

Friday, 27 March 2026

from the National Council of Churches in Australia

Easter 2026 Messages from Australia's National Church Leaders

Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. (Luke 24:5)

Events in recent months have changed us and our sense of the world. It is increasingly hard to see an end to war, violence and suffering. Recent conflicts in so many places destroy communities and shatter hope. Aboriginal deaths in custody continue to occur. The horrific scene of the massacre of Jewish people celebrating Hanukkah at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025 is also etched into our minds. We know of the continuing levels of violence against women and the impact of racism and discrimination seems to be without end. People, made in God's image, suffer. In all of this can we find hope and life?

There is a perspective we proclaim each Easter that defines Christian faith. It is the affirmation **'He is Risen'**. On the first Easter morning, the women at the tomb are confronted with a question that changes them; **'Why do you look for the living among the dead?'** What follows is not their answer to the question, but rather a short powerful statement, **'He is not here but has risen'** (Luke 24:5).

The women leave the tomb and return to the disciples with the news of the Resurrection. They tell of their experience. The listeners are not convinced and Peter, not believing, runs to the tomb, he finds it empty and returns home amazed (Luke 24:12).

We live among and in the forces of death which rob people of dignity, identity and hope. The Easter witness is that Death does not have the last word. We look for and trust that risen Christ, brings life even in the most difficult circumstances. Our witness to the Risen Christ may not be understood and accepted. It is our faith in the Risen one that changes us and our view of the world.

We find the Risen Christ, not in the tomb, but in the revelation of his presence wherever we are and in whatever circumstances we face. We are invited to look for the signs of the presence of the Risen one in the very situation of our own lives. This is the witness of Easter and for this we give thanks.

*Rev John Gilmore, President
National Council of Churches in Australia*

(Note: This year, the Western Churches celebrate Easter on Sunday 5 April 2026 and the Orthodox and Oriental Churches will celebrate Pascha on Sunday 12 April 2026.)

Thirteen (13) messages follow.

For more information, contact the **NCCA Secretariat on 02 9299 2215** or secretariat@ncca.org.au

Anglican Church of Australia



From the first Easter until now the message of the cross has spoken powerfully across languages and cultures.

The Bible tells us that the Roman Governor Pilate ordered Jesus to be executed with a sign that read ***“This is the King of the Jews.”*** The message was written in Hebrew, the language of the locals, Latin, the language of their conquerors and in Greek, the language of global commerce and culture. Pilate meant it as a mockery directed both at Jesus and his fellow Jews. But it disclosed a profound truth. Jesus died both in solidarity with His own people and for the sake of all the peoples of the world.

Last year I visited the suburban church where I first came to trust in Christ as a teenager. A lot has changed in those forty or so years. Red tiled houses on quarter acre blocks have been replaced by townhouses and multi-storey developments. What was once a working-class Anglo and southern European community is now home to many people from the Asian sub-continent. The Chinese and Australian meals of memory have given way to desi food and culture.

My childhood church is still part of that rich local life. A little smaller but much more culturally diverse than I remember it and more representative of its community. Some individuals and couples who mentored me in my younger years continue to live and worship there, because they love their neighbours and their neighbourhood and are convinced that the Risen Lord Jesus does as well. I continue to thank God for their witness. Grounded in the knowledge that through Jesus, God has forgiven them and gifted them new life, they are free to engage the changing world around them with hope and with hospitality.

At a time when change can feel rapid and unsettling and social cohesion is under pressure there is no word more worthy of our attention and trust than the message of the cross.

The Right Reverend Dr Mark Short
Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia

Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese



Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Dear brothers and sisters, as we proclaim with one voice: *“Christ is Risen!”*, we affirm that His victory is our victory, His life is our life, and His mission is our mission. The Resurrection is not only a personal gift; it is a communal calling. And as Christians, we are invited to embody the light of Christ in our worship, our fellowship, and our service to the world. Because the Feast of the Resurrection is the crown of all the feasts, the day when heaven and earth rejoice together. The angel’s proclamation: *“He is not here; He is risen!”* is the eternal declaration that God’s power is greater than every darkness. The Resurrection is not simply the conclusion of the Passion; it is the beginning of a new creation. Through it, Christ has opened the gates of paradise, restored our communion with the Father, and poured out the gift of eternal life upon all who believe.

This truth calls us to live differently. It invites us to see every challenge through the lens of victory, to forgive as we have been forgiven, and to love as Christ has loved us. As we celebrate, let us allow the joy of Pascha to overflow into our homes, our relationships, and our communities. May we be people of hope in a world that often feels hopeless, carrying the fragrance of the Resurrection into every place we go.

May the Risen Lord bless all of us abundantly, guide our steps in the way of holiness, and keep us steadfast in faith until we meet Him in the fullness of His Kingdom. Amen.

*His Eminence Metropolitan Basilios, Archbishop
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines*

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference



Pope Leo XIV has declared January 2026 to January 2027 a Jubilee Year of St Francis, commemorating the 800th anniversary of the death of one of the world's most loved exemplars of peace.

He is perhaps best known for the prayer attributed to him which begins *“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...”*

St Francis' life shows us that being Christ-like is not a matter of making grandiose statements or gestures, but living out timeless values: simplicity, generosity and putting God and neighbour first.

St Francis also had a deep and abiding connection with the Resurrection of Jesus.

Bonaventure records that St Francis called Easter *“the Feast of Feasts”* and urged all people to celebrate it with extraordinary joy.

This Easter, joy is a rare commodity in many parts of our world, especially those torn apart by war.

As Psalm 137:4 puts it: ***“How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?”***

The message of the Cross and the Resurrection is that we can continue to sing, knowing that Christ is Risen.

The Risen Lord is reason for joy. May we all seek to ensure others can experience that joy within communities and nations whose hallmarks are peace, mercy, justice and generosity.

May we all be instruments of peace.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

*Archbishop Tim Costelloe SDB, Archbishop of Perth,
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC)*

Chinese Methodist Church in Australia



The Resurrection of Christ Is Trustworthy

For the past two thousand years, one of the most frequently questioned aspects of the Christian faith has been the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet, without the resurrection, the Christian faith would lose its very core. The disciples proclaimed that Christ had risen because they witnessed events that truly happened. The four Gospels in the New Testament record these events clearly.

On the morning of Easter, the women went to the tomb and found it empty. There, they encountered the risen Jesus and held on to His feet. Jesus told them to go and tell the disciples that He had risen (Matthew 28:1–10).

Later that day, two disciples traveling to their village met Jesus on the road. He explained to them the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. When they recognised Him while sharing a meal, they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples (Luke 24:13–35).

That evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples in a closed room and greeted them with the words, **“Peace be with you.”** He showed them His hands and His side, assuring them that He was truly risen (Luke 24:36–43). A week later, He appeared again and showed His wounds to Thomas, who then confessed, **“My Lord and my God!”** (John 20:24–29).

In Galilee, Jesus later shared breakfast with His disciples and restored Peter by asking him three times, **“Do you love me?”** (John 21:1–17). The risen Christ also appeared to more than five hundred believers. Before His ascension, He gave His followers the Great Commission to proclaim the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:16–20; 1 Corinthians 15:6).

Because many people saw the risen Lord with their own eyes, the disciples boldly testified to this truth and faithfully recorded it, even at the cost of their lives. Later, Saul, once a persecutor of Christians, encountered the risen Christ and became a witness to Him (Acts 9).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is, therefore, not a legend but a truth confirmed by many witnesses. It remains the foundation of the Christian faith and the living hope of all who believe.

Bishop Milton PK Nee
Chinese Methodist Church in Australia

Congregational Federation of Australia and New Zealand



Easter makes Christians into optimists.

It's an impossible story that Jesus, tortured and mutilated through crucifixion, so obviously dead as he possibly could be, should rise from the tomb. It was met with disbelief by many people who were not persuaded by the stories they heard. It took his appearance among his disciples to convince them. Famously Thomas who missed his appearance among the other disciples even when faced with the testimony of all his companions said, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

With the crucifixion the disciples were as crushed as they had been excited in the previous years while sharing Jesus' ministry. Everything had suddenly tumbled down and now they lived in fear, uncertainty, sorrow and misery. The understanding that Jesus was actually alive burst on them like a blinding light. His death was not the end. To the contrary, the world was opening up before them.

Like the disciples, we too can go through many varieties of dark times - personal crisis, relationship breakdown or community catastrophe to name just three. It would be fair say that times look pretty dark right now.

When darkness surrounds us, it is easy to give way to despair and to believe that there is absolutely no way out because we cannot see one. We make the mistake of believing that what we cannot see, cannot be. We make the even bigger mistake of thinking that the way forward lies in our own hands and not through the intervention of God.

Here's the thing to remember: When Jesus broke the ultimate barrier of his own death, he demonstrated that all things were possible, as impossible as they might seem. Whatever challenges that may confront us, they are not as insurmountable as the one Jesus faced. It won't be easy. In fact, it could be very difficult. We will not immediately see where the path is that will lead us outwards. What we do have is hope - hope that there is a way forward because we have an assurance that God will not abandon us to face what we cannot endure. We know that just as Jesus could rise from the dark place of his death we will rise from the dark places of our own despair.

Easter gives Christians faith.

Easter gives Christians hope.

Easter makes Christians into optimists.

Hope has been given to us. I pray that we go out into the world and give hope to others.

*Dr Joe Goodall, Moderator,
Congregational Federation of Australia and New Zealand*

Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

The Glorious Feast of the Resurrection

Christ is Risen; Truly He is Risen!!

Beloved in Christ, in the holy joy of the Resurrection, the Church proclaims the victory of life over death, light over darkness, and hope over despair. The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is not simply an event in history; it is the eternal dawn that shines into every moment of human struggle and suffering.

The world often appears overshadowed by war, conflicts, darkness, fear, uncertainty, sorrow, and injustice. However, the Risen Christ as the Church's everlasting proclamation that darkness never has the final word. From the depth of the tomb burst forth the radiant light of life, illuminating the whole creation. As St. Athanasius the Apostolic reminds us: **"By His death our Savior destroyed death, and by His Resurrection He renewed life."**

Through the Resurrection, Christ transforms the darkest moments into the beginning of new life. What seemed to be defeat on Good Friday became the triumph of divine love on the morning of Resurrection Sunday.

The light of the Resurrection is not merely symbolic; it is a living reality within the Church and within every believer. Each heart united with Christ becomes a lamp that reflects His eternal light to the world. Christ said: **"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life** (John 8:12). His light dispels the darkness of sin, sorrow, grief and pain from our hearts and lives.

In times when the night seems long, we remember the words of St. Cyril of Alexandria: **"Through the Resurrection of Christ, the darkness of death has been scattered, and the light of life has shone upon the world."**

Therefore, as children of the Resurrection, we are called to live as bearers of this light. Where there is despair, we bring hope. Where there is division, we bring reconciliation. Where there is darkness, we shine the light of Christ.

The Resurrection assures us that no suffering, no cross, and no tomb can extinguish the divine life given to us in Christ. Just as the stone was rolled away from the tomb, so too the Lord removes the stones that weigh upon our hearts.

Let us rejoice with the Church and proclaim with faith and courage:

Christ is Risen; Truly He is Risen!

May the light of our Risen Christ fill your hearts with peace, strengthen you in hope, and guide you to live as witnesses of Christ's victory over darkness.

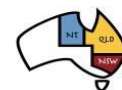
We pray that the light of Christ's Resurrection may shine in our hearts, lives, homes, churches and our Australian society, bringing hope.

His Grace, Bishop Daniel

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church - Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions



COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
+ DIOCESE OF SYDNEY +
& AFFILIATED REGIONS
N S W • Q L D • N T



Greek Orthodox Church of Australia



“Χριστός Ανέστη. Αληθῶς Ανέστη! Christ is Risen; Truly He is Risen”

Protocol No.: 955

The celebration of Easter is truly the celebration of the mystery of salvation, accomplished by the saving Passion, the life-giving death on the cross, and the glorious Resurrection of Christ, for, as Scripture exclaims: ***"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"*** (John 3:16).

The Paschal celebration, however, is not merely a remembrance of the mystery accomplished "once for all" (Jude 1:3). Pascha is the very participation in the fullness of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ declares, ***"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"*** (John 10:10).

Our participation in the fullness of life given to us by Christ is not only an eschatological hope, which will be fulfilled and perfected in the age to come, in the Heavenly Kingdom, but a present reality offered to us here and now. Christ becomes the very centre of our lives, ***"for in Him we live and move and have our being"*** (Acts 17:28). In and through Christ, we are regenerated and renewed. By divine grace, we are transfigured according to the fullness of Christ. This is the power of the resurrection of Christ, which raises us into newness of life and bestows to us the fullness of life which is in Him.

Wishing all a blessed and joyous Easter, I remain,

*Archbishop MAKARIOS, Primate,
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia* Released 20 March 2026

Lutheran Church of Australia



When will it end? Will it ever end? These questions are asked by countless people all over the world for all sorts of reasons.

It is asked by those experiencing the latest conflict in their lands; by those who live under oppressive rule; those experiencing violence in the home; those finding it hard to make ends meet; those suffering from injury or disease or grief; those who are struggling with addiction and by so many others.

When will it end? Will it ever end?

Promises are made – by governments, big business and industry and other well-meaning people and organisations. But still, it doesn't end. They can't end it – not through money or force, through policies or strategy.

The world is in quite a mess – incapable of fixing things, ending things. But God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Jesus was born into our world as one of us – truly human and truly God.

He entered the pain and suffering, the brokenness and failure. He experienced injustice and violence. He did not resist it or avoid it. He faced it. He came to end it. As he hung on a cross dying, it was hard to see how this could end anything. But with some of his last words Jesus said: 'It is finished'!

It seemed as though he was finished. But after three days he rose again from the dead. His first words as the risen Lord were: 'Peace be with you'.

The risen Lord Jesus brings us the hope of an end to suffering, injustice, violence and death. The risen Lord Jesus brings us a new beginning of forgiveness, mercy, peace and life. He finished his work on the cross and he lives to begin a new work in us. This new life will never end.

*Stephen Schultz, Acting National Bishop of the
Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand*

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

The story of the Resurrection, whether we read it as literal or metaphorical, is the promise that we have the ability to reset our path and make our life anew. We are aware of our weakness, our inclination to follow our wrong instincts and to hurt each other in so many ways. It can seem just too hard, even hopeless, this struggle to be a better person. Nevertheless, the Resurrection says 'You can leave all that behind, you can transcend your past failings. You can have a new beginning. You can be reborn into a new life.' This is the promise that keeps me going.



Jesus also promised that we can have life, and have it abundantly. This is the vision we hold to – a life of where suffering is part of our joy, where weakness is part of our strength, where every moment whether happy or not is full of Light.

Let us therefore trust these promises, and feel the courage to begin again and again, to live more fully, aiming always to live in that Light which Jesus has shown us.

*Duncan Frewin, Presiding Clerk
Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers)*

The Salvation Army, Australia Territory



When I turn on the news over recent days and months, I keep on hearing in my mind that little phrase that I once heard around ANZAC Day....." *Freedom isn't free, it costs*"

The ANZACS fought so that we might be free today. Wars are so costly, in terms of innocent lives, but those fighting often believe that it is for the sake of freedom. Freedom for women who have suffered so much and been held back, freedom for every child to have hope and a future, freedom to have food on the table or a job to go to, freedom to live without fear and violence.

It's costly!

And at this Easter time, we remember again that Jesus lived and died and was resurrected so that our freedom might be secured. So costly. Life freely given. No longer bound by sin and fear and shame. No longer under condemnation. Access into the throne room, into the very presence of God. God with us, in us, for us.....free!

May we live that way and may we share this wonderful news with others.

Freedom isn't free.....it costs.

Thank You Jesus, for the blood applied
Thank You Jesus, it has washed me white
Thank You Jesus, You have saved my life
Brought me from the darkness into glorious light

Songwriters: Bryan McCleery / Charity Gayle / David Gentiles / Ryan Kennedy / Steven Musso

What a Saviour. May the whole world, very soon, know this freedom.

*Commissioner Miriam Gluyas, Territorial Commander, Chair of the Board
The Salvation Army Australia Territory*

Uniting Church in Australia

WE LIVE BY RESURRECTION



If life feels loud right now...
If the world feels more anxious than peaceful...

Remember this:

The first Easter wasn't a celebration held in a fancy cathedral.
The first Easter happened behind locked doors, filled with fearful people.
And into that fear, the risen Jesus stood among his disciples and said:

"Peace be with you."

He says it twice — because sometimes once isn't enough.

As President of the Uniting Church in Australia, I want to speak God's peace into this time we are living through.

Many of us are carrying more than we show.

There are financial pressures and the rising cost of living.
Private grief and loss.

An epidemic of anxiety, depression and addiction.
Conversations that divide us more than they heal.

Across the world, many families carry their fears quietly behind the doors of their homes — worried about safety, about finances, about relationships, and about what the future holds.

Across the Pacific, rising seas remind us how fragile home can feel.
Here in Australia, the wounds of this land are still carried by First Peoples.

And yet.

Easter does not look away from any of this.

When Jesus appeared, he did not hide his wounds.

He showed his hands and his side.

Resurrection is not denial. It is love moving through scars.

Jesus stood among his disciples — not performing, not demanding — but simply being fully present.

And he breathed on them and said:

"Receive the Holy Spirit."

This is how his peace comes alive in them.

Not by pretending everything is fine,
but by being fully present to the Spirit, in the middle of real life and real challenges.

It brought them back to God — and back to one another.

As Christians, this matters for us too.

Because if Christ is risen — ***and he is*** —
then fear does not have the final word.

The Church isn't entombed by anxiety
We live by resurrection.

So, we do not need to be anxious about survival. We are called to live and proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We are to represent Jesus Christ.

And that peace does not stay behind locked doors.

It moves outward.

So, this Easter —

Receive the peace of Jesus,

and stand firm in resurrection hope,

For death and fear do not have the final word.

Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed.

Happy Easter.

Peace be with you.

Rev Charissa Suli, President

Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

Australian Baptist Ministries

We really do have good news this Easter.



A lot of people in Australia are feeling a bit lost at the moment - life is busy and full, but somehow still missing something. Even Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg once said, *“The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.”* And many people today quietly feel exactly that - like there should be more to life than what we see on the surface.

It’s a bit like those early archaeologists who stared at Egyptian hieroglyphs, knowing they meant something important but having no way to understand them. Everything changed in 1799 when the Rosetta Stone was discovered — suddenly the symbols made sense.

Easter gives us something like that too.

More and more people are rediscovering that the death and resurrection of Jesus is the key that helps make sense of life. When we look honestly at that moment in history - an event with strong historical grounding - things start to come together: who God is, why we matter, why other people matter, why we long for purpose, how we walk through suffering, how we work, how we love, and what we hope for.

And beyond meaning, Easter shows us love; real, personal, transforming love. This isn’t just an “interesting idea” to reflect on. It’s something we can receive. Something that reshapes us from the inside out as we realise God’s love is not distant or theoretical, but deeply personal.

Easter is a time for reflection but also a time to receive and to celebrate.

The apostle Paul captures this so beautifully when he writes:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all... And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:14–18, 20–21)

What a gift — new beginnings, deep meaning, and love that changes everything.

*Rev Mark Wilson, National Ministries Director
Australian Baptist Ministries*

Australian Christian Churches



Every Easter, the world pauses. Not because life slows down, but because this season points us back to a moment too significant to ignore. An innocent man, facing a brutal Roman execution, looked at those responsible for His suffering and spoke words that still stop us in our tracks:

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34)

Forgiveness in the face of cruelty is not what anyone expected then. It’s not what most people choose now. But that moment reveals a different way to live, one that refuses to let anger write the final chapter.

Today, so many of us carry unseen weight: frustration, disappointment, fractured relationships, unspoken regrets. Our world is quick to judge and slow to reconcile. It’s easier to hold on to hurt than to release it. Yet the message at the heart of Easter shows us that forgiveness is not denial, nor weakness. It is courage. It interrupts the cycle that keeps people trapped. It opens the door to dignity, healing, and a fresh beginning.

This is why Easter still matters. It provides a steady reference point in an unsteady age. It reminds us that even in the harshest moments, compassion is possible. Even when the past cannot be changed, the future does not have to be dictated by it. If forgiveness could be spoken from a cross, it can still transform homes, workplaces, communities, and hearts today.

So this Easter, as the world pauses, may you find space to rest and reset.

- To let go of what weighs heavily.
- To extend grace where it’s needed.
- To receive peace where it’s lacking.

My prayer is that the hope of the risen Jesus brings you fresh grace for today, renewed strength for tomorrow, and the promise of a new beginning.

*Pastor Joel Chelliah, National President
Australian Christian Churches (ACC)*

For further information contact: Liz Stone NCCA General Secretary, secretariat@ncca.org.au