

North Lake Macquarie Uniting Church

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Dear Friends,

I hope you are all travelling well. In saying that I know that some of you have been unwell, some are feeling their age and *slowing down a bit*, and others have family concerns. Some have not been able to return to worship for these and other reasons. This letter is especially to all of the above to encourage you. Then again, this is a letter to all in this season of Lent as we head towards Easter.

It's such a relief and a joy for us all that the church is open, that mask wearing being optional, that we are permitted to sing, and now that we are able to enjoy morning tea together - while still seeking to make our time together as Covid safe as we possibly can in our care for each other.

During Lent we have been considering Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, his soul searching, his spiritual and physical challenges. There are times in our lives when we have much to consider and we can feel overwhelmed. We often have big decisions to make, how do we make such decisions? Lent offers us a time of reflection, soul-searching and renewal as we consider our way forward. *"Lord, the last two years have been a struggle. We have had worries... all sorts of worries: for family, for friends, for our church, for self and for our world. This Lent we ponder our place in all of these."*

In the 5th Sunday of Lent we will be considering John 12:1-8, Jesus in Bethany where he begins to turn his mind to the Passover; then we will have Palm Sunday with Luke 19:28-40 to consider... Jesus 'Triumphal Entry' into Jerusalem... He knows what awaits him - what is being planned. We will then consider John 13:1-17 & 31b-35 on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week, this is a day and a meal that Jesus has longed to share with his disciples. From the joy the Triumphal Entry and Thursday's Passover meal, suddenly we hear that Jesus has been arrested – crucified, that he is 'dead and buried' (John: 18:1-19, & 42). It's the worst news, we disbelieved but it was true. Jesus was dead and buried. Then Luke 24:1-12 Jesus is risen from the dead: He is risen indeed! It's unbelievable! We have seen him!

Jesus is risen from the dead. There is a joy flooding my soul... my cup overflows, I have a feeling of new life coursing through me, I feel brand new, I feel born again, I see everything in a new light, I feel close to Jesus... His Spirit is in me. I want to sing... "Up from the grave he arose... Then sing my soul my saviour God to thee... Thine be the glory risen conquering Son... Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord..."

So, we move forward to Easter, our joyful day of resurrection, our day of joy. I wish you peace this Lent, comfort through Holy Week, and joy everlasting through Easter.

Peace be with you,

Kenneth