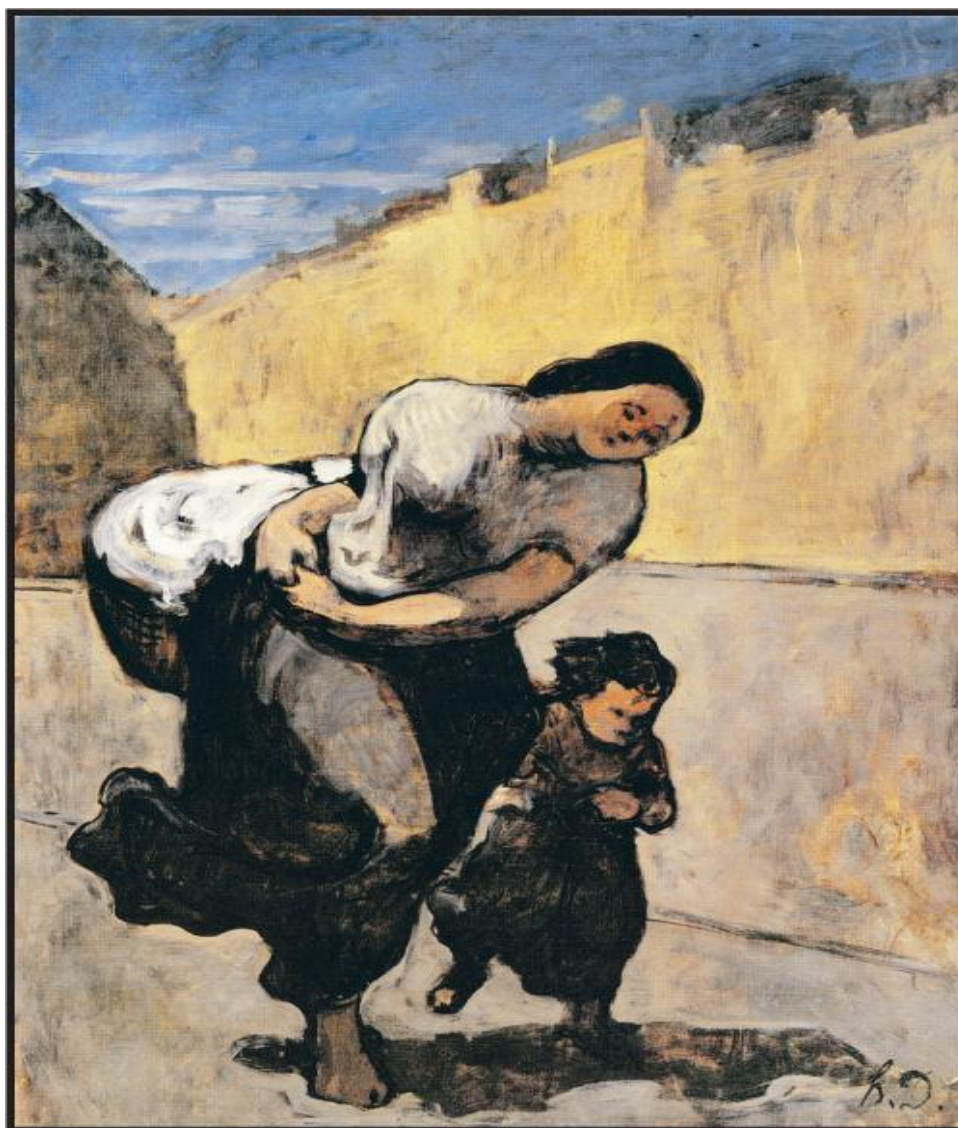


# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



9 JULY 2023

PENTECOST 6



# 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.*

## Focussing ... and connecting ...

The God of heaven has made a home on earth.

Christ lives among us and is one with us.

First among all creation, he lives among the least.

Christ journeys with the rejected and welcomes those who are left out

So we come, a scattered community to drink the water of life!

We who are hungry come to be filled with everything good!

We who seek, come, to discover in God, our full and human life.

So – together and scattered ... We come and worship God ...

## Hymn: TiS 188 Where wide sky rolls down and touches red sand

### Prayer for today

Pilgrim God, you create and renew human communities. You shape us, first and second peoples together into an undreamt future in this ancient land. You lead us on new pathways and in new directions not yet seen.

Help us to trust that it is you at work in our lives and that our journeys matter to you. Give us confidence to know that the cultures and wisdom we bring to this time and place are valued in your vision and are gifts in which we are invited to delight and discern your wonder and your grace.

To your tender care and loving heart we entrust our children, our elders, our visions, and ourselves. Walk with us as you walked with our ancestors on ways known and to be made known, here and in other places and times. Amen.

*(Revd Dr Tony Floyd in "Living Water – Thirsty Land", in "the UCA Assembly Mission Prayer Handbook 2009)*

### Confession

Holy God, hear our prayer: For the mending of our hearts, torn apart by our unkindness;

For the healing of our souls, wasting away from the despair around us;

For the forgiveness we seek for the sin we have allowed to persist;

For our failures to listen-towards-understanding to the stories of First Peoples' and walking the ways of truth, justice, and building reconciliation towards which the gospel calls us.

We pray for the courage to admit our fault,

The strength to amend our actions, and the hope that your grace awaits us.

Through Christ we pray. Amen.

# Assurance Of Forgiveness

Here is Good News! God is willing to cleanse us from our pride, our blindness, our stubborn insistence on having things “our way”. Through God’s grace we are washed and forgiven. Thankyou God! Amen.

## Hymn TiS 253 O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr

### Scripture

Your Word, O God is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path

#### **Genesis 24.34-51**

<sup>34</sup> So the messenger said, “I am Abraham’s servant. <sup>35</sup> The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup> And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and he has given him all that he has. <sup>37</sup> My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live, <sup>38</sup> but you shall go to my father’s house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.’ <sup>39</sup> I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’ <sup>40</sup> But he said to me, ‘The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your way successful. You shall get a wife for my son from my kindred, from my father’s house. <sup>41</sup> Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my kindred; even if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.’

<sup>42</sup> “I came today to the spring and said, ‘O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! <sup>43</sup> I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, “Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,” <sup>44</sup> and who will say to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also”—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master’s son.’

<sup>45</sup> “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ <sup>46</sup> She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I will also water your camels.’ So I drank, and she also watered the camels. <sup>47</sup> Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. <sup>48</sup> Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son. <sup>49</sup> Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left.”

<sup>50</sup> Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “The thing comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you anything bad or good. <sup>51</sup> Look, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has spoken.”

#### **Matthew 11.16-19 and 25-30**

<sup>16</sup> “But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

<sup>17</sup> ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;  
we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

<sup>18</sup> “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup> the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

**Jesus Thanks His Father** - <sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will! <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one

knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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In these readings may I find the Word of God and its place in our hearts!

## For reflection from the Readings - “In the making – hand in hand”

Matthew’s gospel/good news speaks of the great human longing - freedom. In his setting and place in history - freedom from war and persecution, freedom from religious persecution, freedom to worship God in Christ.

In all of the places where we live our lives, we have difficulty with freedom. Yet we also experience increasing forms of control and bondage - many in the name of keeping those self-same freedoms.

Matthew puts alongside those cries and seemingly endless weeping the persistent promise of Jesus: “Come to me! Come to me everyone who is weary and heavily burdened. I will give you rest! Come to ME! My yoke is not a burden, it is easy and my burden light!”

Words on the Statue of Liberty in New York speak of this search for freedom. Memories we value in both Australian and Indonesian histories also speak of the value of this search for freedom. In the USA it is the welcome to the world’s poor and its migrants. In Australia it is the welcome to migrants, the first boat people from south East Asia, our multicultural communities. As I understand it in Indonesia it is the Constitution that values and guarantees religious and cultural diversity.

But how things are casts a shadow over those memories and hopes. The poor, minorities and the suffering are pushed to the edges of society, culture, and community an of the world’s concerns.

Long ago, the prophet Zechariah looked down the ages and saw afar off the coming of a kind of government that would not bring poverty, captivity, orphans, and violence to the people. Zechariah saw that the government God would send was to be one that combined triumph with humility.

Having heard these things, we must hear again the strength of Jesus’ words, “Come to me, all you whose work is hard, and who carry heavy loads. I will give you rest.” For centuries, Anglicans (and later Methodists) in their prayer books introduced this saying with the words: “Hear what comfortable words our Lord Jesus says...” We knew them and we loved them like that. St. Augustine wrote about this blessing this way: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

The Church itself, if it is to be a bearer of God’s truth by the way she lives and not only by the way she talks, must make this invitation her own. An invitation not as words, but as actions, as personal way of life, of the ways our community’s work: “Come unto me all you who work hard and bear heavy burdens.”

When Jesus bids us “Come to me! Come to me everyone who is weary and heavily burdened. I will give you rest! Come to ME! My yoke is not a burden, it is easy and my burden light!” He means it. He offers fullness of life through it. But carrying out that promise is most frequently entrusted to us. That makes it a most fragile promise indeed!

(Revd Dr Tony Floyd – based on the Reflection in Church this morning)

# Prayers of the people – Warwick Barry

God of a thousand names,  
You come to us in many forms –

manna to the hungry  
**water to the parched**

embrace to the grieving  
**rainbow to the despairing**

champion of the oppressed  
**defender of the exploited**

friend to the lonely  
**rescuer to the lost**

rest for the weary  
**shock to the comfortable**

peace to the restless  
**gift to the joyful**

mystery to the knowing  
**revelation to those seeking**

Manna, water, embrace, rainbow, champion, defender, friend, rescuer, rest, shock, peace, gift, mystery, revelation...

In silence, let us reflect on what God's name is for us at this moment...

(Silent reflection)

I was hungry and you gave me food... we pray for people in many lands who go hungry and for those in Australia both adults and children who continue to experience food insecurity, may governments and charitable organisations and your church find dignified ways of helping all be fed.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me...we pray for those who seek asylum and refuge the world over and here, may they find acceptance, shelter and abundance and a place where they feel at home and hopeful.

I was ill and you comforted me...we pray for those we know who are ill or recovering from illness, may your healing Lord, peace and hope be with them each and every day in their journey to wholeness.

God of all people,  
We pray for peace.

We acknowledge our anger, and yours.

We pray that our common humanity and love might prevail in the face of the horror of war especially in Ukraine, the Middle East and Myanmar.

And so too we are called to honour Elders, past and present  
During this Naidoc week, not just in the now  
But in the long time ago

Woven in the forever time  
For and with Elders

May the Creator call us all to hear the ancient wisdom of the lands, skies and waterways  
Storylines  
Songlines  
Lore  
Ways of knowing and being  
Ways of growing and seeing  
For and with Elders

May the struggles of past and present endured by our Elders  
Carry us to a place of justice together, and enable us to provide them with a Voice for change,  
Guided by their resilience, struggle and survival, we give thanks for all Elders, especially for those of the  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Congress.

**God of many names. and still the one, true God, You reveal Your name to us in our need, yet remain beyond  
our control or understanding.  
You are God. and we are Your people.  
In trust and love we commit our prayers and ourselves to exploring and discovering who You are and whose  
we are.**

**Amen**

( adapted from UCA prayers and John & Norma Browns 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 for ever Amen**

## Hymn TiS 665 Jesus Christ is waiting

### Blessing

On our heads and on our houses – the blessing of God  
In our coming and going – the peace of God.  
In our life and our believing – the love of God.  
At our end and new beginning – the arms of God to welcome us and bring us home!

(Iona Community)

# Thoughts for reflection in the week to come - Listening and learning

*Recall a time or a situation when you were expected to participate in something or commit to something that you did not fully understand. What was it like, and how included did you feel?*

*Did something happen that allowed you understanding and freedom to participate fully from your heart? What turned the thirsty land of your isolation/separation into the living water of fuller understanding and participation?*

**Prayer:** *When language barriers are like thick fog shrouding faith's landmarks, blurring into vagueness the clear voice and sounds we seek, speak in us, Lord.*

*Through the swirling veil teach us how much we can share with simple words, patient listening, smiling companionship, with such small efforts for such immeasurable rewards.*

*But God who comes in the sound of sheer silence (1 Kings 19.12), do not let that coming lull us into avoiding the costs of truly speaking heart to heart with another: words, songs, documents, conversation 'in language' – each other's language and not simply our own.*

(Revd Dr Tony Floyd in "Living Water – Thirsty Land", in the UCA Assembly Mission Prayer Handbook 2009)

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