



Weekly Worship

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday September 12, 2021



Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Pause to ponder these words from Psalm 19:

*The instructions of the LORD are perfect,
reviving the soul.*

*The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.*

*The commandments of the LORD are right,
bringing joy to the heart.*

*The commands of the LORD are clear,
giving insight for living.*

As you light a candle(s), recall some of the things that God has taught you that bring delight into your life.

Doxology - Praise God the Source

Tune: Old Hundredth, Words: Ruth C. Duck

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Praise God, the Source of life and birth.
Praise God, the Word, who came to earth.
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame.
All glory, honour to God's name! Amen.

Call to Worship

Jesus said, 'Who do you say that I am?'

**We come seeking to know more about
who you are.**

Who do you say that I am?

We come seeking to grow as disciples.

Who do you say that I am?

**We want to have the faith and courage
to follow you.**

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We offer our respect to elders past, present and emerging and commit ourselves to listening, learning and keeping the covenant as we walk together, First and Second Peoples.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Be Thou my Vision

(TIS 547) *Used with permission CCLI 206 729*

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight,
be thou my dignity, thou my delight;
thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower:
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

Riches I scorn and the world's empty praise,
thou my inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only the first in my heart;
high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys,
O bright heaven's Sun!

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.





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Prayer

As we see the beauty of Spring blossoms bursting forth, and the glorious green of growing grasses and plants, and hear the birds singing their praises to the Creator, we give praise, also, to God who loves us and seeks to instruct and guide us.

So, we pray, open us up to hearing God's word to us this day. Amen.

Listening

Read: Psalm 19,
James 3:1-12 &
Mark 8:27-38

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Confession

O God, we want to be your faithful people, but we get resentful or jealous or impatient or angry, and hateful words sneak out of our mouths. We say things we know we should not say.

Forgive us, and set us back on the path of discipleship.

O God, we want to be your faithful people, but all sorts of doubts creep into our minds. Like Peter, one moment we are confident and trusting, the next we struggle to trust that you are with us, guiding us on our life's journey.

Forgive us, and set us back on the path of discipleship.

O God, we want to be your faithful people, but we get frustrated, we get worked up and angry. We don't treat all people with respect, we think we know better than them.

Forgive us, and set us back on the path of discipleship.

O God, we want to be your faithful people, but we struggle with what it means for us to take up the cross and follow you. Sometimes it just seems too hard and we wallow in our discomfort.

Forgive us, and set us back on the path of discipleship.

So, in the words of Psalm 19, we pray: *'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.'*

Trusting in your love and forgiveness. Amen.





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Reflecting

Rev. Arnie Wierenga

I wonder what it's like to spend US \$5.5 billion for a four-minute joy ride? That's what Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, spent on a private space flight a few months back. But he can afford it because he makes more than \$4000 Australian dollars per second. I was struck recently by his comment that he completed the flight thanks to all those who work for Amazon, those who've helped him amass a great fortune. Those same workers have been in the news recently because of the incredible pressures they are under. Spending billions is a luxury few can afford, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid.

There is a salient reminder from Jesus that whatever we gather for ourselves, even if we inherit the whole world, they have no value once life is over. It comes at a challenging and pivotal moment in the gospel of Mark.

There is a difficult clash between Peter and Jesus in Caesarea-Phillipi. It is a place where divine authority has been hotly contested. It is a place where Philip, son of Herod the Great has seen fit to indulge himself in its new name – joining his own name with that of the great emperor, Caesar. The conversation begins as Jesus asks a simple question, 'who do people say that I am?'

The question quickly turns as Jesus asks the disciples who *they* think he is. Peter answers quickly, perhaps without thinking. His answer is profoundly right in naming Jesus as 'Messiah', but also profoundly wrong. When pushed, Peter exposes his values and priorities, the things he longs for. And they are poles apart from who Jesus truly is.

As part of his response, Jesus asks what good is to gain the whole world, and yet lose your life? He asks because Peter is invested in some kind of revolutionary, a "hero Messiah" who will deliver liberation from their oppressors. Of course he would want Rome to be overthrown, but seeing Jesus as his answer is trouble.

We are all invested on particular paths, hopes and dreams. Not many of us are invested in space travel, perhaps, but which of us doesn't want a Messiah to bring peace to Afghanistan? Or who doesn't want a Messiah to intervene in the global disaster of COVID-19? We all want something and many of us hope for a Messiah who will deliver.

When Peter trips up over himself and gets in the way, Jesus doesn't mince words. "Get behind me, Satan!" We need to let go of ourselves and align ourselves with what God is doing. And God's work likely doesn't meet our longings and hopes, even if we are familiar with the words and somehow reconciled to them. Jesus says: *The Son of Man must suffer, will be rejected, and then killed!*

We can make sense of this in a way because we are on the other side of the resurrection compared to the twelve. But Jesus still challenges our values and sensibilities. In our time, how does peace come to Afghanistan? How do we fix a planet suffering from global pandemic?

Jesus calls us from being full of ourselves, to let go and join him. To do that we must be with him, not try to make him into something else. This means we must deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow. And the particularly challenging bit, we must lose our lives in order to save them.

It looks like a call to each and every one of us to become the peace and the hope that the world so desperately needs in the name of Christ. The road as disciples is not an easy one, but I'd rather be with Jesus than against him. My friend Roger Imms wrote music to words from Craig Mitchell in the 90's that has the line, 'it's only in the burning that the candle shows its flame'.

Whatever we do in Christ's name, let there be light.



Weekly Worship. Season of Pentecost 2021. Presbytery of Gippsland, Fig Tree Worship Resource



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Responding: Prayers for the World and Community

Knowing that you love us and that you love this world, we bring our prayers to you, O God.

We are often overwhelmed by the magnitude of all the problems of the world - wars, famines, natural disasters, the refugee crisis, widespread disease including the COVID 19 crisis, and much, much more.

We pray that you will show us what we can do to help, in our communities and beyond, and give us the will and determination to persevere; and give our leaders wisdom, compassion and a commitment to justice as they wrestle with the many difficult decisions they have to make.

We pray for health care workers, especially those working in dangerous places, and for disaster responders, aid workers, missionaries, and peacekeepers.

Be especially with those who are in vulnerable situations, and yet continue to reach out to those in need.

We pray for principals and teachers that they may find ways to be creative, resourceful and encouraging as they seek to teach the students in their care; and we pray for school students, their parents and families that they may not lose heart, but rather grow in love for one another.

We pray for the isolated, for the ill, for those struggling with mental health issues, and for those facing financial hardship. We pray that they may receive the support they need.

Help us reach out in friendship and encouragement to family, friends, and neighbours.

And be with us in these uncertain times, showing us your love, as we pray:

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 for ever. Amen.**

Passing the peace

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

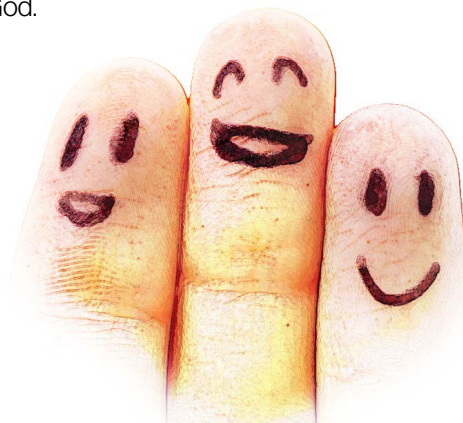
Offering

Bless the gifts we offer to your service, whether they be of money, kind or service.
Receive them with our gratitude and prayers for all that you have given to us.
May our gifts be a blessing to others. Amen.

Notices

Uniting Church President, Rev. Sharon Hollis has invited our churches to join in the [Season of Creation](#) through the month of September. The doxology in this worship resource calls our attention to the source of life.

As Spring brings more light, blossom and life let's be mindful of the Source of all life and give thanks to God.





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Singing: O Lord, May All We Say and Do

Suggested tune TALLIS' CANON 88.88

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, © 2012

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O Lord, may all we say and do
reflect the faith we have in you;
For faith is meant to change the way
we live our lives from day to day.

God, may we open wide the door
and welcome people who are poor;
And may we share with them our bread,
for faith without good works is dead.

Just as a spark can start a fire,
our words can damage or inspire;
We pray for wisdom from above
to speak and act in gentle love.

May we not covet earthly things
or seek the riches this world brings;
May we not boast of all our plans,
for, Lord, our lives are in your hands.

O Lord, possessions rust away,
but your love fills us every day;
Through prayer and service in your name,
may we live out the faith we claim.

Blessing

Jesus said, 'Who do you say that I am?'

You are the Messiah, the Promised One of God.

Jesus says, 'Who do you say that I am?'

You are our Saviour, we are your disciples.

Jesus says, 'Will you take up your cross and
follow me?'

**We will seek to be faithful, and travel into this
week with your gifts of faith, wisdom, hope,
love and forgiveness.**

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