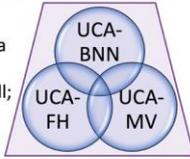




Whitehorse Uniting Cluster

The Uniting Church in Australia
Congregations of: Blackburn
North / Nunawading; Forest Hill;
and Mountview (Mitcham);
in a shared ministry together



Sunday 8th May 2022

YouTube Hymn: The Lord is my Shepherd
(The Vicar of Dibley Theme (Original) Mystery World 2009
<https://youtu.be/lAZN1oVir5A>

Welcome and happy Mother's Day to all the mums



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the First Nations People, the Traditional Owners of this land and their many unique cultures and languages. We respect the knowledge and wisdom of Elders past and present. They have never ceded their sovereignty and we commit to walking with them in their quest for truth, justice and treaties.



Aunty Joy

Call to Worship

Jesus Christ is Risen!
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession – Rev Tina

Adoration

Loving God, you are our shepherd feeding our soul and leading us into peace and stillness
 Restoring our soul when we suffer and are in pain, leading us on life-giving journeys
 Staying beside us through challenging times
 We need not fear
 For you offer us the banquet of life, our hearts overflow with gladness Lord
 We trust you. We know our lives will be filled with goodness and mercy
 You keep us in your kingdom of love

Lord our Shepherd
We shall not want

Jesus, our Lord and Shepherd
 We hear your voice, and we follow you all the days of our life
 We believe in you
 We know in our hearts you have given us eternal life, a place in the kingdom of God

Lord our Shepherd
We shall not want

Holy Spirit, you work through each of us making us life giving for others
 A source of blessing, a comfort and light in the darkness
 You fill us with courage, faith and love so we may trust and follow the Lord
 You gift us for the journey

Lord our Shepherd
We shall not want

Invocation

Come upon us today Holy Spirit
 Reassure us that all will be well

Confession

Lord if we have hurt another, forgive us
 Change our hearts Help us grow
 Pour your love into our hearts, help us carry your Christ light
 Lord in this moment of silence
 We come before you with all that's on our hearts
 Asking for transformation and grace
 Hoping to be forgiven

Here then Christ's words of grace to us
 "Your sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God

YouTube Hymn - In heavenly Love abiding

St Germans Church, Cardiff 2016 Hymn Channel

<https://youtu.be/7SFxG0h57kk>

Young at Heart – Rev Tina

What are your experiences of sheep and shepherds? Have you ever cared for a sheep? They need constant care. In France, sheep in the Pyrenees wear bells so they don't get lost in the fog and a large sheep dog guards them. In Australia the shepherd calls out to the kelpies and border collies, and they listen for the shepherd's voice and watch their hands. Together both shepherd and faithful sheepdog seem to work together to care for the sheep. It's as if they are of one mind. When I was a child living on lighthouses my job was to look after the lambs. When frosts came,

I went out into the paddocks and found frozen lambs, stiff as a board and carried them home and put them in the wood fire ovens warmer. After about ten minutes or so they'd revive and live. Then I had to feed them watered down cow's milk and raise them and they'd follow me around. I also was sent out to watch over them. Cows used to look for weakened lambs and peck their eyes out. Sometimes I was too late. Other times I'd carry them home and they'd join the other lambs in a pen near the house.

They needed a lot of care. We need a lot of care too. We like to belong, feel safe, needed, valued, and loved. We need a home, a warm place in winter, food, and comfort. God gives us what our soul needs and we can feel safe and loved and can hope and trust in the journey. This helps us appreciate our life and all we have and grows gratitude in our hearts where we can give thanks for our blessings in all circumstances.



YouTube Hymn, Author of love divine

Nikki McCutcheon – The Bath Chorus

<https://youtu.be/pcHhscskg0w>

Sermon – The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want – Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen



*The King of Love my Shepherd is
whose goodness faileth never,
I nothing want if I am his
and he is mine forever.*

These words are from a hymn we will sing in a moment, and they echo psalm 23. A psalm that seems to unite us with God and draw us into the divine love that God has for us. I wonder whether Tabitha or her loved ones were saying psalm 23 as she lay dying. Yet she lived. She was given a second chance at life. Perhaps she continued her ministry of good works of craft and almsgiving.

Psalm 23 has become a favourite for many. It's a bit like a skin graft, forming some people's soul, part of them, sustaining them in this life and their entry into eternal life.

It begins with these words: *I shall not want.*

We need a shepherd who supplies our needs, who leads us and stays with us, as we journey through life. Psalm 23 reminds us God is always with us, beside us, and reassuring us death is not the end. In many ways death is a beginning. Jesus Christ made that obvious. It is good for our cup to overflow. Our souls' needs are met by God and the Lord is with us every step of the way, every day, and every moment. We shall not want.

I wonder what it is like to not want. We live in a world where everyone wants something and there is a smorgasbord of choices. So many choices people often end up confused. Psalm 23 reminds us life is a walk of trust with God. Originally it was written to remind people God led them on a new Exodus, out of Egypt and home to their nation. It was used as part of worship in the Temple. It speaks of God being everywhere.

We cannot define the limits of God. Perhaps the invitation is to dwell in the house of God which is as expansive as the universe. Our faith teaches us God dwells amongst us as the body of Christ, his church, his community, his people. We are a kingdom of souls, living stones that make up the Lord's house, where Jesus is the cornerstone.

Perhaps because of this, we are not limited and can cross boundaries and overcome obstacles, as we follow the Lord. Landscapes may change around us, and history may continue, but the Lord is forever, and we dwell in the house of the Lord forever. God said to Moses: I am who I am. We cannot define God. It is God who defines us, and we enter into the mystery where we are known by God. Then we spend the rest of our lives trying to know God and feel in union with God, until we are finally reunited.

Psalm 23 reminds us our journey is a journey of trust in God. It was written around 772 BCE. Centuries later after the destruction of the Temple, John wrote his gospel, between 70-90 CE and Luke, the Physician, wrote Acts between 85-95 CE. Luke speaks of Tabitha, which means gazelle and is Aramaic. Perhaps Tabitha had beautiful eyes. The metaphor comes from Song of Songs and means beloved. Luke tells us Tabitha was a generous woman. We don't know whether she was close to death or had died. She was being prepared for burial but hadn't been anointed. Her loved ones were mourning and some of them sent for Peter. Perhaps they hoped for a miracle. Luke says Peter spoke to her body and commanded her to rise up, words that echo the resurrection of Jesus. Tabitha arise means: little girl, rise up. She may have been young, about 13-14. We are meant to consider Jesus is present and working through his disciples, both Tabitha and Peter. This must have been an amazing miracle for Luke, who was a gentile and doctor investigating Jesus' life and ministry.

There are more revelations about Jesus in today's gospel. For those who believe, they will hear Jesus' voice in their heart. He will know them, and they will follow him. For those who believe they will receive eternal life.

The greatest revelation is Jesus' statement: *The Father and I are one.*

To those who didn't believe they considered this blasphemy and wanted to stone Jesus to death. He had to escape to Petra because his life was in danger. For many, what Jesus said: *The father and I are one*, remains a mystery. Perhaps we do not need to understand or comprehend this mystery. We simply follow Jesus and walk in trust. At the same time, we are encouraged to ask questions and test our faith.

Today's gospel asks us: Do you bring life to others? Like Tabitha or Peter or other disciples throughout the ages.

Perhaps it is enough to believe and trust and be content with God, where we do not want. We hear the voice of Jesus in our hearts where Jesus invites us to enter into the kingdom of Love, into a relationship with God and Jesus, into the intimacy and love that is between them, a love that is cemented through the gift of the spirit.



Women give birth to children, where they are “blood of my blood and flesh of my flesh”. There is a strong bond after bearing a child and coming to the edge of life and death to give birth. It is a sacred moment that Fathers are now invited into so they too can form a strong bond.

This is an unforgettable intimacy and, in some way, may touch upon the union Jesus is speaking of between him and God, the union between him and His father. Yet, there is a difference. The relationship between God and Jesus is outside time, place and history. It is eternal.

It is this relationship that we are invited to enter when we believe. Once we experience this relationship, this intimacy with God, this sense of being known by God and union with God, we shall not want. Then we will bring life to others.

YouTube hymn: The King of love my Shepherd is

John Rutter and the Cambridge Singers, Thelma Owen

From the Album: O praise the Lord of Heaven

<https://youtu.be/fO-57y575jc>

Offering Prayer

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom
all for transformation through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen

Prayers of the People – Margot Kemke, Mountview

Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you today with our prayers for all the people in the world - for people everywhere where there is conflict, war, famine and natural disasters. We pray for our fellow Australians, our families, our friends and for ourselves.

We thank you that we have the freedom to worship you and to celebrate your triumph over death, and acknowledge your love and care for us all.

We pray that you will encourage us to continue to live in harmony and respect for each other whatever the circumstances, especially as we are soon to decide on the future governance of our country. We pray for our parliamentary leaders and the public servants who are preparing for our elections in the very near future. We pray for honesty and integrity.

In our world prayer cycle we pray for the South Asian countries of India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. India, the world's most populous democracy, a multi-racial, multi-ethnic society is a fast-growing major economy based on information technology but with an increasing economic inequality. Gender inequality, child labour and malnutrition, bonded labour, human trafficking and air pollution are major problems, and we pray for a change of attitude of the government and the expanding middle class of the population, to eradicate these conditions. Sri Lanka, a democratic, multi-national, mainly Buddhist, island state has achieved much since the end of its civil war, with universal free education and a growing economy based on its textile and tele-communications industries raising the stand of living for its people. However, human rights and freedom of speech are curtailed, especially against the government and military, and are still problems which need to be addressed.

Pakistan, the fifth most populous country in the world, is the only country to have been created in the name of Islam. Since its creation in 1947 it has been involved in several wars with India over Kashmir and to retain its status. Due to conflict in neighbouring countries it has been a base for many refugees and continues to face poverty, illiteracy, child malnutrition, corruption and terrorism. Reforms in education are proposing 100% school enrolments and agriculture and textile production is increasing.

O Lord, we pray for these countries – for the integrity of their governments and for the continuing freedom to worship even tho' there are many diverse religions.

Here in our own community we pray for the leaders and congregation at the Crossway Baptist Church in East Burwood, the Uniting congregation in Camberwell, the South Camberwell Gospel Hall, and the Chaplain, staff and students at Kingswood College in Box Hill. Grant these leaders and congregations your encouragement and compassion as they witness in their areas.

We ask for your blessing for our ministers, Rev. Tina, Rev. Peter, and our student minister, Daniel. Guide and lead them in their commitment to you. We ask your blessing on all members of our cluster, for the work of Centre 81 and the Forest Hill Op. shop, for our parish councillors and for all who contribute to the work of our churches.

We pray for our members who have difficulties at this time. Bless them and comfort them, O Lord. Answer their prayers and surround them with your love and compassion.

As we leave our place of worship we pray that you will guide us all in the coming week to be true Christian witnesses for you.

We pray together the prayer you taught us –

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

YouTube Hymn, The Lord is my Shepherd and I want to follow,

Brian Boniwell Music

https://youtu.be/4sZaJpllj_c

Happy Mother's Day



Blessing

We go in Peace

With the Love of God

In the Power of the Spirit

May the Lord Bless and Guard us

May the Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious unto us

May the Lord Look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen

Hymn 779 May the feet of God walk with You tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhiG-Vj8CGU&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=40>



Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina

Thank you for your prayers for John and myself during the time we had Covid. It was an interesting experience and horrible. Just letting you know of our experience.

John tested positive on a PCR test at the Austin and received daily care and access to doctors if needed and was sent an oximeter. I tested positive on a Rapid Antigen Test, reported it to the Health Department, did a survey and received a text, but no follow up. This was my experience. It was a long weekend. I called my GP on the Tuesday. Perhaps, if you can, try and have a PCR. Hopefully you will have some good quality care, like John did. Both of us couldn't do much the first three days and then it's taken another week to recover. Please keep wearing your mask and take care. We are still facing 10,000 cases on average, a day. A positive was time to reflect, pray and be still.

Hallelujah

Andrea Bocelli singing with his daughter Virginia at Hollywood Bowl, CA, 2021

<https://youtu.be/llocoDTV4vA>



Winter – Rev Tina

A time when trees lose their leaves, and all is exposed and revealed. A time when we sit in warm places, with rugs, books and soup or knit and contemplate.

The indoors becomes a refuge and rain beating upon our roofs is both comforting and limiting. We cannot go outdoors as much and walk or sit in the sunshine. It is a time to take good care of ourselves, and make sure we have enough vitamin D and C, and the flu shot. For all those who like real tea and tea cosies, winter is a lovely season.

A quiet sedate time of slowing down and hibernating.

Bears retreat into caves. Squirrels stock up. Swallows fly to Queensland. (We can now.)

Walking Group

I hope we can have some walks on sunny days. Perhaps at **Jumping Creek in Warrandyte**. This walk will be for experienced walkers. Another planned walk, which will be easier will be around **Blackburn Lake Sanctuary with a cuppa at Miss Lucy's**. Please contact Rev Tina to express interest in both or one of the walks.

0423 715 590. Tuesday is looking good.