



Sunday 8th January 2023.



Image - RCL

**Hymn 699 A New Commandment
Chet Valley Churches 2021**

https://youtu.be/2X8m9tVR0_Y

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.

Call to Worship

Jesus is a servant Messiah in whom the Lord God delights
The Lord calls us to follow Jesus' example The Lord delights in us too

The Lord put the Holy Spirit upon Jesus to bring the Lord's justice to the world
The Lord sends the Holy Spirit upon us so we can follow Jesus' example
We will do our best to bring the Lord's justice to the world



Image – Tina Lyndon

Prayers of Adoration

Lord our God you delight in us
 You have no favourites and welcome all people
 You bring your compassionate justice to all
 You sent Jesus so we may know of your love for us

**We praise you Lord
 For you are our redeemer**

Jesus our Lord, You came for us and
 You are Lord of all
 With God's power you have changed the world
 You have brought God's compassionate justice to all
 You are God's beloved son in whom God is well pleased

**We praise you Lord
 For you are our redeemer**

Holy Spirit, you have been sent by God to empower us to follow Jesus' example.
 Through you we know we are God's beloved.
 Through you our hearts are filled with God's love so we may love as Jesus first loved us.

**We praise you Lord
 For you are our redeemer**

Prayer of 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 of 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 Come down, O Love divine,
 YouTube Fernando Ortega 2016
<https://youtu.be/2DbytPhyJzo>

Isaiah 42:1-9 - Geoff Walker

42 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ² He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³ a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

⁵ Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶ I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people,^[a] a light to the nations, ⁷ to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸ I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. ⁹ See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Acts 10:34-43 – Elaine Hewson

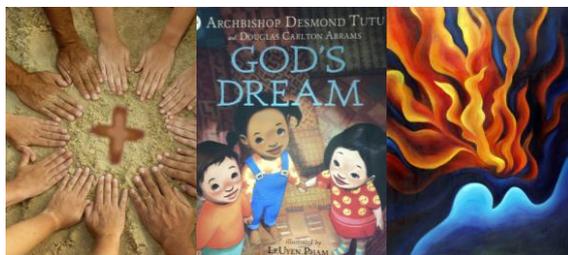
³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: ‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’

Matthew 3:13-17 – Elaine Hewson

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.’ Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved,^[a] with whom I am well pleased.’ ©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Young at Heart

God has no favourites
We are all God’s beloved children
Give thanks to God who loves us dearly



Images RCL and front of book

YouTube Hymn 640: Kneels at the Feet of his Friends – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tyNO9QVVK4&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=21>

Sermon

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



Image RCV

Jesus stands in solidarity with his people. We are called to do the same.

Today's gospel speaks of the qualities God calls us to embrace, for our church to have a future. We cannot expect people to come into our buildings and fit in with our ways of doing things. That is why the church is dying today.

Jesus set us an example of going out to meet the community. He knew their needs and spoke their language. He went into the towns, villages, cities, fields, homes, synagogues, and Temple, bringing people God's Word and healing and wholeness. He spoke the language of the dispossessed, marginalised, hurting, and the people came to him in the thousands.

The Wesley brothers, founders of the Methodist movement, followed Jesus' example. They went out into the community and found out what people wanted and met their needs. Their mother was a woman of prayer and set them an example. They learnt from her how to depend on God's Holy Spirit and live prayerfully.

John Wesley went out into the fields and met God's people there and shared the word of God. His brother Charles wrote hymns from folk tunes, the music of the people and he used an instrument from the pubs, an organ. Both spoke the language of the Holy Spirit and the people came to hear them and sing in the thousands.

Today the Holy Spirit seems to be largely ignored in the church and people don't seem to rely on prayer or God's power working through them.

This is what gives the church new life and a future. Jesus knew it and so did the Wesley brothers.

Our power does nothing to transform the world for God's glory. True transformation only comes from God's power in the world. It is God's church, not ours. People are not coming into our church in the thousands. It is time to follow Jesus' example.

I wonder what people's spiritual needs are and where they go for healing. Who cares for the marginalised and lonely? Who prays? Where are people welcome and not excluded? Where are the thousands going to worship God?

How have the demographics changed between the 2016 and 2021 census? Around 40% of our community say they have no faith. The number of Christians has decreased, especially in Mitcham. We need to know our context. We need to find a way to reach out to those who don't have a faith. What are their needs and hopes? How are our churches reaching out to them?

Jesus said we are called to be Salt and Light. Let's not lose our saltiness and hide our light. Let's make a new start this year. We have begun a journey and entered a period of transition where we hope to find our vision for the future and claim back our place as a beacon of hope within the community.

Covid has scared away many people and many of our members' health has deteriorated. Our Op shop and Centre 81 helps the community, but no one is joining our congregation. We need activities and meeting places that build relationships. We need to build relationships with our CALD communities who are thriving, with children and young families. We need to know our community and find out what we can offer the community that will feed their souls. If we continue doing the same things, we have always done there will be very few of us in ten years' time.

We need to pray about what kind of legacy we can leave the future church. We need God's help, God's spirit, God's power, to move amongst us and empower us. Only prayer will do this for us.

Isaiah spoke of a Messiah who God delighted in and you heard how Jesus was baptised and how God sent the Spirit shaped like a dove upon him, a dove many witnessed. God spoke where many heard how God loves Jesus and named him as his Son, his beloved who he is pleased with. Isaiah said God put the Spirit upon the Messiah to bring Justice to the nations. I wonder what kind of justice Isaiah was speaking about.

It is "*mishpat*" (*Hebrew term*). It is justice that is about compassion and acceptance of all, where all are favoured by God, and all are God's beloved. Can we offer people this kind of Justice? Jesus stood in solidarity with people who genuinely sought to repent and change their hearts and lives and live according to his way of love. Jesus stood in solidarity with all the baptised. He led by example. He embodied what he taught. He had integrity. That's why thousands sought him out. He was with them and for them.

Jesus was an unexpected messiah, who suffered with and for his people and we all love him for it.

Jesus was a victim yet never behaved like one. He was like a reed in the wind, he bent with it. His light never went out, even when it looked like his mission had failed. Jesus didn't grow faint, he grew stronger. He was not crushed. God was with him and never failed him. Because of this we look to Jesus to find our strength during life's challenging times.

Jesus comes in the darkness and brings light and opens our eyes to the truth. He leads us into the light. He sets us free. He is our exemplar.

As God delights in Jesus, we need to know God delights in us too. As God sent the Spirit upon Jesus and empowered him for his ministry, we need to know God sends the same Spirit upon us so we can go out into the world like Jesus and the Wesley brothers and transform it for God's glory.

To be able to reflect and embody God's love we need to receive it first. Before we can embody God's love in the world, we need to know we are loved by God and are God's beloved and God delights in us. If try to love without accepting God's love first, all our efforts to be selfless will leave us exhausted, with nothing to give. Our ability to love depends on us knowing God loves us. If we know God loves and delights in us, we can share that with others and help them come to know God loves them and delights in them.

We need to pray and receive God's love and Spirit, so we have something to give.

Jesus stands in solidarity with his people. We are called to do the same.

The Lord be with you

Father Welcomes all his Children
 YouTube Robin & Dorothy Mann 2015
<https://youtu.be/FtrxdAqwZFE>

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 - Derek Moore

Let us come before God in prayer.

Today we pray for the nations of Iran, Iraq and Syria – countries with long, significant and sometimes troubled histories. It distresses us that there is currently conflict between Iran, Israel and Syria. We pray for peace and the wellbeing of their populations.

In the Ecumenical prayer cycle, we pray for the Anglican Church of the Holy Name in Vermont South; and in our Presbytery for the Auburn congregation in Oxley Road. Lord, please bless these faith communities and be with them in their worship and outreach. We uphold to you the staff and recipients of Uniting Age Well's Community Respite Services – may they enrich each other's lives, with your help.

We pray for an end to the war in Ukraine, as soon as possible.

We also ask for your blessings for those members of our congregation who are unwell or facing other challenges in their lives.

You are all invited to join me in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us in the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen

Notice – Workshop

For those who need some assistance preparing their stories for our book: *Memories and recollections*

We will be having a workshop after the service on Sunday 5th February 2023

Come along, share your story and Rev Tina will write it down, edit it and prepare it for our book.

Thursday Afternoon Communion Service

A reminder our next Thursday afternoon service will be held on January 26th, 2023 (Australia Day)
 2.00 p.m. at Forest Hill

Dismissal

Go forth into the world in peace
 Be of good courage
 Hold fast to that which is good
 Render no one evil for evil
 Strengthen the faint-hearted
 Support the weak
 Help the afflicted
 Honour all people
 Love and serve the Lord
 Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit
 Amen

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.
 Amen**

Brother, Sister, Let me Serve You,

mkariobangi 2014

<https://youtu.be/hlNoxoOocZs>

Pastoral care tips



Leunig – used with permission

Rev Tina is on holidays with her family. She may trek or fish or read or do nothing. She may even finally finish her book.

God called us all to have a sabbath, a sacred rest and down time. It is good to take time out for ourselves. Please take time out during January. We live in a wonderful world where there is beauty. Give thanks for the beauty in your life.

Treasure your loved ones. Life is short. Spend time enjoying one another's company.

Delight in nature, hug your pet, listen to beautiful music, go to the movies with a friend, look through your photo album or visit a gallery. Enjoy your garden or flowers or memories of gardens or watch a TV show about gardens.

Give thanks to God and nurture your relationship with God. Count your Blessings.

Andrea Bocelli Hallelujah with Daughter Virginia Sacramento Ca.

October 23 2021

<https://youtu.be/OnCeEU3UMic>

Santiago Avila 2022

Andrea Bocelli had congenital glaucoma as a child and learnt piano, flute, and saxophone
 He became blind at 12 after a brain haemorrhage caused by a soccer accident
 He studied law and practised as a lawyer. Then embraced his musical career.