

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

EPIPHANY

January 16th



NEW WINE

*When hopes seem dry as bulldust,
old visions on the wane,
look for that wedding feast
where water is changed into wine.*

*If you cannot keep faith's pace,
despair seems it might win,
attend the house at Cana,
where water is turned into wine.*

*When loves appears to shrink
and joy sags frail and wan,
join the amazed disciples
as water becomes new wine.*

*If the new age seems late,
your patience tired and worn,
follow the young Nazarene
to water that is the best wine.*

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.

For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!

(Psalm 36: 9-10)

Prayer of gathering in God's presence (Rev Mindi)

We come this day, Precious God,
as people in need of your steadfast love:

**with you is the fountain of life;
in your Light we see light.**

We gather this day, Water-changing God,
as people looking for signs:

**with you is the fountain of grace;
in your Hope we see hope.**

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer and Friend
We worship you as the source of our true life
You whose steadfast love has embraced from afar
You whose faithfulness and grace support our lives
We thank for Jesus the Word made flesh

Who lives among us evermore.

With you, Enduring Joy,
we find our refuge.

In the shelter of your compassion,
we are made whole;

in the abundance of your grace,
we are fed;

in the depths of your living waters,

we are transfigured into new people.

With you, Revealer of Glory,
we are filled to the brim.
Our lips cannot contain your praise;
our hearts overflow with your spirit;
our lives are poured out for others.

Activating Spirit,
we find our common life
in this community of faith.
United by a common confession,
we take our uncommon gifts
and share them
in serving all people.

Same in love, same in grace,
God in Community, Holy Triune God,

You call us to serve your world in love. Amen

Prayer for forgiveness

Restless God in our desire to have more and more, we cause more damage to your good creation. In our preoccupation with ourselves, we have harmed the lives of those around us. When we hoard what you have given us, we cannot be a blessing to other people. Forgive us, Restless God, so we might be restored to life.

May your steadfast love save and strengthen us to share our gifts with others, even as you have shared the Gift of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Assurance of pardon

God will not rest until you are at peace. God will not remain silent, but will call you by name: 'My Delight.'

God's steadfast love extends to the heavens, and reaches down to touch our hearts. Thanks be to God who forgives and saves us! Amen.

Service of the word

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

Isaiah 62:1-5

The Vindication and Salvation of Zion

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate;
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.
For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your builder marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

Psalm 36:5-10 (Responsive)

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgements are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!

Epistle 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Spiritual Gifts

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel John 2:1-11

The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

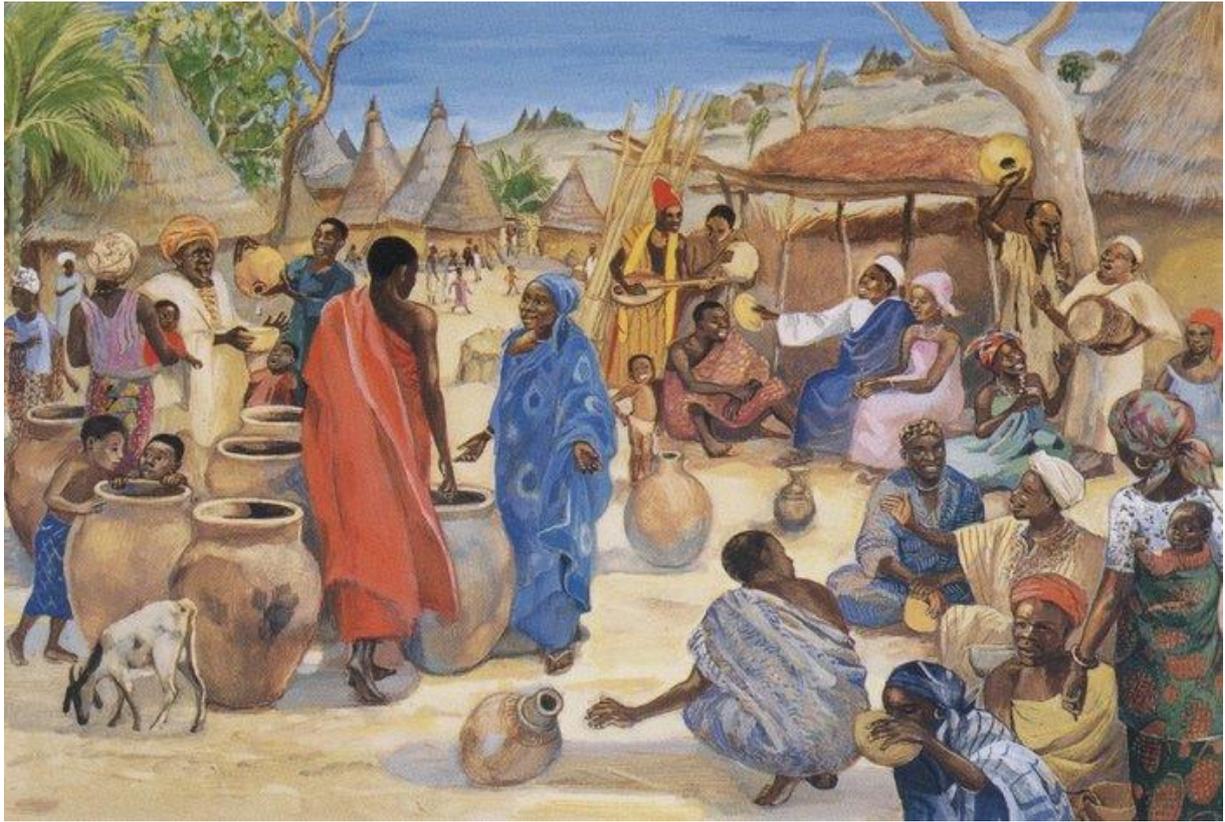


Image: Peter Mafa, The Wedding at Cana, 1973

Reflecting

Give us, O Lord, the mind to know the life you want us to live, the heart to desire that life and the will to live it. Amen

Transformation: Momentary or Continuous?

For most of us change doesn't come easily, especially as we age but as we know, our attitudes can be changed if we are open to new possibilities; often it takes some kind of trigger to lead us to think about things, then an action to enable a different outcome. It may be dissatisfaction with aspects of our life, such as health, weight, relationships and work. Or it could be our life goals and dreams, our harmful behaviours or a tendency to over-achieve or our underlying vision needs changing on reflection, that can result in a changed perspective, convictions and consequences. Usually, the incentive or motivation for change needs to be greater than the status quo for us to move from thoughts to action and outcomes. Transformation can occur at a pivotal moment or event but for most of us I suspect it is more of a lifetime occurrence, especially as we think about the season of Epiphany or revelation.

Most of us can recall weddings we have celebrated by being part of, or perhaps our own weddings. Generally they are happy occasions where events unfold quite well. There are however many things that can go wrong, that can be quite stressful for those directly involved or who have organised them. Things like the wedding car with the bride and father in breaking down prior to the ceremony, or problems with the hire suits of the groomsmen or last-minute adjustments to the bridesmaids outfits, flowers or the wedding singer comes down with a sore

throat on the day. Alongside of this the best man gives a speech that oversteps acceptable bounds of humour and causes the cringe factor or the awkward relatives create havoc at the bar or the table. Not many wedding receptions, today would face the problem of running out of alcohol though I suspect. Our gospel story today on the surface is a simple story of a wedding with this problem, but contains a wealth of deeper meaning in John's Gospel.

It's worth noting a few things about this gospel before we plunge in. Each of the Gospels was represented traditionally by a symbol in the early church, in the case of John the apostle it was the eagle. Mark Powell in his great introduction to the New Testament exclaims, "this is a gospel that soars," because it is inspirational, deeply symbolic and contains stories and discourses by Jesus the other three don't. Others believe it is because, "it is farsighted and powerful, it can look into the sun and not be dazzled – John has the most penetrating gaze into the eternal mysteries/truths, into the very mind and nature of God." In John, Jesus' ministry overlapped with John the Baptist, in the other Gospels Jesus' ministry began after John the Baptist was imprisoned. Furthermore in John's account most of Jesus' ministry is based around Jerusalem and in Judea, again different to the other gospels. So possibly John's Gospel is more an account of the first acts of Jesus before John the Baptist was imprisoned.

So what is so surprising in relation to John's gospel then is that the first miracle recorded in John's Gospel is, as Elizabeth Johnson, a commentator remarks "almost frivolous". Most of Jesus miracles are for people who are in desperate need or who have debilitating conditions or demons. In this story there is no crisis of illness or hunger, rather a crisis of wine shortage at a wedding! Interestingly the story is set in Cana in Galilee, not Syria, which is a neighbouring village to Nazareth, in fact Cana could be seen from Nazareth, it was so close.

Jesus' mother Mary, who isn't named in the story, seems to have had a special place at the feast, something to do with the arrangements as she is worried the wine had run out and had authority enough to order the servants to do as Jesus told them. In fact the Coptic Gospels of Egypt indicate that Mary was the bride groom's aunt. Unusually there is no mention of Joseph here with the family, most scholars think he was probably dead by then, which also may help explain why Jesus spent 18 years in Nazareth prior to starting his mission, supporting his widowed mother and youngest brothers and sisters, until the older ones could earn a living. According to Mark 6:3, Jesus had four brothers, James, Joseph, Judas and Simon and a number of unnamed sisters.

Weddings in those days were great social occasions and often lasted more than a day. The ceremony took place late in the evening after a feast, not the other way round like ours do. Then the couple were escorted by torchlight through the village late at night or early morning (or by oil lamps). They would then stay at one of their parents' homes and keep an open house for visitors and friends, for a week of festivities, hospitality and joy. Curiously though in this story Mary comes to Jesus and asks him to solve the problem of no wine. Hospitality in the east was a sacred social duty, expected of all. Jesus was about to save a family from great shame and humiliation, and wine was essential, as the Rabbis' said, "without wine there is no joy."

Jesus it seems was also perfectly at home at a wedding feast, a rare glimpse of him growing up, he is not a killjoy, he enjoyed joyful celebrations. Charles Spurgeon the great evangelical preacher

once said to his students, “I commend cheerfulness to all who would win souls, not liberty and frothiness, but a genuine happy spirit. More flies are caught with honey than vinegar.”

Jesus will reveal something of his glory in his response to Mary’s request in a humble home in Galilee. Even to Jesus as one commentator puts it, “the home was a place for which nothing that his best was good enough.” Even so Jesus words to his mother seem to dismiss his mother’s concern as unimportant, though she is unfazed and believes he will do something and so directs the servants accordingly. The term “woman” Jesus uses sounds intolerant and rude to our ears, however it is the same word he uses when he speaks to Mary from the cross and to John her son to be. Also as one commentator explains about the rest of his words, it all depends on the tone with which the words are said, hard to gauge in English, which could also mean to reassure, something like, “Don’t worry – you don’t quite understand what is going on, leave it to me and I will fix it in my own way.”

His final words though, “My hour has not yet come,” are a reference to his death on the cross and his commitment to the task of salvation and highlight his close relationship with the Father.

Jesus is about to change the water into wine in a most miraculous fashion, for where he is present, transformation happens. John in writing about Jesus’ action comments in verse 11, “That Jesus did this, the first of his signs and Cana of Galilee,” a place of little importance in Israel, in a home, not to a large crowd or in front of the religious authorities as occurred most often. Reverend Tom Wright’s comments on signs are helpful at this point. He suggests that John’s gospel is structured a bit like a treasure hunt around the key idea of ‘the Word becoming flesh’, or Jesus the divine son of God becoming human, in order to carry out the plan of salvation for all. So there are many signs, or as John uses it to mean ‘clues or signposts’ to take us through the treasure hunt. This wedding is the first occasion of a sign, two chapters later there is the second one with the woman at the well and then ‘we are on our own discovering the rest.’ Wright says this about signs, “They are the moments when heaven is opened, when the transforming power of God’s love bursts into the present world. Moments when the reality of heaven and earth intersect... to reveal deeper truths.” The final verse reveals that this event was transformational for the disciples and I suspect reading between the lines for others at the wedding, both servants and guests, for this happens when Jesus is present and through his actions reveals his divine nature and power in the weakness of a human being. We would expect no less of one such as him.

So Jesus changes large water filled stone jars, that held about 100 litres each, absolutely huge. I was fortunate enough to see these massive ancient jars at a Roman coastal towns’ remains called Ostia Antica, at the mouth of the Tiber River in Rome when I was there – huge stone jars that were chest high off the ground and considerably wider than me. I think Jesus would have been very popular, with those of us who enjoy wine then and now – wine by those jars would’ve proved a real bargain compared to bottles! No doubt this miracle would have set tongues wagging!

Jesus miraculous action is steeped in biblical meanings too, such as the foreshadowing of the feast of the kingdom and the new wine and abundant life of the kingdom. But that is for another time. Has water been turned into wine in our own lives though? (Pause) Reverend Bruce Prewers’

observations of the congregation he led, have I think a rather universal relevance for many churches – what do you think?

“Some of you have known tragedies that could have made you sour or angry characters. But you are not. Some of you have achieved so much that you might have become stuffed up with self-importance. But you are not at all like that.

Some of you have been so bruised or injured by other people, that you could have become cynical and hard as nails. But you have not. Some could have ended up defeated types, afraid of new challenges, knocking the enthusiasm of others. But it is not so.

Some might easily have collapsed into faithlessness, mocking the very idea of a loving God. But that is not how it is with you. Maybe we sometimes take each other for granted here and miss out on the glory of the new wine that flows.”

Transformation can happen in a moment like it did for some of the guests, servants and disciples at the wedding, and no doubt as it may well be for us at times, both individually and as a community as we face new challenges. Equally true it is something that at different points of our lifetime, that Jesus can change our attitudes and actions as we open ourselves to him. Like Mary we need to turn to Jesus, talk to him when things go wrong or are uncertain and trust him to transform the situation in his own time and way, even our very selves. May we all know his grace and steadfast love as we journey with him and partake of his abundant life and joy.

Amen

(prepared by Warwick Barry)

Prayer

(prepared by David Baxter)

Loving God,

As we come into this time of prayer we pray conscious of a world that has many points of concern. We are reminded daily of how difficult life can be for many people, living in places of unrest and fighting, around the world. We pray for those often forced to live in fear, with an uncertain future over which they have no control.

We pray for those who have dedicated their lives to helping others in these situations even putting their own lives at risk for the sake of a desire to help those who are in great need.

As we enter into a new year may we, as a church community be conscious of those people in our broader community who need our help to cope with the stresses that create anxiety and sometimes a sense of hopelessness in their lives. We pray for those who are homeless, for people who live such uncertain lives that they cannot plan for tomorrow.

We pray for the sick, in particular those known to us today and we think of those who wait with them. We remember those who provide community services to them sometimes in very trying situations.

Let us in a moment of silence pray for the situations and individuals we are especially aware of, in any particular way, today.

We pray for the church communities in this area and pray that they will live lives of faithful service bringing life and hope to those they serve. May we here at Ormond be glad for the part we play in making known the love of God for this community.

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.*

Blessing

The love of the Lord Jesus
draw you to himself;
the power of the Lord Jesus
strengthen you in his service;
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Rev. Andrew Boyle

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NEWS AND NOTICES

DAY OF MOURNING CHURCH SERVICE - SUNDAY 23rd JANUARY

Next Sunday (23rd January 2022) marks the Day of Mourning which will be acknowledged at Ormond Uniting Church as an expression of solidarity and a special service will be held in the Church at 10.00am in recognition of this day. Just a reminder that the annual Day of Mourning service the UCA has adopted, will be led by Reverend Ron Townsend. Ron will draw on some of the material provided by the UCA and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Congress.

CLIMATE CHANGE BANNER

The new climate change banner is now in place on the south wall of the church:

Unite for Stronger Climate Action – NOW!

The Climate Change Group thank all you folk who sent through captions and graphics for the Group to consider for the OUC Climate Change Banner. All the Banner contributions were great and a huge amount of thought and effort was evident. Thank you for contributing, we really appreciate it. The Group decided that Lisa Saffin's Banner caption was the one on which we would model the OUC display Banner. Congratulations Lisa. Lisa's 'prize' is a \$100 donation to the environmental cause she chooses.

DEMOLITION OF THE HALLS

– CLOSURE OF THE CHURCH SITE FROM 24TH JANUARY

The demolition of the Booran Rd hall and the North Rd hall is scheduled to **begin on the 24th January**. During this time the entire church site will be out-of-bounds. We will not have access to the church and the office will be relocated for the duration of the works.

During the demolition phase the office will be relocated to Trinity Uniting Church, Black St Brighton. We are very grateful to the Trinity Church Council for their generosity and hospitality during this phase.

When the project is finished the only building to remain will be the church. (The Fraser St hall will remain but this will be on the parcel of land which has been sold)

New, temporary toilets will be provided on site. The church office will be located in the Link after the demolition.

During the demolition period the church office number will continue to be the new number 0411 958 127.

WORSHIP DURING THE DEMOLITION PHASE

Church Council considered a number of options of how to maintain the worship life of the congregation during the demolition phase when we will not have access to the church. We considered two questions: “What would be least disruptive to the congregation’s life?” and “What would hold the congregation together best through this period?”

The conclusion to our deliberations is that we will hold worship by Zoom during this period and deliver worship resources to those who do not have access to a computer. A further consideration for us has been that Andrew will be on leave for some weeks during this time.

Note: Zoom Services will commence for Ormond Uniting Church worship effective from Sunday 30th January until the demolition is finished and services at the church will not re-commence until the demolition is complete.

ANDREW’S LEAVE

A reminder that Cathy (Church Administrator) is now back in the office on Fridays from 9.00am – 5.00pm and Andrew is on leave from 10th January, returning on 8th February 2022.

CHANGE THE HEART BROADCAST

Tuesday, 25 January 2022 7:30pm AEDT

In partnership with the Australian Christian TV Channel, [ACCTV](#), simulcast on ACCTV, online, and on radio

#ChangeTheHeart is an opportunity for our nation to come together in unison to be led by Aboriginal Christian Leaders, and for non-Indigenous peoples to learn and acknowledge the true history of our nation, to lament the injustices and present-day disadvantages facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to pray, for “a nation built on truth, justice, love and hope”. Importantly this happens just before Australia Day occurs.

Aunty Jean Phillips, one of Australia's most Senior Aboriginal Christian Leaders, invites you, and calls our nation to come together, in prayer, and in unison, for #ChangeTheHeart on the evening before January 26.

You can tune into the broadcast in one of two ways. You can either download the app for either Android or Apple devices on your phone, tablet or computer and watch it live through this; though you will need to set up an account and password the first time you use it.

Or you can simply click on the following link <https://acc.tv/>, then on the home page click **Watch Now**, then click **Watch Live**, if you are doing it for the first time it will ask you to set up an account too.

The Ormond Indigenous Action Group highly recommend that you tune in and listen carefully to what you see and hear, as it will be a great opportunity to hear from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Congress (UCA affiliated) people and learn more.

Any queries please contact Warwick.

ADELPHI THEATRE PLAY – “The Christian Brothers”

Friday 28 January at 7pm

Saturday 29 January at 2pm

Saturday 29 January at 7pm

Sunday 30 January at 1.30pm

Book your seat on 96901593 or 95780952 or
Email: michael.adelphi@gmail.com re tickets
ALL TICKETS \$10 (Cash only)

ALL PERFORMANCES AT
GEALC CENTRE
260 Booran Road, Ormond
near cnr. Booran & North Rds
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
THIS IS A COVID SAFE EVENT

ADELPHI THEATRE PLAY – “The Christian Brothers”

...SAVE THE DATE!! An extra performance will be on SUNDAY 30th January at 4pm with all proceeds going to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

This is a Covid safe Event

Any further enquiries for the 30th please call Brenda Grootendorst on 0433494600.

ROSTER for Sunday 23 January 2022 (Service led by Ron Townsend)

READING	Lisa Saffin	
PRAYERS	Heather Baxter	
DOOR DUTY	Lorraine Denniston	Brenda Grootendorst
SOUND	Nev Parker	
MUSIC	Peter Hurley	
COUNTNG	Ruth McLeod	Hans Tilstra
RESOURCES DELIVERY	Mardie Townsend	