

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



13 NOVEMBER 2022
PENTECOST 23



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 90 I'll praise my maker while I've breath...

Prayer for today

You Call Us Too

God,
You don't call us to be honoured.
You don't call us to be privileged.
You don't call us to be special.
You don't call us to be best.
You call us to be your people.
You call us to be your Church.
You call us to be your disciples.
You call us to be your apostles.
You call us in your way.
You call us to your love.
You call us to your grace.
You call us to your hope.
You call us to your work.
You call us to your sacrifice.
You call us to lay down our lives in the service of others.
You call us to the world,
With all its need for healing and wholeness,
For salvation and redemption,
For change and transformation.
You call us as Christ,
Through your voice as Spirit.
We need to now listen,
May it be so.
So, we enter into prayer.

Amen.

Prayer of confession

O God of shalom,
we have built up walls to protect ourselves from our enemies,
but those walls also shut us off from receiving your love.
Break down those walls.
Help us to see that the way to your heart
is through the reconciliation of our own hearts with our enemies.
Bless them and us, that we may come to grow in love
for each other and for you, through Jesus Christ.

–Nolan Palsma, Pitcher Hill Community Church, North Syracuse, NY

Assurance of forgiveness

Almighty God our heavenly father,
who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins
to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him:
have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins;
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness;
and keep you in eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: TIS 588 In heavenly love abiding...

Scripture

From the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 65:17-25 (Translation: Living Bible)

17 For see, I am creating new heavens and a new earth—so wonderful that no one will even think about the old ones anymore. 18 Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation. Look! I will re-create Jerusalem as a place of happiness, and her people shall be a joy! 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and in my people; and the voice of weeping and crying shall not be heard there anymore. 20 No longer will babies die when only a few days old; no longer will men be considered old at 100! Only sinners will die that young! 21-22 In those days, when a man builds a house, he will keep on living in it—it will not be destroyed by invading armies as in the past. My people will plant vineyards and eat the fruit themselves—their enemies will not confiscate it. For my people will live as long as trees and will long enjoy their hard-won gains. 23 Their harvests will not be eaten by their enemies; their children will not be born to be cannon fodder. For they are the children of those the Lord has blessed; and their children, too, shall be blessed. 24 I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking to me about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers! 25 The wolf and lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw as the ox does, and poisonous snakes shall strike no more![*] In those days nothing and no one shall be hurt or destroyed in all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

From the New Testament

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 (Translation: Living Bible)

6 Now here is a command, dear brothers, given in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ by his authority: Stay away from any Christian who spends his days in laziness and does not follow the ideal of hard work we set up for you. 7 For you well know that you ought to follow our example: you never saw us loafing; 8 we never accepted food from anyone without buying it; we worked hard day and night for the money we needed to live on, in order that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 It wasn't that we didn't have the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to show you firsthand how you should work for your living. 10 Even while we were still there with you, we gave you this rule: "He who does not work shall not eat." 11 Yet we hear that some of you are living in laziness, refusing to work, and wasting your time in gossiping. 12 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we appeal to such people—we command them—to quiet down, get to work, and earn their own living. 13 And to the rest of you I say, dear brothers, never be tired of doing right.

A Pastoral Letter: Number Nine

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: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us".

Continuing our reflection on The Lord's Prayer:

"... save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil"

These words are from the "modern" rendering of the prayer (we used to ask that we not be led into temptation). Our minds may go to that story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, when Satan tempted Jesus to put God to the test. The prayer asks that we want be spared that sort of trial. And we might be reminded of that excruciating episode in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus asked to be spared the inevitable — a request denied, as we well know. Our lives, led perforce in the context of multiple temptations and multiple trials, is a constant series of battles with trials and temptations. None of us are spared any of that. We ask to be spared, but we know we just have to face up to the realities of life lived in in the rough and tumble of an imperfect society. We can try to make that society better, but our efforts won't always work. In our prayer we ask for help, but we need to accept that a lot of responsibility rests on our shoulders. This obviously applies to those of us who still live lives immersed in the helter-skelter of daily life, but it also applies to those of us who live, by choice or necessity, in isolation. Being alone shelters us neither from trials nor temptations. The prayer that Jesus taught us is not a protective shield but is a reminder that we cannot avoid the downsides of life while we keep our eyes on the good and the beautiful.

Karel Reus (Minister)

Hymn: TIS 572 O thou who camest from above...

Prayer – Prepared by Heather Baxter

Father

We come to you with our concerns for the world.

We pray for your precious blue planet floating in space:

a planet that supports the life of humans, plants and animals – a diverse range of species which we rarely stop to wonder about.

a planet of water, air and rock- each part precious to the cycle of life on earth.

a planet that groans and objects to the misuse and abuse caused by humans.

We pray for the leaders at the COP 27 climate talks in Egypt, that they will be courageous in their decision-making about the beautiful blue planet.

We pray for those affected by the harsh weather events that are a result of human's activity.

We pray for those seeking election – in particular the United States, Victoria and at Ormond Uniting. May those elected listen to and respond to those whom they represent.

We pray that the democratic process will shine with integrity and truthfulness, and that voters will accept the outcomes of these elections.

We think of the First Peoples of Australia as they champion the idea of gaining a voice that will be heard in parliament. We pray that all Australians will listen to and respond to the call for a change to the Constitution of Australia to enshrine such a voice to parliament.

We pray for our community as it struggles with cost of living increases: those unable to find secure housing, those struggling with food security, those going without so that their children can eat and have a roof over their head.

Father you have promised that you are doing something new – something new in us. Help us to embody your kingdom in our words and actions.

We say together

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 for ever Amen

Hymn: TIS 690 Beauty for brokenness...

Blessing

May the love of the Father,
the tenderness of the Son,
and the presence of the Spirit,
gladden your heart
and bring peace to your soul,
this day and all days, Amen.

Amen.

Thoughts for the week to come

A New Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
which is pretty much everyone,
since I'm clearly not you, God.
At least not the last time I checked.

And while you're at it, God,
please give me the courage
to change what I need to change about myself,
which is frankly a lot, since, once again,
I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect.
It's better for me to focus on changing myself
than to worry about changing other people,
who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying,
I can't change anyway.

Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up
whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter
than everyone else in the room,
that no one knows what they're talking about except me,
or that I alone have all the answers.

Basically, God,
grant me the wisdom
to remember that I'm
not you.

Amen.

James Martin SJ

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Postlude

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

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Presider: Karel Reus

Music: Peter Hurley

Church Office

Tuesdays, 9.30am-12.30pm

Fridays, 9.30am-3.30pm

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NEWS AND NOTICES

