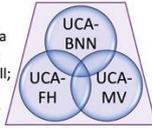




**Whitehorse
Uniting
Cluster**

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



Sunday 21st August 2022

Hymn: Father, I Adore You

2012 Melissia Hogston

<https://youtu.be/Ph-ZBiETB0>

Welcome

May the Worship be a blessing

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 – Psalm 71:1-6

¹In you, O LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

²In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.

³**Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress,^[a] to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.**

⁴Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

⁵**For you, O Lord, are my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my youth.**

⁶Upon you I have leaned from my birth;
it was you who took me from my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.

**YouTube Hymn – Faithful one
Brian Doerksen 2017 Worship Videos
<https://youtu.be/7PjSO5IhI0M>**



Prayers

Loving God, Our rock, our refuge, our fortress
 Our praise is with you, always
 Thank you for giving us a kingdom
 That can never be shaken
 You Lord are a consuming fire
 You consume our fears and worries
 You fill us with courage, peace, hope and faith

Jesus our Lord, Compassionate one who has mercy
 on those whose hearts are weighed down
 who are bent over with troubles
 You call and reach out to us
 You heal and restore
 You help all of us stand tall in our faith
 you set us free from all that binds us
 so we may faithfully continue the journey

Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts
 You give us peace and courage
 An appreciation for the past
 And peace and hope for the future
 Come Holy Spirit Come
 Lead us on

Lord, if we haven't loved one another as you love us
 Forgive us and help us love you and others more
 Lord, we come before you now in a moment of silence
 with all that is on our hearts seeking your forgiveness and transformation

Silence

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



Readings NRSV

Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ⁵ 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'

⁶ Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.'

⁷ But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.'

⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.'

Hebrews 12:18-29

¹⁸ You have not come to something^[a] that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. ²⁰ (For they could not endure the order that was given, 'If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.' ²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear.')

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly^[b] of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵ See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.' ²⁷ This phrase 'Yet once more' indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; ²⁹ for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

Gospel - Luke 13:10-17

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹ And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' ¹³ When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴ But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' ¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

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Praise to the Living God 2021 NHEpiscopal

<https://youtu.be/4KPjUETW1vQ>

Young at Heart – Differences and Contrasts



Light display at Heide Gallery by Bruce Munroe

A few years back fellow students and I did experiments with our eyes. This is a very basic understanding of how eyes work, from the experiment. During the day cells called cones are sensitive to a spectrum of light where the wavelengths differ, with cones sensitive to long wavelengths picking up red, cones sensitive to medium wavelengths picking up green and cones sensitive to short wavelengths picking up blue. Somehow the brain or visual cortex (at the back of the brain) makes sense of this and interprets the many colours of the spectrum. Things change at night. Cells called rods are sensitive to light, which is seen as white light, with its many tones and there is a lack of contrast and depth in what we see.

White lighthouses and light seem to shine and glow in the darkness, we can see stars, we see fireworks and lighting, and artwork at the Heide by Bruce Munro who created the Field of Light at Ayers Rock. We can see lightning during storms and need light to guide our footsteps, so we find our way. These sights seem majestic and leave us feeling wonder and awe. Day and night seem like different worlds. Many of us are like night and day, very different. There is diversity in our looks, thinking, theology, loves, diets, customs, heritage, history, positions, perspectives, worship styles, hopes and understanding. It is said we are fifty per cent genetics and fifty per cent environment. Perhaps that's why members of large families are so different. The beauty of being a Christian is we are different and God who wonderfully made us all loves us all equally. The best part of belonging to the Uniting church is differences are welcome. We can belong together and journey together, where we are accepting of one another's differences. In fact, we celebrate our diversity.

Oh, the Deep, Deep love of Jesus – The Epic version 2018 Simon Khorolskiy

<https://youtu.be/KLTu1xv2-Us>

Sermon – Rev Tina

We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken

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

We tackle life in different ways. Some of us start out life with a bucket list of things we wanted to do and do our best to work through and others like the man in Leunig's cartoon, make a bucket list of things we don't ever want to do again in life. (*Leunig – used with permission*)



I remember attending St Anne's Girls boarding school at Sale when I was about ten, along with other friends from farms and cattle or sheep stations in Gippsland. We boarded in the primary girls building and our house mistress was called Miss Fardon. I remember her well.

Whenever I said: *I can't do it*. Miss Fardon would say: *There is no such thing as can't*.

Like many, I've had a bucket list of things I've wanted to do in life and done my best to work through it. It's changing as I'm getting older and there have been times when some things have seemed beyond me, like climbing Mt Everest. I've climbed to Base Camp instead due to limitations such as asthma, money, and the common sense of not wanting to end up in the death zone in a queue and die. But this is an extreme example.

Most of the things we want in life are about relationships and making a difference for the better in the world or in others' lives. It often takes perseverance or is about finding ways around things or waiting until the time is right or weighing up things and deciding whether they are worth investing energy, time, and money. Sometimes it takes adaptability, grit, tolerance, patience, and sheer hard work to achieve what we discern as God's call, but sooner or later we all find a way to embrace our call or ask for help from others to be able to move forward.

Today's gospel is about a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years. She had been bent over and unable to stand up. She couldn't stand face to face with people and look them in the eye. She only saw their feet. Whenever she had to walk a distance, her back must have hurt, because of her spinal condition. She may have been 18 or 88, we don't know. She had lived this way for a very long time.

Jesus saw her and had compassion for her and called her over to him. She may have needed to look at him from the side to see where he was standing, before going over to him. When Jesus lay hands on her she was healed and set free from whatever had kept her in bondage. She stood up straight for the first time in eighteen years.

Many people find change difficult to embrace but she didn't. The change she experienced was life giving and welcome and offered her a new life where she was fully restored. Suddenly, she had options. She could live her life to the full, like everyone else. Of course, she will welcome this change with open arms and stand up straight and in front of everyone claim her healing and praise God.

It was too much for the religious leaders. Perhaps they were afraid of losing power and control over the people. They hid behind their rules and tried to shame and discredit Jesus. Jesus wasn't one to run away from conflict. He called them hypocrites and told them they had more love for their donkeys than the woman. They really didn't get it. Jesus confronted them for going against God's call to show love and mercy to those who were vulnerable.

He said the woman was their equal, a daughter of Abraham and she mattered to God. Their behaviour shamed them in front of a crowd who were rejoicing and praising God. Jesus demonstrated what mattered most, love is greater than rules.

The woman's story demonstrates we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. God is with us as he was with the bent over woman. She was able to stand up straight in her faith after years of faithfulness to God, while crippled. All of us are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Perhaps we all want to be whole and free and celebrate our faith where we don't feel weighted down by life's challenges.

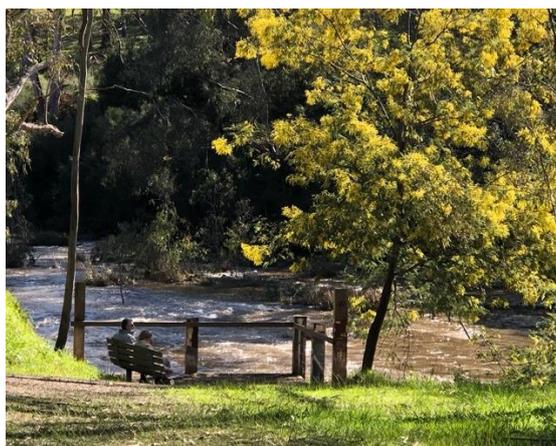
The good news from the gospel is we belong to a kingdom where our faith cannot be shaken. God is our rock, our fortress, and our refuge. At times we may not believe in ourselves, and we may doubt we can do something that seems beyond us. But God helps us. At times we may feel like the bent over woman, weighed down by the worries of the world or illness or failure or loneliness. That's when Jesus calls us over to him and reaches out to each one of us to comfort us, so we can let go of our troubles and once again, stand tall in our faith and stand firm in our faith, with confidence and trust in the future.

We may feel bent over in life and weighed down then Christ comes along and surprises us. We may read a gospel or hear it proclaimed or see it embodied in another's actions and be inspired where we find the courage to stand straight up where our dignity is restored and once again, we stand firm in our faith.

At times we may feel like a child, like Jeremiah did when God called him to be a prophet. We may feel like a child when asked to do something that seems beyond us. We can do things beyond what we believe. We can be strengthened in our faithfulness and receive the courage to continue the journey. We can come to know we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

This is the nature of the kingdom, a kingdom where Jesus is continually restoring us and affirming our conviction that God is our rock. We can find strength in God where our faith is not shaken by what's happening around us or our doubts. We can find the courage and conviction that God is there for our church community as we journey towards all God is calling us to be, as the people of God on the way.

A moment for quiet Reflection



Oh, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus
Fernando Ortego and Audrey Assad 2016
<https://youtu.be/1vUhwjkd8A>

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 – Margot Kemke

Almighty God, You have given us grace to make our supplications to you on behalf of all the people in our world, so today we pray for our families, our friends, our neighbours, ourselves and all those who need your care and comfort at this time. We thank you for this opportunity to come together in freedom, in fellowship and with love for others, and pray that you will listen and answer our prayers today.

We pray for our leaders in government, federal, state and local. May they govern with compassion, wisdom and integrity for all Australians.

Focussing on people round the world we pray today for blessings on the nations of Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa. These two constitutional republics with representative democratically elected governments are, following independence and two civil wars, gradually improving the wellbeing of their people. Both of these nations have evolved from relocated Africans who were freed following the end of slavery in the United States of America. Being poor economically they rely heavily on international aid and, in Liberia, people slaughter the endangered native animals for food and destroy forests for timber for trade. Agriculture and mining, for minerals and diamonds, employ the majority of people. Education is free and compulsory – altho' not always enforced and many are still illiterate. In Sierra Leone health care is almost non-existent, especially for women and their health situations, and child mortality is high. Religion is free, tolerant and people share and participate in each other's festivals. In Liberia the law allows for a man to have up to four wives – it is predominately Muslim - and Sierra Leone is 75% Christian, mainly Protestant. O Lord, we pray for Your grace to be bestowed on these nations and that their economic situations will

improve, and the welfare of the people be a priority. We pray also for improvements within the health care and education systems for the women of Sierra Leone and their families. Hear our prayers today, O Lord.

We pray also for the leaders and congregations of the churches in our area. Namely, the Anglican Church of the Ascension in Burwood East, the Uniting Churches in Bayswater, Boronia Road, Ferntree Gully, Rowville, Scoresby and the emerging Knox Cluster. Also the Queens College Chaplaincy. Encourage and sustain these congregations and may they know your strength and guidance.

Within our own congregation we pray for our ministers, Rev. Tina and Rev. Peter and their families and encourage them as they lead us into new ways of worship within our cluster. We pray for any of our members who are in poor health, worried, unemployed, experiencing difficulties or lonely and depressed. Have compassion on them, comfort them, and answer their prayers so they will feel your love surrounding them in their time of need.

Heavenly Father, listen to our prayers and grant us all peace in our daily lives as we continue to love and serve You.

We pray together as You taught your disciples –

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 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.

**Sent forth by God's Blessing
 Omer Westendorf 2015
<https://youtu.be/PLp85eLlAlM>**

Dismissal from UIW

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 Bless and Guard us
 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

Thuma Mina (Send me) The Peoples version – The Masekela All- Stars
 2020 Constitution Hill Human Rights Precinct
<https://youtu.be/I3ejDqHoLiE>

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



Continuing the story from Joan Chittister's book: *Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope* (Used with permission)

Joan spoke of the need for equilibrium or stability, where we are hoping to arrive somewhere and get things under control. We want to embrace the dream, own a house, or achieve something. We have a deep need for security. But life isn't always like this. Suddenly we may face a turn in our life that is beyond our control. Joan spoke of struggle beginning with shock and loss. The radical interruption of what was just minutes before, certain, and sure. She concluded change is the eternal constant. It often comes to carry us into the next stage of life so we can grow and blossom and reach our full potential. Joan quotes Norman Mailer who wrote: Every moment of our existence is about growing into more or retreating into less, where one is always living a little more or living a little less.

The spirituality of struggle begins with the decision to grow or retreat, to live a little more or die a little bit. The essence of struggle is the decision to grow either smaller or larger. It is neither endurance nor denial. It is about transformation by the possibilities of new beginnings.

To have a new beginning we need an ending and a time of transition between the two.

We are on a journey together. A journey that involves God's grace, peace, and love, where we find the confidence and courage to work together for a common purpose. When we move forward, we do not forget the church life that has gone before us. God guides our footsteps on this journey towards a common goal and future. It is a journey that requires thoughtfulness for others rather than insistence on our own way. A journey where we hope for new insights and opportunities that will be shared and owned by all of us as we come together to unite and move forward into the future. With God's help we will do this, as we share and care for one another. It is our faithfulness to God and to one another that will sustain us on this journey.