantly meets the disciples, the women and all those he meets along the way in their fear and grief, gradually revealing himself showing his wounded hands, side and feet. He does not hurry them. He helps them understand, greeting them with peace.

The wounded Jesus, does not judge. The wounded Jesus, stands quietly beside us. The wounded Jesus, does not demand. The wounded Jesus, has a gentle touch.

In standing beside us in peace, Jesus brings comfort. It is in this space that life can take root. It is like the gentle planting of a seedling. It allows the roots to take and the plant to grow.

A person in grief often just needs the warm embrace of a friend. Words may not come and may not be needed. The quiet sharing of sorrow becomes a burden shared.

In our journey together through the changes we face as a new congregation, it will be the listening ear that will provide the greatest insights.

May you see the wounded hands and side and hear the word of peace.

*Shalom,*

*Rev Peter*



*Photo, Margaret Cosstick*

***Quiet Meditation***

## ATok 313 Longing For Light (Christ be our light)

### Offering

**'A Fine Wind is Blowing': Psalms of the Bible in Words That Blow You Away**

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**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**

### Prayers of the People *by Michael Plumridge*

Lord God, whose greatness transcends human comprehension, yet whose mercy, forgiveness and compassion heals our wounds, enables us to release our resentments and frees us to choose to let go of hurt. We ask you to hear us as we pray this morning.

In prayers for the world, we pray for those caught in the midst of conflict. Lord, we deplore the human tendency to allow our conflicts and disagreements to be resolved with war. Help us to choose the way of peaceful, respectful negotiation. We pray at this time for those displaced in the Israeli Palestinian conflict. We pray for a ceasefire. We pray for the easing of human suffering.

We pray also for peace in Ukraine. Lord help them to know that their suffering is not forgotten. Be with them we pray.

We ask for peace and justice in Ukraine.

Lord may your reign of peace be upon the whole world.

God of all creation we give you thanks and praise for the earth. We confess to you that we have not cared for our earth the way we should have. We have allowed ease and convenience to rule our lives rather than consideration for the environment. We pray for those in the Pacific Island nations who are suffering the inundation of their lands. We pray for all people who have suffered with fire and flood – with many people enduring multiple events. Be with them we pray. We thank you for emergency services people who risk their lives to help others, and we give you thanks for volunteers who give up time and energy to be of assistance to others in times of crisis.

Lord, we ask for safety for all citizens. We especially pray for the safety of women, both in the community and in domestic circumstances. Lord we are failing. Help us to do better.

We pray for the youth of Australia. We pray for those young people seduced by the spurious philosophies of so-called influencers. We ask you to be with us as we strive to be real-life influencers in the way of grace and peace.

We pray for our Uniting Church, and we ask your presence as we continue to be Whitehorse Uniting.

Lord we ask you to guide us as we serve you. Grant us the ability to see opportunities to further your kingdom on earth.

Help us to see others through your eyes: enliven within us compassion, empathy, mercy and love.

We pray this and all our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray...

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.



*Freepik*

### Candle Prayers

**TIS 687 God Gives Us A Future** written by Elizabeth J Smith tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64lXkcwZ06M&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=16>

## **Blessing and Commissioning**

*stanza #1: author unknown, sourced from Rex Hunt's website*

<https://www.rexaehuntprogressivelgy.com/lent5b1732024>

*stanza #2: Rev Peter*

The God we worship is never confined to this place.  
So go and travel with the God who is found  
in ordinary and surprising places.

Share peace,  
be bearers of grace,  
and offer hope.

**TIS 778 Shalom** tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=35>