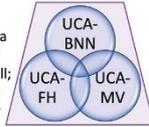




**Whitehorse
Uniting
Cluster**

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



**Sunday 13th November 2022
All Saints**

Introit - Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

David J Evans 1986 Kingsway Thank you Music

Northern Baptist Association 2011

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

Welcome

May the worship be a blessing to you



Uncle Bob – Photo Tina Lyndon

Acknowledgement

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

When we face challenges and difficulties

By our endurance we will gain our souls

When change comes and God calls us in new directions

By our endurance we will gain our souls

When the world seems far from God, and we are called to be pioneers of our faith

We will follow Jesus with hope and courage

We will persist and stand firm in our faith

Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession

Loving God, we live in changing and challenging times

Yet, you continue to show us the way and we come to know of your steadfast love for us

When we pray, we find hope and courage to continue the journey

We will stand firm in our faith.

We will endeavour to hold fast to our hopes for the future.

Jesus our Lord, we are your lambs.
 We know we need your constant leadership and care.
 When anxious times come, and we fear
 You feed us with your words of encouragement and teach us how to live our lives with love and courage
 Because of you

**We will stand firm in our faith.
 We will endeavour to hold fast to our hopes for the future.**

Holy Spirit, you dwell within us
 You open the eyes of our hearts
 So, we may draw closer to God
 Holy Spirit, you fill us with God's love
 So, we may love as God loves
 Holy Spirit come upon us
 Guide us into the future
 Help us know God's will for His church
 Encourage us and fill our hearts with peace
 beyond our comprehension

**We will stand firm in our faith.
 We will endeavour to hold fast to our hopes for the future.**

Lord, forgive us if we haven't lived out your love command
 If we have hurt someone, Lord, transform our hearts
 Lord, we come before you now in this moment of silence
 With all that troubles our hearts

Silence

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

Hymn 647 Comfort, Comfort all my People

Robyn and Dorothy Mann from Let's Sing it again
 Tune Core Comfort 2014

<https://youtu.be/B8DXPAYWr-c>

Reading

Luke 21:5-38

⁵When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, ⁶'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.' ⁷They asked him, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?' ⁸And he said, 'Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, "I am he!"^[a] and, "The time is near!"^[b] Do not go after them.

⁹'When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.' ¹⁰Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

¹²'But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; ¹⁵for I will give you words^[c] and a

wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your souls.

²⁰'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.^[d] ²¹Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; ²²for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written. ²³Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; ²⁴they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

²⁹Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

³⁷Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. ³⁸And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

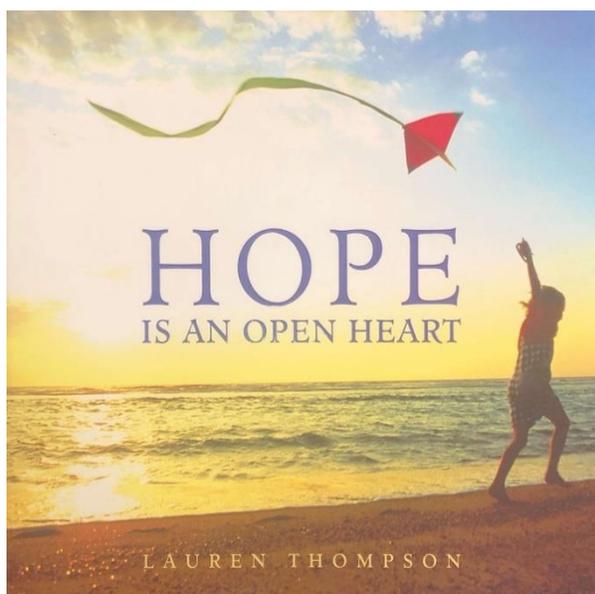
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Hymn 560 All My Hope is founded in God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN3vNz4XndM>

Sung by the Plymouth Choir and Congregation of First Plymouth Church, Lincoln Nebraska 2015

Young at Heart



What helps you hope?
Pray and ponder for a moment
What fills you with gladness?

Sermon – “By your endurance you will gain your souls”

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



Jerusalem – Tina Lyndon

Every morning and every evening most of us hear about the worries of the world through the TV or radio or newspapers. Worries about wars, climate change, destruction of God’s creation, earthquakes, droughts, floods, cosmic events, injustices, and suffering people. This is nothing new. It’s been happening for centuries. It may seem endless. Sometimes we can feel weighed down by worry. Imagine what it was like for Jewish people and new Christians to live under the Roman occupation.

Herod the Great reconstructed the Temple between 19-20 CE, doubling its size. Jesus came to Jerusalem around ten years later, to reclaim the Temple for God’s purposes. The religious leaders rejected Jesus’ message. They held positions of power, were attached to the system and often oppressed societies most vulnerable. Jesus would have foretold the destruction of the Temple not long before he died. Perhaps around 30CE. Forty years later the Temple was destroyed in 70CE. Luke’s gospel was written around 85CE. Fifteen years after the destruction of the Temple. Luke writes about making a thorough investigation about what happened.

Now imagine what times were like for Jewish people living under Roman occupation. It was a multi-faith society. Christians came from a background of other faiths, and many Jewish families were Jewish and Christian.

Jewish revolts against Roman rule began around 66CE. Josephus, a leader, and historian indicated around 1.1 million people died in Jerusalem, 100,000 in Galilee and 97,000 were made slaves, during the times of the Jewish revolts and wars. The revolts began during Emperor Nero’s rule and were due to Roman taxes. When the Roman governor plundered the Temple, revolts intensified. Nero sent Vespasian, a Roman General to crush the rebellion and he left for Rome after becoming emperor and left his son Titus in charge. There was a seven-month siege of Jerusalem until Titus took Jerusalem and he burnt parts of it, including the Temple. The Jewish revolt ended at the siege of Masada between 73-74CE where the Jewish people killed one another rather than surrender to the Romans. 960 died. I’ve done my best to access this information. I’m sure there is more and wasn’t easy to find information, after 2000 years have passed. I invite you to find out more about what happened. There is a book that has some of Josephus accounts of history during this time.

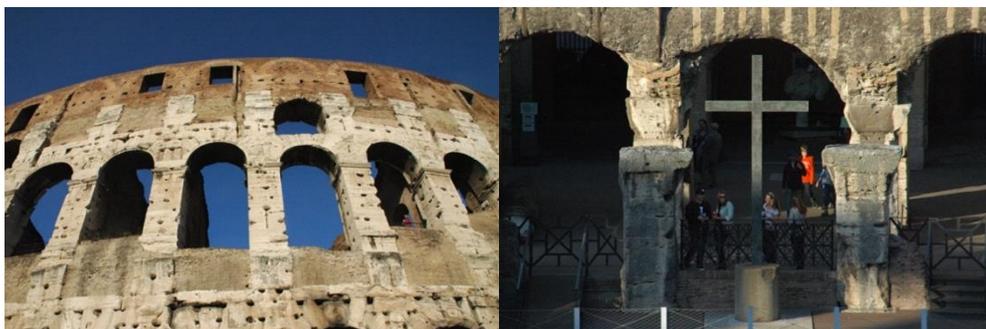
What happened was symbolised as a cosmic event. The very fabric of society, religion and family had been torn apart by the Romans. No wonder Jesus advised his followers to flee Judea and Jerusalem.

This is the arch of Titus in central Rome. It shows a menorah from the Temple being carried to Rome and Priests bound in chains being brought to Rome.



Photos – Tina Lyndon

The destruction of Jerusalem was just the beginning for Christians. They were persecuted for almost three centuries. Their leaders were killed, and thousands died in the Colosseum in Rome.



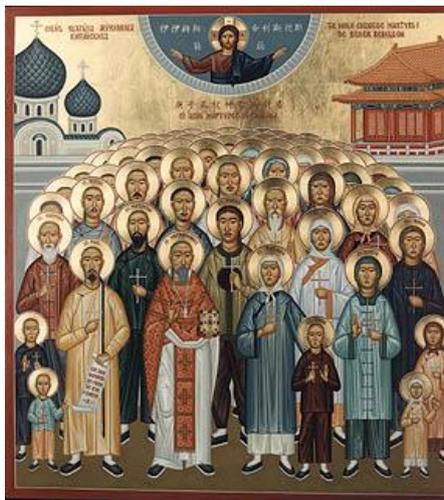
Photos – Tina Lyndon

You can see a cross that has been placed in the Colosseum to remember those who died.

Jesus said: *Flee*. But where could Christians go? The known world was ruled by the Romans.

Jesus called for his followers to stand firm in their faith and focus on the welfare of their souls. He reassures them he is with them and will return.

He says: *“By your endurance you will gain your souls”*



Revised Common Lectionary

What is endurance? It is the same as fortitude, resolution, strength, patience, staying power, persistence, and tenacity. This is an icon of Chinese Christians who have persisted in their faith.

I wonder how these times in the gospel are different from today. Where is the good news for us in this gospel?

We know persecution and death are not the end of life for the faithful. We know that we can endure tough times by having hope. Being prayerful and remaining faithful, despite what is happening around us, is the best way forward. Trusting in Jesus as we follow him gives us courage and hope for the journey.

We live in a secular society where once again the church has become marginalised, and we often encounter values and a way of life that do not support Jesus' teachings.

Despite what is happening around us we have this soulful longing to find inner peace and fulfilment. We look to God as our rock, our anchor and safe harbour during times of turmoil and find inner peace through prayer. We look to what gives us deep gladness and find strength and hope in our relationship with God. Through our endurance we overcome and care for our soul.



Revised Common Lectionary

Challenging times come and go from time to time, but Jesus encourages us to endure these times.

We persist, are tenacious, we make resolutions, we are patient, we find staying power and journey onwards with hope.

The Lord be With You

We put our soul's welfare first and depend on the Holy Spirit's encouragement and empowering power within us, giving us the words to say, the actions to take and the right attitude.



Photo – Tina Lyndon

Hymn 628 In Faith and Hope and Love

From Songs and Praises from Australian Hymn Book Vol 3 2014 Cantus Choro – Peter Chapman Organ Geoffrey Cox and Norman Kaye

<https://youtu.be/Plyz5kg834M>

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

Let us come together in prayer of and for the people.

Lord our God how great you are. Heavenly father, sustainer of all life, we bring before you in prayer the people of Australia and New Zealand known by its Māori name, Aotearoa, both wealthy countries by international standards. However there are a number of classes who are disadvantaged and marginalised despite the countries' prosperity.

Each country has a population of First Nations people who are some of the most disadvantaged in poor education and health, especially the high incidence of diabetes and renal disease resulting in a higher mortality rate when compared with the rest of the population. This disadvantage is comparable to third world standards. Again Lord, encourage the decision makers of each country to redistribute resources on a more equitable basis to improve the health and education of the First Nations people thus increasing the age of mortality and quality of life and participation of First Nations people in decisions affecting the quality of their standard of living.

Lord, there is presently a climate conference of all nations being held in Egypt. A dire warning was given to all delegates that if drastic steps are not taken by leaders of each participating country it will be too late to halt global warming with catastrophic consequences for humanity resulting from irreversible climate change. Lord, we pray that there will be a breakthrough in negotiations and that all countries will agree to take measures to reduce greenhouse emissions and that the wealthy countries will give assistance to the poorer countries to meet the necessary targets to save humanity and our planet earth, your creation.

Lord in our ecumenical prayers we pray for the congregation of St. Luke's Anglican Church. Bless its leaders and congregation as they bring your word to life through their ministries within the community in which they serve. Be with and bless the chaplains of the University of Melbourne chaplaincy as they bring pastoral care to the students and staff of the University.

We extend our prayers to our churches at Mountview, Forest Hill and Blackburn North/Nunawading as we continue to smooth out any differences that may arise from negotiations between the representatives of each church. Be with and bless each Minister as they bring your word to each of us. There are within each congregation of the cluster many who are sick, infirm or down in spirit. Lord, ease their suffering and pain and lift their spirits to feel your presence surrounding each one in need.

Lord, we live in uncertain times; war in the Ukraine and Yemen, worrying midterm elections in the USA, famine across large parts of Africa and movements of many displaced people. However, Your pervading presence and love is a constant force for good to prevail and provide solace in such troubling times

Lord, guide us through the following week and enable us to see your glory in the faces of our neighbours and give us the grace to do the hard things cheerfully and see your face in all that we do. Lord, hear our prayers as we pray in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the prayer he taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be Your name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven

Give us today our daily bread

And 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.



Candle Prayers

Hymn 687 God Gives us a future – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64IXkcwZ06M&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=16>

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 778 Shalom To You Now – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=35>

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina

Caring for our Soul

Oh, The Deep Love of Jesus – Epic Version

Simon Khorolskiy 2018

<https://youtu.be/KLTu1xv2-Us>



In the introduction of his book: *When I Talk to You*, Michael Leunig wrote about his faith, approach to God and prayer and his soul. (The following extract has been adapted). Leunig drew a picture of a person kneeling before a duck to symbolise his ideas and feelings about prayer. The duck symbolises his relationship with God. He explains the cartoon's meaning.

A man is kneeling before the duck in a sincere attempt to talk with it. His act of kneeling symbolises humility. He comes closer to the duck. He becomes more like the duck.

The duck symbolises nature, instinct, feeling, beauty, innocence, the primal, the non-rational, and the mysterious unsayable. Qualities we can attribute to the duck but also to the inner life of the man, his spirit, or soul. The duck is a symbol of the human spirit, and in wanting connection with his spirit it is a symbolic picture of a man searching for his soul.

He cannot see his soul, but he can feel its enormous impact on his life. Outward manifestations can be dramatic and disturbing and inner presence, wild and rebellious or elusive and difficult to grasp. But he knows from his inner dimension with all its turmoil comes his love, fear, creative spark, music, art and will to live.

The more he believes in the spiritual dimension, recognises, and names it, explores it and becomes familiar with it, the more he wants a robust relationship with it, cares for it and makes it strong, the more his life takes on a sense of meaning. The search for the spirit leads to love and a better world, for him and for those around him. (Cartoon and thoughts about it used with permission.)

Leunig asks: *How do we search for our soul?* He answers his own question. Through prayer.

The gospel invites us to focus on our soul. There are many ways of finding it, but prayer is the most direct.

We are a people of Spirit and God is Spirit, a tender presence and love. God speaks to us through prayer and the Holy Spirit.

Prayer nurtures our spirit and draws us closer to God.

We can pray in many ways. Each of us understands God differently and has a different way of relating to God.

Prayer can be making bread, caring for others, being still, gardening or simply opening our heart to God and loving God, others, and ourselves.

The Prayer

Andrea Bocelli & Celine Dion

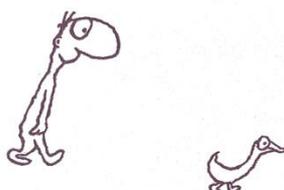
Andrea Bocelli 2015

https://youtu.be/qt_OkgSOrkU

Love is like Bread

It has to be made fresh every day

Old saying.



Leunig (Used with permission)