

# Worship in Spring



# Pentecost Week 20

## Worship@Home October 18, 2020



## Gathering

As we gather in our homes at this time:

- light your candle and
- sit quietly and still for a moment.

What can you hear inside your home?  
What sounds can you hear outside?

## Call to worship

The Source of all  
thunders over the hills  
and whispers in every stilled heart.

**Glory be to God**

We encounter the Holy One;  
And like a strong earthquake,  
our souls shudder and quicken.

**Glory be to God.**

The Lover of Justice longs to  
transform the world, and us,  
shaping all people  
into the ways of love.

**Glory be to God.**

## Acknowledging

By acknowledging the Boon Wurrung people,  
the First Peoples in this place we offer a glimpse  
towards the grace our nation seeks and the  
reconciliation hoped for: just as we live in the  
grace of Jesus Christ.



## Singing: Holy, Holy, Holy TIS 132

Holy, holy, holy!  
Lord God almighty,  
early in the morning to you  
our praise shall be;  
holy, holy, holy!  
merciful and mighty  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy!  
all the saints adore you,  
casting down their golden crowns  
around the glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim  
falling down before you,  
God everlasting through eternity.

Holy, holy, holy!  
though the darkness hide you,  
though the sinful human eye  
your glory may not see,  
you alone are holy,  
there is none beside you  
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy!  
Lord God almighty,  
all your works shall praise your name  
in earth and sky and sea;  
holy, holy, holy!  
merciful and mighty  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

*'Reginald Heber'*



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## Prayer

Loving God,  
You are both  
beyond our comprehension  
and as near as our very breath.  
Dwelling as the air between all things.  
Awaken our minds;  
Quicken our hearts;  
Alert our yearnings  
as we open ourselves to your presence,  
enter into this time of worship,  
and seek healing, refreshment and renewal.

The world of wondering surrounds us;  
the dramatic change  
coming in each season.  
Gentle, like a leaf unfurling;  
Brilliant, like the midday sun.

Our spirits respond  
to the warming of the weather;  
the lengthening of the days.  
We pause to breathe in the fresh air around us:  
And as we breathe out,  
we find a place of stillness and release.

We give thanks  
for all good things around us.  
We give thanks  
for the love of God in Christ Jesus.  
We give thanks for your enduring  
and sustaining Spirit in our lives  
and in our world.

It is in that same attitude  
of thanksgiving and gratitude  
that we come to God  
with our prayers of confession:  
so that we might be freed from  
where we have neglected our calling,  
hurt our neighbour,  
or failed to live  
in the grace we have received:

*<We pause in silence to say to God,  
the things that need saying>*

Were we have missed our mark,  
we find forgiveness  
and the empowerment of forgiveness,  
to change, make a fresh start,  
and to start again.

Sin is forgiven: **Thanks be to God.**

## Listening

**Read** Exodus 33:12-23

**Read** Matthew 22: 15-22

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





## Reflection

**Rev Jennie Gordon**

Today in our Shearwater Worship resource, I'm delighted to welcome a special guest and he wants to do his own introduction. So, it's over to you:

*Thank you, for the opportunity to share my story. Hello to all of you. I can only tell you the beginning and the middle of this particular story; you'll have to imagine the end for yourself. "Who am I?" you ask. Well, I'm Moses, yes: Moses of the basket in the reeds, the burning bush, the encounters with Pharaoh, the Passover, the pillar of cloud, the crossing of the Red sea, the water from the rock, the quail, the manna on the ground, the wilderness walking, the mountain encounters, the commandments. Moses, leader of the people of Israel. Settle in and get comfy; I want you to come with me.*

*We are at a point in the journey where God is furious with the people and is sending us on our way to the land flowing with milk and honey but has decided not to come with us. There will be an angel sent, a subordinate messenger, to accompany the people of Israel. God's anger with the people has been white-hot. While I was up the mountain in conversation with God, they created a golden calf as an idol and are running wild. God was ready to destroy the people and I begged for them, reminding God of the promise in the stars. This is crisis time, again, and I need to intercede, on behalf of my people.*

*God listens. God knows me by name and trusts me. God promises to go with us. That was such a merciful and tender turn-around from God that I asked a brave and maybe foolish request, "Show me your glory." Knowing full well that you can't look into the face of God and live. I just had this overwhelming sense of longing to be face-to-face with this awesome source of wonder. Wait, what's that? You know that*

*longing? Oh, yes, it's planted so deep in us all. That desire, not only to enter into the presence of God, but to stand face to face with God, to be blessed by the very countenance of God, and live to tell others! Yes, you know, and yet, if I could have swallowed those words I would have, but they were out there.*

*I waited.*

*God agreed.*

*So, I stood on the rock, heart pounding in my chest, hands sweaty, knees buckling in fear and anticipation. Then the hand of God held me gently and placed me in a cleft of the rock, and everything went dark. Can you imagine what that was like? The smell, dank with the detritus of creatures and plants who cling to the night. The embedded cold, rock-chilled from an unceasing lack of light. The feeling of being enclosed, encased, entombed. The quiet, the disturbing quiet, the deep quiet, ruptured in my ears by this thumping heart.*

*Wait, what's that? You've been there? OK, no, maybe not this exact cleft in the rock, but I hear you. You've been in that hard and dark place, full of fear and anticipation. Life does that. Sometimes it's been your choice, your words, your actions that have landed you there in the crack of a rock, and sometimes it just happens to you. Well, you'll be interested in the next bit.*

*When I was able to slow my breathing and calm the rising fear, I noticed it. The hand of God: soft, warm, alive, present, powerful, protective. The hand of God: The Maker's hand, inscribed with as many lines as there are stars in the sky, near enough to touch.*

*Thankfully, I don't know what God's glory looks like, but from that moment, I knew what the intimate presence of God feels like. It breaks the darkness, warms the cold of fear, is presence*

*Reflection continues P4*



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*Reflection continues*

*in the deepest absence and life, life in the most mysterious way, life eternal.*

*Do you want to know the next part of the story? When the hand of God moved away from the cleft in the rock, light like a summer sunset fell on my face and I saw...*

*Sorry, I can't tell you because there are no words in any language that are worthy and any attempt would be a betrayal. That's the part that you need to find out for yourself. Pay attention and be careful what you pray for.*

Oh, Moses, thank you so much for sharing that wonderful and extraordinary encounter with the divine. I have a question, if I may? Was there a time when you felt that cold, deep, dark, lonely fear and you weren't as certain of the presence of God?

*Oh no, not one time, ... but so many. 40 years is a long time to wander in the wilderness, leading a bunch of people who aren't always completely committed to the project. There were times of lostness and longing for me, just like there were for my people. Deep in the marrow of my bones, feeling alone, so alone. You enter those caves more than once in your life.*

*You know, it's only in looking back that I know. It's like I see the back of God there also: in the words of hope that were whispered, in the kindness of a gentle touch, in the simple, loving gesture of food on a plate placed before me, in the smiling eyes of a companion. Looking back, I see God.*

Thank you Moses, thank you.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, we learn and grow in faith through the ancient stories, and the stories of God-with-us in the present. Looking back, where do you see the hand of God in your life? How can you share your story with others?

Be assured:  
God knows you by name.

God is closer to us than our breathing. We long for God. We belong to God.  
We bear the image of God.

May it be so, Amen.



Worship for You @ Home: Pentecost Week 20 Uniting Church in Australia, VicTas, Presbytery of Gippsland



Uniting Church in Australia  
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### Prayers for the World & Community

#### Hidden in the cracks.

Created in your image and for your Glory, we get stuck in the rock, caught in the crevices. We pray today for all those who feel stuck. Stuck in addictive habits, we pray for liberation. Stuck in poverty, we pray for a world where the gaping crack between rich and poor narrows. Stuck in mental health issues or loneliness, we pray for freedom. Stuck in apathy, we pray for passion and compassion. Stuck in illness or pain, we pray for healing. Stuck in brokenness and grief, we ask for your balm and comfort. We pray for those we don't notice, those who have no voice; give us eyes to see and ears to hear. All of us, and all of creation, are important to you.

#### Hidden in the cracks.

We pray today for our governments and other authorities. We pray for those in power and authority, those who can make a difference. The pressures and strains of leadership are heavy. We pray for refreshment and new perspectives. We pray for sensitivity to where the cracks exist and the will to create change. Lover of Justice, we pray for open hearts which share your glory.

#### Hidden in the cracks.

We pray for ourselves. There are people and circumstances which cause us pain. We get stuck in our own sense of injustice and judgement. People we know are hurting and that hurts us too. We hold them in our hearts and name some of them now.

#### Hidden in the cracks.

All things wither and fade. We pray for the dying and those who grieve. We pray for the carers of the sick. For those who are carers of others in their own homes, those who tend and hold.

#### Hidden in the cracks.

Our creation groans. Our world, and beyond, are exploited and treated as resource. We look around and know that all you have made is good, so good. Help us to advocate for the world, and take the struggle to sustain our environment seriously and to make it our priority.

#### Hidden in the cracks.

'Who will go with me' you say back to us? Let it begin with me.

**You call us to intimacy with each other and with you. Dwell with us in the cracks until we are able to come out into the Light of your Love and Glory, Glory which is the fullness of your character. Do not pass us by but dwell with us, dwell in us, we pray.**

*We pray the prayer Jesus taught his disciples. This is an alternative version of the Lord's prayer that comes from Uniting in Worship II.*



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### 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

Passing the Peace is a gift we practice and offer  
one another.

May the Peace of God's Glory rest with you:  
**And also with you.**

*Be sure to ring or text or send a card to  
somebody today to share the Peace of God  
with them.*

### Offering

We bring our gifts into our communal time of  
worship, recognising all that we have comes  
from God.

Place your offering on your table: the gift of skills  
and service; and the gifts of resources:

May these offerings bring Light and Life: the  
Good News in this place and beyond. Amen.

### Singing: Made in God's likeness TIS 671

*Chorus:*

***Made in God's likeness,  
moved by the Spirit,  
called to create  
a new world for the Lord,  
called to create  
a new world for the Lord.***

Birds in the mountains  
sing of your praises,  
called in the morning  
to tell of your love;  
bell birds and whip birds  
sing of creation,  
celebrate always  
that Christ is the King.

*Chorus:*

***Made in God's likeness...***

Summoned at noontide,  
come now and follow,  
joyfully marching  
wherever you lead;  
roller birds stunt-men,  
kingfishers' laughter,  
clowns of creation  
in the circus of God.

*Hymn continues P7*



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*Hymn continues*

*Chorus:*

**Made in God's likeness..**

Called in the night-time  
to act in your drama,  
to take on the Christ role,  
your script in our hearts;  
masked owl and bower-bird  
teach us to study  
the part we must play  
and the gifts we can share.

*Chorus:*

**Made in God's likeness..**

Called now at all times  
to wait on the Father,  
follow his lead  
as he partners our dance;  
broilga bird dances,  
retreats, and, returning,  
bowing at last to  
his partner the Lord.

*Chorus:*

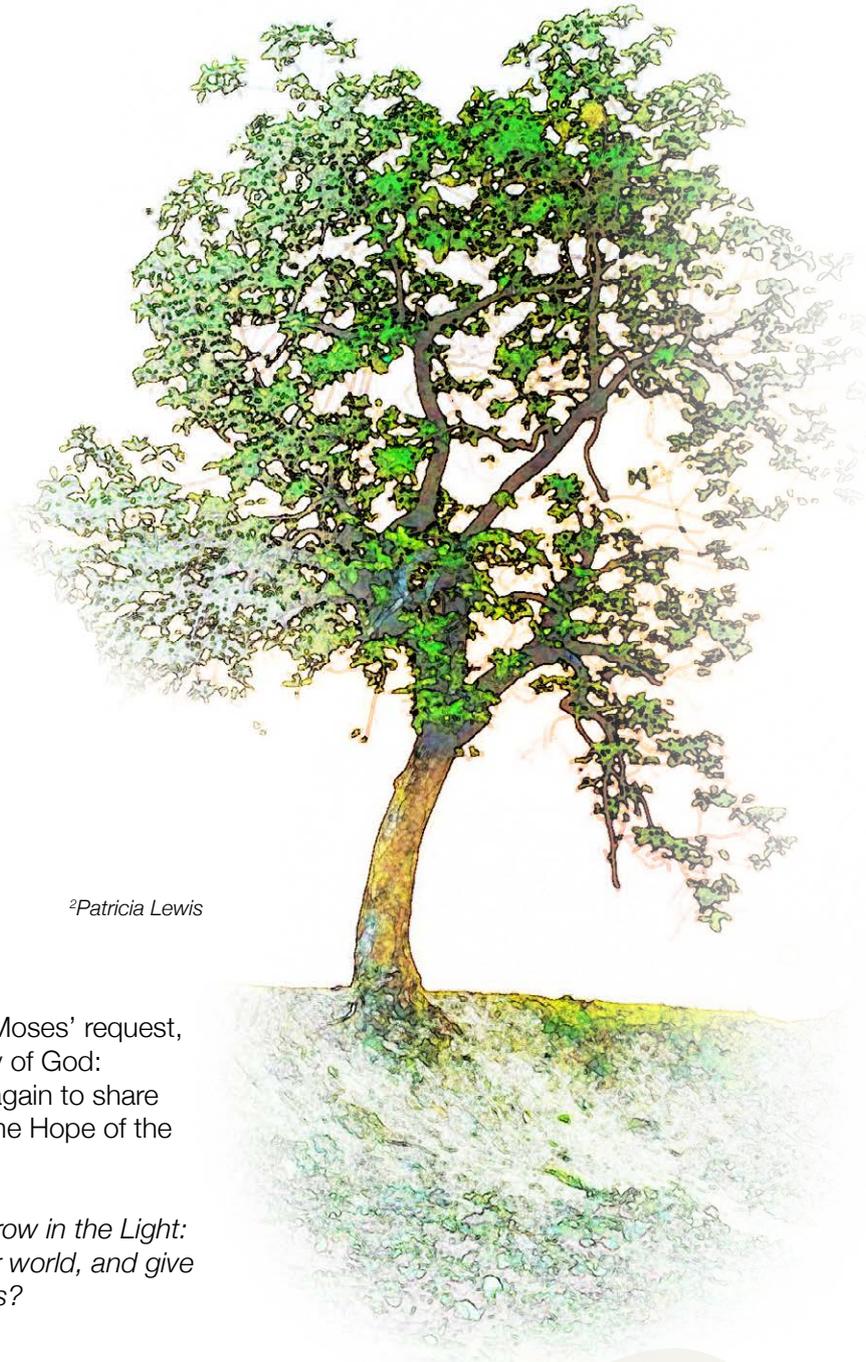
**Made in God's likeness...**

*<sup>2</sup>Patricia Lewis*

## Re-Collection

Today we have reflected upon Moses' request,  
granted to him, to see the Glory of God:  
and we have been challenged again to share  
the things that are of God, for the Hope of the  
Good News.

*What will you do this week to grow in the Light:  
dare to glimpse the Holy in your world, and give  
to God the things that are God's?*



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## Blessing

Singer and songwriter, Leonard Cohen wrote a song called "How the Light Gets In". It is a song about the things that get cracked or broken along life's way. Moses wanted to see God as an assurance of God's presence with him. YHWH said "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on a rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of a rock..." Leonard Cohen sings "There is a crack, a crack in everything: That's how the light gets in."

**In the places where  
we have been hurt or injured,  
in the places where  
we are vulnerable or feel broken:  
They are places where  
the Light of Christ gets in.  
They are the places  
in the cleft of the rock,  
where we glimpse the Glory of God.**

**May the light of God  
shine on your way  
And the healing of Christ's Light,  
heal your world,  
And all those who join your pathway  
this week.**

**The Holy Spirit of Life  
sustains your very being.**

**May you find glimpses  
of the Holy in your week,  
And feel the gentle moments  
of healing you yearn for,  
And rest upon the Holy Spirit  
that empowers you to live and love  
This day, and every day.  
May it be so: Amen.**

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

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



<sup>1</sup>Holy, Holy, Holy Used with permission CCLI 241 739 Reginald Heber, 1783 1826 alt. NICEA

<sup>2</sup>Made in God's likeness, Used with Permission CCLI 241 739 Patricia Lewis 1938-

