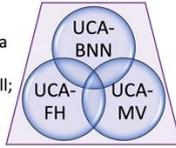




Whitehorse Uniting Cluster

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



Sunday 4th September 2022

Introit - Shine Jesus Shine

Kirchenband St. Josef Oldenburg 2016
(Grahm Kendrick 1987)

<https://youtu.be/BkxoTmKpDcU>

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

Lord, you have searched us and know us

You know when we sit down and when we rise up

For it was you who formed our inward parts

You knitted us together in our mother's womb

Lord, we praise you

For we are fearfully and wonderfully made

Prayers – Rev Tina

Loving God, you formed us in our mother's womb

You shaped us like a potter shapes a work of art

We cannot find words to respond

We can only wonder in our hearts

We are your pilgrim people

We give you our thanks and praise

Jesus our Lord, you taught us
about the cost of discipleship and holy allegiances

By faith we follow you

Through love we serve you

We are your pilgrim people

We give you our thanks and praise

Holy Spirit, encouraging us on the journey
Helping us run the race with perseverance

Filling us with God's love

Helping us know God

We are your pilgrim people

We give you our thanks and praise

Come upon us today Holy Spirit
Come Holy Spirit Come

Lord, these are challenging times yet here we are willing to make a commitment to share and care for one another as one united family in Christ.

If there is anything we have done in the past to hurt another, forgive us Lord. Transform our hearts and help us make a fresh start and a new beginning, with Jesus' help and guidance. Lord, in this moment of silence we come before you with all that's on our hearts, as we seek your forgiveness

Silence

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



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Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (with responses)

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

³You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

⁵You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

¹³For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

¹⁷How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end^[a]—I am still with you.

Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam

Cedarmon Kids 2021

<https://youtu.be/UYWWBnAepes>



Readings

Philemon: 1:1-21

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,^[a] To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, ² to Apphia our sister,^[b] to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ When I remember you^[c] in my prayers, I always thank my God ⁵ because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus.

⁶ I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we^[d] may do for Christ. ⁷ I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. ⁸ For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, ⁹ yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus.^[e]

¹⁰ I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. ¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful^[f] both to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. ¹³ I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced.

¹⁵ Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self.²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ.²¹ Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them,²⁶ ‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.” ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions. ©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Young at Heart – Tina & Peter – (using Puppets – Jack and Charlie)



What are the most important things about our faith?
 What would you give up, to follow Jesus?
 What does it mean to think and act out of abundant blessings?

This little light of mine (Harry Dixon Loes 1920's)

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine
 This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine
 This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

From Psalty the singing song book
Wesleys Wuppets 2018
https://youtu.be/RGWC6_SjHKQ

Sermon – How far will you go for God? Rev Tina
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen

Today's gospel is addressing two things that motivate people. Feelings and progress.

Paul is doing a little arm twisting with Philemon (pronounced Fai/lee/muhn). He is appealing to his feelings of love and trying to persuade Philemon to change the status quo. Paul refers to Philemon and his slave Onesimus's (pronounced On/nes/simus) progress. Both have become Christians, and both have become brothers in Christ. Paul is trying to help them build the foundations of their faith, where their changed relationship is acknowledged. Paul is trying to persuade Philemon to change the status quo. This is a society where owner and slave had unequal relationships.



Revised Common Lectionary

Paul appeals to Philemon to set his slave free, a slave he considers useless. We don't know why. Perhaps he ran away. Paul even offers to pay any debts due to Onesimus's behaviour. Considered useless by Philemon, he is now useful to Christ, Philemon, and Paul.

Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon as a slave, appealing to his love for Christians, hoping Philemon will set him free and return him to Paul, who considers him like a son. As a Christian he is now an equal. This scenario has been repeated throughout history, whenever issues of slavery, race, gender, disability, and all other forms of inequality have arisen. Our faith changes us, where all of us are equals and all are brothers and sisters in Christ, equally loved by God. This is what Paul has recognised. He is addressing the status quo for all Christians.

The gospel is also about changing the status quo. In ancient societies family allegiances were often about heritage, lineage, inheritance, and survival in a harsh culture and environment. Possessions were often due to these allegiances. Today we have similar allegiances to family, where wealth and possessions are built up over generations. Although we live in a culture where many things have a short use by date and families in this country don't live in homes that have been handed down over hundreds of years. Households were baptised in ancient times. Today families often allow their children to choose their faith. Some families have mixed faiths, with Buddhists and Christians in the same family. Some families' children went to Sunday school as children and then as teenagers drifted away and chose not to baptise their children or preferred sport on the weekend.

Jesus uses the word hate to challenge the status quo.

Perhaps people listened and said: I don't hate my family. I can embrace my faith and follow Jesus, despite my family choosing not to become Christians. I can accept their faith may be different to mine. I can still follow Jesus and can continue building the foundations of my faith by having as my first allegiance, my faith in Christ. I choose not to hold fast to my allegiances to family and possessions when they prevent me from following Jesus.



We do not hate our family when they don't choose our faith. We continue following Jesus. Discipleship has a cost, and we accept it. Some people feel grief about family not wanting to be the same faith. This grief becomes part of the cross we take up when we follow Jesus.

Jesus reminds us, our first allegiance is to the kingdom of God and following him. The invitation to us is to keep on building the foundations of our faith. All of us have come a long way and we know we have faithfully followed Jesus. We do our best to run the race with perseverance and stay faithful. Our faithfulness is worth celebrating.

The Lord be with you

**The Love of God is broad like beach and meadow
Now the Green Blade Riseth (1981)**

Lotok Pito-Dalo 2009

<https://youtu.be/H2GE-MfUatw>

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 – Heather Barnes

Our loving and gracious God, we come humbly before you this morning to worship you and bring you our concerns as your people. We have so much to be thankful for, but often in the busyness of our daily lives, we do not make the time to do so. Although there is much good news, it is often overshadowed by grim events. We pray that we may see beyond our own immediate concerns, and in our own small way, do what we can to help.

All people of the world need your care and guidance Lord, but today we particularly bring before you our prayers for the West African Republics of Benin, Togo and the Ivory Coast. These peoples have endured much throughout history, including having many deported as slaves by European Traders. Despite having natural resources, these countries are predominately agricultural and many live in desperate poverty. Dear Lord, we pray for peace, unity and political and economic stability throughout the region.

We remember too, the people of Ukraine who are suffering death, injury and displacement with Russia attempting to occupy their country. This has been going on for over six months and nightly we see on our TV screens the horrors of this war. We pray that good sense and reason will prevail and that this death and destruction will come to an end.

For all those worldwide who are entrusted with the responsibility of leadership, we ask for wisdom, courage and compassion that they may lead wisely in order that your world may be shared and peaceful.

Within the Ecumenical and Presbytery prayer cycles, we are remembering the congregations at St John's Anglican in Blackburn and the Uniting Church community of Manningham. Bless them all as they seek to share your love in their communities. We also give thanks for all retired Ministers who have faithfully served you and ask for good health and contentment.

This morning as we gather as the Whitehorse Cluster, we pray for guidance as we journey towards our shared future. May we actively listen, be open minded and tolerant of varying ideas and suggestions. We ask your blessing on our ministry team of Rev Peter and Rev Tina as they seek to guide and lead us. Grant them good health and strength.

Dear Lord we bring before you all who are grieving, facing troubling family situations, experiencing mental health problems, recovering from surgery or illness or awaiting operations or treatments. May they know the comfort of your peace as we name them silently in our hearts...

Loving God, may we as your church witness to your grace and love through our service to others and 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.

Communion

The Spirit of 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

It is right to give our thanks and Praise

Archangels sound the trumpets
 Angels teach us their song
 Saints pull us into your presence
 And this is our song:

Holy, Holy, Holy God
Our life, our mercy, our might
Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory
Save us, we pray, you beyond all
Blest is the one who comes in your name
Save us we pray, you beyond all

Holy God, we remember your son, His life with the humble
 His death among the wretched His resurrection for us all
 Your wisdom, our guide, Your justice, our strength,
 Your grace, our path to rebirth

And so we cry, Mercy:

Mercy!

And so we cry, Glory:

Glory!

And so we cry, Blessing!

Blessing!

Holy God we beg for your spirit,
 Enliven this bread, awaken this body
 Pour us out for each other, transfigure our minds
 Ignite your church, nourish the life of the earth
 Make us though broken, whole, make us, despite death, alive

And so we cry, Come, Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit!

And so the church shouts, Come, Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit!

And so the earth pleads, Come, Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit!

Praise now,
 Praise tomorrow
 Praise forever

And so we cry, Amen

Amen!

Life-giver, pain-bearer, love maker. Source of all life that is and shall be
 Father and mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by all peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done

By all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom

Sustain our hope and come on earth!

With the bread we need for today, **Feed us**

In the hurts we absorb from one another, **Forgive us**

In times of temptation and test, **Strengthen us**
 From trials too great to endure, **Spare us**
 From the grip of all that is evil, **Free us**
 For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever, **Amen**

Christ is the bread of joy **Who shares food with sinners**
 Christ is the cup of life **Who revives the faint hearted**
 Let us receive what we are, let us become what we receive

THE BODY OF CHRIST

Invitation

This is the table of the Lord
 It is an open table where all are welcome
 These are the Gifts of God for all the People of God
May we who Share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us

We have the bread and wine together

The body of Christ keep us in eternal life **Amen**

Pause

The blood of Christ keep us in eternal life **Amen**

Prayer after Communion

Blessed be God who calls us together
Praise to God who makes us one people
 Blessed be God who has forgiven our sin
Praise to God who gives hope and freedom
 Blessed be God whose word is proclaimed
Praise to God who is revealed as lover

Blessed be God who alone has called us
Therefore, we offer all that we are and all that we shall become
 Accept, O God, our sacrifice of praise **Amen.**
Accept our thanks for all that we are.
Our hands were empty and you filled them.

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

Hymn 755 Trees of the Field

Chet Valley Churches 2020

<https://youtu.be/ivfUKd6AFXw>

Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina



Psalm 139

Being known and loved by God is a blessing
 We often have our good days and bad days
 Times when we feel good about ourselves, and the sun is shining
 Times when we feel down after receiving bad news or we're struggling with health issues
 Our moods and feelings can be like the weather
 Yet, no matter what happens to us
 No matter where we are on the journey of life
 God is constant and faithful
 God is our go to, in all kinds of weather
 Stormy or calm
 Our hearts can be reassured
 God knows us intimately
 God is there for us, no matter what
 This constancy creates trust and hope
 This love for us no matter what,
 helps us feel valued and loved.

The sun always shines when God is present



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