

Worship in Spring



Pentecost Week 21

Worship@Home October 25, 2020



Gathering

*Light your candle,
watch the flame dance with delight.
The light of Christ shines in the darkness
and the darkness cannot overcome it.*

Come into your worship space.
Welcome, we've been expecting you.
Come, you're not alone
even if the seats around you are empty.
Come, you gather with the faithful
of every time and place.
Come, as you are.
You have become very dear to us.

Call to worship

Spirit of life, descend on us,
rest on us, as we yearn for you.
Jesus the Christ, love incarnate,
teach us your ways, walk beside us.
Source of life, beyond our knowing,
be our alpha and our omega.
As it was, as it is, as it shall be.
Amen.

Acknowledging

This land was never sold, never ceded, never terra nullius. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and pay our respects to them and to elders living, gone before and those to come. We commit ourselves to truth telling, to justice for all people and to loving our neighbours as ourselves.



Looking and Breathing

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."
Matthew 22: 37b-39

Imagine that everything you see from where you're sitting is infused, charged, filled with the glory of God.

Bask in God's glory.

Imagine that your heart, your mind and your soul are all infused, charged, filled with the love of God.

Breathe in God's love.

Imagine that each time you exhale, the love of God rests on your neighbours, filling them as you are filled.

Breathe out blessing.



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Singing: The great love of God

TIS 164

The great love of God
is revealed in the Son
who came to this earth
to redeem every one.

That love like a stream
flowing clear to the sea
makes clean every heart
that from sin would be free.

It binds the whole world
every barrier it breaks
the hills it lays low
and the mountains it shakes.

It's yours it is ours
O how lavishly giv'n!
the pearl of great price
and the treasure of heav'n

¹Daniel Thambyrajah Niles

Prayer

God of love,
God who is love,
God whose love is unbounded.

**Our hearts are filled with gratitude,
because you loved us
from the beginning.**

You loved the world into being,
and everything in it.
**Your creative love filled the sea,
the land and the sky,**
formed the trees and grasses,
made the creatures of the deep,
**the creeping, crawling things,
the birds who fill the air
and the outrageous animals
that inhabit our wild places.**

**In the stillness of these moments,
we offer colourful, fragrant prayers
like a bunch of flowers
to say thank you, thank you,
thank you God.**

(moments of stillness)

Overwhelmed by your goodness,
and sure of your mercy,
we confess that:

**We have not loved you
with our whole heart,**
instead, filling up the space
with idols and misplaced longings.

**We have not loved you
with our whole mind,**
instead, filling up the space
with distractions and obsessions.

**We have not loved you
with our whole soul,**
instead, filling up the space
with greed and unexamined fear.

We have not loved our neighbour
preferring to keep our distance
and our possessions.

We have not loved ourselves
preferring to feel small
and deeply unworthy.

**Free us from this clutter
of heart, mind and soul,
forgive us for our foolishness
our pride and our denials,
so that we may be free.**

(moments of stillness)

In your mercy we are free.
free to love you
free to love ourselves
and free to love each other
fully and without measure.

Thanks be to God, Amen.



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Listening

Read: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Read: Matthew 22:34-46

For these words of faith and Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting:

Rev Dcn Wendy Elson

There is the Gospel right there.
Jesus gives it to us in a nutshell. Do it.
What matters? Love.

This should be the easiest text to preach on,
right? Simple and to the point. Yes.
But what does it mean?

There is something here about justice. I know
we use this word a lot and perhaps it is a good
place to think about what it means. Justice
in the sense of the Bible, means living in right
relationship, right and generous, relational
and connected living perhaps. Words such as
righteousness are part of this meaning also,
and they pertain especially to our care of the
vulnerable and that is, all things in the created
order.

So just love one another. Lesson over, right?
But ... Just a few questions first.

What does it mean to love one another and
know that there are refugees needing a home?
And not taking or joining action that will reach
out to them. Leaving children in detention
centres.

What does it mean to love one another and
know we contribute to such a huge impact
on our world and environment? Is there some
action we can join or take that will minimise this,
even a little?

What does it mean to know that we need to
wear face masks but believe that my right not
to do so is more important than the collective
steps we take to keep others safe?

Where is the love for God and God's world
when I purchase something? Do I ask questions
about how and where it is made? Consumer
ethics are so difficult to navigate. I have had a
bit of an addiction to buying household linen
online while in restriction time. Just buying a
pillow is difficult. Not sure if it was right for this
vegetarian to buy a feather pillow! But then
polyester isn't so great for our environment
either. Perhaps I should have tried to find a
woollen one? Oh dear, it is complicated. We
need to ask ourselves if our purchase is made
in Australia (buying our society jobs at this tough
time). If not, is there a reasonable alternative
that is made here? Is there forced or cheap
labour involved in its manufacture, or even in the
materials it is made from? Are there substances
in it which will have environmental impact? And
what about its packaging and the environmental
statements of the retailers. Of course, these
questions are arduous, but surely, they matter.

Why do we pay our respects to the First
Peoples and their elders? Surely because first
and foremost they deserve our respect and
secondly this is a way to love our brothers and
sisters and acknowledge their place.

What about the Black Lives Matter movement?
If our answer is "All Lives Matter" then please
think again. Of course, they do! That is why
Black Lives Matter, and until they do matter no
lives truly matter. The universal is only true when
the particular is also true. We are all diminished
when any of us are disrespected or mistreated.
Further than that, we need to take action which
stands for this sentiment.

Reflection continues P4





Reflection continues

It is Children's Day on the October 28. My mum used to say that everyday is Children's Day! But many of our children live in homes with socio-economic poverty, domestic violence, disrespect or neglect. Some are homeless and many are living with trauma. In some places they are in war zones or refugee camps, or starving, or ill. Hold them in your prayers this day.

The Thessalonians reading tells us that the apostles did not come with vested interests or fixed agendas. They shared their very selves with the readers of the Epistle. Their witness was in their love and sharing of their heart. This is what we are good at! This is a way for us to love deeply. As you move around the community, interacting with friends and neighbours, you are living the Gospel of Love.

So when the second commandment, loving others as ourselves is done from the heart and with intentionality, perhaps this is the means to fulfil the first commandment, Love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. To love radically as Jesus did. To love passionately and steadfastly.

Let it be so.

Prayers for World & Community

You have been our dwelling place through all of life.

We bring our Heart to prayer,
creating God of Nature.

We give thanks for the refreshment of the season's change:

The mountains stand in their timeless stillness:
and our hearts receive their call to us.

We spin in an endless Universe: and our hearts wonder at our very being.

Bring courage to our daily endeavours
that each meditation, action and prayer
may bring healing in both our community and
within our own hearts.

We bring our Soul to prayer,
redeeming Christ of Life.

We give thanks for the simplicity of the two commandments.

The grass renewed in the morning: the fading at the setting sun.

Our days are but a dream, a blink in watch of the night;

Yet our Soul yearns at the hint of eternal life.

With compassion may we work together
to bring to our world and communities
life-giving meaning to our work, relationships
and the stewardship of the lands.

We bring our Mind to prayer,
sustaining, Life breathing Spirit.

We give thanks for your dance between us
bringing capacity for us to gently and deeply
care for one another.

You bring the Gospel to our living, entrusting us
with Good News to share,
and Good News to live in practical simple
gestures of Love.

Prayer continues P5



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Prayer continues

Inspire our imaginations
to be change makers for the voiceless
and companions for the vulnerable we live
alongside.

You have been our dwelling place through
all of life.
And so with Heart, Soul and Mind
we pray for those who are sick, struggling, sad
and lost;
And for those who are dying and those who
care for and grieve for them.
We pray: with our own Hearts that feel, and
Souls that yearn, and Minds that seek Hope.

Jesus' Disciples asked, "How do we pray?",
and Jesus suggested a way:

*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

The peace of the Lord
be always with you.
And also with you.

We pass the peace to you; pass it on.

Offering

Loving God, accept the gifts that we give. Fill
them with the fullness of your love, so that they
may multiply and bring your blessing in places
where it is most needed.

*Thank you for keeping on making your offerings,
however you have managed that over this time
of worshipping at home. If you need assistance
with this, please contact your church treasurer.*

Notices

Next week we will be offering a service for All
Saints Day. Please have some candles ready to
light for your loved ones and friends, especially
those who have died in the past year, and to
remember those who have gone before us
through the years. You may also like to gather
some photos to bring to your worship space.

The online service from St. John's Uniting
Church, Cowes, each week is based on this
resource. You can watch it online, just follow the
link on their website:

<http://cowes.unitingchurch.org.au/>



Worship for You @ Home: Pentecost Week 21 Uniting Church in Australia, VicTas, Presbytery of Gippsland



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

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Singing: A new commandment

TIS 699

A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

By this will others know
that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this will others know
that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.

²Australian Hymn Book

Re-Collection

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 22: 37b - 39

How can you be more active in your love for God, for your neighbour and for yourself? What do you need to begin, or to let go of? Please find someone you trust to share this with; a friend from church, a member of your family or your minister. How can we help each other to love as fully and freely as God loves us?

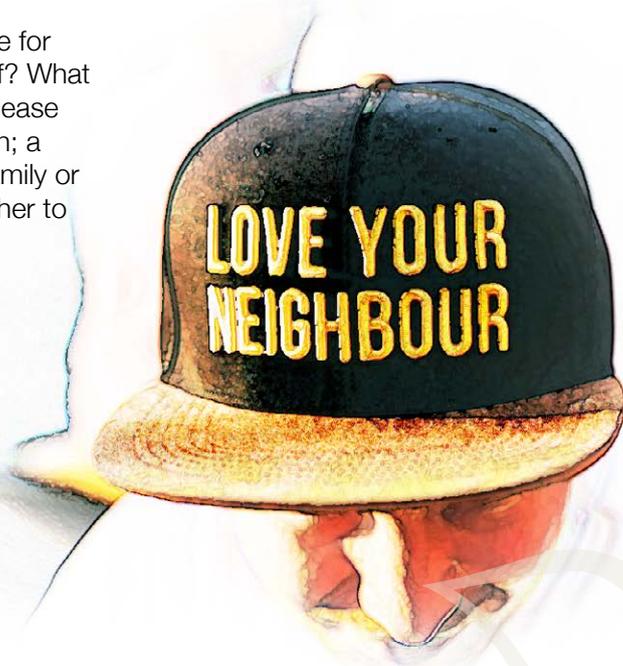
Blessing

May the love of Christ enfold you,
wherever he may lead you.
May he guide you
through the wilderness,
protect you in the storm.
May he bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home rejoicing,
with a welcome at the door.

Go in the peace
and the power of the Spirit,
to love and serve God,
In the name of Christ, Amen.

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

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



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