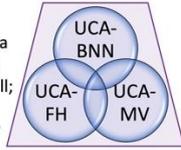




Whitehorse Uniting Cluster

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



Together at 10 on 3rd July 2022

YouTube Introit: Be Still for the Presence of the Lord 2011
Northern Baptist Association
<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

Welcome

May the worship be a blessing

Acknowledgment

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 be your pilgrim people on the way

Lord, you call us

To be your disciples, united in Christ and in our faith and love for you and one another

Lord, you call us

To be sent into the world as your community of love

Prayers – Rev Tina

Loving faithful God, Lord, we come before you along with all the pilgrim people throughout the ages who
have travelled paths like ours throughout the ages.

We give thanks for the blessings of your constant presence and love for us
and trust you as we journey to your promised goal for us.

We give thanks for your gifts that allow us to serve you and others in quiet and humble ways,
that build up your kingdom

We are your pilgrim people
We give you our thanks and praise

Jesus, Lord, risen one, life giver and saviour,
You have taught us how to love, care and share.
You call us to remain united in you as the body of Christ,
as your people on the way.
You teach us and then send us out into the world
to proclaim the kingdom of God, in how we live our lives.

**We are your pilgrim people
We give you our thanks and praise**

Holy Spirit, midwife of the community of Christ,
Stirrer of hearts, our guide through uncertain times.
Encourager for the community of Christ,
You unite us as one in God's love and
call us forward, gifting us for Christ's ministry in the world.

**We are your pilgrim people
We give you our thanks and praise**

Come upon us today Holy Spirit
Come Holy Spirit Come

Lord, these are challenging times, yet here we are willing to make a commitment to share and care for one another as one united family in Christ

If there is anything we have done in the past to hurt another, forgive us Lord.
Transform our hearts and help us make a fresh start and a new beginning, with Jesus' help and guidance.
Lord, in this moment of silence we come before you with all that's on our hearts,
as we seek your forgiveness

Silence

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

Hymn 409 O Breath of Life come sweeping through us
Recorded at EMW Aberwyth Conference 2020 (EFC Norwich)
https://youtu.be/5QHZB_v0ZaY

Young at Heart Rev Tina



Jesus' instructions to the 70 disciples: "Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals and greet no one on the road"

Jesus sent people in pairs, knowing we need one another when we are doing mission in the world. He encouraged his disciples to trust God and others on the journey with instructions to not carry money or extra clothes or shoes. He also encouraged them to not stop along the way to have too many chats with

everyone they met, so they reached the village he sent them to and completed their mission. Maybe that's about taking their role seriously.

Readings – from New Living Translation (NLT) Lois Marshall FH

Galatians 6:1-16

6 Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer^[a] is overcome by some sin, you who are godly^[b] should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. **2** Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. **3** If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

4 Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. **5** For we are each responsible for our own conduct.

6 Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them.

7 Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. **8** Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. **9** So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. **10** Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

11 NOTICE WHAT LARGE LETTERS I USE AS I WRITE THESE CLOSING WORDS IN MY OWN HANDWRITING.

12 Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good to others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save. **13** And even those who advocate circumcision don't keep the whole law themselves. They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast about it and claim you as their disciples.

14 As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross,^[c] my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died. **15** It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. **16** May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God.^[d]

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

10 The Lord now chose seventy-two^[a] other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. **2** These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. **3** Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. **4** Don't take any money with you, nor a traveller's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road.

5 "Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be on this house.' **6** If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. **7** Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay.

8 "If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. **9** Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.' **10** But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, **11** 'We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—the Kingdom of God is near!'

¹⁶ Then he said to the disciples, “Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God, who sent me.”

¹⁷ When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!” ¹⁸ “Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! ¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ²⁰ But don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.”

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Sermon – Rev Peter



Photo by Margaret Cosstick

The “e” word has become a “dirty” word among many in the UCA over the years. And for good reason. We have seen in other denominations and even our own how it has been exercised with aggression and a lack of integrity. It has been associated with a particular brand of politics and inappropriate manipulation of vulnerable people.

What on earth am I talking about? The “e” word? Yes. Evangelism. Yes we talk of “conservative, evangelical churches” with suspicion and concern as we associate them with “bible bashing” and Christian fundamentalism. We have images of walking down Spencer Street as the preacher on a soap box declares how sinful we all are, telling us of our need to repent and turn to Jesus to be saved.

We are happy though to talk about mission. We specify this as meaning acts of compassion, justice and care. We will advocate for justice and work in welfare and schools to express compassion. We want our actions to speak louder than words. Almost all would even suggest words are superfluous. Our agencies, our programs, our political advocacy, our welfare work are where it is at.

This is a disaster for our church and denomination to allow evangelism to be high-jacked by one brand of Christianity. It allows a misunderstanding of evangelism to dictate how we live and express our life-giving faith. It limits our engagement with others in ways that may be life-giving for them.

To separate evangelism from mission in the way others have done it, and ourselves distorts the Gospel and Christian discipleship. Luke paints a picture of the disciple learning from Jesus by watching his actions and listening to his words and then going and doing likewise, acting and speaking, sharing with others being bearers of good news.

In our reading from Luke 10 the disciples are sent symbolically to the nations (70 or 72 depending upon which version of Genesis you read), foreshadowing what is to happen in the book of Acts. First they bring peace. They initiate good will. Second, they receive hospitality while being respectful of refusals. Those refusing are allowed to get on with their lives the way they want. The reception of hospitality is one of appreciation of the gift offered. There

is no looking for a better offer. A relationship of warm mutuality that seeks to bless is established. It is not a relationship of commerce that says, "I will provide you with this good thing if you give me what I want." If a welcome is provided, then healing is done and a message of hope is shared. Openness is needed for these gifts to be received. The Gospel is made known in what is said and done. It is made possible if there is a generous spirit and gracious openness by the disciples.

In our in-person worship, we have been encouraging questioning and sharing in response to the scripture readings and as part of the sermons. We have been encouraging a willingness to share and name how the Good News brings life to us. In this the peace of God is offered.

Name your faith. Give it voice. Let it speak to the needs within you and to those you meet. Live graciously and with compassion. Let the things you do and say give meaning to each other and life to all you meet. Be bearers of the good.



Litany of Coming Together – Daryl Hawkey
 Words of Encouragement from Presbytery
(Litany prepared by Rev Peter)

Leader: We are a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal;
 we have the gift of the Spirit in order that we may not lose the way.

The congregation says:

**We will live and work within the faith and unity of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church,
 bearing witness to that unity which is both Christ's gift and his will.**

Leader: In our journeys, the congregations of Blackburn North Nunawading,
 Forest Hill and Mountview have witnessed faithfully to the mission and
 ministry of God in the world in both our words and practise.

We prepared for this journey in developing a MOU,
 called ministers to work among us as a cluster
 and appointed a consultant, Ecclesia Ministries,
 to guide us through the process of coming together.

As leaders in your congregations,
 How do you now respond?

The chairpersons of the congregations and church councils say:

We will continue to move forward in our journey.

We have heard the call of God to walk together in faithfulness.

We respond now to God's invitation by

Setting our hearts and minds on defining a shared future.

The chairpersons of the congregations and church councils say:

Together we will reflect upon our

Mission

Ministry

Finance

Group life

Leadership

Decision-making

Property management

Communication

and Pastoral Care

Leader: Our deliberations will seek to find a shared future
and a common ministry and mission.

A proposal will be developed and presented for approval
by our church councils and congregations reflecting this shared future.

"The congregations says"

We will listen for the voice of the Spirit in the deliberations and proposals.

We look forward to following in the way the Spirit leads.

A short word of encouragement from Presbytery

Hymn 687: God Gives us a Future – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64lXkcwZ06M&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLlSLD2rC&index=16>

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**

Prayer of Hope – Rev Tina



As we continue the journey towards a shared future together you are invited to write down your hopes on the little boat you were given as you entered the church and place it on the Lord's Table. If you are worshipping at home draw a little boat and write down your prayer of hope and send it to Rev's Peter or Tina or keep it in your bible to reflect on and pray for the cluster as we journey onwards.

Prayers of the People – Geoffrey Willis

In the World Council of Churches Prayer Cycle we remember the people and churches of the African nations of **Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda**. These war-ravaged countries have suffered as a result of ethnic animosities and violence and governments which have not respected the will of the people and have allowed human rights injustices. Lord, we pray for those leaders who are pursuing peace processes, healing and reconciliation. We pray for people who have been the victims of genocide and war crimes. Lord, please empower those who are attempting to bring them justice through the International Criminal court. We pray too for those organisations which carry out humanitarian work in these countries and who settle those who are displaced. We give you thanks, dear Lord, for the economic progress and peacebuilding that has occurred in Uganda and we pray that your Spirit will continue to guide this humanitarian work. Lord, we pray for the migrants from South Sudan who have settled in Melbourne. We ask for forgiveness where our media has portrayed them unkindly. We ask that you will encourage their people and leaders as they work hard to be exemplary citizens in their new-found environment. As they grieve for the plight of their people back home, may they know your love and care. Here is a prayer for peace from Sudan. May we make it our own prayer. I quote:

*Bless, O Lord, those who hear your word and believe it.
We pray for the people who are in remote areas, and live in fear of the world of spirits,
that they will know your power as Saviour of the world.
Bring peace to our land and all parts of the world that are disturbed,
so that the gospel of salvation may be preached to all humankind.
In Jesus' name we pray.
End of quote.*

[Episcopal Church of Sudan. PEW #123. From the World Council of Churches website: www.oikoumene.org.]

We offer prayers for the situation in the **Ukraine**. Lord, we pray for the international efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Russian invasion. We pray particularly for the people who have been displaced and who fear for their lives. We pray for their President. Give him wisdom as he seeks a solution which maintains national identity. Dear God of peace, please guide the NATO nations as they seek a solution. May it be one which upholds justice and one which quickly brings peace.

In our ecumenical prayer cycle for churches in the City of Whitehorse, we pray for **St Luke's Anglican Church, Vermont**. St Luke's is in partnership with St Alfred's Anglican Church in Blackburn North and describes itself as a "contemporary Anglican Church". Their 9:30 am service is complemented by an on-line service and worship-at-home resources. We pray, Lord, for their minister, Rev Peter MacPherson, and associate minister, Rev Dr Mark Simon. St Luke's celebrated its centenary in 2007 and has recently completed improvements to disabled access, toilet facilities and car parking. Lord, we pray for your blessing on St Luke's children's program which meets during Sunday church time and during the week.

Within our Presbytery, we pray for the **Glen Iris Road Uniting Church**. Led by the Rev Garreth Darlow, this church provides weekly worship, monthly intergenerational worship, a kid's drop-in playgroup, a monthly messy church and regular BBQs. Glen Iris Road provides a busy community centre offering a range of programs and activities run by either church or communality groups. We pray for those who lead and that those who attend will be enriched.

Dear Lord, we pray for **Uniting AgeWell Nangare Independent Living Units** in Burwood. These 21 modern one-and two-bedroom units provide secure and comfortable housing for residents and a pendant-connected emergency call centre for 24/7 security. Nangare features a community hall and communal gardens. We pray for their Friday afternoon teas and other social occasions. Lord, bless this community as it provides comfort and safety for its residents.

Finally, Lord we pray for **ourselves**. We ask for your blessing on our planning to be a Cluster. We pray too for our Ministry Team of Peter and Tina and the Regional Council as it guides our ministry and justice activities. Lord, we seek your blessing on the work of Forest Hill's Op Shop as it provides economical shopping and supports the work of the Uniting Burwood East Centre. Bless too Mountview's Centre 81 as it provides food and fellowship to those experiencing tough times. We seek your peace and blessing, Lord, on those of our members who are living in special accommodation or who are unable to worship in person. We pray that their needs may be met and that they experience love and care from those who provide nursing and medical services.

Let us join together as we say the prayer which Jesus 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.

Communion - Rev Tina



The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We proclaim your power in goodness
and your might in compassion, as we say:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Nurture us with your brokenness, renew us with your poured out life,
empower us with your powerlessness, that we may take root in your risen life
and bear fruit in your world.

**You are our life; you are our hope;
you are our peace; and we praise you. Amen.**

The bread of life is offered to us.
We feed on the bread of life with gratitude

The cup of the newness of life is offered to us.
We drink of the cup with gratitude.

The gifts of God for the people of God.
**May we who share these gifts be found in Christ
May we who share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us.**

Prayer after communion

God of truth and love who calls us and leads us into the future, make us a blessing for others
Help us to see creation as being in the future and to love it into being.

**May we hold on to the hope You have planted in us,
believing the unbelievable, reaching for the unattainable,
trusting the things beyond seeing and the things beyond hearing,
loving and living with compassion, offering hospitality and hope,
until the people who walk in darkness see the great light and are glad and free.**

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>

Blessing – Rev Peter

As disciples of Jesus
Go into your community to practice what you have learnt.
Engage others with grace and peace,
Accept hospitality with appreciation,
Allow the Spirit to speak and act in and through you
So that the healing, peace and abundant life of God is known by all. Amen

Hymn 755 You shall go out with Joy

Golden Ears United Church 2020

<https://youtu.be/vMkWGtKbMFU>



Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina

The Blessings of Friendship

When we were children, our best friend mattered to us. We wanted to spend time with them at school, after school, to have sleepovers and parties with them, and holidays. We discovered the world through each other's eyes.

Later, as teenagers we found our identity through our friends, sharing our fears and struggles, tears and joys, and sometimes angst over life, as we found our purpose and discovered who we are in the world. Then came university and new friends, but our old friends were still there, waiting for us to make time to be with them. Then came partners, who we wanted to spend time with, and children and sometimes they came first. Then families would gather, and children would grow up together. Friends would share the journey and support, encourage, offer insights, love, and help, with parties, school events, holidays, teenagers' struggles, university stories, children's marriages, looking after parents and children, retirement and perhaps a little time for just being and pottering. Time to sit in the sun and have a cuppa or two and share some memories and laughter. One day we may find ourselves asking: How long has it been? Fifty, sixty, even seventy years of friendship with someone who knows everything about us and accepts us for who we are, warts and all. Someone who we can have a good laugh with. Someone who doesn't mind if the cuppa and conversation last all day. Friends, what would we do without our best friends?

When we are older our best friend matters to us. We want to spend time with them and look back over our lives and rediscover the world through each other's eyes.