

Worship in Spring



Pentecost Week 19

Worship@Home October 11, 2020

Gathering

God's love endures forever.
Steadfast and solid,
the heart of God beats for you.
What is your response
to the invitation?
Come. Come. Come.
Come on in and worship with us.

Call to worship

God's justice and love
invites our response.
Come.
With joy and thanksgiving.
Come.
In the Spirit of Rejoicing.
Come.
In gentleness and thanksgiving.
Come, for all is ready.
A banquet is prepared for you.

Acknowledging

Shearwater congregations meet on Bunurong,
Boon Wurrung land. It is our custom to
acknowledge and pay our respects to their
elders, past, present and emerging. May we
commit ourselves to listen, to deeply listen.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Looking and Breathing

To help us 'change gear' and settle into a
worshipful place:

Look out your window:

Note what you can see. Now...

- Take a breath in
- Breathe out.
- Wiggle your toes.

Singing: Come to the banquet

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Though you maybe have no money,
though you maybe feel unworthy
in your strength or in your weakness
you are welcome, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

See, you are an honoured guest,
from constant serving you may rest
so sit you down, be fed & blessed
for you are welcome, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Woman, wise one, mother, maiden,
see your plate with food is laden
and your place is set and waiting,
you are welcome, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Worker, father, little boy,
old man or youth without employ
come rest your worry, here is joy
and you are welcome, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Whether you've been lost or faithful,
whether you've been wise or wasteful
here's a place of rest and grace
and you are welcome, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Here is one who runs to meet you
loving arms stretched out to greet you
do not let your fear defeat you,
you are welcome, come.

Hymn continues P2



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Hymn continues

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Willing hands have made this bread
with salt and yeast and labour shared.
Let all the hungry ones be fed;
it's time for feasting, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you**

Abundant wine, enough for all;
our generous loving host has called.
The cup of blessing now is poured
for sweet communion, come.

**Come to the banquet
there's a place for you.**

¹Fay White

When we open in prayer we are seeking to
come to a receptive,
grateful place.

Praying

Joy and Crown, who...us?
We come in prayer, and in supplication, and in
thanksgiving. For we are your people, known by
your name. Truth, Justice, Honour, Purity, the
commendable, the excellent, the praiseworthy.
These are the things you invite us into. Teach
us, give us courage. Walk beside us, we pray.

...and so that we may be free to hear the Good
News for us today, let us come to speak to God
of our brokenness.

We give thanks to you, for you are indeed good.
We know you call us to this same goodness, to
justice and right relationships. And we feel our
hearts sadden, because we know that we have
a long way to go. 'Righteousness at all times'
feels like such a long way off. We swap your
glory for other inferior and human made images.

We pause in quiet reflection.



But you say again, "Come". Just come. And we
know ourselves forgiven and reconciled.
Help us to offer this same welcome to others.
As we think of all that is and all we yearn for it to
be, and the gap between these things, hold us
in your peace.

Listening

Read Philippians 4:1-9

What is this peace which passes
understanding? Peace means different things
to different people. There are different ways to
experience it at different times. Parents like a
moment of peace in the midst of the chaos of
raising children. We pray for world peace. What
does it mean for us to BE in this world and to
long for peace?

Read Matthew 22: 1-14

For these words of faith and Jesus the Word:
Thanks be to God.





Reflection

Rev. Ian Turnnidge

The incredible documentary about Cathy Freeman's Olympic achievements has been inspiring. What joy it is to see her success! She also broke so much ground for the First People of this nation. The weight she carried on her shoulders at the Sydney Olympics was far more than the race itself. Looking back makes me feel sad how little progress our Nation has made with the Indigenous people of this country.

When an international mining company can go ahead knowingly and destroy ancient and sacred sites: when laws to protect such places can be so effectively and quietly eroded over time; my heart grieves. When a Federal Government can ask the Indigenous Community to tell them what is needed for our future, and that same Government just flatly rejects the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart', I despair if National reconciliation is possible?

Paul's letter to the Philippians encourages us to 'rejoice'. To 'rejoice' is a wonderfully complex and deep action to practice. To rejoice is to enter into the complexities of life and find Christ there. Bill Loader, Uniting Church Theologian remarks "*Joy is never alone. Its companions are pain and fear...Paul's sense of joy is not the absence of pain and fear, but the presence of Christ, in whom he places his hope and trust.*"

These early words of Paul, and his conviction that Christ journeyed with him and the new Christian community, were tested many years later when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. When the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70CE, the writer of Matthew's Gospel could only have concluded that it had come about because of the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Matthew saw the destruction as God's punishment. This was a signal that Israel had failed again: the Temple's destruction

was a call for the community to repent. "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" may well have been the song of lament echoing in the community.

It is against this backdrop that we have today's parable. You will recall a similar story in Luke's gospel: and there is a version of it in the Gospel of Thomas (Saying 64). And the story is based around village life and customs of weddings, and used it as an allegory of what authority God was demonstrating in Jesus.

Customarily if a wedding was happening, the village would know about it, and when it was time, the call would be made to the community to come! And if nobody came, it would be highly embarrassing. I would suggest soul destroying! I once arranged a big party for my work friends. On the day of the party, I received phone call after phone call from colleagues who made their apologies. I didn't call the party off, because there was still enough people who had been invited. Nobody came. I was left in an empty house, with oodles of food and nobody there. It was humiliating!

In the parable, we recall the song, "I cannot come to the banquet": with invitations to the wedding rejected, the King sends his slaves to gather them: but they are killed. We might see the history of Israel and the prophets being rejected and killed, and Matthew might have us see the analogy of the king and his son. The violence of the city's destruction mirrored in the destruction as the outcome of the rejection of the invitation to the good news. And there, we can see the welcome of the Good News: that the marginal are welcomed into the banquet instead. They are all found there: the good and the bad, and brought into the wedding feast.

But the writer of Matthew's gospel wants to make another point: the character rejected for not wearing a wedding robe! It is harsh to our ears: but here Matthew is making a point: there

Reflection continues P4





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Reflection continues

is no status in the Christian Community: only a life transformed in attitude and heart in Christ matters. It's not a free feed, but an invitation to the pathway of rejoicing, with its companions of pain and fear. For the Matthean community, the destruction of the Temple as the backdrop in recalling this story, the parable is a call for true discipleship, even for the gentiles.

When Cathy Freeman won the 400m at the Sydney Olympics, she recounts coming into the stadium with the expectations of the nation upon her. In the documentary she spoke of how she looked to the night sky, to connect with the forever-ness of her ancestry to prepare. She describes the race as gliding, flying almost, and then in the final stretch she could feel the energy of all her ancestors taking her over the finish line. At the end of the race, the overwhelming emotions crashing in on her, she takes off her shoes and gets to the ground: to connect with the source of her very being.

“For many are called, but few are chosen” concludes the parable: surely Cathy was chosen for this moment in history?

Surely Paul was chosen for his insight into the rejoicing with its companions: pain and fear? Surely this parable is remembered against the backdrop of the Temple's destruction to emphasise the call to true discipleship?

Paul encourages us to turn our minds to “Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Against the backdrop of the destruction of sacred sites and the dismissal of the ‘Uluru Statement from the Heart’, the hopes we have for more moments like that night our Nation shows itself at its best: when Cathy Freeman united us all in that race, is what I hope for. Against whatever backdrop we encounter, we are invited to dwell with these true, honourable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent and praiseworthy things. And we are reminded that the peace of God will be with us; an active peace that empowers new life for all.



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Prayers for World & Community

adapted from Uniting in Worship 2, p281

God of all, you hear our prayers
before we speak, and answer
before we know our needs.
May your Spirit pray in us,
drawing us towards you
and towards our neighbours.

We pray for the whole creation:
may all things and all people
work together for good,
until, in your time,
your children inherit the earth
and order it wisely.

**Let the whole creation praise you,
O God.**

We pray for the church of Jesus Christ,
that, birthed and nurtured
by the Holy Spirit,
it may be true and engaged,
glad and active, doing your will.

**Let the church always be faithful,
O God.**

We pray for peace in the world.
Disarm weapons, silence guns
and put out ancient hate
that smoulders still,
or flames in sudden conflict.

Bring peace on earth, O God.

We pray for those who govern us,
that they may seek the common good
and lead us in this time of trial
with wisdom and compassion.

**Govern those who govern us,
O God.**

We pray for those who are poor,
those who are hungry.
Increase in us, and all who prosper,
concern for the disinherited.

Care for the poor, O God.

We pray for social outcasts,
those excluded
by their own aggression
or by the harshness of others.
May we accept them
and show your mighty love.

Welcome the alienated, O God.

We pray for sick people
who suffer pain
or struggle with demons of the mind,
may they be patient,
brave and trusting.

Heal the sick and troubled, O God.

We pray for the dying,
who face the final mystery,
may they enjoy light and life intensely,
keep dignity and greet death unafraid,
believing in your love.

Have mercy on the dying, O God.

We pray for people who are alone
and lonely,
may they be remembered,
befriended,
and know you care for them.

Visit lonely people, O God.

We pray for families,
for parents and children,
may they enjoy one another, honor freedoms,
and forgive,
as freely as we are forgiven.

Keep families in love, O God.

We pray for people everywhere,
may they come into their own
as children of God,
knowing they are loved,
blessed, healed and held.



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(This alternative version of the Lord's prayer comes from Uniting in Worship II.)

The Lord's Prayer

Life-Giver, Pain-Bearer, Love-Maker.
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo
through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by all peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth
of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today,
feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another,
forgive us.
In times of temptation and test,
strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure,
spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil,
free us.

For you reign in the glory
of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

Passing the peace

Coo-ee!
Come! The peace which passes understanding
is yours to share. Call someone, or send them a
note, and share a coo-ee, with rejoicing.

Offering

Let's invite others to share in the feast.
Tomorrow is the start of Anti-Poverty Week. Is
there somewhere you can give a donation (of
any size) in your local area? Or give through
the Uniting Church. This can be done online or
through your treasurer or minister.

Notices

There are many ways to share in our services.
Who will you share this one with today? For
next week, give someone a call and read it out
together with them.

Call to Action to look at

- Synod website
- Presbytery website
- Local on-line UCA resource



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Singing: Rejoice in the Lord always

Rejoice in the Lord always
And again I say rejoice.
Rejoice in the Lord always
And again I say rejoice.
Rejoice, rejoice,
And again I say rejoice
Rejoice, rejoice,
And again I say rejoice

Public Domain, KJV Philippians 4:4

Re-Collection

Today we have been thinking about those things that inspire us, and Paul's call to 'rejoice', regardless of the backdrop of our lives. How might we see God's action in this circumstance?

Blessing

Beloved of God,
you are Joy and Crown.
Go out in Joy
for the Spirit is given to you.
Love more and more.
And more and more.
The God of Peace
which passes all understanding,
Maker, Keeper and Lover,
will go with you
into this coming week.
Go to be peace.

*Today's service has been prepared by
Rev. Jennie Gordon, Rev. Dcn. Wendy Elson,
Rev. Ian Turnnidge (Reflection).*

*Shearwater Congregations: Toora: Fish Creek:
Foster: Tarwin Lower: Inverloch: Wonthaggi:
Phillip Island: Uniting Church in Australia*

¹Conversation (Come to me) © Fay White 1996 Used with permission from <https://loddon-malleeuca.blogspot.com/p/fays-songs.html> accessed 13 Aug, 2020

