

Whitehorse Uniting Church

Written Worship

Sunday 5 February 2023



Introit – hymn 210 O for a thousand tongues to sing

Mkariobangi 2013

<https://youtu.be/X-dEfz6Vms>

Welcome

May today's worship bless you

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place
We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.

Gurrumul & Paul Kelly – Amazing Grace

Gurrumul Official 2015

<https://youtu.be/MVORrx9jiiE>



Uncle Bob (Photo T. Lyndon)

Call to Worship

May we bring the flavour of Christ's love into our community

May we be Salt of the Earth

May we be the Light of Christ in the world

May we be Christ's love in the world

Prayers

Loving God, You bless us when we are poor in spirit and needing comfort
You bless us when we mourn for letting go to follow Jesus
You bless us when we mourn for others
You comfort us with your love and reassurance
You bless us when we do not respond to violence and anger
You bless us when we hunger and thirst to be in right relationship with you
You bless us when we show the mercy of Jesus to others
By embracing those who suffer

You bless us when we make you our first priority
 You bless us with peace when we are peacemakers
 You bless us when we are persecuted for your sake
 Lord, you teach us how to be leaders in your church
 How to be salt of the earth
 How to be your light in the world
 Lord, you bless us
 We thank you Lord
 We put our trust in you.
 We surrender in prayer to your love for us. Amen

Prayer Invocation

Holy Spirit
 Come upon us and bless us
**Fill our hearts with the fire of God's Spirit and Love,
 so we may bring God's compassionate justice to the world**
 Come Holy Spirit. Come upon us and bless us

Prayer Confession

Lord our God, if we have hurt another, forgive us
 If we have not loved others as Jesus first loved us, forgive us
 Help us know you delight in us and that we are loved, so, we may love others

Lord, help us seek forgiveness for ourselves, from those we have hurt.
 Give us your grace, to forgive those who have hurt us.
 Give us grace, to forgive ourselves.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"
THANKS BE TO GOD

YouTube Hymn 430 Your words to me are life and health

Allan Henderson 2021

https://youtu.be/0ZY_HQmsbQU

Readings

Isaiah 58

Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they want God on their side.^[a] ³"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. ⁴You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator^[b] shall go

before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. ¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Matthew 5:13-20

¹³"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,^[a] not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks^[b] one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Young at Heart



Two songs for you

This little Light of mine

Anon. Public Domain

46 million people have watched this

<https://youtu.be/cKkblZtqhyQ>

Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam

Lyrics, Nellie Talbot. Music Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921

Jesus wants me for a sunbeam,
to shine for him each day
In every way try to please him,
At home, at school, at play.

*A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
Jesus wants me for a sunbeam
A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
I'll be a sunbeam for him*

Jesus wants me to be loving,
And kind to all I see
Showing how pleasant and happy
His little one can be

*A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
Jesus wants me for a sunbeam
A sunbeam, a sunbeam,
I'll be a sunbeam for him.*

Sermon



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

Once again, we return to Jesus' teaching on how to be salt of the earth and the light of our Lord in the world. We look at how the church is blessed by God and how worship connects with God's compassionate justice in the world.

Isaiah 58 asks the question: What is genuine worship? The answer is worship that embodies God's compassionate justice and is lived out through our words and deeds.

As the church, we may ask: *How can we be salt of the earth and flavour Christ's church? How can we be the light of Christ in the world?*

We have begun the journey of building up Christ's church, where he is the cornerstone, and we are its living stones. We build his church, stone by stone, slowly, at God's pace. We do it with the Holy Spirit's guidance and assistance. We do it by looking to Christ as our exemplar. Our vision will shape our hearts and lives and bring permanent transformation. The foundation of that vision is Jesus Christ, his love for us and through us. This year we hope our vision emerges from amongst us. This cannot be rushed, and we will do it together in Christ.

Christ's love working through each one of us will add to the saltiness of our community and how we shine Christ's light into the world around us.

What a promise we find in Isaiah 58

⁶ *Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*

⁷ *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*

⁸ *Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator^[b] shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.*

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I have been writing to Jackie Pullinger for several years now. St Stephen's Society in Hong Kong, its original letterhead and now on the website has parts of Isaiah 58 as its vision statement. Jackie's story is also on the website. She felt called many years ago to ministry in Hong Kong with people who had addictions to drugs. Her light has shone into the lives of many people and their lives have been transformed. Jackie and those who have ministered

with her have lived out these verses from Isaiah 58. They took the risk and preached the kingdom of God in the world where the Light of Christ shone for all.

We can look to them and pray about how we care for the elderly who have no money left for heating and food; for people begging outside our supermarkets, for children who go to school without breakfast, for the lonely housebound elderly who no longer have someone who visits or gives them a hug, for the mentally ill who feel rejected and abandoned and increasing numbers of people who feel churches are not the place where they find healing, safety or a sense of belonging.

We can look to the stories of what Whitehorse Churches Care are doing and ask: What can we do for our community? WCC is engaged in ministry that brings God's compassionate Justice to the World. How can we do that?

We do not need to look far to find people in our congregation who have given their lives to the church and others. They have done their best to love others and bring hope and joy into their lives. They are salt of the earth and have embodied God's compassionate justice in their ministry. All of us know them and all of us are joining them, with offering love and compassion to all.

On Thursday Meg and Dawn from Strathdon brought John and Margaret Williams for a visit to their home church at Mitcham, now Whitehorse Uniting. They both came in wheelchairs and shared stories about our church. Both have contributed to the life of our church at Mitcham.

Margaret is going well, and her sense of humour is as good as ever. Margaret led many studies, wrote poetry and is a woman of prayer. John designed and made so much within the church and battled for 22 years to have the house beside the church used for needy people who are doing it tough in our community. One of the things John made was the baptismal font, which even has lights under the bowl. It's made from Tasmanian Blackwood from some pews. I will put John and Margaret's story and more photos in our book: *Memories and Recollections*.



We are all salt of the earth and Christ's light in the world. Over the next few months, we will begin our journey in the next stage of our discernment. Pray for God to give us a vision for the future where we can all use our gifts to contribute to the wellbeing of our church. Listen to your hearts and to what others have to say. Are you hearing the same thing as them? Is this something we can do together? Will it build on what we are already doing? Ask yourself: How can our church bring God's compassionate justice and love to the world? How can our Church be salt of the earth and Christ's light in the world?

Lord, bless us all and help us be a blessing for your church where we act with love and embody your compassionate justice in the world, amen.



YouTube Hymn 690 Beauty for Brokenness

Graham Kendrick 1993

Chet Valley Churches 2021

https://youtu.be/O5_TVy2gHRg

Offering Prayer

*(about offering up ourselves and giving thanks to God
for all we have)*

**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 – Michael Plumridge

Lord of all nations and peoples of the World, Giver of life in all its abundance, Lover of the Human soul, please hear us as we pray this morning.

In the **World Prayer Cycle** we pray today for the European countries of Andorra, Italy, Malta, Portugal, San Marino and Spain. We also pray for Vatican City. Lord we give thanks for the rich historical legacies and distinctive cultures in these countries. We recognise that it was from some of these nations that the ancient mariners began venturing out in the world and claiming and eventually colonising other lands. We pray for resolution to the issues created by the scourge of colonisation and empire building and we give thanks for the faithful witness of the churches in standing alongside First Nations peoples. We also pray for the natural environment in this region. We pray that European leaders will address air pollution – a major health concern for the citizens of these countries. Droughts, fires and sea level rises are also of major concern. Lord grant strength to those who bring these matters to the attention of governments. Lord we would ask also for an end to economic and political turmoil. We pray for the establishment of stable governments that end corruption and serve the common good, and for policies that relieve disparities between those who are rich and those who are poor.

In Other Prayers for the World today we pray for the women of the world especially in Iran and Afghanistan where basic rights and freedoms have been wound back. We pray for the families of those women and men who have lost their lives in protests against oppressive regimes.

Locally this morning we pray for St Edward's Anglican, Blackburn South. We ask you to bless their programs and initiatives including the telephone bible studies and online ministries. In the Uniting Church we pray for the Box Hill Hanbit Korean congregation worshipping at St Andrew's. Bless all who attend there we pray. We also ask your blessing on Wesley Uniting Box Hill. Today we also pray for the Epworth Hospital Chaplaincy. Lord grant strength to all who serve you in care settings.

We pray for our own **Whitehorse** congregation. Lord be with us as we live out our calling to be your disciples. Help us to persevere in faith, hope and love. Lord be our strength, encouragement, and hope as we love and serve the world. We pray this and all our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to 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 forever. Amen.

Holy Communion

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Prayer continues ...

We proclaim your power in goodness
 and your might in compassion, as we say:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.**
Prayer continues...

As he broke bread before the brokenness of his death, **(Break Bread)**
 as he poured out wine before his blood was poured out on the cross, **(Hold up Cup)**
Prayer continues

Nurture us with your brokenness, renew us with your poured out life,
 empower us with your powerlessness, that we may take root in your risen life
 and bear fruit in your world.

**You are our life;
 you are our hope;
 you are our peace;
 and we praise you. Amen.**

The bread of life is offered to us. **We feed on the bread of life with gratitude**

The cup of the newness of life is offered to us. **We drink of the cup with gratitude.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.
May we who share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us.

Prayer after communion

**God of truth and love who calls us and leads us into the future, make us a blessing for others
 Help us to see creation as being in the future and to love it into being.**

May we hold on to the hope You have planted in us,
 believing the unbelievable, reaching for the unattainable,
 trusting the things beyond seeing and the things beyond hearing,
 loving and living with compassion, offering hospitality and hope,
 until the people who walk in darkness see the great light and are glad and free.

YouTube Hymn 474 Here in this place (Gather us in)

(a virtual choir from 2020)

Marty Haugen

Ferry Hill Parish Church 2020

<https://youtu.be/kTbOxrlQ0zo>

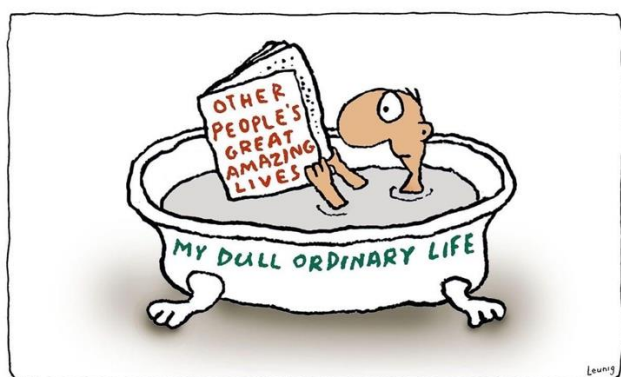
Blessing

We go in Peace in the love of God
in the Power of the Spirit
May the Lord make His face shine upon us
and be gracious unto us as we bring Christ's love
and peace to the world this week. Amen

YouTube Hymn 778 Shalom To You Now - tMt video

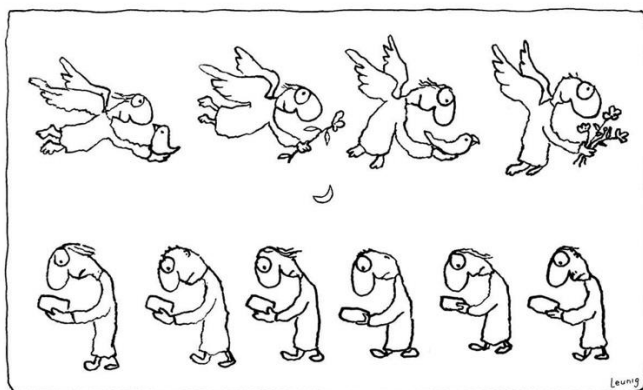
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLsLD2rC&index=35>

Pastoral Care Tips



Leunig – used with permission

We spend a lot of time focusing on how other people live their lives and not enough time on how we want to live our life. The gospel offers some guidance about being blessed and being a blessing to the world. We can create happiness for others and ourselves. I often ask people aged about a 100. 'What is your secret to long life? How's life treated you? Some say there's been good times and bad times and overall, it's evened out and been a good life. Others share stories about relationships or things they are proud about or about their contribution or gift to others and about how others have blessed them. We must live our life to the full and seize the day.



Leunig – used with permission

I often see people standing in car parks on their phone. People on the bus on their phone. Families and friends at restaurants all on their phone. People at home on their phone. Perhaps they miss out on seeing angels and profound moments.

Many people say what keeps them alive is a goal or something to do each day, someone to live for or something they want to contribute to or belong to or be part of or family need them or all of these reasons.

Ultimately, when we die, it is our relationships that matter most. We want our loved ones to be with us in our last moments. So, take good care of your loved ones. Cherish them. They are gone before you know it. Then you are faced with missing them and sometimes, regrets. Enjoy belonging and contributing.



Leunig – used with permission

Something different
YouTube Hymn - Here in this House
 2016 Discover worship
<https://youtu.be/s9kgflgaBgA>