

# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



13 AUGUST 2023

PENTECOST 11



# WORSHIP AT HOME

*At worship we will be lighting a candle to remember all those who are part of our church community and who are not at worship with us today. You may like to light a candle at home as you follow these worship resources.*

## 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.

**Acknowledgement of Country:** We come to meet this morning from all manner of places, and on the Country of diverse Clans and Nations of First Peoples', and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging, and commit ourselves afresh to the journey of justice and reconciliation.

**Hymn/Song: TIS 154: Praise the God who changes places ...**

**Our prayers - of Thanksgiving:** God of peace, you bring peace to a troubled world, you bring peace to troubled hearts, you bring peace to our past, you our present and to our future.

You are the great reconciler. Your loves binds up the broken world. Your peace heals. Your joy fills our minds and hearts.

You never stop loving us. You never give up on us. You never fail or falter. We live in a world flooded with your light and love and for this we give thanks.

*(Words for Worship 20221120)*

**Confession:** We have journeyed into a far country and wasted our gifts and resources ... Lord, have mercy on us – **Lord, have mercy on us.**

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

Silence

**Assurance:** 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 and power of God's Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

*(Uniting in worship – adapted)*

# TIME FOR STORYTELLING AND LISTENING

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

## **From the First Testament - Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28**

<sup>37:1</sup> Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan.

<sup>37:2</sup> This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>37:3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. <sup>37:4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

<sup>37:12</sup> Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. <sup>37:13</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." <sup>37:14</sup> So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, <sup>37:15</sup> and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" <sup>37:16</sup> "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." <sup>37:17</sup> The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

<sup>37:18</sup> They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. <sup>37:19</sup> They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. <sup>37:20</sup> Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams. <sup>37:21</sup> But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." <sup>37:22</sup> Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him" - that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

<sup>37:23</sup> So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; <sup>37:24</sup> and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. <sup>37:25</sup> Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>37:26</sup> Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>37:27</sup> Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. <sup>37:28</sup> When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

## **From the New Testament – Matthew 14:22-33**

<sup>14:22</sup> Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>14:23</sup> And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>14:24</sup> but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. <sup>14:25</sup> And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. <sup>14:26</sup> But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. <sup>14:27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." <sup>14:28</sup> Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>14:29</sup> He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. <sup>14:30</sup> But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>14:31</sup> Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>14:32</sup> When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>14:33</sup> And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Hymn/Song TiS 745: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God*

## Reflection on the testimonies from Scripture ...

The Scripture stories of recent weeks have a number of references to the discovery of and encounters with God in unexpected places and circumstances. Some years ago, the Revd Bruce Prewer wrote 'Australian Psalms' about these unimagined possible encounters and presences of God in Jesus. As Joseph enters into a forced exile away for the country where he knows God dwells, and Matthew raises serious questions about faith and trust and the presence of God, this Psalm of Bruce's' bears reflection:

On this faith journey, we are pilgrims too easily seduced by the self-centred contemporary culture: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

Passing by refugees in the holding compounds in Darwin, Port Headland, and Woomera: *Surely the Lord was in this place, but we did not know it.*

Touring the green grounds and ruins of Port Arthur where suffering and grief have twice abounded: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

Among the scapegoats, queuing at Centrelink counters and making endless futile job applications: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

Out of sight, behind pubs or in the alleys and park toilets, where drugs and needles proliferate: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

Wherever other congregations and pastors practise a religious style that we personally find off-putting: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

In Canberra, with those brave Christians who by sheer faith and hope endure the compromises of the political process: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

In the very familiar ordinariness of our own local church, where we share the pews with folk who are boring sinners like us: *Surely the Lord is in this place, but we did not know it.*

Spirit of God, more present and real and sane than we ever are, *enable us to know you more surely, to love you more eagerly, and to serve you more joyfully, now and to the end of the world. Amen*

*(Incognito, in Australian Psalms (Revised and Expanded), Open Book Publishers, 2000, by Rev Bruce D Prewer,)*

## TIME FOR RESPONDING

### Hymn Song TiS 691: *Faith will not grow from ...*

### Lighting of the Candle

As we prepare for our prayers for others, we light this candle to remember all those who are part of our church community but who are not at worship with us today.

### Prayers of the People: prepared by Warwick Barry

Including – the lands and peoples of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger

Confident in God's steadfast love through Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world and all people who are in a global and local sense our neighbours.

Therefore we pray that you will increase our faith and embolden us to both pray and live by it. Loving God, teach us to trust you and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

Loving Friend, we pray for those far away neighbours who are in conflict: in the Ukraine and Africa, South East Asia and the Middle East. Bring an end to all human conflicts soon.

Loving Friend, we pray for mistreated neighbours: suffering from extortion and injustice, political or religious oppression, cruel economic exploitation, climate change or domestic tyranny. Bring healing and liberating change.

Loving Friend, we pray for neglected neighbours: homeless, misjudged, persecuted, and hungry, or consigned to unremitting poverty, hard labour, and a short life span. Bring acceptance, care, change and hope to all.

Loving Friend, we pray for near-at-hand neighbours: at work, in our street, in supermarkets, banks, schools, and hospitals; all who are in trouble and at their wits end. Bring peace and a way forward.

Loving Friend, we pray for our bruised and weeping neighbours: those just made redundant, pained by divorce, grieving over a delinquent child, or weeping hot tears at a grave. Bring comfort, hope, faith and love.

And for ourselves as we seek to follow you through all the storms and distractions of our lives.

When we are tempted to add our noise to the shouting of opinions and doctrines, teach us O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we face the crashing of guns and missiles in our world, and allow justifications of violence; when we are overwhelmed by the wails of those who grieve and suffer, and by the white noise of those who deny the world's pain, teach us O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we are lured by the song of materialism, and lulled by the lullaby of the immediate and the expedient, teach us O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

In all the places where your love and justice are unheard, where the song of your Grace is silenced, and where the noise of sin, robs people of life, teach us, to hear the whispers of your reign, and to quietly, gently, persistently, proclaim your gospel in love, word and action.

Amen

(Adapted from Rev Bruce Prewer & Sacredise)

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

Together in Song (TIS) 414 *There's a spirit in the air*  
verses 1, 6, 7

## A 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 your expectations and dreams were thwarted by actions or words of others. What was it like, and how included did you feel?*

*Did something happen that allowed you understanding and freedom to recover your sense of identity and freedom? What turned the thirsty land of your isolation/separation into the living water of fuller new life and understanding?*

**Prayer:** *When circumstances change and overwhelm us, God speak to us and in us.*

*Through the darkness and silence teach us how close you are and how mindful of our circumstances and need for hope.*

*God who comes in the sound of sheer silence (1 Kings 19.12), who lives in and through the lives and presence of others, enfold and enable us, buy your grace to truly speak heart to heart with another in words, songs, documents, conversation 'in language' – each other's language and not simply our own.*

(Revd Dr Tony Floyd)

## Postlude

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

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NEWS & NOTICES