



**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Introit – Be Still for the Presence of the Lord**

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

*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.*

**Welcome to our Worship**

May you be blessed

**Acknowledgment – Alex Adam**

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.

**Call to Worship** (*inspired by Psalm 1:1, and Nathan Nettleton's paraphrase*) **Rev Peter**

LORD, how good it is for those who turn a deaf ear to the advocates of greed and self-interest but instead keep their ears tuned to hear your voice.

When we turn with humility to seek after the gentle life giving-away of Jesus, life is made known.  
 We meet and share together to hear God speak and see God's Spirit lead.

**Opening Prayer – Rev Peter**

We have come today Lord because consciously or not, your Spirit drew us.  
 Your heart is overjoyed to see us gathering together in your name.  
 Lord help us to recognize the unconditional love you have for each person here.  
 And to also recognise the beauty and value that you see in each of us.  
 In Jesus' Name  
 Amen

**What a friend we have in Jesus**

<https://youtu.be/pi1-5kmbkyQ>

**Bible readings (NRSV)**

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**Proverbs 31:10 – 31**

<sup>10</sup>A capable wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.

<sup>11</sup>The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.

<sup>12</sup>She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

<sup>13</sup>She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands.

<sup>14</sup>She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from far away.

<sup>15</sup>She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and tasks for her servant-girls.

- <sup>16</sup> She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.  
<sup>17</sup> She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong.  
<sup>18</sup> She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.  
<sup>19</sup> She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.  
<sup>20</sup> She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.  
<sup>21</sup> She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all her household are clothed in crimson.  
<sup>22</sup> She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple.  
<sup>23</sup> Her husband is known in the city gates, taking his seat among the elders of the land.  
<sup>24</sup> She makes linen garments and sells them; she supplies the merchant with sashes.  
<sup>25</sup> Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.  
<sup>26</sup> She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.  
<sup>27</sup> She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
<sup>28</sup> Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her:  
<sup>29</sup> "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."  
<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.  
<sup>31</sup> Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

### Mark 9:30 – 37

<sup>30</sup> They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; <sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

<sup>33</sup> Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" <sup>34</sup> But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup> He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." <sup>36</sup> Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

### Prayer of Confession – Rev Peter

*Prayer for Children B D. Prewer 2005*

You know God,  
 we do get our ideas screwed up, don't we just?  
 We reckon it's cool to come first in sport, or games or in an argument.  
 We even think we are being clever if we get the biggest slice of cake  
 or the largest scoop of ice cream.  
 You don't see us that way, do you God?  
 Instead you really enjoy watching us help some slow kid to win,  
 or letting others get the first slice, or apologising we are in the wrong  
 instead of trying to win an argument.  
 We wish we could please you more, God, but it's not easy to change, you know that?  
 It's really, really, really hard for us.  
 Please give us a big push when we need it,  
 trip us up whenever we get too cocky,  
 and help us to be both generous and happy about it.  
 In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!

### Assurance of pardon

From many differing places we come, contrasting ages, cultures, histories, opinions, and even beliefs. Yet, we surely belong to one another in the peace and unity of God. In that peace and through that world-wide unity we are made whole, healed, and forgiven.

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

**Hymn: TIS 474 Here in this Place (Gather us in) tMt video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0RQvnJeeYA&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLsLD2rC&index=41>

## Sermon – Rev Tina

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

The early disciples, those following Jesus didn't understand. In a time, when status and power mattered it was only natural for them to fight amongst themselves over who would lead if Jesus died. When they reach the house where they are staying Jesus asks them about what they were discussing as they followed him on the way. They are speechless.

Jesus knows and turns their notions of greatness upside down. He takes a child and says this child represents me. If you welcome this child, you welcome me and if you welcome me, you welcome God. This is how things are in the kingdom of heaven. A child without status, one of the little ones, represents me. You must be like this child. But how can we be like a child? Perhaps Jesus calls all of us into a life of self-denial where we become the servant of all, like he was. Perhaps the call of Jesus to "Follow me" involves accepting self-sacrifice. Some people within our society today may find this countercultural.

When we think of children today, they are dependent on adults who make choices for them. What they eat, wear, which school and peer group, how they play and where they play. Children trust those who care for them. Children are capable of unconditional love, trust, compassion, wisdom, openness, prayer, growth, playfulness, abundant joy, and resilience. Most of all they don't expect a payback when they do something for someone else. We can learn a great deal about living well and faith from children. No wonder Jesus chose a child to represent him.

I've mentioned I've been on a pilgrimage. This pilgrimage made the bible come alive for me.

As I travelled, I wondered whether I'd meet a holy person, someone in whom I'd see Jesus and who would represent Jesus for me. It wasn't until I reached Petra in Jordan, once a great city, now in ruins now. Nabateans once lived amongst these ruins, but the government moved them out into settlements. One family remained. I met their daughter. She was selling trinkets she'd dug up out of the sands and offered me a small copper cross. I gave her US\$1 for it and put it in my wallet. It wasn't until I reached home and found it that I realised she was the holy person. It was God reminding me of my need to be like her, a child, open, trusting, loving and God-centred. At the time I was a lawyer managing a Legal service that received many calls from people experiencing trauma or facing a crisis. That job was a turning point in my life and led to ministry. Adopting the position of a child when representing Jesus and not seeking status, is at the core of ministry. Jesus' teaching is for all of us. We are all pilgrims on the way, following Jesus. We are the priesthood of believers, representing Jesus in the world.

We learn how to represent Jesus, when we live in relationship with others, where we depend on each other and live-in interdependent ways. Marriage is a good example of interdependence. I sat next to a monk from a closed order who lived in a monastery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. We were on a flight from Rome to Jerusalem. Brother Angelo shared his wisdom with me. What he said about marriage was interesting. He said: *The wife has the will of the husband, and the husband has the will of the wife and together they see the love of Christ in each other.* Another insight is one I gained after watching the movie, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. A mother and daughter are having a conversation about the husband/father who appears to be a bit set in his ways. The mother reassures her daughter. *Don't worry the man is the head of the house and the woman is the neck. She can turn the head any way she wants, anytime.* My husband watched this movie with me and laughed when he heard this. Another insight is offered in this extract from a favourite wedding poem by Kahlil Gibran called: *On marriage*

*Stand together yet not too near  
For only the hand of life can contain your hearts  
For the pillars of the temple stand apart  
And the oak tree and the cypress grow  
Not in each other's shadow*

It's a beautiful poem. I invite you to read the whole of it. Today's reading from Proverbs speaks of the perfect wife. She sounds amazing and selfless. She buys a field and plants a vineyard. She works all day and night. She becomes wealthy and can afford purple cloths. She shares her wealth with others. She is strong and brings happiness to her family. She supports her husband in being a leader in the community. She is the provider. Today these roles may be reversed where a husband is the provider and supports his wife as a leader within the community.

The point is that when two people spend a lifetime together they come to know the love of Christ within each other. They share their lives with one another. Every relationship is different. Like the poem which uses the metaphor of two columns holding up the roof of the temple of love, two people stand together in a relationship and they don't stand close together like two columns, where the roof collapses, one of them doesn't lean on the other, for if they were columns

holding up the roof, it wouldn't be supported. The two people stand together yet have their own identity and needs, so they can both contribute to one another's wellbeing and their own. Over the years there is give and take and sharing and sacrifice. The reading from Proverbs speaks of this interdependence and selfless giving. The gospel brings it all together where Jesus teaches us about true greatness. The ideal wife and the tiny child reflect God's character. They do not seek to be greater than others.



It reminds me of a rose and its perfume filling an entire room. When we become like the woman or the child, we represent Jesus and all we do touches lives, and we become the perfume of Christ.

During a psychology tutorial the other day I heard the tutor say we are as a community currently experiencing collective trauma. This means we need one another's love more than ever. I heard a young woman in her early twenties say during the tutorial she is learning who she is, resilience and is becoming more self-sufficient during the lockdowns. Perhaps we all are learning this, and it is the right time to discern who we are as a cluster of churches. The tutor said that once we emerge out of this pandemic, we will experience a great deal of post-traumatic growth. If I had to use an analogy, perhaps we are like rosebuds and when the sun comes out, our petals will open, and a wonderful fragrance will fill the air as we heal and grow. Of course, this will take time. What we need to remember is roses produce fruit in the form of rosehips and we too will bear the fruit from this time of unseen growth.

I read the mission report the other day for our three churches forming the cluster. There is so much going on already, even if it's been suspended for a little while. We share an Op shop, Centre 81, a drop-in for homeless. There is a young adult and children's ministry group at Mountview. We have a choir and two music teachers. We have musicians. We have two choirs at Mountview. We have multicultural congregations also worshipping at each church. We share a refuge in partnership with Uniting and other partnerships with groups doing their best to assist people in the community.

We are the perfume of Jesus and represent him within our church and the community. To have a future we must be ready to take Jesus out into the world and welcome strangers into our church. What empowers us to represent Jesus is our ability to live in interrelated ways with one another where we are all equally valued and loved. The good news from today's gospel is status has no place. The greatest amongst us are the little ones who teach us how to live and love.

**Hymn: TIS 687 God gives us a future** tMt video

<https://youtu.be/64lXkcwZ06M>

### **Prayers of the People (by Corry Skilbeck)**

You must look on our world today with a heavy heart; seeing our struggles; yearning that your Creation would embrace your Wisdom-Way of Love and Peace.

Today we pray for all across our world who work towards an understanding between people of differing ethnicity and race, culture and colour, age and gender, that your wisdom-way of Love may break down barriers and build bridges to reconciliation and peace.

Today we pray for all who are working, in complex circumstances, for the health and wellbeing of others...

who are in war-ravaged and disaster areas, who are living in poverty, with disability, and are the most vulnerable, who are in hospital with COVID – especially where hospitals are overloaded or without adequate resources ...that your wisdom-way of Love will sustain, enable and guide them through these most stressful times.

Today we pray for the leaders of nations, tribes and localities. Loving God, speak through people of good-will to turn 'Power over' to 'Empowerment for all', greed to generosity, corruption to compassion and understanding, so that all, including the most vulnerable can reap the benefit.

Today we pray for all who work to heal, restore and preserve the wonderful natural world you have given us. Teach us your wisdom-way for our environment and how to deal with climate change. Show each of us how we can play our part as custodians of your gift.

Today we also pray for family, friends, and others in our community who are dealing with personal struggles. As isolation has compounded illness, loneliness, anxiety and grief, we ask that your wisdom-way of Love may show us the most positive ways to care for and support one another.

We pray these things in Jesus' name and pray as he 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 – Rev Tina**

### **Holy Communion**

You may choose to participate on Zoom or use the Communion at Home resource

### **Communion from Uniting in Worship**

#### **The invitation**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this is the table of the Lord. It's an open table where all are welcome to receive if they feel comfortable in receiving.

Jesus calls us to this sacred feast. We come, not because we are strong but because we are weak.

***We come, not because of any goodness of our own but because we need mercy and help.***

We come, because we love the Lord and would like to love him more.

***We come, because he loves us and gave himself for us.***

The eternal God be with you.

***And also with you.***

Lift up your hearts.

***We lift our hearts to God.***

Let us give thanks to God who is Wisdom and Love.

***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

It is always right in all times and all places to give thanks to God, Holy Wisdom and Eternal Love.

Holy and life-giving God, we offer you thanks and praise in wonder and awe, in delight and astonishment:

for you are Creator of all things, and Lover of each one.

You sculpted the planets and set the stars on fire. You moulded Uluru\* and shaped the ways of the Murray-Darling\*.

You imagined the echidna into being and set the broilgas dancing.

You made the great beasts of the oceans just for the pleasure of them; and you called forth human beings that we might love and care for your creation as you do.

The rainbow and the law are signs of your promise to protect the earth, and your covenant with a people called to witness to the nations.

When we failed to honour your work and your being, your Word of Wisdom entered creation as Jesus to share with us the joy and pain of our humanity.

***Through Christ, life rises from despair. In Christ, all things are made new.***

***Because of Christ, your Spirit remains with us.***

As she once brooded over the waters of the deep, your Spirit now works throughout creation, preparing for the day when all things find their purpose in you.

Therefore, with the whole creation: with all your people gathered across time and space, with all the works of your hands with everything visible and invisible, imagined and unimaginable, we sing in thanks and praise:

***Holy, holy, holy God, wisdom, strength and hope, heaven and earth are full of your glory; Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God. Hosanna in the highest.***

Blessed is Jesus, Wisdom embodied, who feasted with sinners, disciples, friends and now shares this meal in our midst.

On the night before Jesus died, on the evening of betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:

'This is my body which is for you. Do this in memory of me'.

In the same way, also the cup, after supper saying:

‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in memory of me’.

As we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the coming of God’s new creation in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and finally, in the completion of all things when Christ comes again:

***Christ has died.***

***Christ is risen.***

***Christ will come again.***

Send your Holy Spirit, O God, that these gifts in creation may also be for us the gift of re-creation in Christ.  
***Shape us into one body; press us into one wine; bake us into one bread – the Bread of Life and Cup of Liberation –  
 for the feeding of all your children and the nurture of creation.  
 Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ in the power of the Spirit of Love, all glory be to you, O God, Source of  
 all Being, Eternal Wisdom and Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. Amen.***

Christ is the bread of life, food for healing and wholeness.

Christ is the cup of hope, wellspring of resurrection life.

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**

Most gracious God, you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life, and renewed us for your service. Now we give ourselves to you, and ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom.

**May our love be your love, reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Hymn: TIS 650 Brother, sister, let me serve you** tMt video

<https://youtu.be/IsabMsp1uvQ>

### **Prayer for offering** © Jeff Shrowder 2000, 2012

Gracious and eternal God,  
 to whom we turn in every need;  
 receive the gifts we offer,  
 and let our lives bear fruit,  
 our compassion never wither  
 and give glory and praise;  
 in Jesus’ name.  
 Amen.

### **Benediction and commissioning – Rev Peter**

May your mind O God guide our ways  
 Your heart drive us forward  
 Your Spirit open our ways to new life for all we encounter along the way.  
**We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
 In the name of Christ. Amen**

**TIS Hymn Shalom to You Now** tMt video

[https://youtu.be/LiH\\_HdkWs74](https://youtu.be/LiH_HdkWs74)

## Self-Care Tips

This week I offer you a meditation for rainy days this coming week and a reflection for those who like to walk to take on your next walk to the shops.



## Meditation for Rainy Days



Sit in a comfortable chair where you can see outside  
 Where you can watch the rain falling and listen to the rhythm of its sounds  
 Allow yourself to breathe out slowly and deeply as if you are sighing  
 Saying, 'Lord'  
 breathing out slowly and deeply  
 breathing in, allowing your lungs to expand.  
 Breathing out slowly handing over your worries to God.  
 Breathing in God's deep Peace  
 continuing like this as you listen to the sounds of the rain outside.

## Meditation for Walkers

*(either take it with you on your next walk or quietly sit and read it)*

Take an opportunity to set off on a walk of gratefulness and before setting off have a moment of quiet prayer and reflection at your front door. Praying: The home of Christ is in my heart.

If you pass some roses pray: *Lord help me be the perfume of Christ in the world permeating others' lives with the love of God in Christ Jesus. Lord I give thanks for my neighbours' support and care. May I offer the same to them.*

While walking on the footpath pray: *Lord I give thanks for straight paths. If only life was like that.*  
 Stop before crossing the road, to give thanks for your feet which have taken you to many places.

If you walk through a park, give thanks that once again children can play at playgrounds.  
May we be open to being like a child where we can laugh and pray.



If you see two people together, give thanks for friends, who remind us, we are not alone

Pause before you enter the local shopping centre and pray. *Lord protect me wherever I shop so I do not carry COVID back to my loved ones or catch this dreaded virus. I give thanks to all those who keep their shops open and take risks so*

*I can buy food. I give thanks to farmers and all those who grow and make my food. As you buy food, pause for a moment to be grateful for your body. We do our best to take care of it, watching diet, exercising, getting enough sleep and learning something new every day, and praying for God to care for our loved ones and ourselves. Perhaps when you finish shopping you may wish you hadn't bought so much; your bags may be heavy and it's a long walk home. Perhaps you wouldn't mind someone coming and picking you up and bringing you home.*

*Do you have someone you can reach out to when you need help? If you do, give thanks and if you don't then contact the minister or pastoral coordinator at your church and ask for help. Jesus said: Ask and you will receive. Matt 7:7-12*

As you continue the long walk home the bags may seem to get heavier and you may become aware of burdens and what's weighing you down during these long lockdowns which make us feel weary, bored, lonely and frustrated.

*Are you feeling burdened at the moment? Matt 11:28-30 invites us to hand over our burdens to Jesus.*

If you reach the park, you may see children running all over the place, laughing and playing. I saw a family who had set up hurdles and a long plastic tube for their two border collies to jump over and run through. Two dog walkers stopped so their dogs could greet one another, and they had a conversation. Children were playing on the swings. Very soon I forget about my troubles. *What lifts your spirits and helps you forget about your troubles? Perhaps being near people, who enjoy life and are a gift to others. Imagine walking past some blossoms. Their scent is so lovely. Spring is such a joyful time with its sunshine and blossoms. What has lifted your spirits on this walk?*

When you arrive home, give thanks for your home and family, food and warmth. Some people don't have a home. Pray for them for a moment. Perhaps if you're feeling tired have a cuppa and snack and take time to read something that nurtures your soul. This is what I read.

### **Extract from a book by Brother David Steindl-Rast called: Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer**

*When we grow in gratefulness, we grow in faith. Gratefulness implies trust in the giver. A grateful person says, "Thank you" and only afterwards checks what's inside the gift wrapping. Faith is the courage to respond gratefully to every given situation, out of trust in the Giver.* Copyright © 2021 [Inspiring Quotes](#)