



Sunday 9th January 2022

Introit - Be Still for the Presence of the Lord (Verse1)

*Be still, for the presence of the Lord the holy one is here;
come bow before Him now with reverence and fear:
in Him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.*

YouTube Be Still for the Presence of the Lord (all verses)

David J Evans. 1986 Kingsway Thankyou Music

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

Welcome

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well and the worship blesses you

Acknowledgement

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

Psalm 29 from The Message

29 ¹⁻² Bravo, GOD, bravo!
Gods and all angels shout, “Encore!”
In awe before the glory,
in awe before God’s visible power.
Stand at attention!
Dress your best to honour him!
³ GOD thunders across the waters,
Brilliant, his voice and his face, streaming brightness—
GOD, across the flood waters.
⁴ GOD’s thunder tympanic,
GOD’s thunder symphonic.
⁵ GOD’s thunder smashes cedars,
GOD topples the northern cedars.
⁶ The mountain ranges skip like spring colts,
The high ridges jump like wild kid goats.
⁷⁻⁸ GOD’s thunder spits fire.
GOD thunders, the wilderness quakes;
He makes the desert of Kadesh shake.

⁹ GOD's thunder sets the oak trees dancing
 A wild dance, whirling; the pelting rain strips their branches.
 We fall to our knees—we call out, "Glory!"
¹⁰ Above the floodwaters is GOD's throne
 from which his power flows,
 from which he rules the world.
¹¹ GOD makes his people strong.
 GOD gives his people peace.



Prayers

Loving God we fear not
for you are with us
 Jesus our Lord we fear not
For you are with us
 Holy Spirit we fear not
For you are with us

Come Holy Spirit

As we pray, trust and spend time with God
 Come upon us
 As we remember our baptism
 Come upon us
 Drive out our fear and pour God's love into our hearts
 Give us courage for the journey and help us remember we are God's beloved children
 And if we haven't loved or spent time with you Lord, draw us back into your presence
 forgive us and transform our hearts so we can be Christ's heart and love in the world
Come Holy Spirit, come upon us today as we pray,
In Jesus name we ask this, amen

Hymn 418: She sits like a bird

YouTube – Enemy of apathy (She sits like a bird) by John Bell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EmkyT6uUZE>

Song for Pentecost Sunday with Virtual Choir 2021
 Ferryhill Parish Church (Sleepless nights production)



Scripture – NRSV - Colleen Rowe

Isaiah 43:1-7

43 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³ For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia^[a] and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴ Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶ I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth — ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."



Thanks to Lorraine and Barney

Luke 3:15-22

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,^[a] ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with^[b] the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹ But Herod the ruler,^[c] who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰ added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved;^[d] with you I am well pleased."^[e]

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Hymn 491: Father Welcomes all His Children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99T4ZOvuDvk>

Young at Heart – Story
Guess How much I love you

Song from Wild Goose by John Bell & Alison Adam 2017

Don't be afraid

<https://youtu.be/LXCMv5IF-TM>

Sermon – Rev Tina

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



It is said: *Perfect love casts out fear.* (1 John 4:18) Thousands of people came out into the desert, seeking a baptism of repentance from John the Baptist. God fearing people seeking to come closer to God. That holy fear, that's the beginning of wisdom.

At the moment many people are sheltering in their homes, afraid to come out during the pandemic, with so many cases. Despite this, God fearing people seek to worship God, whether live or online worship. They seek to draw closer to God. I wonder what gives people the courage to push through their fears during these times. Is it an awareness of the power of God over all creation, including the current pandemic? God's voice thunders over the waters of chaos bringing order. God's voice tells us to fear not for I am with you. God's voice tells us you are my beloved people. You are loved by me.

Perhaps this is why people throughout the world push through their fears and take risks to embrace their faith. Perhaps it's why they have done this throughout the centuries, through all kinds of challenging times. They know who they are, God loves them and where they belong.

The church is a community which Christians belong to, where they feel loved and accepted and can strive to be more loving like Christ, their exemplar and today's gospel reminds us of our baptism into Christ, into his body, community and way of life.



Today we hear Luke's version of Jesus' baptism. John has been imprisoned and all the people and Jesus have been baptised. John's ministry has been completed.

Jesus is praying. While Jesus is praying, the heavens open. I wonder what this looked like. Did the sky part and a great light come down from heaven or did people see thousands of angels, or the clouds parted and bright light shone through the sky? Artists have tried to capture this moment. Witnesses have spoken of it. Luke investigated it. We are left wondering what it was like.

When the heavens opened God's Spirit came down upon Jesus. Perhaps those who witnessed this were lost for words and that's how we know it's genuine. They couldn't really describe what they saw. They said the Spirit looked like a dove. I wonder what kind of dove. A dove is very small. I can't imagine God's Spirit being as small as a dove. Perhaps the Spirit covered the entire sky and seemed to be in the shape of a dove. When the Spirit came down upon Jesus God's voice was heard, naming Jesus as his Son. Only God could do that. Up to that moment people thought the Messiah, the one prophesied about, was coming and wise men had said Jesus was King of the Jews. In Luke's gospel this is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. From the moment he is named by God: *"You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."*

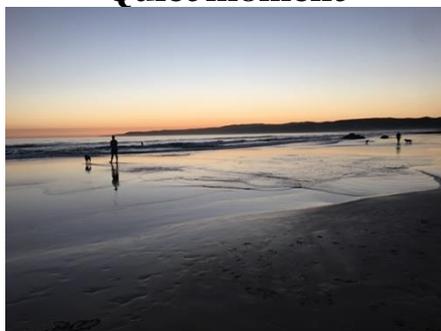
Jesus' ministry begins with prayer and with God's affirmation of his identity and love for Jesus. All Christians are called to follow Jesus' example and to pray like Him and wait on the Spirit.

I wonder what it would be like if this happened. All churches united in prayer, every single church, the body of Christ, praying together, where the Spirit comes upon us all, so we know who we are and that we are God's beloved people. Imagine all the world's churches united in prayer, Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals and Free Churches. Instead of division, unity. I can imagine God would say: It is good. Just like God did when He created the universe, the world, the church at Pentecost, and each one of us. Perhaps our cluster of three churches could unite and pray as one and wait on God to send the Spirit, so we know who we are as one church and that we are all God's beloved.

I remember meeting with adults who I was preparing for baptism and when they were prayerfully sharing, tears came to their eyes due to the Spirit moving within their soul. It was a privilege to witness them coming to know God's love for them.

During these challenging times do not forget who you are in Christ through your baptism. Remember you are God's beloved child. Read Isaiah 43:1-7 whenever you feel afraid. Pray and wait on the Spirit and you will find strength and courage. God is with you and loves you.

Quiet moment



O the deep, deep love of Jesus

(Feat. Fernando Ortega) Audrey Assad 2012

Northern Baptist Association

<https://youtu.be/1vUhwjydk8A>

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 Savior, amen**

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer – Geoffrey Willis

In our prayers for the World, we remember the difficult political region of the Middle East comprising **Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon** and **Palestine**. Dear Lord, it is our wish that these lands, which are sacred to the origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, may find peaceful ways of co-existing. May their people resist the urge to kill one another. May hatred which feeds and nourishes anger be curbed. May animosity which blinds mercy be put aside. Dear Lord, we especially pray that religions will not cause division, that children will not learn to hate and that the elderly will cease to nurse old grudges. We pray for those who continue to work for peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land. Empower and protect them dear Lord. God of peace, please guide political leaders so that they will courageously bring about justice and reconciliation for the sake of all.

Lord, we remember the great work in South Africa of the late **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**. May someone with the same leadership qualities and passion for justice and reconciliation be active in the Middle East. Dear Lord, may leaders in the world's trouble spots not grow weary and disillusioned in searching for peaceful solutions. Our God, whom we share with Judaism and Islam, is a God of peace, hope, love and joy.

Let us share in this prayer by Christian, Jewish and Muslim clergy:

Eternal God, Creator of the universe, there is no God but you.

Great and wonderful are your works, wondrous are your ways.

Thank you for the many splendored variety of your creation.

Thank you for the many ways we affirm your presence and purpose,

Thank you for the freedom to do so.

Forgive our violation of your creation.

Forgive our violence toward each other.

We stand in awe and gratitude at your persistent love for each and all of your children:

Christian, Jew, Muslim, as well as those with other faiths.

Grant to all our leaders attributes of the strong; mutual respect in word and deed, restraint in the exercise of power, and the will for peace with justice, for all.

Eternal God, creator of the universe, there is no God but you. Amen.

(Excerpted from Current Dialogue 24/93, p.36 as quoted on the World Council of Churches website.)

Closer to home, we pray for the ministry of leaders and people of the **Nunawading and Waverley Lutheran Church**. This is one united congregation with two worship centers, one in Rooks Road Mitcham, the other in Glen Waverley. They operate with one governing board and all joint activities and committees. We pray for their Pastor Wayne Muschamp and those who share in leadership with him. We pray for their many activities including their weekly English Conversation classes.

Within our Presbytery, we pray for the **Surrey Hills** congregation and their minister the Rev Rob Gotch. This congregation includes the former members of St James' Wattle Park, and they continue to explore a relationship with Kingswood College, the Uniting Church school in Box Hill South. Dear Lord, please bless the various fellowship groups as they plan to resume in a COVID safe way in the new year.

We also pray for the **University of Melbourne's Chaplaincy**. Chaplains are available for each of the major faiths under the coordination of Uniting Church minister, the Rev Carlyne Nunn. We pray, Lord, that chaplains will be able to meet the needs of students and staff of the University and particularly those international students who are far from home.

Finally, Lord we pray for ourselves. May we be encouraged by the Holy Spirit in our relationships with one another and in our outreach to our community. We pray for our **Whitehorse Uniting Cluster**. May we discover new ways of working together and of encouraging each other in the faith.

Let us join together as we say the prayer which Jesus 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 forever. Amen.

Candle Prayers



Classical Music - Geoffrey Willis

Try to listen to your favourite music and be comforted

Blessing

We go in Peace
 We go in the Love of God
 We go 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

Dismissal

In all things and at all times remember Christ is with you.
 Make your life your worship to the praise and glory of God. Amen

Hymn 778: Shalom to you Now

Shalom to you now,
 shalom, my friends.
 May God's full mercies bless you,
 my friends.
 In all your living and through your loving,
 Christ be your shalom,
 Christ be your shalom.
 Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina

The Lord's my Shepherd

This hymn is a comforting hymn when we are doing it tough

This one is by Stuart Townend 2012

The Lord's my Shepherd (Psalm 23) by Stuart Townend
 Admin. By EMI Christian Music Publishing

<https://youtu.be/pN4tPkXoMGo>

This is a time when many people are feeling afraid for their loved ones and themselves. It's important to lean into God, to pray and to take care of our loved ones and ourselves and remember we are not alone. If anyone needs help, reach out to your pastoral partner, visitor, contact person or the coordinators or ministers. If you need to isolate and have Covid and need a meal or assistance let us know and we will do our best, in a Covid-safe way, to help. Don't allow fear or loneliness to overwhelm you and take away your trust and hope in God. Reach out, use the phone and call someone.



Pray for the people of Melbourne

If a loved one has Covid, ask for prayers from your pastoral contact person or send me an email and we will pray during candle prayers and ask the prayer chain to pray. Pray and make your daily prayer "*Do not fear, I am with you*" or another reassuring bible passage. Know God loves you and will bring you through this time.

If you're doing it tough and struggling, like most of us are, spend time with loved ones, listen to your favourite music, read poems like footprints, or spend time outdoors or hug your pet. Do something special for yourself or practice the fine art of doing nothing. Watch a funny movie or read a funny book. Humour is a great protective strategy when you're afraid or stressed. It's good for the soul. So is getting enough sleep or exercising and eating well. Do special and practical things that help ground you and keep on praying so you stay grounded in God.