



Moderator's message 2025

EASTER

CHRIST IS RISEN – HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Tena koutou katoa

Throughout my ministry I have either participated in, or led, an Easter sunrise service, firstly at Mt Albert in Auckland, and more latterly at the Lookout in Oamaru. It is very uplifting to stand in the quiet darkness and then see the sun come up over the city/town and hear the words proclaimed, 'Christ is Risen – He is Risen Indeed!'

The other Easter tradition of my ministry is to have the dressing of the cross at the Easter Sunday service. As part of the service everyone comes forward with a flower to place on the cross, which gives a visual sign of the change from death, darkness and despair, to life, light and hope. And the hymn is sung, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today, Alleluia". Such a joyous day.

With the lockdown that occurred in 2020, Easter Sunday saw me hurrying through the darkened, empty streets of Oamaru to find a vantage point on a hill to see the sunrise over the sea – and there it was, glorious! And members of our parish decorated their letterboxes with flowers to proclaim the Easter message in our town. A different dynamic that year – yet the Risen Christ was honoured and known and celebrated.

Easter is such a significant time in the life of the Church, and in our individual lives. Something to truly celebrate in whatever circumstance we find ourselves.

I have always loved John's account of resurrection morning. "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb". It is so familiar and yet every year it brings to us afresh the beginning of a chapter in the Christian faith that continues to shape and inform us, here and now. A little later Mary encounters the Risen Christ in the garden. Galvanizing, truth-telling, revolutionary. After a short conversation Mary goes and tells the disciples "I have seen the Lord". The first witness to the Risen Christ.

That Christ rose from the dead opens up the world for those who follow him. Through his death on the cross, Jesus brings us into deeper relationship with the living God. A relationship that is covenantal in its nature, that has an expansiveness about it that takes us into eternity. The empty cross speaks to us of resurrection life. It talks to us of the outstretched arms of Jesus who gathers us to himself through his sacrificial love.

The cross also speaks back to the perceived power and status of the world. The structures and posturing of those who believe they are in control, that they call the shots. Against unimaginable odds, faith wins out. And as followers of Christ, we can live with the posture of hope, love, goodness, for we believe in the power of the Risen Christ, that all things are possible in Christ.

I pray in whatever circumstance you find yourself, that Easter will be a time of renewal and nurture for you, and also a time that re-energises us all in the Church. A time we proclaim with conviction, "Christ is risen – he is risen indeed!"

