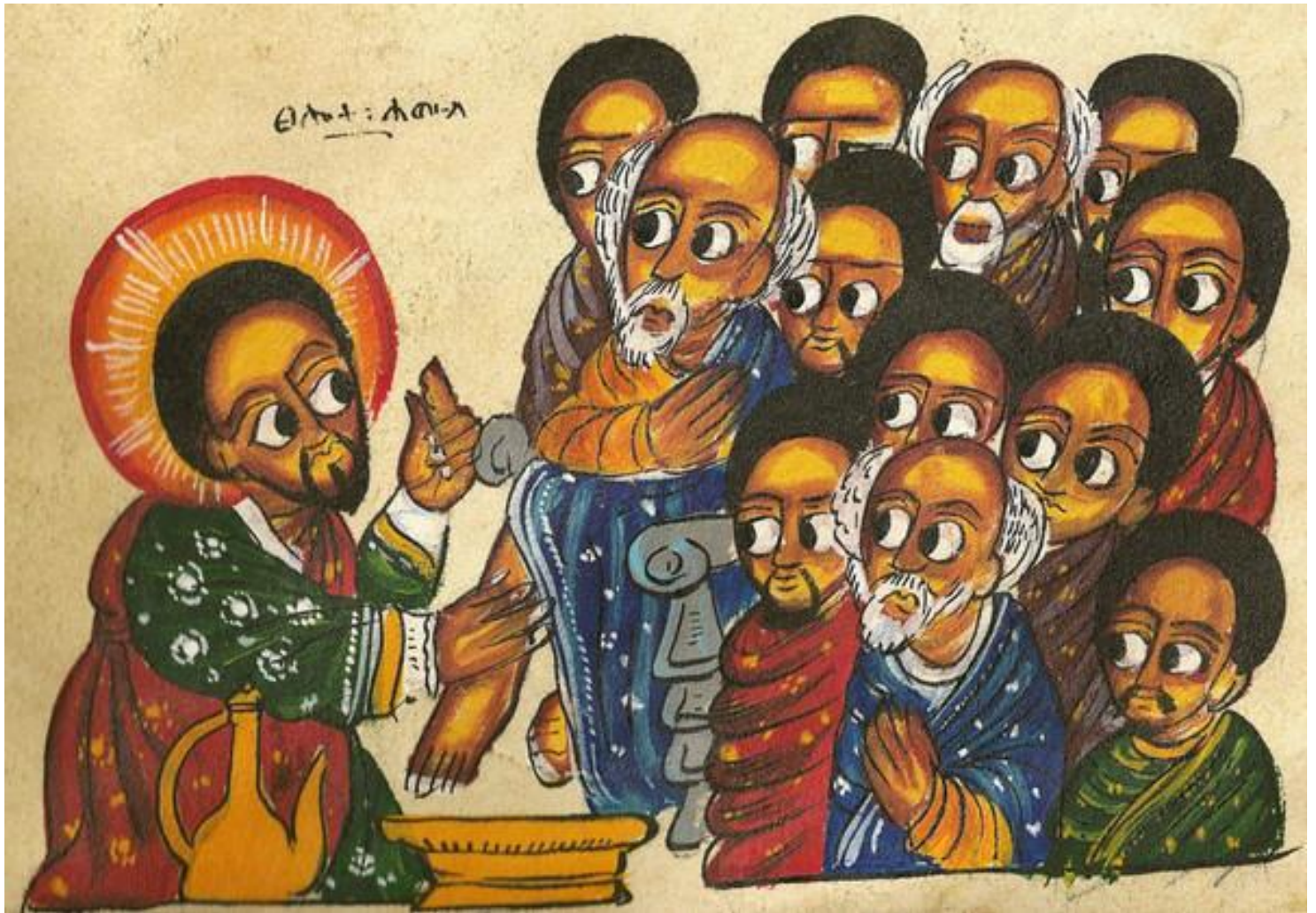


# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Easter 6

9<sup>th</sup> May



This is my commandment,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.

# WORSHIP AT HOME

*This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.*

*Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.*

*Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.*

Let the floods clap their hands;  
let the hills sing together for joy  
at the presence of the Lord,  
for he is coming to judge the earth.  
**He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.**

Psalm 98

## Prayer

God of all truth, we give thanks for your faithful utterance of reality.

In your truthfulness, you have called the world very good.

In your truthfulness, you have promised, *I have loved you with an everlasting love.*

In your truthfulness, you have assured, *This is my beloved Son.*

In your truthfulness, you voiced, *Fear not, I am with you.*

In your truthfulness, you have guaranteed that, *Nothing shall separate us from your love in Jesus Christ.*

It is by your truthfulness that we love.

And yet, we live in world which is phony deep down  
in which we participate with a slant.

Ours is a seduced world,  
Where we call evil good and good evil,  
Where we put darkness for light and light for darkness,  
Where we call bitter sweet and sweet bitter  
Where we call war peace and peace war,  
So that we rarely see the truth of the matter.

Give us courage to depart the pretend world of euphemism,  
To call things by their right name,  
To use things for their right use,  
To love our neighbour as you love us.

Overwhelm our fearful need to distort,  
That we may fall back into your truth-telling about us,  
That we may be tellers of truth and its practitioners.  
We pray in the name of the One you have filled  
With grace and truth,

Jesus, your anointed One. Amen

## Acts of the Apostles 10. 44-48

... Peter was preaching in the home of Cornelius, an officer from the Italian regiment. The gathered people were taking his words to heart, and even before he had finished his speech, the Holy Spirit fell upon them. The other believers who had come with Peter were all good Jews, and they were absolutely gob-smacked when they saw that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on people who weren't even Jewish. There was no disputing it though, because they could hear these outsiders speaking in unknown languages and singing the praises of God. Then Peter turned to his companions and said, "Can there be any justification for refusing to baptise these people into the community of Christ's followers, when it is clear that God has treated them exactly the same as us and given them the Holy Spirit in the same way?"

... So, on Peter's say-so, they were baptised in water into a declared allegiance to Jesus the Messiah. At their invitation, Peter stayed on in Cornelius's home for the next few days.

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## Psalm 98

O sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have gained him victory.  
The Lord has made known his victory;  
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.  
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness  
to the house of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth have seen  
the victory of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.  
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,  
with the lyre and the sound of melody.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
the world and those who live in it.  
Let the floods clap their hands;  
let the hills sing together for joy  
at the presence of the Lord,  
for he is coming to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.

## 1 John 5. 1-6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

## The Gospel of John 15. 9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you;  
abide in my love.  
If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.  
I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you,  
that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.  
No one has greater love than this,  
to lay down one's life for one's friends.  
You are my friends if you do what I command you.  
I do not call you servants any longer,  
because the servant does not know what the master is doing;  
but I have called you friends,  
because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me but I chose you.  
And I appointed you to go and bear fruit,  
fruit that will last,  
so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.  
I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

## Reflecting

*And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

John's words echo Jesus' assurance in Matthew's Gospel: *take my yoke upon you and learn from me. ... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* Throughout the scriptures there is an invitation to choose. To choose between life and death, light and dark, seeing and blindness, hearing and deafness, between love and fear. These are all metaphors for perceiving, or not perceiving, the presence of the kingdom in our midst.

Jesus offers those who will follow him an invitation to abide in the divine love. This is a love which is characterised by truthfulness. This is not the distinction between telling the truth or telling a big, or little, lie, but it goes to the heart of existence. This is about existence being grounded in the truth.

Through Lent we engaged in a process of truth-telling about the treatment of the indigenous people of Australia in our past. Certainly, this truth-telling was about sweeping the lies about our past out from under the carpet. But importantly it is also about truth in our self-understanding and, therefore, how we then relate to our indigenous people and how we regard ourselves. To live with a lie, at least a denial, about our past is to shape a self-identity based on a lie. In his prayer at the beginning of our order today we were led by the Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann, who names that we so often use euphemisms to paper over untruths which might deceive us about the real state of things.

Jesus invites us to abide in his love, the perfect love which casts out fear. So often our unwillingness to attend to the truth is because we fear. But the love of God enables us to see the true nature of things, both light and dark and to release them into the loving hands of God, that we might be fruitful in the pattern of Jesus.

## Prayer – prepared by Brenda Grootendorst

Lord God, you come to us wherever and however we might be – you assure us even when we doubt that we are worthy of your love and grace. We ask you to hear our prayers for your world, its people and ourselves.

Lord we pray for all who govern and hold authority in the Nations of the world. We acknowledge the extra pressures on our leaders as they race against time to minimise the effects of Covid 19. We pray for those working tirelessly and overtime to research vaccines and we are grateful for the glimmer of hope they bring. We pray especially for those who govern India that you will give them strength, calm wisdom and compassion as they lead their communities to respond to this crisis – we pray for the sick and dying and for the many who mourn the death of loved ones – may the world's wealthiest countries share their vaccines and essential medical supplies generously with those most in need.

Lord, this pandemic occupies much of our world leaders' time. We pray that those who struggle daily with poverty and homelessness are not left behind. We pray for the 70 million refugees around the world facing a lifetime of displacement - hear their cries for freedom and a chance of a safe place to call home. We pray that political stubbornness may be broken, hardened hearts softened, closed minds changed and unhearing ears opened - that World Leaders will commit to work towards a humanitarian solution to this ongoing crisis.

Lord, teach us to love each other as you love us welcoming both friend and stranger.

Lord we thank you for doctors, nurses, care givers and family members who care with gentleness and compassion for the elderly, the sick and those who are disabled. We pray now for those known to us.

Lord, teach us to love each other as you love us caring for both the vulnerable and the strong

Lord, even though we celebrate Mothers' Day today, may we acknowledge every day, the love and significant role that mothers play in the lives of their children and in the community – we thank you for the unique joy that being a mother brings to many.

We remember and pray for those for whom becoming a mother has not been all they had hoped for – for single mums and the difficulties they face and for those who experience family violence. We pray for mothers who felt that other parents could offer their child a better chance in life and for those who adopted these children and loved them as their own.

We pray for women who are not mothers but who have played a significant role in the lives of many children loving them and shaping them with motherly love.

Lord we pray for our Indigenous women whose children were forcibly removed from them and the life time of grief they experience – and for the children who grew up without their mother's love.

Lord many will gather today sharing love with their mothers and grandmothers and perhaps great grandmothers – we pray for those who grieve quietly as they remember their loved ones no longer with them.

Lord, we thank you for our mother's love and for your love for us all today and always.

We offer you these prayers in Jesus Christ's name. AMEN

## Blessing

I have called you friends,  
because I have made known to you everything  
that I have heard from my Father.

May the source of love  
Bless and sustain you with joy.

Early prayer: Walter Brueggemann, Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth, alt.

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## NEWS AND NOTICES

### MORNING TEA (COVID-SAFE STYLE) IS BACK

Morning tea looks a bit different

After the service please make your way to the morning tea room and:

- Collect your own cuppa from the servery. It will be poured by the servers and they will add your milk and sugar.
- Take your own cup to the dishwasher tray, empty any dregs into the jug and place your cup upside down in the tray and put any rubbish in the bin.
- Food will be served to you by servers wearing gloves and using tongs.
- Please don't assist anyone else - the servers will do this.

Thanks to everyone for helping keep us safe.

Robyn & Dianne

### ROSTER for Sunday 16 May 2021

READING	Dianne Richter	
PRAYERS	Warwick Barry	
DOOR DUTY	David Northwood	Elizabeth Northwood
SOUND	Neville Parker	
COUNTING	Marg Davis	TBA
MORNING TEA	Brenda Grootendorst	Mary Coulthard
MUSIC	Karen Roberts	
RESOURCES DELIVERY -14 May '21	Ron Townsend	



## **Saturday Bike Ride – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

### **Details:**

- **Meet at Ormond Station about 10:30 AM**
- **Train to Mordialloc, arrive about 11 AM**
- **Ride from Mordialloc Station along Mordialloc Creek to Waterways Café**
  
- **Coffee at Waterways Café beside the lake.**
- **Ride to the north side of Braeside Park for lunch**
- **Return to Mordialloc Station by a slightly different route.**

It's completely flat, distance 8 km one way, about 40 minutes at a leisurely pace plus coffee and lunch breaks. Toilets on the route. Total trip including bike and train travel and breaks will be about 3 to 4 hours.

*If you don't have a bike we can lend you one.  
Looking forward to seeing you all.*

If interested in joining in this event, please contact the Church office on 95781553 or by email [office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto:office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au) by Tuesday 1 June, just so we have an idea of numbers.

Cheers, David and Liz Northwood

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### **A THANK YOU FOR CHRISTMAS BOWL CONTRIBUTIONS**

This week, we have received at the Church office, a letter of thanks to the Ormond Uniting Church congregation, for the generous contribution made to the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal of 2020. Organisers were very appreciative of the \$748.95 raised, which will make a practical difference to vulnerable people in Zimbabwe, and in communities affected by conflict and disaster all around the world. A copy of the letter is available on the Noticeboard near the North Road Hall for those interested.