



Weekly Worship



Pentecost 4

Sunday June 16, 2024

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Leader: As we gather to renew our faith and to celebrate God's goodness. We place the open Bible in our midst:

All: Your Word, O Lord is a lamp to our feet.

Leader: As we gather to hear God's Word and to seek direction, we light a candle to remember God's presence with us

All: Your Word is a light for our path.

Leader: Together we affirm;

All: We come from many places, with varied stories. O God, you travel with us and gather us together; we come to worship you.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded land and waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

Prayer of approach

O God of beginnings and endings,
God who walks beside us:

In your grace, be present with us.

Christ, friend of the weary,
Christ of the broken heart:

In your compassion be with us.

Spirit who touches and heals,
Spirit of holiness and prayer:

Present God, renew us.

God, we gather to worship you.
Call us into a deeper commitment:

a bolder proclamation of your word,
a greater praise of your name,
more joyful celebration,
more wholehearted love
of each other,
more faithful service as your people.

ALL: Amen.

Singing: Our God, our help TiS 47

OR: A man there lived in Galilee TiS 235

OR: Love divine TiS 217



PSALM 20 - *Link to Rev Ian Brown's video reflection with reference to Refugee Week.*

www.dropbox.com/s/uthh2s4iy48frgf/Ps20b%20.m4v?dl=0

Pause for silent reflection

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Uniting Church in Australia
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Prayer

God of all depth, every thought and reality,
holy creator of community,
lover of the left out;
we gather as your people,
children of your good news.
Assure us of your presence,
that we may trust your mysteries of life
and growth.

Gracious God, we come in prayer,
with our words
and all that can't be expressed,
knowing that you hear.

It looks to us, from your record, O God,
listening to Psalmists and people of faith
and all who cry out to you;
that you are all ears.

That your listening
is at the heart of your compassion.

So, hear us, save us and answer us.
For you, with the ears that hear all
and the sight that takes in our depths,
- you know all the ways
that we and our world's systems muck up,
how we leave others
to suffer the consequences.

In your unfathomable mercy,
we believe
you have the means to save us too.
O God, all our thanks and praise to you;
for in Christ, we are forgiven
and find our peace.

Friends, be assured of God's presence.
Know that God hears our cries of pain;
God cares, forgives and heals.
So, **Thanks be to God. Amen**

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: 2 Corinthians 5: 6-10, 14-17
Mark 4: 26-34

Teach us wisdom, O God;
let your word bring us light.

Take a moment of quiet for reflection.

Reflecting

Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

Two things stood out to me when I looked at this week's readings. Firstly, in 1 Samuel we are told that God was sorry for choosing Saul as King, the idea of God being sorry for something seemingly an unexpected view of God. Then God chose someone new, David, who in fact didn't seem to 'fit the bill' and was quite unexpected in the scheme of things. It seems that we can always expect the unexpected with God. Change is a surety. Samuel's level of discernment and trust in the Spirit makes me wonder about how we choose our own leaders.

The second thing was the line in 2 Corinthians 5 v 17. This God who reconciles, makes us new. It's a do-over, a rebirth. In a sneak peak ahead at v 19 we are told God is not counting the trespasses against us so much as reconciling and making afresh. And our old selves are now new ones.

Now some of us like the idea of the old being made new. Cosmetic surgeons and cosmetic companies are pretty keen on the idea of old looking new again, at least in appearance. But God's changes are more than skin deep. God makes us a whole new creation. Jesus is on the move in our world through us. Are we going to dwell on the old and hold onto it for dear life?! Or are we going to embrace the new? There is a whole new agenda of grace, the agenda of this Pentecost Spirit bringing reconciliation and unity. I think this is pretty good news in a world that

Reflecting continues

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Reflecting continues

sometimes appears to be off its rails. Do we want to settle for a belief system which is rigid and devoid of life? Sometimes it is tempting because it is secure and unchanging. Or a theme of love and grace that connects us much more deeply in the true meaning of religion, 're-ligio' (ligio is like ligaments) reknitting us together and connecting us.

The alternative is to let go and let the movement of the Spirit take us into new, spiritually alive places of inspiration, creativity and intuition, a place of new truths and transformations which bring us fully alive. When we follow the rhythms of the Spirit, the guidance and the wisdom, and as we deeply listen and discern, we are led into the challenge of seeking justice and wholeness (salvation). This is the way of love. It is the old made new. It does not negate the old, but it recognises the old must be made new by transformation.

I recently read a piece about there being three horizons-Triage, Transition and Transformation.* The first is maintaining the status quo, of taking care of the present, the now. The second is about "disruptive innovation" (those who invent and make and innovate). The third is the place of re-wilding, of unseen and undefined possibilities, of dreaming and potential and rebirthing. The whole notion of horizons is an image of depth and width and vastness. And perhaps we see our own small but important place in the approach.

So, in thinking of the old made new, this process of complete disruption, I wonder; what is my part to play? I long for the familiar, but yet, I know the importance of change. When I long for the old, is it the new I should be longing for? I know the ways of the Spirit call me to be an agent of change, of transformation and reconciliation. I wonder if I have the courage to meet the challenge of letting go of the old, in order to embrace the new?

This is part of the challenge of the gardener in Mark's Gospel, who must relinquish the seed of the old, in order to re-create for the new season. Even small seeds sown, can produce amazing and abundant crops. If we are to harvest and experience

abundance and life to the full, we are empowered by this Pentecost Spirit, to see through new eyes as we are transformed and made new.

So, the questions that arise for me are firstly what do I need to let go of? And secondly what do I need to embrace in the new? And thirdly, how do I have the courage? This uncontained, reconciling and renewing Spirit beckons me, calling me to trust and follow. I can do nothing else but let go of my fear and anxiety knowing the faithfulness of the One in whom I trust and embrace the new with relish and excitement.

**Small Giants Academy- Berry Lieberman essay (www.smallgiants.com.au/ideas-and-stories/where-the-horizon-meets-the-stars) May 29 2024*

**Singing: Beauty for brokenness
TiS 690**

*OR: Lord let me see TiS 681
When I needed a neighbour TiS 629*





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Offering

God who makes all things new,
we bring to you our lives and these gifts.
Bless what we offer.
Renew us and remake us,
so that together
we might participate in your work in the world,
through love, grace and generosity of spirit,
And all the people say: **Amen.**

Notices

Refugee week begins today - there are some great resources here from the Victorian Council of Churches, The Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce and the UCA Synod of Vic/Tas: justact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/240408-eLM_PFA-Refugee-Week-Report-4pp-Digital-1.pdf

Refugee Week Theme 2024 – Finding Freedom: Family. Read Stories of Freedom, for a donation you can download an amazing cookbook, get involved in the Share a Meal / Share a Story. www.refugeeweek.org.au

And don't forget that June 22nd is the UCA's 47th Anniversary.



Responding: Prayers for World & Community

Response:
... for all who cry in need,
hear the cries of our hearts.

God of love; of small beginnings and amazing growth, we share our concerns for a world that in many ways is scarred and stunted and in need of hope and real change. We remember again that as the risen Christ had scars and wounds and that you identify with each of us in our struggles,

so: for all who cry in need,
hear the cries of our hearts.

We pray for our friends and neighbours, all those affected by divisions and conflicts; those without homes, those dealing with loss, for those where grief is known and people are struggling:
for all who cry in need,
hear the cries of our hearts.

We pray that your love and hope will be known and grown in our community – that compassion and care for all will grow to be the guiding value for us. We pray for refugees, those suffering violence and all who are desperate for help:

for all who cry in need,
hear the cries of our hearts.

We pray for a world that continues to bear grief and loss through war and those struggling to make leadership see past their ideology to those who suffer its results:

for all who cry in need,
hear the cries of our hearts.

We pray for those of our friends and family who are in particular need, we name them to you in the quiet: ...

for all who cry in need,
hear the cries of our hearts.

Prayer continues

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Prayer continues

We pray that the hope of Christ brings real change and shines the light of truth and compassion in places it's most needed. May the community of Christ be that hope in streets, towns and cities across our world. As our questions cries and prayers are heard, we offer the prayer Jesus taught:

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Singing: Touch the earth lightly TiS 668

*(can be sung to BUNESSAN TiS 156)
OR: Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665*



Blessing

The steadfast love of God
draw you close in loving embrace.
The transforming power of Christ
free you for growth and for faithful service.
The gift of the Holy Spirit remind you
always of the grace of God.

Go with confidence into the future
which God has claimed.

Know that the God who holds all things
will be there,
that Christ who calls us friend
will walk beside us,
and that the Spirit who makes all things new
will mark our way with light and hope,
both now and always.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
in the name of Christ. Amen

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