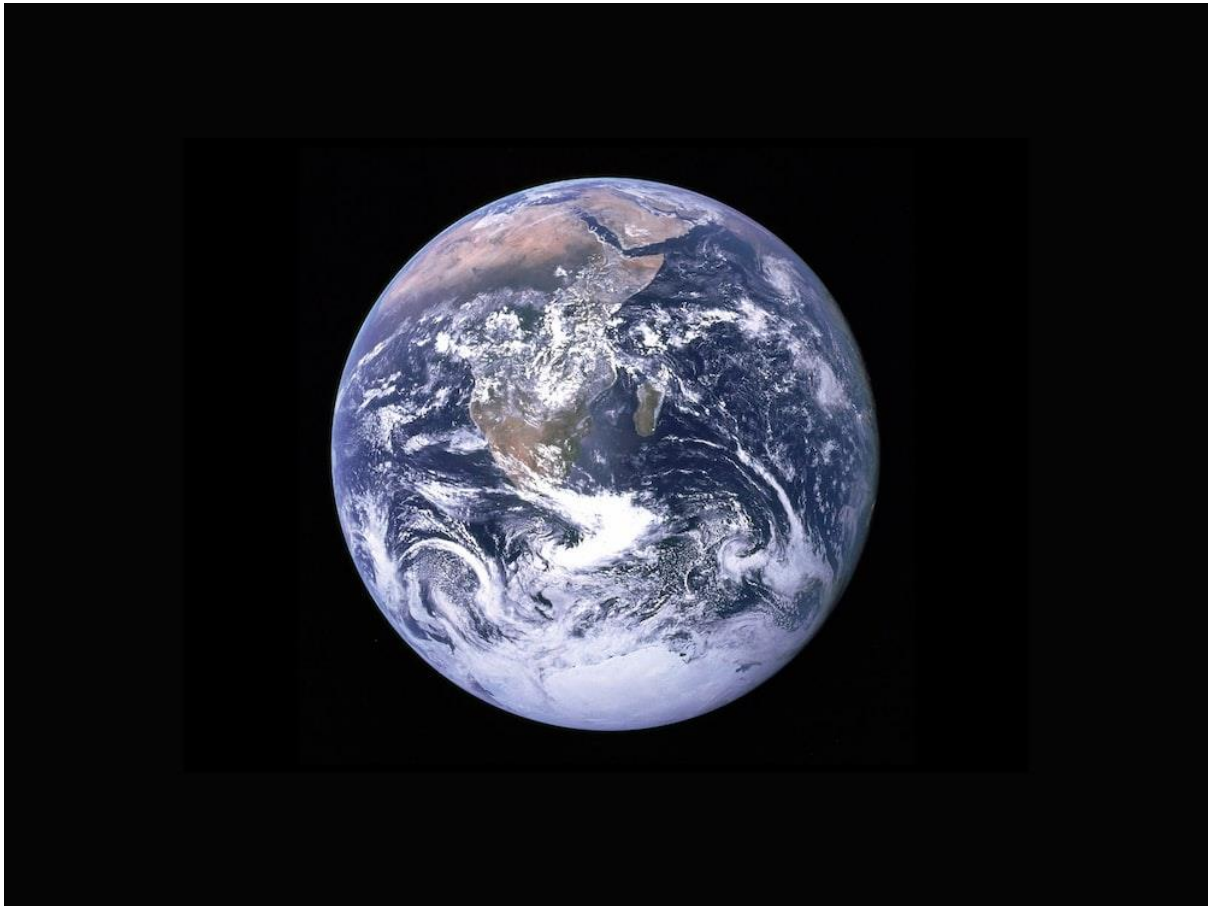


ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



2 OCTOBER 2022

PENTECOST 17



World Communion Sunday

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.

HYMN: TIS 59 All people that on earth do dwell...

Prayer for today

Celebration of life

In the midst of hunger and war

we celebrate the promise of plenty and peace.

In the midst of oppression and tyranny

we celebrate the promise of service and freedom.

In the midst of doubt and despair

we celebrate the promise of faith and hope,

In the midst of fear and betrayal

we celebrate the promise of joy and loyalty.

In the midst of hatred and death

we celebrate the promise of love and life.

In the midst of sin and decay

we celebrate the promise of salvation and renewal.

In the midst of death on every side

we celebrate the promise of the living Christ.

You know us as we are

We confess to you, Lord, what we are:

We are not the people we like others to think we are;

We are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depths of our souls.

But we do not want to hide our true selves from you.

We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us.

Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge:

teach us to respect ourselves for your sake;

Give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding power.

Raise us from the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and energy of forgiven people.

And for those who through life-long habit find forgiveness hard to accept, we ask you to break their bondage and set them free,

Through Jesus Christ or Lord. Amen

HYMN: TIS 427 Lord your word abiding...

Scripture

From the Hebrew Scriptures

Psalm 137

Alongside Babylon's rivers we sat on the banks; we cried and cried, remembering the good old days in Zion. Alongside the quaking aspens we stacked our unplayed harps; That's where our captors demanded songs, sarcastic and mocking: "Sing us a happy Zion song!"

4-6 Oh, how could we ever sing GOD's song in this wasteland? If I ever forget you, Jerusalem, let my fingers wither and fall off like leaves. Let my tongue swell and turn black if I fail to remember you, If I fail, O dear Jerusalem, to honour you as my greatest.

7-9 GOD, remember those Edomites, and remember the ruin of Jerusalem, That day they yelled out, "Wreck it, smash it to bits!" And you, Babylonians—ravagers! A reward to whoever gets back at you for all you've done to us; Yes, a reward to the one who grabs your babies and smashes their heads on the rocks!

From the New Testament

Luke 17:5-10

5 The apostles came up and said to the Master, "Give us more faith."

6 But the Master said, "You don't need more faith. There is no 'more' or 'less' in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, 'Go jump in the lake,' and it would do it.

7-10 "Suppose one of you has a servant who comes in from ploughing the field or tending the sheep. Would you take his coat, set the table, and say, 'Sit down and eat'? Wouldn't you be more likely to say, 'Prepare dinner; change your clothes and wait table for me until I've finished my coffee; then go to the kitchen and have your supper'? Does the servant get special thanks for doing what's expected of him? It's the same with you. When you've done everything expected of you, be matter-of-fact and say, 'The work is done. What we were told to do, we did.'"

A Pastoral Letter: Number Four

Just for a while, rather than simply repeat the sermon from the church-based service, I have decided to offer the folks not able to attend the service a special tailored “pastoral letter” for their prayerful consideration. The overall theme, for a while, will be The Lord’s Prayer, and today we will look at the next words: Your Kingdom come.

Looking at The Lord’s Prayer — Your Kingdom come:

What are we doing when we say, in The Lord’s Prayer, “Your Kingdom come...”? Is this a prediction? Are we confident in the belief that the Kingdom of God will, in due time, come — arrive, that is, here. Or, perhaps, this is an expression of hope; that we hope that God’s Kingdom will come and that we will be fully-fledged citizens of that Kingdom, with all the rights and duties that are implied. And, of course, we understand that Kingship carries with it responsibilities. This was said again and again during the recent transition to a new monarch following upon the death of our queen. Everyone has a role to play in the effective working of a kingdom; from the King to the citizen.

But there is always that other big question: “When?” When will that Kingdom arrive. I’m sorry to say that the answer is not clear. Some theologians (people who talk seriously and systematically about God) say that the Kingdom of God will come at what they call “the Eschaton” or the end times — when Jesus will return in triumph to establish the Kingdom. Other theologians say that “The Kingdom” is already here; that it arrived with Jesus and that its form and structure was made clear in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Those theologians insist that we are already honoured citizens of a Kingdom in which we already live and have our being. “Your Kingdom come” is not just a prediction; nor is it just a hope, but it is a fact of life.

Does all of this matter? Well, yes! If The Kingdom is here, now, then there are rights and duties that apply to us right now, and our King (our Heavenly Father) is a ruler who has undertaken to be responsible for us here and now. This is a kingdom governed in love. This is a kingdom that breaks the rules of all earthly kingdoms. This is a kingdom that, by its existence, casts judgment on all earthly kingdoms. This is not an airy-fairy namby-pamby other-worldly kingdom. This is the alternative Kingdom, embodying alternative values, alternative goals and alternative destinies. It’s here – we just need to take note and live accordingly. Easier said than done? Yes! But it’s worth a try.

Karel Reus (Minister)

HYMN: TIS 153 God is love let heav’n adore him...

Prayers — Prepared by Dianne

We remember that God loves, God listens, God answers. The answers may not be the ones we expect, but no prayer is ever wasted.

Let us pray.

Loving God, because the world’s problems and miseries are so vast and complex, we pray for your divine assistance in every sphere and that you will help us to find our place in your world.

We pray for those who are struggling for justice and peace among nations and communities. Give them comfort and strength to continue their work. At this time, we especially remember those working for peace in Ukraine.

Please assist those who are trying to govern wisely, and those who administer justice, especially now when wise leadership is so much needed. Help them to see beyond immediate concerns and consider the needs of all in our communities, especially the most vulnerable.

Support those who, through research or hands-on care, are fighting disease and suffering that they may understand the importance of their work in other's lives.

Please assist those who work or volunteer with others in our community – in education, community centres and organisations, aged care, – to understand the value of their contribution to other's lives and your work in the world.

We give thanks for the groups and organisations that make a difference to people living in poverty, especially those who provide practical help, advice and support. Help us to understand our role in their work.

Please assist all those who in spite of the help that is offered are still finding it hard to cope and find themselves at their wits end.

Lord, all our times are in Your hands. We give thanks for this beloved place of worship and community life where, as friends, fellow-travellers and companions, we have found blessing in times of trial, struggle, celebration and festivity, all through lives of patient faithfulness and persistent prayer.

Loving God, Friend of all who turn to you, and Friend also of those who in anger turn away from you, in your love embrace this world with your almighty tenderness. Lead us from all that is hurtful and destructive to grace, mercy and peace. Help us, individually and collectively to find our place in your world.

In the name of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Hymn: TIS 380, Thine be the glory...

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

Blessing

The grace of the Word of life rest upon you;
the love of the Source of life embrace you;
and the transforming power of the Breath of life
help, strengthen and surprise you,
this day and all your days.

Amen.

Thoughts for the week to come

Table Blessing

To your table
you bid us come.
You have set the places,
you have poured the wine,
and there is always room,

you say,
for one more.

And so we come.
From the streets
and from the alleys
we come.
From the deserts
and from the hills
we come.
From the ravages of poverty
and from the palaces of privilege
we come.

Running,
limping,
carried,
we come.

We are bloodied with our wars,
we are wearied with our wounds,
we carry our dead within us,
and we reckon with their ghosts.

We hold the seeds of healing,
we dream of a new creation,
we know the things
that make for peace,
and we struggle to give them wings.

And yet, to your table
we come.
Hungering for your bread,
we come;
thirsting for your wine,
we come;
singing your song
in every language,
speaking your name
in every tongue,
in conflict and in communion,
in discord and in desire,
we come,
O God of Wisdom,
we come

(Source: Jan L. Richardson from [In Wisdom's Path: Discovering the Sacred in Every Season](#))

Postlude

You can find a copy of today's sermon along with other congregational information on the church website.

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Music: Peter Hurley

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Fridays, 9.30am-3.30pm

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NEWS AND NOTICES