



**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Welcome – Rev's Tina, Peter and Pete**

**Hymn: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord** – tMt video

<https://youtu.be/3-yBLNgQkvY>

**Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge the First Nations People, the Traditional Owners of this land and their many unique cultures and languages. We respect the knowledge and wisdom of Elders past and present. They have never ceded their sovereignty and we commit to walking with them in their quest for truth, justice and treaties. - Alex Adam

**Call to Worship – Rev Tina and Responses – Rev Peter**

*Invitation to Seek the Lord from Uniting in Worship – Peoples Book 1988 (Adapted)*

Seek the Lord and his ways

**Call upon the Lord**

The Lord says: My thoughts are not your thoughts

**Nor are your ways my ways**

For as the heavens are higher than the earth

**my ways are higher than your ways**

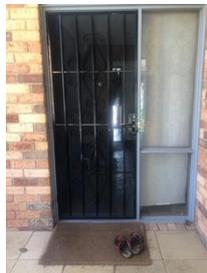
seek the Lord and his ways

**Call upon the Lord and embrace his ways**

**Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession**

**Rev Tina with Responses from Rev Peter and Rev Pete**

**Response - Lord, we open the door of our heart to you**



We begin our prayers with an invitation to say this prayer each time we enter the front door to our home, whether it is a house or unit or our room in a family or communal home

**Jesus the door  
My heart is open to you**

Let us pray

You help us Lord  
 You help our fears and anxieties  
 You help us learn your goodness by heart  
 You, Lord, help us in the midst of our doubts  
 to begin to see what you see when you look at our world  
 Lord, you imprint that vision somewhere deep within us  
 Where it stays and speaks to our hearts  
 Offering us a future filled with light, love and laughter  
 The light of Christ  
 Your love and laughter  
 You, Lord, help us become a gift for one another in Christ and through Christ

**Lord, we open the door of our heart to you – Rev Pete**

Jesus our Lord  
 You help us walk with you  
 You often carry us  
 Today we ask that you challenge and encourage us  
 Change our hearts so we come to know your ways  
 Lord, come dwell in our hearts as  
 we follow you on the way as faithful pilgrims  
 Be with us Lord in our conversations  
 In our eating and resting  
 In our learning and laughing  
 May we find you, follow you and offer you to one another

**Lord, we open the door of our heart to you – Rev Peter**

Holy Spirit Come into our hearts  
 We may not know how to pray, we may be weary  
 Empower us as the people of God

**Lord, we open the door of our heart to you – Rev Pete**

**Prayer of Confession**  
 God of all grace  
 In foolishness and pride  
 We often dare to speak on Your behalf  
 Claiming to know your ways  
 And making promises we struggle to keep  
 Help us in humility to learn to be still  
 Trusting that You indeed are God

**Lord, we open the door of our heart to you – Rev Peter**

Lord, in all that comes our way  
 We will open our hearts to you and  
 Believe that all things will work out for our good  
 Because we love You  
 We will not be dragged down by life's challenges  
 We will pray and know we are heard by You. Amen

## Hymn 681: Lord let me See - tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8roH9ocFM&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdvYNQLIsLD2rC&index=7>



### Readings – Elaine Hewson

#### Psalm 19:14

<sup>14</sup> May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

#### James 3:1-12

<sup>3</sup> Dear brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

<sup>3</sup> We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. <sup>4</sup> And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. <sup>5</sup> In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. <sup>6</sup> And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>7</sup> People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, <sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. <sup>10</sup> And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! <sup>11</sup> Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? <sup>12</sup> Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.<sup>[c]</sup>

#### Mark 8:27-38

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" <sup>28</sup> "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets." <sup>29</sup> Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>30</sup> But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man<sup>[b]</sup> must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. <sup>32</sup> As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>33</sup> Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

<sup>34</sup> Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. <sup>35</sup> If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. <sup>36</sup> And what do you benefit if you gain the

whole world but lose your own soul?<sup>[d]</sup> 37 Is anything worth more than your soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

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### **Hymn 474: Here in this place – tMt video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0RQvnJeeYA&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=41>

### **Sermon - Rev Peter**

#### **Get back on track**

One of the delights of being a School Chaplain was that I went on lots of camps with the students. On one such camp with a group of year 7 students near Bright, we were walking along one of the High-Country tracks. On the way back down the track I had been appointed the lead staff member. All the students were supposed to stay behind me while I led the way back to the camp. There was a staff member at the rear and several in-between. It was a system that meant all got back to the campsite in one piece (and didn't get lost!).

As you may expect, the students, 11- and 12-year old's, were very excited. One was with me in the lead but no matter how much I tried, she couldn't or wouldn't stay behind me! She kept running ahead on the path and I had to keep calling her back. That was until we came upon a red belly black (snake that is). She stayed behind me then as we followed the docile creature as it meandered its way down the path until it got to the creek. On this occasion the path was well defined so easy to follow and stay on track – sort of... Even so the area has seen many people get lost over the years.

We, however, are living in a time and place where for the church our path is not clear. The COVID pandemic leaves us uncertain as to the future and our safety.

For a long time, the wishes and needs of business have dominated the political and public sphere. With COVID in Australia, they have now been usurped by health concerns. Business lobbies have found this an uncomfortable space to be and made sure the community knows about it.

The church used to have a dominant place in the community. Attendances were high. This area was known as the “Bible Belt”. Churches are in significant decline as the average age of our congregations' increase. The wider community culture has become multi-cultural, and attitudes have changed markedly.

The temptation is to hold on to what we know; to see our experience and what we want as determining decision making. We hold tighter to what we have and know. In our Churches we have experienced change being forced upon us. Our much-loved communities, traditions and ways have declined, been interrupted and challenged. We are not able to meet regularly or in the ways we would like. It is unsettling and upsetting. We hold on to what we can – it is precious for us.

The disciples following Jesus were on a journey which was exciting, generating hope and anticipation. As good Jews, they saw in their experiences of Jesus a fulfilment of a dream. It was a dream they had language for and expectation of; it was well established. The miracles, feedings, healings, teaching all pointed to the anticipation as declared by Peter on behalf of all the disciples. Mark makes clear he is speaking on their behalf. “You are the Messiah”, the one sent by God to deliver and save.

Up to then Jesus had kept on telling them and those who saw what he did, to keep it quiet. Now though he speaks openly... but not as expected! He declares this dream is not quite as they think. It will involve risk, pain and struggle and suffering. To recognise Jesus as the Messiah, the one sent by God, it is to see a new way and path that puts us at odds with established religion, teaching and politics. This then puts our status, our image and even our safety at risk.

When we hear the phrase, “Get behind me Satan”, we can easily personify the image and miss the point. Jesus is calling out the temptation to hang onto the past and what we think we know. “Get behind me...” is much closer to my call to the young student in my story at the start – “get behind me so that you are following the path I lead you on”. The phrase Jesus uses parallels the phrase used when he calls the disciples to follow him at the start of Mark’s gospel. “Come and follow me.”

It is a recall to return to the place of discipleship, of following, because they are no longer on the path Jesus is taking. His is a path of risk and suffering whereas they thought they were on a path of glory!

Following Jesus is not always straightforward, easy or safe. When hanging on to what we think we know, we may find ourselves following our own path. In difficult times we hold onto the safe and known. But Jesus calls us back into line.

As a cluster, we can be tempted to hold onto what we have experienced and liked. We can see the possibility of coming together as a bigger group as providing an answer to our decline – we can even keep a hold of some of the precious ways. If this is why you are seeking a cluster, then the word is “get behind me satan”. Such a temptation is not the way of Christ. When we seek to hold onto our life, we will lose it. We need to let go of our life if it is to be given back to us. But remember, the life God gives us is not the same as it was. The path of Jesus is one of risk and challenge.

So, a couple of questions to consider:

In the light of so many thinking they know the way of Jesus, how can we truly know?  
How does being part of a community help us listen to the move of the Spirit?

### **Moment of Quiet Reflection**



### **Hymn - TIS 473 Community of Christ**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1I4i3IOPBU>

### **Offering Prayer – Rev Peter**

(This Prayer is 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 (written by Derek Moore) read by Lynne Rosenthal**

Let us come before God in prayer.

Today we pray for the nations of Ghana and Nigeria – countries with long and sometimes troubled histories. We pray for the wellbeing of their populations during the current pandemic, and for religious tolerance between their peoples. In the Ecumenical prayer cycle, we pray for St Mark’s Anglican Church in Forest Hill and in our Presbytery for the Emerald, Gembrook and Tecoma congregations. Lord, please bless these faith communities and be with them in their worship and restricted outreach.

We uphold to You the staff and students of CTM’s Pilgrim College.

We pray for the medical teams throughout Victoria dealing with the latest COVID surge. May they not become over-fatigued due to high workloads.

We pray for all those experiencing mental health issues due to Lockdowns, with more than 340 teenagers presenting to hospital emergency departments each week in Victoria. We are distressed to learn that children as young as eight have been placed on suicide watch by their parents because these children are so troubled by the COVID pandemic and the current restrictions.

Lord, we pray that the enhanced immunisation rollout will be increasingly effective, throughout Australia.

Lord, please strengthen us all so that we can endure these difficult times.

### **The Lord's Prayer – Lynne Rosenthal**

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your Name.  
 Your Kingdom come, your will be done  
 On earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day 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 forever. Amen

### **Candle Prayers – Rev Tina**

Invitation to express concerns where a candle is lit for each concern

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tyNO9QVVK4&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLsLD2rC&index=20>

### **Benediction – Rev Pete**

Lord our God  
 May there be sense in our persistence and reason in our tenacity  
 May a divine discontent give colour to our dreams  
 And a passion for holy heresy set the tone for our thoughts  
 And may our ultimate loyalty be only to You,  
 That we may never surrender to the threats of falsehood  
 Or capitulate to the idols, caesars, and powers of this world.

### **Blessing – Rev Tina**

Go with confidence into the days ahead  
 Trusting in God's unfailing love and faithfulness  
 God will not abandon you, for you are the work of his hands  
 His own creation  
 and His love endures forever  
 So go in joy  
 To love and serve the Lord!

### **Song – For you Deep Stillness – tMt video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeP01DBKGd0&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLsLD2rC&index=25>

*Resources for liturgy and Prayers adapted from Celtic Daily Prayer Book Two 2015  
 Northumbria Community Trust published by Collins*

## Self-Care Tips



*Mountview Uniting's latest sign.  
Many thanks to Lorriane and Barney*

If you're worried or anxious or fearful,  
hand it all over to God.

### **Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said:**

*"Come to me all who are weary  
and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Psalm 121 is about a friend comforting his or her friend. Verse 1 is about someone who is having a tough time and only sees huge obstacles ahead and calls out, 'Who will help me.' His or her friend then reassures them, God is with them on the journey and will help them.

## **Psalm 121**

### **Assurance of God's Protection**

<sup>1</sup> *I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?*  
<sup>2</sup> *My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.*  
<sup>3</sup> *He will not let your foot be moved;  
He who keeps you will not slumber.*  
<sup>4</sup> *He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.*  
<sup>5</sup> *The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.*  
<sup>6</sup> *The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.*  
<sup>7</sup> *The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
He will keep your life.*  
<sup>8</sup> *The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.*

## **Resurrection Ferns**

When I was walking the Larapinta trail there were these tiny ferns called resurrection ferns that looked dead but when the rain came, they came back to life. We will get through this time and find new life.



### **A Resurrection Prayer (Uniting in Worship, adapted)**

Just when we have given up hope  
You come to us  
Just when we had decided it was all in vain  
You surprise us by joy  
Through locked doors you come  
Entering our pain and brokenness  
Our fears and anxieties  
With the gift of peace and reassurance  
With the gift of love and comfort.

**Lord, we give you our thanks and praise**

### **Isaiah 41:10**

<sup>10</sup> *do not fear, for I am with you,  
do not be afraid, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.*

**Don't be Afraid, John Bell, Scotland,  
Chorus Pro Musica**

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