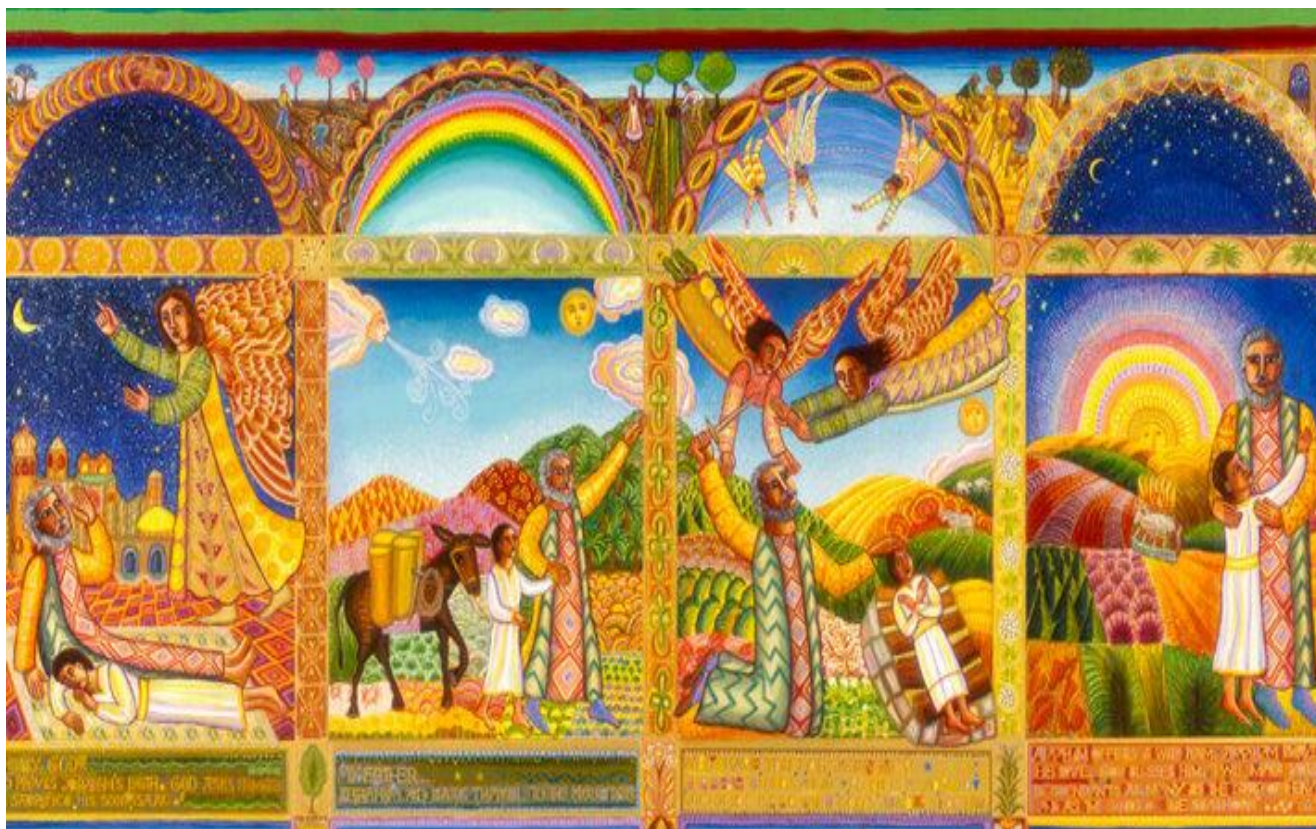


# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



2 JULY 2023

PENTECOST 5



Time for Gathering Together

# 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.*

## Acknowledgement of the Country on which you live and work

### Gathering reflection

*I place on the altar of dawn:  
The quiet loyalty of breath,  
The tent of thought where I shelter,  
Waves of desire I am shore to  
And all beauty drawn to the eye.*

*May my mind come alive today  
To the invisible geography  
That invites me to new frontiers,  
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,  
To risk being disturbed and changed.*

*May I have the courage today  
To live the life that I would love,  
To postpone my dream no longer  
But do at last what I came here for  
And waste my heart on fear no more.*

JOHN O'DONOHUE - Excerpt from 'A Morning Offering' found in his books, *To Bless the Space Between Us (US) / Benedictus (Europe)*

Let the day begin and the world move into newness. Let our minds imagine, our bodies stir, and our hearts be stilled. Let God's holy name be praised and let all God's people say: Amen! Amen! So be it!

## Hymn/Song: Together in Song (TIS) 187 *Let all creation dance*

**Prayer of approach:** We are gathered in God's name and claim Christ's promised presence not out of dread or fear, but believing God is faithful to forgive, let us rid ourselves of what we need to carry no longer.

**Confession:** Holy God, holy and mighty, holy, and beyond understand, have, mercy on us. We have journeyed into a far country and wasted our gifts and resources ... Lord, have mercy on us.

We turn our backs on family and friends, neighbours, and others I need, seeking our own pleasure and satisfaction ... Christ, have mercy on us.

We seek from you gifts and interventions for matters entrusted into our own hands, but patiently waiting, you keep on loving us and welcome us home with rejoicing ... Lord, have mercy on us.

### *Silence*

**Receive these assurances of Forgiveness** God is love. Through Christ God forgives us all that leads into brokenness and away from God's gifts of life. Take hold of this forgiveness and live your lives in the freedom. Amen, Thanks be to God!

## A TIME FOR STORYTELLING AND LISTENING

### Readings from the Bible: Hebrew Scriptures - Genesis 22.1-14 : The Command to Sacrifice Isaac

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." <sup>3</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. <sup>5</sup> Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." <sup>6</sup> Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. And the two of them walked on together. <sup>7</sup> Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

<sup>9</sup> When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." <sup>13</sup> And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide," as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

### and Gospel - Matthew 10.40-42: *Rewards*

<sup>40</sup> "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. <sup>41</sup> Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous, <sup>42</sup> and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

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### Reflection: "*How to share Jesus' life for all?*"

Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." (10:40) In other words, the one who welcomes another in Christ's name, welcomes Christ and God the Father who sent his Son to save us.

*You see, whenever we welcome Christ, Christ is no longer the guest. Christ becomes our host, welcoming us into new life.*

Think back to the story about Easter evening. Two disciples are walking home from Jerusalem, confused and disappointed in the way things have turned out. It's been a long and difficult weekend. A stranger joins them, and as this stranger explains how the scriptures teach Messiah must suffer and die, their hearts burn in their chests.

They want to hear more, so when they reach their home in Emmaus, they invite the stranger into their home. They welcome him to a meal. And the most astounding thing happens. This guest, this stranger, takes on the role of host and breaks the bread for them. They suddenly recognize Jesus, and he vanishes. (Luke 24:13-35)

When we welcome Christ, Christ welcomes us. The prophet's welcome is the welcome Jesus extends to us. We are welcome in God's presence, through his Son, to live for all eternity. Sometimes our dreams don't match reality. Sometimes our dreams are too small, our vision is too limited.

I didn't come here today to be your prophet. I'm not here to predict your future. I'm here to call you into it. My job as a preacher is to tell you the truth about yourselves, and the truth God is speaking into your lives and the life of this church.

You may not always like what you hear. But it's my job to be truthful with you. And if you can be truthful with each other, God is giving you a chance to examine your church's dreams and plans for ministering to this community. Your work together will be more fruitful if you can trust each other to speak openly and honestly, and listen to each other with love.

Then, together, we can find welcome at Christ's table, and extend that welcome to others who are thirsty for more than a cup of cold water – they are thirsty for God.

A Sermon preached (not by me), Preached at Willmar UMC on June 28, 2020

## A TIME FOR RESPONDING

Hymn/Song: TIS 390 Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks

Prayers of the People: Heather Baxter

The Lord's Prayer (pray the version you are most familiar with).

If you have access to Wifi, you might like to watch a Video clip: "The Blessing" - sung by churches on Aotearoa/New Zealand - Youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZQPifs2kjo>

May the peace of Christ be with you all. And also with you!

Final hymn/song: TIS 473 Community of Christ

**The Blessing:** We remember who we are, and we receive the promise of God's presence with us whatever we do and wherever we go.

God to enfold us, God to surround us.  
God in our speaking, God in our thinking.  
God in our life, God on our lips.  
God in our souls, God in our hearts.

May the feet of God walk with you, and God's hand hold you tight.  
May the eye of God rest on you, and God's ear hear your cry.  
May the smile of God be for you, and God's breath give you life.

May the Child of God grow in you, and God's love bring you home.

(Words © A.W. Podlich)

**We go in peace ... to love and serve the Lord – In the name of Christ!**

**We close the Bible and** carry it **out** remembering that God's Word lives in our daily life and work.

## 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