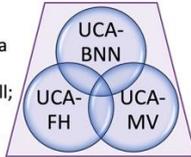




Whitehorse Uniting Cluster

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



Prayer Service

Sunday 30 October 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

*We gather on Wurrundjeri land. Land that has been cared for by them from time immemorial.
We acknowledge the elders past and present and commit ourselves to work towards reconciliation
between 1st and 2nd Nations peoples.*

UTube hymn: "Come As You Are" Deidre Brown/Paul Gurr

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qD4KAq_W8tY

CALL TO WORSHIP © B. D. Prewer, used by permission

We are here....

In the name of Jesus Christ.

He came and preached peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near.

We are no longer like outsiders in a foreign land,
but are fellow citizens with the saints in the household of God.

Let every one praise the Lord!

The Lord's name be praised!

THE ONES WE LONG FOR – a prayer

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In a world that too easily wounds and breaks,
we long for those who will heal and restore;

In a world that too easily divides and dissects,
we long for those who will unify and interweave;

In a world that too easily excludes and judges,
we long for those who will include and understand;

And in a world where your call, O God, can still be heard,
we long for the courage to answer,
and to be the ones we long for.

Amen.

A TIME TO MEDITATE IN QUIET:

Take a moment to pause and just breathe in and out in silence for about a minute or so.

Notice 3 sounds

Notice 3 smells

Notice 3 things you feel

Give a silent prayer of acknowledgement of God's presence with you today and throughout the week.

Light a candle and let the light of Christ shine in your life.

READING: EPHESIANS 2:11, 14–18

Holy Bible: New Living Translation Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers (2015)

¹¹ Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. ¹⁴ For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵ He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶ Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. ¹⁷ He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. ¹⁸ Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

*Reconciliation is at the heart of the Gospel – reconciliation between humanity and God
but also between peoples and with the whole of creation.*

A LOCAL APPLICATION by © John van de Laar, www.sacredise.com, used by permission

The vision that Paul describes, of a diverse, inclusive community in which all people are cared for and through which God works in the world, is what we are all called to as Church, and in our families and neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, we too often use God's name to justify lives and attitudes that are far removed from this vision.... And Christians try to justify their rejection and abuse of those of other faiths or no faith, of those of different theological perspectives or sexual orientations, and even of those who are different in race, language, or gender, in God's name.

Rather than celebrate the house of God in which all can find a home, we have tried to become door-keepers and draw dividing lines. Rather than fulfil our role as shepherds to those for whom we are responsible, or those with whom we live and worship, we have chosen legalism, pointing fingers, and self-righteousness too often. The call... is to learn to see God's Spirit within each person, and in our community as a whole, and to embrace the diversity of the community of faith. Then, as a community, we are called to care for and protect the least and the most vulnerable in our families and neighbourhoods. As we seek to follow the Good Shepherd, we are called to live as good shepherds for all we meet and in so doing allow God to build us into a house – a community – of grace and love in which God's Spirit "lives" and moves.

FINDING GOD TOGETHER

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The image you have shaped within us,
mysteriously,
incredibly,
a reflection of your own Being,

Is best seen in the multiple refractions, of our variegated humanity;
in the prismatic kaleidoscopes, of our shared life,
our interconnectedness, our being with each other.

We seek you, God, we long for you
and, thankfully, you are not far off, not hidden;

We need only remember that you are most easily found when we find you together,
and when we are humble enough to look even in the faces we find most strange and unfamiliar.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - John Gerrard

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we bring to you now our prayers for others. As we consider the bountiful world in which you have placed us to live, we pray particularly today for the people of Canada and the United States of America.

We give thanks for:

- Churches that see beyond their own congregations and countries to reach out to others in the name of Christ.
- The National Council of the Churches of Christ USA, and the Canadian Council of Churches, and their efforts towards unity.
- Those who tell stories from other parts of the world linking the poverty of the developing world to the consumerism and wealth of North Americans.
- Those who work for the rights of women and children.

We pray for:

- Continued efforts to ensure the rights of all peoples in Canada: First Nations, English and French speaking, and all immigrants.
- An end to the creation and proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.
- Those who experience poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunity amid great wealth, and who go without in the growing gap between rich and poor.
- Those affected by terrorist attacks.
- Revitalization in the churches and renewed leadership.

In our **ecumenical** prayer cycle we remember today your people worshipping and serving at St Thomas' Catholic Church Blackburn. May they know you with them as they seek to show your way and your compassion to others in their area. Be with those who take special responsibility, as either ordained or lay people. May they be both encouragers and supporters in that worship community, and may they see the fruits of their labour perhaps in ways unexpected.

Within the **Uniting Church** we pray today for the members of the Sophia's Spring congregation at CERES Community Environment Park in Brunswick who seek to understand and practice an eco-feminist theology. In so doing they must tackle issues that are controversial. We pray that you will guide their work and relationships with the community as they shine a light on commonly held beliefs that may be hurtful both to people and to our planet.

We pray, too, for the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress who call for a renewed commitment to justice for First Peoples throughout their country. As governments and people move slowly towards a fair recognition of the First People's rights, we ask for guidance and motivation of those seeking to give First Peoples a voice in parliament. Help us, Lord, to right the wrongs that have been done to these people over many generations.

Within our local cluster of parishes we seek your blessing on our people, on our worship and our work together. We ask your blessing on each member of our cluster ministry team as they lead us in worship, service and growth at the parishes within the cluster. As the three congregations plan to combine, may this be a time of encouragement and growth for us all.

We pray today for comfort and healing for those close to us who are unwell or who need your guidance and strength, and we remember and pray for them now in silence.

We bring these prayers in our Saviour's name, praying the words that 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 for ever. Amen.

BLESSING ©2003 Nathan Nettleton www.laughingbird.net

Go out, remembering all God has done for you.
Break down the walls of hostility,
proclaim peace,
have compassion for all,
and don't forget to take time for yourself also.
And may God be with you wherever you go;
May Christ Jesus heal you and replenish you;
and may the Holy Spirit encircle you and strengthen you.
***We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.***

Hymn "Brother Sister Let Me Serve You" - tMt video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsabMsp1uvQ&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=32>