

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



21st February 2021

Lent 1



COVID arrangements – *face masks must be worn inside today, unless you have a legal reason to not wear one.*

We acknowledge that we meet on land that was under the custodianship of the First Peoples for millenia. We respect their elders, past and present, and are working towards reconciliation.

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

To be free, we must be able to give up what is past
And so respond to God's call today and beyond,
So come, let us walk in the light of Christ.

HYMN TIS 186 Stars and planets flung in orbit

Stars and planets flung in orbit,
galaxies that swirl through space,
powers hid within the atom,
cells that form an infant's face:
these, O God, in silence praise you;
by your wisdom they are made.

Skies adorned with sunset splendour,
silent peaks in calm repose,
golden fields awaiting harvest,
foaming surf and fragrant rose:
earth, its bounty clothed with beauty,
echoes all creation's praise.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,
beast and fish and swarming insect,
soaring bird, rejoicing, free:
these, your creatures, join in chorus,
praising you in wordless song.

Humankind, earth's deepest mystery,
born of dust but touched by grace,
torn apart by tongue and colour,
yet a single, striving race:
we, in whom you trace your image,
add our words to nature's song.

Gracious God, we bring before you
gifts of human life alone,
truth that throbs through song and story,

visions caught in paint and stone:
these, O God, we gladly offer,
gifts to praise the Giver's name.

Christ, the Word before creation
as creation's final goal,
once you came for earth's redemption;
by your Spirit make earth whole:
then, O God, the new creation
will your praise for ever sing.

Herman G. Steumpfle 1923-

PRAYERS

Breath of our every fibre
Flowing in and beyond the stars
may we rejoice in your ever-renewing life.
May your love flourish.
May your peace be known in all beings and becomings.
Sustain us in what we need.
Transform the suffering we inflict as we transform the suffering we endure.
Free us from all that crushes joy and keep us from unbearable pain.
Let your way be our journey,
Your truth our story.
And your life our coming home, now and always. Amen

(Josephine Inkpin after Jesus. A reworking of The Our Father)

Eternal God, we breathe in Your Spirit,
the Spirit of Jesus who knew the vision of your realm,
the Spirit who brooded over the waters ever before our birth
who inspired the prophets
who sustains our belief
and fills us with hope.
Fill us with confidence
Make us available to respond to the cries of your people,
to interpret the signs of our times
that we may prepare for your kingdom.
Free us from complacency,
Give us courage to face all that tempts us away from your ways.
Fill us with the vision of your world, confirm in us the dreams
that lead to your peace for all, found in compassion and justice. Amen

EARLY WORD

SCRIPTURE

Today we again use the modernized paraphrases of the readings as presented by Baptist Minister Nathan Nettleton. Often to read in a modern idiom helps the words resonate with us.

You may also like to read the translation in your own particular Bible. It is generally accepted that the New Revised Standard Version is the most accurate and writes usually in gender inclusive language. Some prefer the poetic language of the King James Version because they grew up with it. Perhaps a danger in reading the always familiar is that we don't hear anything new. As a practice for Lent you might care to read a variety of versions and ponder on any phrase that seems to be saying something new to you.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Your Word O Lord is a lamp to our feet
A light to our path

Genesis 9: 8-17

God said to Noah and his family:

“I, myself, am forging an alliance with you, and with all your descendants to come, and with every living creature; all the birds, domestic animals, and wild animals of the earth who came out of the lifeboat with you. In the terms of this alliance which I am forging with you, I am giving you my word that never again will all life be wiped out by a flood. There will never be another flood that will totally destroy the earth. I am making this alliance between me and you and all the living creatures that are with you, and I am signing it in the clouds. The rainbow that I have put in the clouds for you all to see is my signature on the alliance between me and the earth. Whenever I make the clouds gather and my rainbow signature becomes visible there, I will remember the alliance that governs my relationship with you and with every living creature on earth. I will remember, and the waters will never again become a flood that wipes out all life on earth. I will see the rainbow which I have signed in the clouds and remember that I am party to a permanent binding alliance with every living creature of every kind on the earth. I assure you, Noah, that with this signature that you see in the clouds, I have sealed the alliance between me, God, and the entire community of living creatures on the earth.”

Psalm 25: 1-10, selected verses

I gladly offer you everything I am, LORD.

**I have put my trust in you, God;
.....please don't let me down;
.....don't give my enemies grounds to gloat.**

Be there for those who hang in there for you, no matter what:

**Let me in on your way of doing things, LORD;
.....teach me how to follow your tracks.**

Steer me along your ways of truth, and teach me all about them.
.....Only you can save me from disaster, God,
.....so I'll wait for you before setting out.

**Your love and mercy have been as timeless and dependable as the rock;
.....please don't change your mind about them now!**

Don't keep a record of everything I've done wrong in the past.
.....Let your unshakable love colour your view of me,
.....and keep your reputation for generosity intact!

**You always do what is good and right, LORD,
.....and so you patiently retrain those who do wrong.**

You pilot a safe course for those who are not too full of themselves;
.....you give lessons on your ways to the humble folk.

**Every path you tread, LORD, is marked by solid love and loyalty
.....for the benefit of all who keep our end of the bargain with you.**

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1 Peter 3: 18-22

The Messiah copped the consequences of human corruption
..... and suffered them all in one hit.
He who had done only what is right
..... suffered for those who had done wrong
..... in order to bring you home to God.
He was killed by human hands
..... but made alive by the Spirit.

In the spirit, he went and preached freedom to those who refused God's way in past generations and whose spirits have remained in prison ever since. In their own day, God had given them every chance. While Noah was building his boat, for example, there was plenty of time for people to realise why and change their ways, but in the end a mere eight people were saved from the waters by getting into that lifeboat. Their experience was a bit of a preview of the way baptism saves you. It is not just a bath to clean up your appearance. Rather, you are pulled from the water to a new life so that you can stand before God with a clear conscience. You are raised from death to life with Jesus the Messiah, who has since taken his place in heaven as God's right hand man, and he has the last word on everything and everyone. There is no authority or power, human or angel, that can overrule him.

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Mark 1: 9-15

During those days, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. The moment he came up from the water, he saw the sky open up and the Spirit coming down like a diving kookaburra and taking hold of him. And a voice filled the air, saying, "You are my Son; the love of my life. You fill me with pride."

Straight after that, the Spirit drove him out into a remote wilderness area. He had to prove himself for forty days in the bush, while the devil tried every trick in the book to lure him off-track. Jesus was in tough country, surrounded by wild animals, and God's angels took care of everything he needed.

After John the baptiser was arrested, Jesus headed up to Galilee and began spreading the good news of God. This was the guts of his message:

"The time has come!
The culture of God is close at hand.
Turn your lives around and accept the good news."

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The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

HYMN TIS 684 Love will be our Lenten calling

Love will be our Lenten calling,
love to shake and shatter sin,
waking every closed, cold spirit,
stirring new life deep within,

till the quickened heart remembers
what our Easter birth can mean.

Peace will be our Lenten living
as we turn for home again,
longing for the words of pardon,
stripping off old grief and pain,
till we stand, restored and joyful,
with the Church on Easter day.

Truth will be our Lenten learning:
hear the Crucified One call!
Shadowed by the Saviour's passion,
images and idols fall,
and, in Easter's holy splendour,
God alone is all in all.

Elizabeth J. Smith 1956-

SERMON

HYMN TIS 595 (*tune Beaumont*) O Jesus I have promised

O Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
Lord, be for ever near me,
my master and my friend:
I shall not fear the battle
if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if you will be my guide.

Still let me feel you near me:
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
and tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw me nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear you speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
Lord, speak to reassure me,

to chasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
true guardian of my soul.

Lord, let me see your footmarks
and in them plant my own;
that I may follow boldly
and in your strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my friend.

John Ernest Bode 1816-74 *alt.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE prepared by Ron Townsend

HYMN TIS 672 (ii) Lord of earth and all creation

Lord of earth and all creation,
let your love possess our land:
wealth, and freedom, far horizons,
mountain, forest, shining sand:
may we share, in faith and friendship,
gifts unmeasured from your hand.

People of the ancient Dreamtime,
they who found this country first,
ask with those, the later comers,
will our dream be blessed or cursed?
Grant us, Lord, new birth, new living,
hope for which our children thirst.

Lord, life-giving healing Spirit,
on our hurts your mercy shower;
lead us by your inward dwelling,
guiding, guarding, every hour.
Bless and keep our land Australia:
in your will her peace and power.

Michael Rayner Thwaites 1915-
and Honor Mary Thwaites 1914-93

BLESSING

May you go where the Spirit leads you
May you face your wild beasts honestly and with courage
May you be attended by angels
And may you follow the path Jesus beckons you on as you speak the Good News...

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Spirit nurture you, support you, inspire you always.

WORD OF MISSION

Go out to seek reconciliation with all people, especially the First Peoples of our Land

We go in Christ's name Amen

POSTLUDE

References

Nardi Simpson The Song of the Crocodile , Hachette, Australia 2020
Exploring the Vision Study 2 UCA Synod of Vic Tasassembly.uca.org.au/walkingtogether
Dictionary of the Bible T & T Clark Edinburgh 1914
Prayer composed by Rev Josephine Inkpin

Rev. Andrew Boyle

Office: 9578 1553; Mobile 0409 869 009; Email: ajmboyle@optusnet.com.au

Rev. Deacon Pam White

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

Music Director: Mr Peter Hurley

Administrator: Mrs Cathy O'Connor

Tuesdays & Fridays, 9am-3.30pm – 9578 1553
office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

Website: www.ormondunitingchurch.org

NEWS AND NOTICES

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 (pending Government restrictions advice) . 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

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 is currently on two weeks' leave from Monday 8th February. Pam will lead the service this Sunday 21 February. Andrew 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 February.

ROSTER for Sunday 28 February 2021

READING	Brenda Grootendorst	
PRAYERS	Mardie Townsend	
EARLY WORD	Heather Baxter	
SUNDAY OK	Dianne Richter	Elizabeth Northwood
DOOR DUTY	Dianne Richter	Russell Hoffman
SOUND	Neville Parker	
COUNTING	Graeme Davenport	Gary Richter
MUSIC	Peter Hurley	
RESOURCES DELIVERY Fri 26 Feb	Ron Townsend	