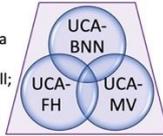




Whitehorse Uniting Cluster

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



Sunday 18th September 2022

Introit: Make me a Channel of your Peace

Prayer of St Francis with lyrics 2012

Susan Boyle (Mark G)

<https://youtu.be/ihhvm6eLWZI>

Welcome

May the Worship be a blessing to 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

Pray for all people in the world

We pray for all people

Jesus calls us to be faithful stewards

He calls us to use our wealth and resources to build up the kingdom of God

We cannot serve both God and money

With God's Grace we live out our faith with hope, courage, and love

Prayers of Adoration

Loving God, our rock, our creator, and sustainer

We can come before you any time

You are always there for all of us

You love us

We are your beloved child.

We give you our thanks and praise

Jesus, we follow you

All the days of our life

We trust you

Because of you, we have life eternal

We give you our thanks and praise

Holy Spirit, prompting us

Filling our hearts with God's love

Transforming our lives

Leading us through life

Blessing and gifting us

We give you our thanks and praise

Prayer invocation

Come Holy Spirit Come

Come Holy Spirit Come

Prayer of Confession

Come before the Lord in reverence and silence with all that's on your heart

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us

"Your sins are forgiven"

THANKS BE TO GOD

Hymn 211 Jesus Lover of my Soul

Fernando Ortega 2012 from Beginnings

Words Charles Wesley Music Joseph Perry (Scott Baker)

<https://youtu.be/NsXcCdWjmsg>

Readings

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

¹⁸ My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. ¹⁹ Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: 'Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?' ('Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?') ²⁰ 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'

²¹ For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. ²² Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

⁹ ^[a] O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

1 Timothy 2:1-7

² First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all —this was attested at the right time. ⁷ For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, ^[a] I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Luke 16:1-13

¹⁶ Then Jesus ^[a] said to the disciples, 'There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ² So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer." ³ Then the manager said to himself, "What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes." ⁵ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" ⁶ He answered, "A hundred jugs of olive oil." He said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty." ⁷ Then he asked another, "And how much do you owe?" He replied, "A hundred containers of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and make it eighty." ⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth ^[b] so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. ^[c]

¹⁰ 'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, ^[d] who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No

slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.'^[e] ©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Kumbaya My Lord - Judith Durham and the Seekers 2009

From 25th Anniversary Reunion Concert Melbourne 1993

<https://youtu.be/bYJMtn6lJeE>

Sermon – About God’s grace

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



Jeremiah is feeling discouraged and is lamenting. Lamenting about what has happened to his people in Judah and in the city of Jerusalem. He calls out to God with that eternal question: Why? His heart is sick and he has no joy.

We don't know what's happened, but it does involve widespread suffering. Jeremiah asks: Why is there no physician to help the people heal and balm for their wounds? He sits with his feelings and the pain of compassion for their suffering. One day he may be able to pick himself up, when he's ready to try and find a way forward. Beside him is an expensive gift that he may use to help people, but not now. For now, it's important for Jeremiah to lament. But he is not alone in his discouragement. God is there with him, comforting him, waiting, and listening, even if he isn't aware of it, yet.

Perhaps some of us have felt like this once or twice and wondered at the time how we can pick ourselves up and go on. There will always be setbacks, losses, grief and challenges and failures in life. We may even want to sit with our feelings and lament. We may feel discouraged and want to help others or ourselves find healing and restoration, like Jeremiah did. Most of us are familiar with feeling discouraged and powerless to change things or have felt compassion for loved ones when they suffer. These are the times when we can sit quietly with God or loved ones and seek comfort. These are times when God's grace works for us and through us for others' sake. These are times when we don't take on too much or make important decisions. We try to focus on one or two things at a time and take things slowly.

Paul encouraged Timothy to pray for everyone, including those who didn't belong to the Christian community. He asked him to pray for political leaders who persecuted them, in order to find peace. Christians were suffering deeply during these times and were not safe. They persevered and lived a life that witnessed to God's love, in the hope that those who persecuted them would spare them and perhaps join them. Against all odds, they remained faithful to God and to their community. In many ways we can identify with them. We have faced many challenges over the past few years, and some of us have struggled with anxiety and discouragement. Despite this, we have remained faithful to God and continued following Jesus. We have done our best to share and care for one another.

What about the gospel? What are we to make of the parable? We are familiar with the story.

Perhaps it's meant to challenge us to consider breaking down social barriers between rich and poor. The photo is challenging. It seems to show the manager with everything and then his worst nightmare of becoming a beggar. Or it could be a social statement about the haves and have-nots of the world.



Clearly the manager faces a crisis. What will he do? Pray? Lament? Perhaps that's not enough.

So, how can we apply this parable?

We could try applying it to the world. Wars, climate change and the wilful destruction of the environment is causing great suffering. They come about due to the actions of a few and many, actions that are creating a greater divide between the have-nots and haves of the world, with loss of land, lives, diseases, and in some cases genocide where entire tribes have been wiped out. There is hunger, thirst, homelessness, and disease. Many of us may be lamenting about what's happening and feeling powerless. We may even feel discouraged and afraid, like Jeremiah, Timothy, and the Manager. The problem seems too big to tackle.

Yet, the gospel suggests a new ethic and new values, that wealth and resources be used in a new way that brings about solidarity between all peoples. God continues to create and renew our universe, despite wars that inflict suffering, like Jeremiah and the people of Judah experienced, persecution, like Paul and Timothy experienced and in Luke's gospel, unjust social structures that support unethical use of wealth and resources.

The gospel encourages us to embrace kingdom values and ethics that encourage a just use of resources and wealth. It encourages us to put God first, before we act.

We may feel discouraged from time to time whenever things seem too big for us. What makes us eventually get up, act, and continue following Jesus, is our love for God. Out of our love for God comes our love for others, whether loved ones, neighbour, or stranger. Whether family, church, friend or local or global community. It is our ability to feel love and compassion for others that eventually gives us a sense of purpose and restores us.

The Lord be with you

YouTube Hymn 640 Kneels at the feet of his friends – tMt video

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

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 – Rhonda Goodall

Lord our God, how great you are, ever present, ever knowing. Hear our prayers as we pray for your people of your world together.

Today Lord we pray for the people of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. South American Spanish speaking democratic republics. All have high rates of literacy with free compulsory education and public health systems; but while each country has a thriving growing economy, the benefits are not evenly distributed, hence a large number of each country's population are poor. Assist their leaders to be more aware of the needs of the poor and more evenly distribute the wealth of their nation equitably.

In our ecumenical cycle we pray for the East Burwood Crossway Baptist Church. Under the church's minister, guide their leaders in the numerous ministries of outreach services to cater for the spiritual and physical needs of the community in which they serve.

In our presbytery prayers we pray for the Monbulk Open Door Community Church. May they continue to grow in worship and ministry under the guidance of their minister. Encourage their members to continue in their outreach to the surrounding community for your glory, Lord. We pray for the AgeWell Strathdon community. May they continue to provide the dedicated care to each aged resident, personally. May there be sufficient staff to cater for residents' care and keep the facility free from any COVID infection.

Lord, we pray for our own community; that you will guide us in the tough decisions we will have to make for the future of our congregation and the cluster of churches. Give us courage in our mission and enable us to see and experience your glory in the faces of our neighbours. Lord, we remember those who are suffering from grief and or illness. Give them the peace and comfort in their time of need, let them feel your healing arms around them.

Lord you are the light of our world. Guide us through every hour of the new week, envelope us in the breath of your gentle but eternally strong Spirit. And as we conclude these prayers Lord, we pray as our Lord Jesus taught us to pray:

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.



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.

In Jesus of Nazareth, in compassion for the outcast,
 forgiveness for the fallen, hope for the poor and hungry;
 in his life poured out for others and broken in rejection and disdain
 you have made yourself known.

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.**

We greet the one who comes in your name,
 your true light, your true love,
 the bread of compassion, the wine of renewal.

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)**
 as he gave his life in acts of goodness,
 as he invited all to the feast of new hope,
 so come to us, God of Jesus, in your love.

Come to us, Spirit of our Lord of love,
 and let the bread and wine before us
 bear your life to our life,
 nourish us with his vision of hope,
 and unite us in one body of peace.

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.

Time for Quiet Reflection



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

May the Feet of God – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhiG-Vj8CGU&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=40>

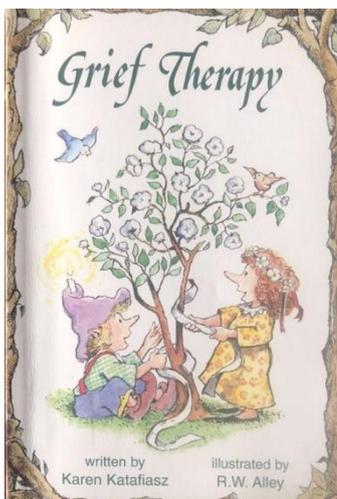
Pastoral Care Tips - Rev Tina

Grieving well – Pastoral Lunches

Several people within our cluster churches have lost loved ones and are grieving. We have discussed having a pastoral lunch or two for those who are grieving so they can share about how they are going, and several people have offered their homes. Please contact me if you are interested in coming along to a pastoral lunch and sharing the journey with others who are grieving.

Helpful Books

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. We all do it differently. Two of my go to books are Grief Therapy from the Elf series and Good Grief which offers some practical tips about the stages of grief.

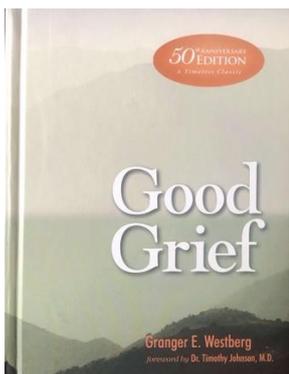


***Grief Therapy* by Karen Katafiasz and illustrated by R.W. Alley**

This book encourages tears to wash away the sadness and a good cry to find healing. To stay connected with others. To tackle the emptiness and take pleasure in simple things like a cuppa or hot bath. And its ok to be angry.

***Good Grief* by Granger E. Westberg**

This little book looks at the stages and feelings. It is simple and practical and has been around for a while. I have a couple of copies I can lend, if needed.



My experience is people double back to an earlier stage of grief or miss one and come back to it.

Grief can be difficult at night or about three months later or years later. It can come in waves when we least expect it and there are good days and bad days. Everyone takes as long as is needed. What's important is we grieve well and do not delay or put aside grief. Reach out to your loved ones for support and take good care of yourself. Be kind to yourself. Do things that comfort and nurture you. Spend time with people who are comforting. Try to go outdoors. It can be healing.