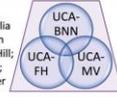




**Whitehorse
Uniting
Cluster**

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



Sunday 12th June 2022

Introit – TIS 179 Praise with joy the world's Creator

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLZszh-wFz0>

Call to Worship

Come, let our hearts be glad
and our spirits rejoice,
for God has shown us the path of life
and leads us in the ways of peace.
May the seeds of hopefulness
be planted in our hearts today
and the fruits of hopefulness
blossom and grow within our community.

(Kate McIlhagga, *The Green Heart of the Snowdrop* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2004), p. 24)

Welcome

As we come together, we remember the land on which we gather, and we acknowledge its first inhabitants – the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. May the same God who created this land in ancient times dwell with them today, and guide all of us together towards reconciliation.

Opening Prayer

Wisdom is calling us
to cancel debt
to risk in faith
to give unconditional love

Wisdom whispers
in the rubbish dumps
in the arid wastes
in the suburban jungles
in the empty homes

Wisdom whispers words of comfort,
words of hope to the evicted and the lonely

Wisdom reminds us that in a vast universe God became matter
that we could be made whole

God became one of us in Jesus who was hungry and homeless
afraid and betrayed

He teaches us that when we help those who are without
to find food and shelter
we welcome him

Spirit of wisdom, breath of God
awaken in us
understanding and forgiveness
insight and commitment
as we try to follow
in the footsteps of Jesus.
(McIlhagga, *The Green Heart of the Snowdrop*, p. 161)

Prayer of Confession

As we come together
in the presence of God's awesome spirit
we remember also the ways in which we have fallen short

We have failed to love with the same depth and passion
with which we have been loved.
We have failed to welcome others with the same grace and hospitality
with which we have been welcomed.
We have failed to give with the same sacrificing generosity
from which we have been given.

For when we have done wrong, and when we have failed to do what is right, we ask forgiveness.

[pause]

We can be confident to ask forgiveness, for our God is a merciful and loving God
who is with us today and all days
Forgiving, blessing, and accompanying us always.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn – TIS 418 She sits like a bird

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EmkyT6uUZE>

Readings

Proverbs Chapter 8: 1-4 and 22-31

- 1 Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?
2 On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
4 "To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.
22 The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago.
23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth—
26 when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil.
27 When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,

29 when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

30 then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,

31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Romans Chapter 5: 1-5

1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

John Chapter 16: 12-15

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

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Being at one with the Triune God

The Symbols of Trinity

We have many symbols of the Trinity that matter to us. They are all meant to remind us of the affirmations of faith. Symbols and Icons point to something important. Different traditions use various symbols to point to what matters to them – we use the empty cross, the table (called altar by some), the placement of the pulpit, the bringing in of the Bible, the Paschal candle, musical instrumentation, stained glass windows, brass commemoration plates; we have many symbols in our tradition and many of us find them helpful.

So when we talk of the Trinity, what comes to mind? Take a moment to reflect and consider.

Trinitarian theology came late in the early church, firstly trying to work out the person of Jesus. Out of these debates came God 1, 2, 3 or 1 and 3, perhaps an attempt to intellectually make sense of something in the Bible more described in what is seen and experienced.

The Bible talks extensively about God and God's Spirit in the Old Testament; even 'children of God' but never gets into a debate over 'is God 1 or 2'. Even in the New Testament, we hear of the Spirit of God in and on Jesus. But this is all to do with Jesus' ministry and mission. It expresses Jesus' unity of mind and heart with God. It was only later that we started talking of Jesus' divinity – adoption or birth from God.

For the New Testament, Trinitarian theology is expressive of mission, ministry and relationship with God and each other.

The essence of Trinitarian thinking is – being at one with God and expressing the mission of God as shown in Jesus.

To have a Trinitarian theology is to be in mission.

That means we see ourselves primarily not called to worship, but to be in mission – God's mission (as expressed in Jesus). Yes we come together to worship, pray, reflect and support one another but all with the purpose of returning to walk in the way of Jesus, *sharing good news, being a community of healing and a people of grace (reconciliation).*

Hymn – TIS 631 Father Lord of all Creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5fqJaLg3ug>

Offering Prayer

We have received richly out of the generosity of God, and we pause now to offer in return – from our lives, from our hearts, and also from the fruit of our labour, in the prayer that our donations might do lasting and meaningful work in the service of God’s people. Amen.

Candle Prayers

We bring to mind our prayers for others at this time

Prayers of the People – Geoffrey Willis

Dear Lord, in our prayers for the world we focus on the African nations of **Botswana** and **Zimbabwe**. These two countries, like many others in Africa, suffer from serious droughts and desertification which have left families with serious food shortages. We pray, dear Lord, for the herders and farmers who continue to raise cattle and food despite these difficulties. We ask that you will empower the development of effective measures to improve the health and life expectancy of all. These lands have endured governments whose policies have not always been fair for their people. So we pray, Lord, for stable economies that enable all people to prosper and live in justice and peace. We ask too for the fair election of democratic governments to counter instability, violence and human rights abuses. Please strengthen, dear Lord, the prophetic witness of churches to protest injustices and advocate good governance.

Here is a prayer from Botswana which we pray with them. I quote:

*Dear God, our builder,
you have all the building materials needed to construct our societies.
You have all the strength to put wisdom on all that has fallen apart in our lives.
You have the wisdom to reshape our world.
Inspire us with all your wisdom, strength and love,
to rebuild the broken walls in our community.*

End of quote.

[By Rev. Cheryl Dibeela, Gaborone, Botswana. *Africa Praying: A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, ed. Musa W. Dube, WCC, 2003, pp.57, 175, 187-88. From the World Council of Churches website: www.oikoumene.org.]

We also pray for the protection of the people of the **Ukraine** during the current war. Please empower their President and curb the belligerence of those who wish to do them harm. In our own region, please uphold those Pacific Island nations who seek to build peaceful alliances with New Zealand and Australia.

In our local ecumenical prayer cycle, we pray for the priest and people of **St Mark’s Anglican Church, Forest Hill** led by the Rev Philip Knight. St Mark’s offer two services each Sunday which are also live streamed and on YouTube. We pray for their Community Meals program when, on the first Thursday of the month, St Mark’s puts on a free hot lunch. The lunch is to show Christian hospitality to the local community with good conversation and a meal for anyone who wishes to join in. St Mark’s also hosts a wide range of group activities for all ages.

Our prayer for Uniting Churches in our Presbytery highlights the congregation of **Deepdene**. This congregation celebrated 100 years in Deepdene in 2015. We pray for their minister, the Rev Gi Won Kang, and their youth worker, Tim Womersley. Deepdene has a strong Korean membership. Church services are currently in-person and also streamed on Zoom. Lunch together is a regular part of their Sunday program. An important part of their ministry is the Deepdene Korean School which meets every Monday. Planning is underway to establish an adult class. We pray, dear Lord, for their other activities, including their Wednesday women’s prayer group and Korean Community Playgroups which have waiting lists. May all these activities be blessed as their members serve one another and their local community.

Dear Lord, we pray for **Melbourne City Mission**. This organisation helps people lead positive lives through a broad range of support services, including homelessness, early years, disability, palliative care, early childhood intervention and education. We pray for their work as they seek to create inclusive, fair and just communities to ensure that all people have equal access to opportunities.

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 for our Ministry Student, Daniel. Lord, we seek your blessing on the work of 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. We pray that their needs may be met and

that they experience love and care from those who provide nursing and medical services. We especially pray today for Margot Kemke and her family as they mourn the death of Ray. May Margot know the comfort of your loving arms.

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.*

Hymn – TIS 547 Be thou my vision

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT_Hjg

Blessing

Now may the blessing of the Holy Trinity of love
be upon you:
the fire of the Spirit to ignite you,
the love of God to encircle you,
and the wisdom of Christ to enliven you,
this day and evermore.

(Uniting in Worship 2 (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2000), p. 331)

Outro song – TIS 779 May the feet of God walk with you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhiG-Vj8CGU&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=40>