

## **A Service for Easter Day - or during the week before**

*This service is written for Stretton Park in Maffra and Laurina Lodge in Heyfield, but with the intention of being available for use in other retirement villages and nursing homes. This service can be used as a script, enabling anyone with a good reading voice to use it for a dispersed group in a large room, or it can be printed off in whatever sized font is appropriate, for distribution to those who are interested for their private use.*

### INTRODUCTION

Today, we remember Easter Sunday. Churches usually have special services celebrating Jesus being raised from the dead. It is a day of celebration after the dreadful evil of Good Friday. No matter how you understand Jesus coming back to life, the great message is that evil and death did not win, God and life and joy came through in the end. Christ is risen - He is risen indeed

HYMN No. 8 - How great thou art

*You can read the words to yourself, or out loud. If you remember the tune well enough you can sing it yourself. You can, of course sing just the first, or the first and last verses.*

### PRAYER

Thank you God, for who you are and for the way you care for us. Thank you that you are always there for us, you are always present and always listening. Thank you for Jesus' strength and courage in accepting the worst that the world could do, and then showing that love and forgiveness were stronger than hate and death. Thank you that the forgiveness that Jesus bought can be ours as well. We ask for this forgiveness now for any of those things from the past that still haunt us. As we ask, those things are forgiven by you. Help us to let go of them and live with a conscience freed from regret. This we ask in the victorious name of Jesus, Amen

HYMN No. 2 - Blessed assurance

### BIBLE READING

*The Bible reading for Easter Sunday is Matthew 28 : 1 - 10. Here is a shortened version:*

O Sunday morning, at dawn, Mary and Mary Magdeline went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. An angel was there, who rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb. The guards were scared. The angel said that Jesus had risen, the tomb was empty, and that they would see Jesus in Galilee. The two Marys ran off to tell the other disciples. Jesus met them on the way, and told them that they would all see them all in Galilee.

## REFLECTION

It is hard for us to understand just what happened and how it happened on that first Easter morning. We are told in the Bible that the Jewish leaders had put guards on the tomb and made sure in every way that they could, that Jesus disciples could not take his body or interfere in any way. Then, on Easter morning, Jesus has risen. The angel says so, the two Marys see him, and the guards are paid-off by the Jewish leaders to say nothing.

The message for us is that God has won. Love and life have won. And the power of evil is ultimately limited by God. This power of God over evil also means that God has the power to limit the effect that evil can have in our lives. We can be forgiven, through Jesus, for wrongs in our lives, so that evil cannot take hold of us. We can break bad habits, we can be cleared of bad consciences, and our minds can be at peace, through the loving power of Jesus.

HYMN No.20 - What a friend we have in Jesus

## PRAYER

God our Father, we pray for our friends, our families and ourselves. Keep us all safe, we pray. We pray for those we cannot visit and for those who cannot visit us, for our spouses, our children and grandchildren and for their children. May they stay well and be happy, and may we see them again before too long. We pray for our friends close by, as they too, miss their visitors. Be with us we pray, help us to continue on, even though everything may not be as we would want it to be. Give us the strength and positive outlook we need for this time.

And we pray together,

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

For ever and ever, AMEN

HYMN No 19 - Onward Christian soldiers

## THE BLESSING

May the risen Lord Jesus comfort you, and may you be able to feel his presence with you this coming week. And may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always, Amen