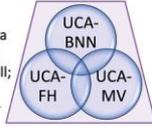




**Whitehorse
Uniting
Cluster**

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



Sunday 26th June 2022



YouTube Hymn: O let the Son of God enfold you 2021

Orchard enterprises and Oasis Worship

Music and lyrics by John Wimber

From Heart of Worship Vol 3 2020 Classic Fox records

<https://youtu.be/kLqTNhxwzKI>

Welcome

May the worship be a blessing to you

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

Lord, you call us

To follow you

Lord, you call us

We will go

Lord, you call us

We will follow you

Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession

Lord our God

You love us with an everlasting love as your beloved children.

You have made us and delight in us.

You have given each one of us a divine purpose.

You value and accept us and are always present with us on the journey.

We give you our thanks and praise

Jesus our Lord, You came for us
You taught us how to love, You called us to follow you
You showed us how to live out your love command

We give you our thanks and praise

Holy Spirit, You guide us on the journey
You pour God's love into our hearts so we may know God and follow Jesus
so we may love God and others as ourselves

We give you our thanks and praise

Come upon us today Holy Spirit
Come Holy Spirit Come

Lord, forgive us if we haven't lived out your love command
Where we have hurt someone
Transform our hearts as 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

YouTube Hymn: Jesus calls us over the Tumult

The Royal School of Church Music 2020

St Martins in the fields

<https://youtu.be/Y5lxbPK8Ow4>

Reading - Luke 9:51-62

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to prepare for his arrival, ⁵³ but they did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶ Then they went on to another village. ⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² And Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." ©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Sermon – Jesus calls us to follow him with trust and faith – Rev Tina

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

I have a photo of a mother and son on a roller coaster looking excited and terrified. It's got a liner saying: God: "I have a plan for your life" and the photo identifies the mum holding her child's hand as the Holy Spirit and child who is clinging to her for dear life. This is how it can be at times, especially when we feel called to embrace new directions and change.



Imagine the first disciples' responses to Jesus. They, like Jesus, lived in small villages around the sea of Galilee and lived simple lives. Their lives were dramatically changed when they said yes to Jesus' call to: *Follow me* and left their village for places unknown. Today's gospel challenges us to do the same.

There are lots of words about journeying, such as to go, his face was going, they went, as they were going, along the road, wherever you go, let me go, and go, to help us understand they were constantly on the move. Jesus had set his face to Jerusalem and was deeply rooted in God's divine purpose for his life. Everything in his life was orientated towards God's divine purpose and no matter what came of it, rejection, hostility, death and no matter what commitments, family, and allegiances, he went forward on his journey to his destination to live out his purpose.

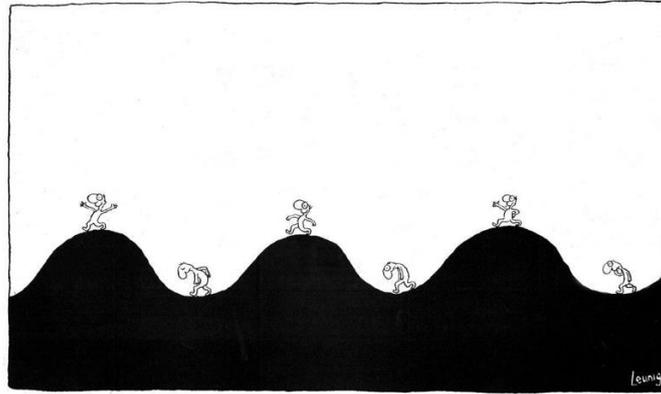
Perhaps today's gospel calls us to live out our divine purpose as we follow Jesus, where we are not distracted, or afraid of rejection or hostility, where we keep on plodding on, step by step, with trust and faith. Perhaps it also helps us understand more about the journey.

We hear about John and James who are on the journey with Jesus. They had witnessed his transfiguration, lived through his death and resurrection and been there when Jesus ascended. Yet, they still don't get it!

When a Samaritan village rejects Jesus' messengers and refuses to offer hospitality to Jesus and his disciples, John and James ask Jesus whether they can call down fire and brimstone on the entire village. They were judging people and called for revenge. Jesus rebukes them. It is not his way.

Jesus is single minded and focused on his mission and is trying to teach his disciples to do the same.

All of us face rejection some time in our life and at times it may be because of our faith. We are strengthened by the challenges we face as our journey constantly changes us as we grow in courage and faith and encounter turning points, epiphanies, insights, shifts, changes in priorities and commitments, transformation and life's ups and downs.



Leunig – used with permission.

Today's gospel teaches us about three different responses to Jesus' call to follow him.

One person says: *I will follow you wherever you go.*" Jesus responds by making it clear he has nowhere to lay his head because the journey is ongoing, full of change and challenge and depends on others' hospitality. It is a journey of trust and faith in God and involves interdependence on others. It's a journey that can lead us to many places. We desire to please Jesus and know God through him and embrace his ways. We want to be faithful disciples and love others just as God loves us.

Jesus says to another person: *Follow me.* They respond by saying: *Lord, first let me go and bury my father.*

Jesus' reply leaves us pondering on what he meant: *Let the dead bury their own dead: but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.*

When people died at this time their body was laid in a sealed tomb and twelve months later there was a second burial where the remains of the person were placed in a "bone box". The man was asking for a delay of twelve months.

Time is a priority for Jesus who is on his way to Jerusalem where he will be rejected and killed and fulfil his divine purpose. There are to be no delays in responding to Jesus' call: *To follow me.* The man must immediately respond to Jesus' call to go and proclaim the kingdom of God, even if it means acting against what is acceptable in a world not orientated to God's purposes.

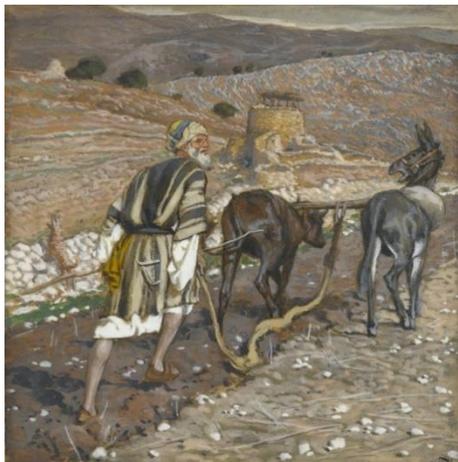


An Anglican priest I knew was the only son of a wealthy family with a sheep station and he was expected to take over his father's role, run the station and continue the family legacy. He chose to become a priest and his family rejected him. Doors can close when we choose to follow Jesus.

Jesus approaches the third person, who responds to Jesus' call with an excuse. They say: *Lord, I will follow you, but, let me first go and say farewell to those at my home.*

The irony is for both people they know Jesus as Lord, but choose family first, not God. True, there is always a tension between choosing God and choosing family.

Perhaps Jesus is teaching his disciples that discipleship requires commitment to follow him and worries about shelter, cultural expectations, allegiances that cause delay in responding and excuses reveal a lack of commitment to follow him. Why else say: *"No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God"*.



The choice to follow Jesus requires commitment and a change in orientation and priorities. At times our loyalty to God and family leaves us feeling torn. Loyalty to God and family are both important to us, yet at times responding to the call to, follow me, can turn family relationships upside down.

My little brother was Australia's strongest man for a couple of years, he organised Highland games around Ballarat, and was sponsored to compete in the World Strongman competitions. He rented a property sandwiched between two farms near Ballarat and has a business. We thought he'd never settle down. Then he met his wife who is Catholic, became a Catholic, got married and bought the property. He and his wife now have a son, called Henry Lyndon. His life has been completely changed.

Families often nurture one another's faith. But what happens when families don't have a faith, and someone is all alone, and they feel called to follow Jesus? A few years ago, a school chaplain I know referred a teenager to me to baptise. Her family had no faith. Her call to become a Christian came from knowing the chaplain. When she was baptised her friends and their families were there and afterwards her friends asked to be baptised, one by one. Their parents had no faith. The girls chose to organise a bible study group at school and went on to proclaim the kingdom of God.

So, what's the good news for us in today's gospel?

The gospel challenges us to take our call to follow Jesus more seriously and to get to know our divine purpose. The gospel reminds us, the call to follow Jesus involves commitment, trust and faith and a willingness to keep on following Jesus even when faced with an uncertain destination.

For us the beauty of belonging to a caring community is that we are not alone on the journey, and we can nurture one another's faith and encourage one another. Yes, there will be challenges and change. It may seem like a roller coaster ride at times, but we know in our hearts, that the journey of faith is worth everything.

Quiet moment



YouTube Hymn: I the Lord of Sea and sky (here I am Lord)

Created by Michelle Sherliza 2015

Music by John Michael Talbot from the Album - The Troubadour Years

<https://youtu.be/giulD5OZXOI>

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 – Michael Plumridge

God of hope who gives light and power to your people, we ask that you to hear us as we pray.

In the World Prayer Cycle, we pray this morning for the countries of Kenya and Tanzania. We give thanks for these nations with coastlines on the Indian Ocean. Lord, we thank you for the vast tracts of wilderness and for the animals that live there; for the plains of Serengeti National Park; for the majesty of Mount Kilimanjaro. We pray for the natural beauty of the region; that it may be protected not exploited. Lord, we pray for the people of Kenya and Tanzania. We thank you that the literacy rate in Kenya is the highest in Africa and we ask your blessing on schools and teachers. We pray for the Church in the region. We thank you for all those called to ministry – grant them strength for their work and witness we pray. We also ask you to bless people of other faiths and we give thanks for all those engaged in relationship building – bless their efforts we pray. We ask especially for greater tolerance between Christians and Muslims. Lord, we also ask you to bless the work of those persons and organizations who seek to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees who arrive from other African countries. We ask for economic structures that provide just outcomes for all.

Lord, we bring before you the youth of the region. We pray that they do not succumb to the scourge of radicalisation but are envisioned with plans of careers and good citizenship. We pray, Lord, for victims of crime; especially sexual or gender-based violence, and for all who are marginalized or excluded from communities. We also bring before you those groups and individuals who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. We pray for the world-wide effort to reduce global warming. Lord help us to love your creation.

In other prayers for the world, we pray for all those affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan, and we continue to pray for the people of Ukraine. We pray also for Australia and the ongoing work of reconciliation. Help our government to act with true diplomacy in our relationship with Pacific Island Nations.

Locally, we pray this morning for New Hope Baptist Church, Blackburn North. We pray for their many programs and for all those who worship there. We pray also for our Uniting Church brothers and sisters at Eltham/Montmorency. Bless their minister Rev Yoo Mi Park. We also pray for the principal, teachers, students and administration staff at the Methodist Ladies College. We pray for a learning environment that is safe and empowering.

We pray too for ourselves and for the whole Whitehorse Cluster. We pray for our ministry team and their families. Grant us peace as we work and worship in your name.

We pray for all who need our prayers at this time.

Lord, help us to do good; to act in love, and to glorify your name always.

We pray this and all our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

The Lord's prayer

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

**Take my Life and Let it Be, sung by Brian Doerksen 2011,
Islington Baptist Church**

<https://youtu.be/IQ93HVuYd5Y>

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

779 May the Feet of God – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhiG-Vj8CGU&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLsLD2rC&index=40>

Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina



Leunig (used with permission)

Winter can be a challenging time for many.

A time when there is less sunlight and more time outdoors.

For others it's a time to sit by the fire and read or knit or phone friends.

Others may like to listen to relaxing classical music or watch a funny movie or look through the family photo album.

While others may enjoy winter and go outside to cut back the roses or plant veggies.

We are all made differently and respond to winter in our own way.

A lady I know once said she loves how the branches on trees are so exposed, where so much is revealed such as nests in the branches of trees.

It's also a good time to walk through parks and listen to frogs or if you're early enough at Westerfolds Park, spot a kangaroo or wombat.

Here is a little classical music to listen to for music lovers.

Classical Relax-Classical music for relaxation: Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt...

Halidon Music 2019. It goes for a generous amount of time so enjoy it while you are working on your computer.

https://youtu.be/pxEj6m_7Qfk

WINTER PRAYER

The little frog in joyful praise has croaked
The winters' quiet heavenly fog has come.
The paddocks and the bush are softly cloaked
In peaceful beautiful delirium.

Oh holy mist come to our heart and mind
Come gently to the troubles and the pains
Make soft the angry shapes that clash and grind
Make beautiful the scars and ugly stains.

Yet listen for the joyful frog, and thrill.
Look softly as the mist of love comes in.
Be still, forgive, adore with all your will,
And touch the softer, simpler world within.



Leunig

Leunig (used with permission)

Trust by Joan Chittister from the Breath of the Soul Reflections on Prayer (used with permission)

It's when we begin to take life for granted that we most need to learn to pray. The truth is that all the while we are making plans for what we will do next and how we will go about doing it, life happens. The stock market falls, the job disappears, the plane doesn't leave on time, the project fails or a loved one is diagnosed with cancer. Everything we mapped out for our lives, for our future, for the moment, simply goes awry.

Then, the God-problem raises its ugly head. Why did God do this to me? What did I do to deserve this? Why doesn't God fix it? How is it that God ignores our prayer? As George Bernard Shaw writes, "Most people do not pray they only beg." But somewhere along the line, if we are ever to grow up spiritually, the whole notion that prayer is about learning how to make life what I want it to be, dissolves. Obviously, it doesn't work.

Depression sets in. We stop praying completely. We stop going to church. We begin to toy with the notion that the whole prayer thing has been some kind of hoax. Did we say the wrong prayers? Did we overlook some part of the ritual that would certainly have assured our success? Does God not love us?

What are we missing here?

The purpose of prayer. It is the process of falling into God. As the mystics say, ..beginning to learn that God alone is enough.

The truth is that none of us really knows where we are going and must never take it for granted that we do. We can plan our lives, but we cannot guarantee them.

When our prayers are not answered, we know only one thing for sure: The challenge of life now is to live it differently. And it will be through prayer that we discover how to do that. Seeing Jesus being driven out of town, we come to understand that we cannot expect more. Seeing Jesus depressed in the garden of Olives, we understand depression is not the loss of faith, but the moment of faith. Seeing Jesus lose favour with the authorities, we learn that authorities are not the final measure of our lives. Then we come to prayer free of the desires that bind us, free to live life in God, free to choose trust over certainty -which really means free to choose God over self.