

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



21 MAY 2023

EASTER 7



"Do good; seek justice" (Is 1:17)

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.

Introit- Doxology TIS 768 (i) or (ii) tune. By Thomas Ken 1637-1711. (Public domain.)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God above, you heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Welcome and Greeting

Call to worship prayer

L: Sisters and brothers, we gather here in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

R: By the waters of baptism, we have become members of the Body of Christ, yet our sins have caused pain and trauma to each other. We have failed to do good. We have not sought justice in the face of grave oppression, nor heeded God's command to care for the widow and orphan (Is 1:17).

L: As we gather, let us reflect on our actions and inactions and learn to do good and seek justice.

R: We need God's grace to overcome our divisions and to uproot systems and structures that have contributed to the fracturing of our communities.

L: We gather to pray to reinforce the unity that we have as Christians to "open our hearts, that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us. We pray in faith." Amen.

Hymn TIS 48 You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord (by Michael Joncas 1951- Oregon Catholic Press.)

**1. You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
Who abide in this shadow for life,
say to the Lord: 'My refuge, my rock in whom I trust!'**

Chorus-

**And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'**

¹ Rev'd Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

2. *Snares of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear,
under God's wings your refuge, with faithfulness your shield.*

Chorus-

3. **For to the angels God's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against
a stone.**

Chorus-

Gospel Reading- John 17: 1-11 (reader- Dianne Richter).

First Word- LEGO/ Duplo connections: "Holy Father, protect them in your name that they may be one, as we are one". John 17: 11.

Pass the Peace

Hymn "Come thou font of every blessing" *by Robert Robinson. Public Domain.*

vs 1,3 tune -Nettleton.

1 Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!

2 Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

3 O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above. *Source: Glory to God: the Presbyterian Hymnal (2003)*

Sermon- The importance of good theology for unity.

Confession and Forgiveness through the Reading of Isaiah

1:12-18 (Reader- Dianne Richter, C = Congregation).

L We are invited to confess our sins with the words of the prophet Isaiah.

R 1 When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me (12 – 13a).

C **Forgive us Lord when we come to worship without walking humbly before you.** *Silence*

R 2 New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation – I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them (13b – 14).

C **We ask forgiveness for the complicity of churches in the evils of colonialism felt around the world.** *Silence*

R 3 When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. (15)

C **We ask forgiveness for our sins of injustice and oppression that suppress the diverse harmony of your creation.** *Silence*

(The presider slowly pours a pitcher of water into a basin during the 4th reading.)

R 4 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (16, 17)

C **As we have been washed clean in the living waters of baptism, forgive us anew and reconcile us to one another and to creation.**

Silence

R 5 Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (18)

L May God in his mercy, free you from your sins so that you can do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God. *Silence*

L Almighty God hears our prayers, has mercy on us and forgives our sins.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer

L God of all, our hearts and bodies are thankful for this opportunity to come before you to confess our sins of injustice and divisiveness.

Together we come before you, a holy family, united in the beautiful diversity of your creation: some of us are Indigenous peoples, some of us are descendants of the enslaved, some of us are descendants of the enslavers, some of us are migrants, some of us are refugees, but all of us are part of the one Body of Christ.

We praise you that through the living waters of baptism our sins, red as scarlet, were washed away and we were healed, as we became part of the beloved community, the family of God. We offer our thanksgiving and praise to you, Creator God.

Together on this journey, we celebrate with our hearts and eyes open to understanding and growing in the sacred wisdom that is shared and passed amongst all people. Help us to embrace unity with each other, and remind us that we are of one family gathered by your Holy Spirit, in the midst of your creation.

Amen.

Offering- to the Glory of God - during next hymn.

Hymn “Hear my prayer for Unity” by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, tune -Aberystwyth. TIS 211

(i) or Hollingside TIS 211 (ii). Vs 1, 2, 3.

1. “Hear my prayer for unity,” Jesus prayed for all his own.
“May these ones you’ve given me live the love that I have shown.”
Mine are yours and yours are mine; in them I am glorified!
Now I send them as a sign; so may they be unified.
2. God, we live in great discord, torn by issues we hold dear,
Even as we call you Lord, we still cling to pride and fear.
Bound together, we’d be free; we could join in serving you!
For the best theology starts when love makes all things new.
3. By your Spirit, make us one; so the world will come to know,
All the love of Christ the Son, all your joys that overflow.
Help us put aside our strife; give your church a humble mind!
Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life, strengthen now the ties that bind.
(By Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Copyright 1999, with permission.)

Offering prayer- WFW 17

Loving God, we pray that by these gifts we share and in all our words and actions we may participate in the ways by which you provide for the needy: like rain in abundance, flow through our lives with generosity and kindness. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prayers of the People- (NCCA adapted by Warwick Barry.)

With faith and confidence, we come in prayer, before God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Creator God, today we live with the consequences of actions that have made life unsustainable for some and overabundant for others. Teach us to know how to use responsibly the resources you have given to us for the benefit of all and the respect of your creation. The groaning creation cries out to you.

Teach us and show us the way.

Compassionate God, help us repair the harm that we have inflicted upon each other and the divisions we have created among your people. Just as Christ Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit onto the disciples to birth the community of the new creation, send your grace to heal our divisions and gift us with the unity for which Jesus prayed.

Teach us and show us the way.

Christ, the way, the truth and the life, you embodied justice in your ministry on earth by the good that you did, breaking down the walls that divide and the prejudices that imprison. Open our hearts and minds to recognize that though we are many, we are one in you.

Teach us and show us the way.

Holy Spirit, you create anew the face of the earth. The summit of the mountains, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the lakes and rivers speak to us – the surging seas, the music of birdsong, the sounds of praise lifted to you. Recreate us so that we may save your creation for all life within it.

Because we are connected.

The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrops on the flower speak to us – of the changing seasons, of the approach of winter and the inevitable changes in our lives, that challenge us to embrace change positively and look beyond ourselves to the needs of those in our community and world.

Because we are connected.

The voices of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized speak to us – the despair of those without housing, those struggling with the cost of making ends meet, those whose voices aren't heard, especially at this time people of the LGBTQI + community who face intolerance and abuse daily.

Because we are connected.

We pray for those who lead us in the wider Uniting Church for wisdom, compassion and insightful leadership in a diverse and fragmented society, for our own church at Ormond for growing faith, hope and love and a clear way forward with ministry and the reshaping of our facilities. For ourselves and our families that your abundant grace, peace and blessing may be upon all we do. And we remember those known to us now who need our prayers at this time in their lives...

But above all, our hearts soar to you for we cry out 'Abba, Father' as we say:

**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
and 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.**

Commissioning and Benediction.

L: Everlasting God, look upon these faces gathered together in holy community and send them anywhere you would have them go.

Encourage them by your Holy Spirit to continue to tell their stories, to do good, and to seek justice for the sake of your Creation through their actions.

Sustain them that they may be one, so the world may believe that you sent your only Son Jesus for the life of the world.

L: The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you. And give you peace.

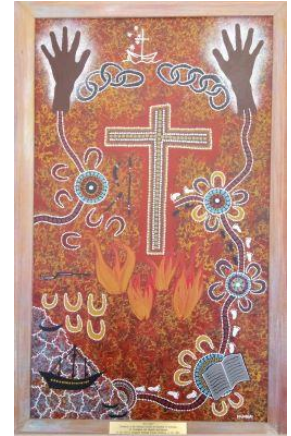
C. Amen.

Recessional hymn- TIS 590 What a friend we have in Jesus

Vs 1,3 Tune

**1. What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer.
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer.**

**3. Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
Jesus is our only refuge: Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you, You will find a solace there.**
(by Joseph Medlicott Scriven 1819-86 Public Domain.)



Refs: NCCA Week of Christian Unity resources 2023, Words for worship.

Theme Art-

“Invasion” White man came to this country in their ships. With their guns the black man has no answers. They were poisoned, shot, hung and put in chains as punishment. Then along came religion, Christianity, the Bible was read at campsites by white man and later black and white. Now we walk side by side burning bridges of the past. The chains of the past are broken and black and white walk on equal ground through this rugged wide land. Their spirit finally free through Christianity.

Artist: John “Munnari” Hammond A’Hang © Presented to NCCA 14-7-1994

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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NEWS & NOTICES