



Sunday 7th August 2022

Welcome

May the worship bless you

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

By Faith we believe in God's promises

We set out on a journey seeking a new beginning

By Faith we leave behind what no longer works for us

We Journey together sharing and caring for one another on the way

By Faith we persevere

As we journey towards all we hope for

Prayers of Adoration

Lord our God

When we look up at the stars in the sky or try to count the grains of sand on a beach
we are filled with wonder

When we consider your love for us and promises for life and a future
we are filled with wonder

With hope and by faith

We journey on together

Jesus our Lord

Filling us with light, love and hope

You are our morning star You are our strength

With hope and by faith

We journey on together

Holy Spirit,

Filling us with hope and faith

Guiding our hearts, inspiring us and calling us forward

With hope and by faith

We journey on together

Prayers of Invocation

Come Holy Spirit Come

Come upon us today Holy Spirit

Prayer of Confession

Lord, if we haven't loved you with all our being and our neighbour as ourselves or if there is anything we have done to hurt another, forgive us Lord.

Transform our hearts and help us make a fresh start and a new beginning

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



YouTube Hymn – Davido - Stand strong – Sunday Service Choir 2022

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<https://youtu.be/KyR6Sd2-afI>

YouTube Hymns, BBC One Songs of Praise. The UK's Favourite Hymn 2020

<https://youtu.be/r2BP9HSiuvk>

Readings

Genesis 15:1-6

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' ²But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'^[a] ³And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' ⁴But the word of the LORD came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' ⁵He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' ⁶And he believed the LORD; and the LORD^[b] reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Hebrews 11:1-3

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²Indeed, by faith^[a] our ancestors received approval. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.^[b]

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a

foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised.^[a] ¹²Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, ‘as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.’

¹³All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Luke 12:32-40

³² ‘Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵ ‘Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹ ‘But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he^[a] would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.’

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Young at Heart – The Velveteen Rabbit

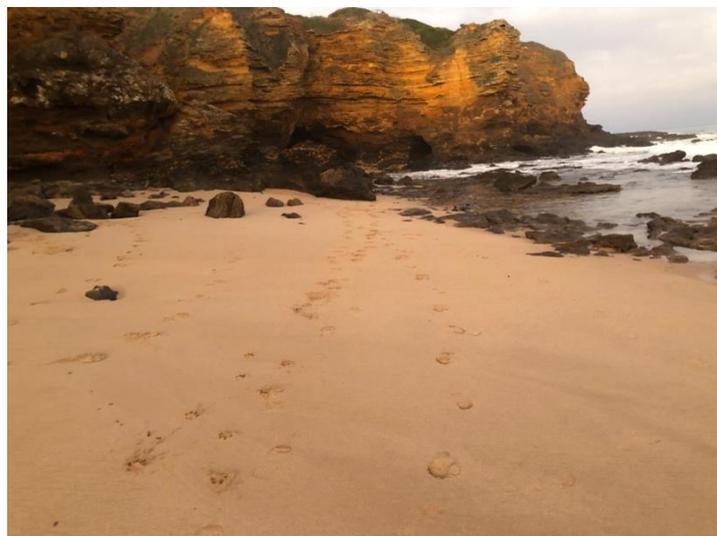
Have you read this wonderful story? It is a story about becoming real by being loved. Loved for a very long time. Ponder about the times you’ve been loved or loved another. Ponder about how God is Love. Every time we love, we make God real for others. Every time we are loved, God is made real for us. Love makes us real and fully human.

YouTube Hymn -All are welcome – Marty Haugen. 2016

<https://youtu.be/GlnVLP0qFEo>

Sermon – God shapes our hearts as we journey in faith

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



Today’s reading from Hebrews is about faith and how it depends on hope and setting out on a journey. A journey where we leave behind what no longer works for us and as we journey God shapes our hearts.

Have you ever tried to count the grains of sand that make up a beach? It's impossible for us. Yet, God can. Have you ever looked up at the sky at night and seen all the stars that make up our galaxy? It's a sight that leaves us wondering. All those grains of sand and stars make up the whole beach or galaxy and all are equally important. In the same way we are all equally important to God and one another, for together we make the church.

Hebrews speaks of seeking a homeland. It says: *if they were thinking of the land, they left behind they would have had opportunity to return.* Like them we have left behind what we had in the past and are seeking a new homeland, a new way of being as the people of God. We are living through a time of transition from what we had, to what we hope and long for. Some of us may fear not seeing the promises of God fulfilled. But what counts is each one of us will contribute and leave a legacy for those who come after us.

Hebrews also says: *But as it is they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, indeed He has prepared a city for them.* Never doubt the journey. By faith we have set out on a journey trusting the Lord will bring us to a new beginning as a church, where we have a future. Just like Abraham and Sarah, we will believe, and be faithful and will remain faithful during this journey of transition between what we had and what we hope for.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Our faith is our hope, and, in our hearts, we have the conviction that what we hope for and cannot see, will become real and we will see it.

By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance and set out not knowing where he was going. By faith we have obeyed God's call and set out for a new future as a church that God has promised us. We may not know where we are going or what shape our future will take, but we will get there. By faith we will get there.

By faith Abraham and his descendants stayed in the in-between place, for a while. They went through the process of spiritual growth as God prepared them for their new beginning, as they looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. In the same way we look forward to our future church, the foundations of which God is building. God is the architect and builder of our spiritual home, where we are the living stones and Jesus is the cornerstone.

The church is a living moving community of faith and is always on the way to what God promises us. Our hearts long for what is promised. We long to see it and we long to receive it and this longing creates hope in our hearts and this hope gives us the courage to set out and stay together with one another on a journey where we haven't yet reached our destination. During this time God shapes our hearts, where we become more Christlike, more alive, stronger in our faith, more able to believe and receive what God has promised us. By faith we keep on journeying, where we share and care for one another along the way.

Perhaps some of us have experienced setting off for an unknown destination before this time where at the beginning, things have seemed impossible and beyond us. But we have taken that first step and kept on going and over time things have changed and become more possible. By perseverance we get there, and God brings about all we have hoped for.

My younger brother married at fifty and his wife was nearly forty. They tried to have a child and my sister-in-law had two entopic pregnancies, so they turned to IVF and eventually conceived and now have a son named Henry. It was a long journey for them. They are both Christians and it was their faith that sustained them and helped them keep on hoping and believing, until they finally had a child. The only son to carry on the Lyndon name.

Imagine what it was like for Abraham and Sarah. Hebrews speaks of Abraham as being as good as dead, and Sarah as unable to have children, yet their descendants were as many as the stars of heaven and innumerable as the grains of sand by the seashore.

Perhaps the journey we are on as a church will help all those amongst us who are personally experiencing transition, where what we discover together will give us hope and courage, especially if it seems like nothing is happening or we feel overwhelmed by fear or weary with coping with Covid, or change. We are not alone on this journey. We are

all in it together and there is strength in that, where we love and support one another. This journey is about our hearts and relationships being transformed and strengthened.

As we journey, we have opportunities to share our stories and encourage one another and stories have begun to arrive for our book: *Memories and Reflections*. Stories about migration to Australia and gratefulness for God's blessings and provision for family. Stories about working overseas and migrating to Australia and feeling God's presence and about faith keeping us strong. Stories about the journey through serious illness and feeling supported and loved and leaning into God.

If you have a story about setting out on a journey in faith and what it was like to finally reach your destination please share it with us, please write it and send me a copy. You will be helping us on our journey. The book we are contributing to will be a wonderful blessing to others, an inspiring legacy for our church that will bless us and all those who come after us.

So, what is important as we journey together during this time of transition?

It takes time and there is a process where we journey in faith, step by step.

Don't give up, keep on going and persevere.

Don't be afraid. Focus on Jesus and lean into God.

Know your heart and nurture it by spending time with God.

Continue to support and encourage one another.

The Lord be with you

YouTube Hymn: Christ be our Light 2010 Marty Haugen

Anggosworship

<https://youtu.be/caA4slXkD44>

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 – Geoffrey Willis

Let us pray.

In the World Council of Churches Prayer Cycle we remember the people and churches of the African nations of **Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea**. These countries experience internal unrest and conflict and so, Lord, our prayers are for Christians and people of other faiths who courageously pursue reconciliation and peace. May your Spirit guide those who seek just resolutions to the conflicts and violence among diverse groups and their leaders. We pray too for the provision of health clinics and schools in Cameroon and the Central African Republic. Lord, we pray for the plight of refugees who flee to other countries, and for those who host them. May compassion be offered to all refugees. We pray that stable democratic governments will effectively serve the common good. Bambari is the Central African Republic's second largest city, with displaced people making up almost half of its population. Since 2013, it has experienced waves of violence, and today, it is split along religious lines. We pray for wisdom as the people of Bambari seek just solutions to these problems.

We pray with the people of Cameroon as they give thanks for God's gifts and seek God's guidance.

I quote:

When we contemplate such beauty, the immensity before us, blossoming with colour and scent, the surprising diversity of all that surrounds us, the green forests, the animals, the intelligence which allows us humans to create with you, God, the acts of your grace on our behalf, we can only express our joy at being your children and gladly sing of the generosity of your love.

End quote.

[© Rev. Dr Kayoka-Luendu M., Cameroon. English transl. Dr Colette Bouka Coula, adapted by Terry MacArthur. Published on the World Council of Churches website) website: www.oikoumene.org.]

Dear Lord, we pray for the situation in the war against the people of the **Ukraine**. May there be a peaceful solution to the Russian invasion. We pray too for the current efforts to allow the export of grain. We pray for the Ukrainian President, give him wisdom as he seeks a solution which maintains their national identity.

In our ecumenical prayer cycle, we pray for **Independent Churches in Whitehorse**. Many of these churches are led by husband and wife pastors and cater for a range of theologies and cultures. Please Lord, bless their work and witness.

Within our Presbytery, we pray for **Christ Church Kensington**. This is a joint Uniting and Anglican Church where ministers are alternately drawn from both traditions. Christ Church is partnered with Hotham Mission and they also host regular concerts to aid the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Dear Lord, we pray for our **Presbytery Ministers**, Rev Liz McMillan and Rev Dr Sunny Chen. We also pray for Geoffrey Grinton who is acting as Presbytery Minister Administration as well Presbytery Secretary. Lord, we pray that they will be blessed as they assist congregations to develop new ministries and to fill vacancies.

Lord, we pray for **ourselves**. We ask for your blessing on our planning to be a Cluster. We especially pray for working groups which are meeting during this fortnight to develop proposals for consideration by our three congregations. Lord, please empower our Ministry Team of Peter and Tina and the Regional Council as they guide our ministry and justice activities. Lord, please bless our outreach to the community through the Op Shop and Centre 81. We also seek your blessing on the Kid's Hope ministry and the work of its mentors. We pray for the needs of our members who are struggling with health concerns and other difficulties. May they know your love and the support of family and friends. Amen

INVITATION

Here is the table of life around which is a place for every person. Come to hear your name. Come to find a new life.

Come to take your place among the people of God.

May the grace and peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

When we are travelling,

God is with us.

When we are alone,

God comes to us.

When we feel weak and unsure,

God offers us food for the journey.

(Leader) You:

God of Jews and Samaritans;

God of Mary and Martha;

God who commands sharing;

God who answers the needs of your children.

(Left) You:

God of everlasting love;

God of promise;

God of faith;

God of presence.

(Right) You:

God of prophets and martyrs;

God of teachers and questioners;

God of hosts and guests;

God of all space and time.
(All) We, your people, gather here out of love for you.
We gather here in the sure and certain hope that you hear the cries of all,
and your reach is great enough that no one is ever beyond your knowing and loving.

Come to us in this sacred meal.
As we break bread, may we be reconnected to the Christ.
As we drink from this cup, may we be strengthened to go forth in Christ's name,
offering forgiveness and wholeness to all people.

Hear us as then we sing with all creation:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth and full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!

We give thanks that the compassion of this table is a sign of the compassion of your realm here now and yet still to come on every roadside, in every home, in every future, in every gathering where love is sought and made known. May our living be our thanksgiving retelling the story in every moment of the night Jesus took bread and shared it took wine, and offered it saying, "eat, drink all of you." In our thanksgiving may we live as the Body of Christ within the new covenant sealed for all for the forgiveness of sins.
 For we remember Jesus the Christ always in whose name we are bold 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

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ.
 The gifts of God for the people of God

THE DISTRIBUTION PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Dismissal from UIW

Go forth into the world in peace
 Be of good courage
 Hold fast to that which is good
 Render no one evil for evil
 Strengthen the faint-hearted
 Support the weak, help the afflicted, honour all people
 Love and serve the Lord rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn 778: Shalom to you now – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC>

Pastoral care tips – Rev Tina



What's your Horizon?

**Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine
as You shine: as a light to others**
Cardinal Newman

**This version of This Little Light of mine has been watched by 42 million people, mostly
children**

Let the light of Christ shine through you. Don't hide it.

**This little light of mine 2016
From the DVD "Let it Shine" Listener Kids**
<https://youtu.be/cKkblZtqhyQ>

I'm reading Joan Chittister's book: Scarred by struggle, transformed by Hope

In this book Joan explores why some people come through struggle whole of heart and sure of soul. She explores other faiths and how every major spiritual revelation known to humankind is based on the bedrock of hope. A spirituality of hope that helps followers with the power to believe in life and cope with life and live life, whatever burdens are being faced. We have stories of struggle and hope as part of our tradition, stories like Jacob wrestling with the angel. Joan's book is an account of the way hope grows in us, despite our moments of darkness. Over the next few weeks as I read her book, I will share some insights. For now, I invite you to pray and ponder about what gives you hope.

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