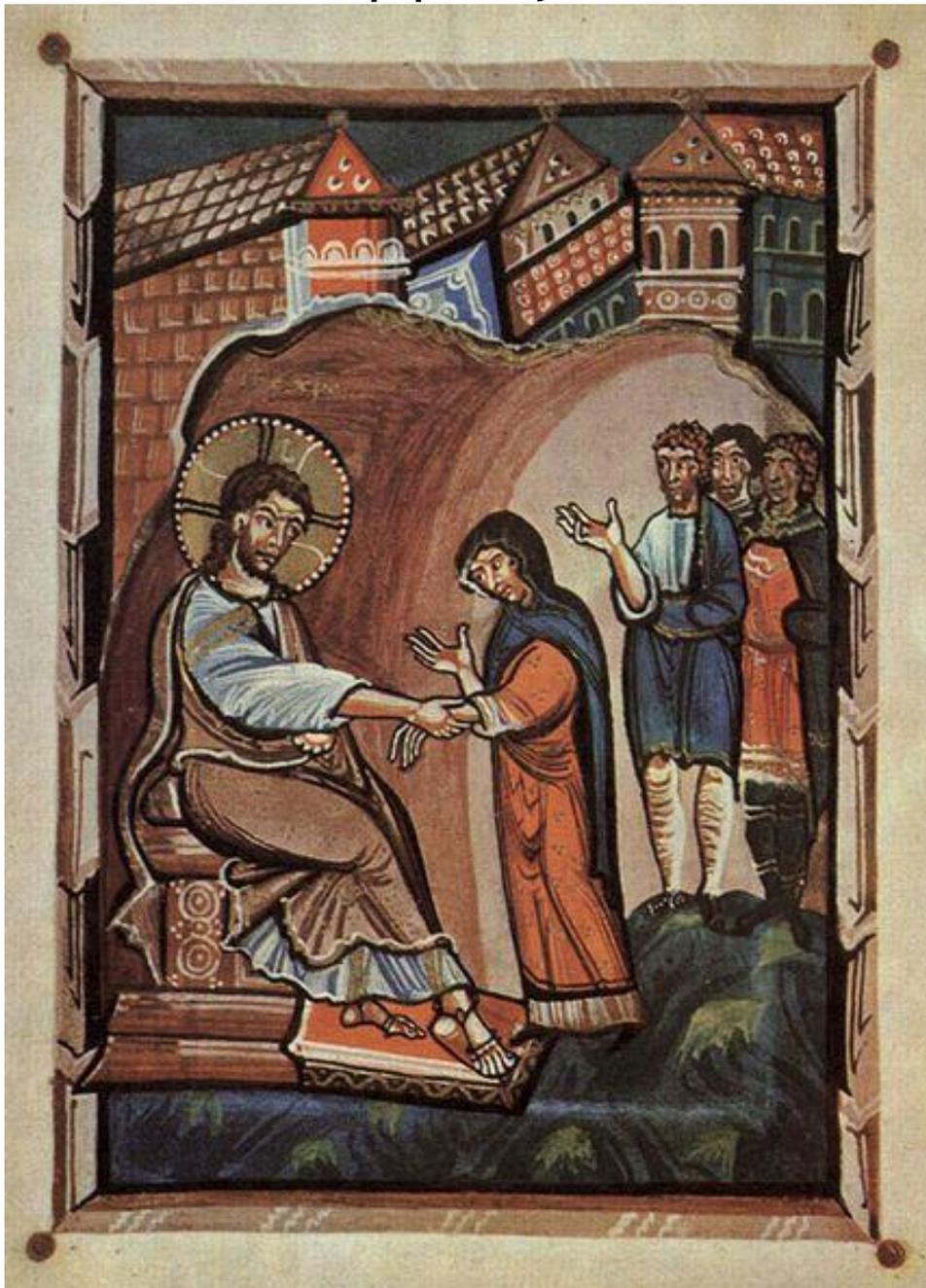


ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



7th February

Epiphany 7



Jesus healing Peter's mother in law
Meister des Hilda-Evangeliers

Today in our gathered worship we commission elders, church councilors and members of the formation group. Please pray for them and be mindful of them as they commit and recommit themselves to the work and life of the congregation. Today we especially celebrate and give thanks for Heather Baxter's -more-than 20 years of service as secretary of the Church Council.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Mardie Townsend (chairperson)
Dennis Taylor (treasurer)
Robyn Mulder
Heather Baxter
Marg David
Brian Moore (secretary)
Ron Townsend (Minister in Association)

FORMATION GROUP

David Baxter
Dianne Richter
Karen Roberts
Lorraine Denniston
Warwick Barry

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

**The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.**

He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

Psalm 147

PRAYERS OF GATHERING – A LITANY OF PEACE

In peace, as people of the light,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

Joining our voices
with the deep sighs of creation
yearning for redemption;
with sun, moon and stars,
tree and plain, desert and bush;
the sea and its inhabitants,
with all creatures wild and tame,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

For the Bunn Wurrung people,
who came first to this place;
and for all faithful custodians of the earth,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

For all who share life with others:
for parents and carers,
teachers, artists, healers,
peacemakers and reconcilers,
and those who seek to renew the face of the earth;
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

For all who know their need of others:
for children and old people everywhere,
the infirm and disabled,
the lonely and bereaved,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

For those who complete the afflictions of Christ,
whose suffering seems without end:
who lack food, shelter, work and dignity,
and suffer the violence of the proud;
for all who cry for justice day and night,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

For all in authority:
those who require wisdom
and those who require restraint,
and all who serve those in need,
keeping them from harm;
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

With the whole Church,
from *this place* to the ends of the earth;
with each one gathered here in prayer,
with absent brothers and sisters,
that we may be renewed in the faith of Christ,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

With God's faithful servants of every time and place,
with apostles, prophets, saints and martyrs,
with all who have gone before,
who inspire, guide and encourage us,
let us pray to the Lord:
Into your communion, Lord, gather all creation.

CONFESSION

O God, you search us out and know us,
and all that we are is open to you.
We confess our sin.
Lord have mercy

We use our power to dominate
and our weaknesses to manipulate:

Kyrie eleison

We evade responsibility
and fail to confront evil:

Kyrie eleison

We are seduced by fashionable dreams
and pursue our desires at the expense of others:

Kyrie eleison

We despair of changing the world
and neglect to change even ourselves:

Kyrie eleison

We fail to integrate spirit and flesh
and forfeit our wholeness and dignity:

Kyrie eleison

We turn to you,
O God of infinite mercy;
we renounce evil;
we claim your love;
we desire to be made whole.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

Be assured of the word of Jesus,
That God is love
And sees us with eyes of mercy.
Be assured that God desires
Healing and wholeness for us all
And that we can rest in peace in this word.
Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 40. 21-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

Kyrie eleison:

'Lord, have mercy' 'Lord, you
are the merciful one'

The *Kyrie eleison* appears in
early Greek liturgies, and in the
West from the 5th century

Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
'My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God?'
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

1 Corinthians 9. 22-23

To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Mark 1. 29-39

As soon as Jesus and the disciples left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' He answered, 'Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.' And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.



Christ healing the sick - Rembrandt von Rijn

REFLECTING

I find great comfort and joy in the words of Isaiah for today: *they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength*. One of the things about our scriptures which gives me great comfort is the way in which words such as these resonate in me. I find myself asking, how can utterances which were written more than 2500 years ago still speak to me? Yet they do.

There is an unusual intimacy about this scene with Jesus and the disciples going to the house of Peter. They have been at the synagogue – public space – and now return to private, domestic space. Surprisingly, Peter is married, and I suppose has children. Yet we are told he leaves them and goes off, fishing for men (people). At the end of this episode Jesus then goes to solitary space.

But Jesus is pulled back into the needs of the crowds which have already begun to follow him. The need is clearly great, and he speaks to them and heals them in ways which point to the kingdom of heaven. The calling of the church is to seek to embody the Christ in our own place and time. This is the mystery of what the church seeks to do. Yet we carry this calling in the flawed containers of human organisations. While we have so many different forms of the church, each with its own traditions and emphases, each is called to bring the kingdom close.

As Christendom, which we all grew up in and which formed our sense of the church, is passing away, the calling to the leadership of the church is to adapt to this new reality and to make space for leadership which is able to thrive in it. I fear what we have understandably done over past

decades is to hold tightly to what was slipping away. Each of us have our own reasons for doing so, not least of these because this was what formed us. But space needs to be made for something new. We need to be able to do this if our church is to have future - we need to let go, make space for freedom and for new possibilities to emerge. The future will be a time primarily of the spirit, not of programs which was the character of the church life we knew.

This requires a willingness to withdraw and be still and to listen for the nurturing touch of God, as Jesus does after being at Peter's house. We are so attached to being busy and too many of us were raised with a sense that our value as people and our sense of self worth is based on our busyness and achievements. This is corrosive to gaining a sense of our self as children of God. We are forced to find this as we move into old age but Jesus, even as a young and much-in-demand man, knew this.

We can pray for our congregational leaders today as they are commissioned, that individually and jointly that they will be able to seek that still small voice that nurtures, inspires and sustains the life of God within.

HYMN: TIS 417

Loving Spirit, loving Spirit,
you have chosen me to be -
you have drawn me to your wonder,
you have set your sign on me.

Like a mother you enfold me,
hold my life within your own,
feed me with your very body,
form me of your flesh and bone.

Like a father you protect me,
teach me the discerning eye,
hoist me up upon your shoulder,
let me see the world from high.

Friend and lover, in your closeness
I am known and held and blessed:
in your promise is my comfort,
in your presence I may rest.

Loving Spirit, loving Spirit,
you have chosen me to be -
you have drawn me to your wonder,
you have set your sign on me

Shirley Erena Murray
1931-

COMMISSIONING OF ELDERS, CHURCH COUNCILORS AND FORMATION GROUP MEMBERS

As we commission congregational leaders you can share in this action through this liturgy and give thanks for the way God continues to call us into service.

Merciful God,
you renew the strength
of all who wait upon you.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit,
that, in serving others,
we may always be true to Christ,
our Lord and our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever.
Amen.

INTRODUCTION

There are different gifts,
but it is the same Spirit who gives them.

There are different ways of serving God,
but it is the same Lord who is served.

God works through different people
in different ways,
**but it is the same God whose purposes
are achieved through them all.**

Each one of us is given a gift by the Spirit,
to use for the common good.

During baptism, we as God's people
promise to love, encourage and support
our brothers and sisters in faith,
that they may grow
in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the knowledge and love of God.

**We seek God's help
to live out our baptism
as a loving community in Christ:
nurturing one another in faith,
upholding one another in prayer,
and encouraging one another in service,
until Christ comes.**

THE COMMISSIONING

We have the joy of using our gifts
as members of Christ's Church
which is his body
continuing his ministry in the world today.

Today we commission those who offer themselves for service
As Elders, as Church Councillors and as members of the Formation group
in the life of our congregation and community.

Called by name, those to be commissioned come forward

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
do you believe that you are called by God
through the Church to work
in the life of our congregation and community?

I do, God being my helper.

Will you be diligent and prayerful in your preparation
and continue to equip yourself for this ministry?

With God's help, I will.

Let us pray:

Loving God,
We thank you for those who have responded to your call.
We pray that your Holy Spirit may inspire them
as they undertake this ministry in your name.

**By their encouragement and example,
may they enable others to discover
new life in Christ. Amen.**

Members of the body of Christ,
will you encourage in their ministry,
these workers among God's children, younger and older,
and support them with your prayers?

With God's help we will.

AARONIC BLESSING – TIS 776

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

PRAYER

God of grace,
you have called us to be servants of Jesus Christ,
and to share in his ministry of love to all people.

Renew our zeal,
give us joy in your service.
direct us by your Spirit of wisdom
and fill us with the gifts of your grace,
that together we may declare
your wonderful deeds
and show your love to the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

HYMN: TIS 506

Author of life divine,
you have a table spread,
furnished with mystic wine
and everlasting bread;
preserve the life yourself have given,
preserve the life yourself have given,
and feed and train us up to heaven.

Our needy souls supply
with fresh supplies of love,
till all your life we gain,
and all your fullness prove,
and, strengthened by your perfect grace,
and, strengthened by your perfect grace,
behold without a veil your face.

Charles Wesley
1707-88 alt.

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Today we will use this Eucharistic prayer.

The Lord be with you.
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you, gracious God, sovereign in grace and love,
for all things come from you.

We praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ, the living Word;
crucified and risen,
he is the beginning of a new creation.

You poured out the Spirit, pledge and foretaste of the future,
that we might not lose the way
as we look for the renewal of all creation.

Therefore,
with the whole realm of nature around us,
with earth, sea and sky,
we sing to you.

With the angels and archangels who surround us,
with all the saints before us and beside us,
with brothers and sisters,

east and west, north and south,
we sing to you.

And with our loved ones,
separate from us now,
who yet, in this mystery are close to us,
we sing the hymn of never ending praise:

**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.**

Blessed are you, O God;
your Son our mother
nourishes and sustains us
with the pure milk of his very self,
embodying the reign
of justice, mercy and peace;
suffering in his own body on the cross
the brokenness of creation,
embracing our brokenness
and making us whole.

Several spiritual writers have
used the image of Jesus as
Mother: e.g., St Anselm,
Archbishop of Canterbury
(1033–1109) and Dame
Julian of Norwich (c. 1342–
1416).

On the night he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said:
'This is my body, which is for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.'

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, whenever you drink it,
for the remembrance of me.'

So, as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the mystery of our faith, singing:

**Christ has died;
Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.**

Therefore,
with the Church throughout the ages,
we celebrate the life that Jesus creates among his people,
the life that overcomes death.

Made one with him,
and thus one with each other,
we lay before you these gifts of bread and wine;
for here we offer and present to you ourselves,
our bodies, minds and spirits,
to be a holy and continual sacrifice
of praise and thanksgiving to you.

**Come, Holy Spirit,
brood over this bread and this wine.
May they be for us
the body and blood of Christ,
vibrant with life,
healing, renewing
and making us whole.
Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

Spirit of Jesus,
draw us into your blazing heart,
that as these gifts are consumed in us,
we might be consumed in transfiguring love
and thus become one with you,
bone of your bone,
flesh of your flesh,
living our prayer
and praying our life
until love and loyalty embrace,
peace and justice kiss,
and all are free as Christ is free.

**Glory be to you, O God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be all honour and praise,
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

... as our Lord taught us we are confident to say:

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 gifts of God for the people of God.

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

PRAYER

God of heaven and earth,
you make us one in Christ.
Inspire us with new vision
and the wisdom of ancient dreams.
Give us strength to walk together
until we come to our eternal home.
In Christ's name. Amen.

BLESSING

The blessing of the Holy Trinity of Love
be upon you:

May God take your hand as you go,
Christ be your constant companion,
and the Spirit guide you on the Way
this day and evermore. **Amen.**

Rev. Andrew Boyle

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Rev. Deacon Pam White

Mobile 0434 378 099; Email: pamdwhite@optusnet.com.au

Music Director: Mr Peter Hurley

Administrator: Mrs Cathy O'Connor

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Website: www.ormondunitingchurch.org

NEWS AND NOTICES

CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICE BEARERS

The following positions were confirmed at the recent Church Council meeting for 2021.

2021 OFFICE BEARER POSITIONS

- Church Council Chair, Mardie Townsend
- Church Council Secretary, Brian Moore
- Church Treasurer, Dennis Taylor

We acknowledge Heather Baxter and Joan Cleghorn who are finishing their Office Bearer roles held with Ormond Uniting Church, and thank each for their tireless work in these roles which have been held over several years.

MORNING TEA

The COVID group (Mardie, Robyn, Lorraine and Marg) met on Thursday evening and it has been decided not to recommence morning tea until March. The group will meet near the end of February to review the situation. More details regarding this decision will be in the February Pathfinder.

PANCAKE DAY

The COVID group also discussed this event, which will not be held live at OUC. However; a Zoom opportunity will be available. Details also available in next week's Pathfinder.

SUNDAY EVENING WALKS DURING LENT

As part of our Lenten observance this year you are invited to take part in a meditative walk each Sunday evening over the six weeks, commencing on Sunday 21st February. We will gather at Allnutt Park on Wheatley Road at 6pm and be given a provocation and question to reflect on as we walk. As we reflect on issues of reconciliation between First and Second Peoples over Lent, this will be an opportunity to consider how we are each involved and how we can each, and together, move our nation toward healing. We will gather at the Wright Street Rotunda near the centre of the park. Enquiries to: Ron Townsend

ASH WEDNESDAY

Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return. These are not easy words which are said to us as ash is applied to our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. Our willingness to have ourselves marked with the sign of the cross and to hear these words is sign of our openness to healing and the lightening of our loads by the one who says to us: *my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* It seems counterintuitive to engage in this ritual as a way into the light of Christ but this is what it offers us.

This Ash Wednesday we will send you a pack for observing Ash Wednesday at home. It is an opportunity to begin the Lenten journey and to enter into our collective reflection on the relationship between First and Second Peoples of Australia.

UNITING CHURCH SYNOD

The Synod will be meeting virtually this year from Friday 26th to Sunday 28th February. Amongst a full program we will be electing a new moderator who will commence their 3-year term in 2022 (see the candidates' profiles in this month's Crosslight). Andrew will be participating.

ORMOND LEARNING HUB: AN OPEN AND CURIOUS FAITH LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We are delighted that our plans to launch a full year of courses for the Learning HUB are well advanced. The team of Lisa Saffin, Lynley Moore, Brad Denniston and Andrew Boyle have been working together over January and are excited about our program for the year. This is our first course:

Believing in our Contemporary World -

As Christians, how do we reconcile tensions between being educated in a rational, secular context while drawing on ancient texts as the inspiration and guide to our faith. In three video sessions we will hear scholars and pastors unpack these issues.

Dates: Thursdays, 4th, 11th & 18th March

Time: 7.00 - 9.00pm

Format: Face-to-face

Location: Ormond Uniting Church, cnr North and Booran Roads

Cost: \$30

Facilitators: Andrew Boyle & Brad Denniston

More information on the church website

Enrolments to: learninghub@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

ANDREW ON LEAVE

Andrew will be on two weeks' leave from Monday 8th February. Pam will lead the services while Andrew is away. He will return from leave on Tuesday 23rd February. The Uniting Church Synod meets 26th to 28th February and Andrew will be (virtually) attending this. Ron Townsend will lead the service of Sunday 28th.

ROSTER for Sunday 14 February 2021

READING	Dianne Richter	
PRAYERS	Dianne Richter	
SUNDAY OK	Dianne Richter	Lisa Saffin
DOOR DUTY	David Northwood	Elizabeth Northwood
SOUND	Robyn Mulder	
COUNTING	Hans Tilstra	Jan Davenport
RESOURCES DELIVERY Fri 12Feb	Warwick and Anne Barry	

