

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING    24 April 2019    Ascension

The Easter services reminded me how we are missing Australian colour, liturgical practice and theology in our worship. The new fire told us that Jesus, the God of the Spring-time, had come back to life. That resurrection has happened for all things and all people. We should have left the church to see new life being breathed into the dormant earth, inducing sap to begin to move and a new cycle of life to awaken in the longer hours of sunlight and warmth. Pale, green tips of leaves should dapple the branches and wattle should dust the ridges with flashes of resurrected gold and orchard trees in blossom promise a rich harvest. But, we left the church on Easter morn to pass the roadside trees drab and sad and grey, with wan autumn sunlight slanting through, nothing like the bursting light from the empty tomb of incomparable joy.

Overseas, hawthorn hedges proffer pink and cream blooms for May Day. From pre-Christian times, youth went out into the woods "a' Maying." They danced and sang all night in honour of the goddess of flowers and gathered May blossoms at dawn, "bringing in the May." The prettiest girl in the village was crowned "Queen of the May." The Roman Church seized on this to sing "O Mary, we crown you with blossoms so gay, queen of the angels and queen of the May." Morris dancing and dancing around the Maypole banished the last of winter. At May Day's ending, garlands were hung on the parish church rood screen until the next rural festival.

Has the church springtime really come for us? In late June, we will robe in green, the sign of the Church's growth period, but springtime will be a memory and our fields will be brown or fallow, and cold, grey wearisome winter grows nothing.

The psalmist asks us "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" Living Lord, what more may we do to know your love in the message of Easter and rejoice in the gift of life in Christ risen? What more may we do so that, when we pray, it is an Australian accent that we hear?