

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



27 AUGUST 2023

PENTECOST 13



WORSHIP AT HOME

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.

Set aside 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.

Focusing ... 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.

WELCOME SELAMAT DATANG MARHABA MALOE LELEI NISA BUL CROESO

To this Service of Worship 12th in the Season of Pentecost – a time for reflecting on the growth and obedience of the Christian community

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.

Call to Worship

Once a community sang: *"It is an awe-full thing to fall into the hand of the Living God!"* (Book of Psalms)

Do we dare to come into God's presence in worship?

Yes, for all are welcome in God's family.

If we are strangers here, unfamiliar with how things have 'always' happened here, dare we come in? Yes, for all are welcome in God's family.

If we are rich of poor, not all dressed the same, not all living the same way or not

understanding the same things, dare we come in? Yes, for all are welcome in God's family.

If life is hard, the journey long and dark, life's struggle unending and unheeded, our presence here patchy and uncertain, dare we come in? Yes, for all are welcome in God's family.

Yes, it is indeed *"... an awe-full thing to fall into the hand of the Living God!"* But this God is the One whom Jesus calls 'Abba', Daddy and as part of this God's beloved community I/we come to worship!

Hymn/Song – Together in Song (TiS) 152 Joyful, joyful

Prayers of praise & thanksgiving followed by our confession and an assurance of the promise of God's loving forgiveness.

Let us give thanks to God who is wisdom and love: **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

Holy and life-giving God, we offer you thanks and praise in wonder and awe, in delight and astonishment: for you are Creator of all things, and Lover of each one.

You found out what we were doing and interrupted: "*Come and do it with me*", you said. So thank you, Lord, for interrupting our lives.

You promised us nothing by way of success, recognition, possessions, or reward. "*These things will come at the right time when you walk with me*", you said. So thank you, Lord, for promising us to act.

You gave us no resources apart from ourselves, hands meant for caring, lips meant for praising, hearts meant for loving, and the holy spirit to make us restless until we change. So thank you, Lord, for the essential gifts.

Then, just when we've got it right as to where we should go and what we should do, just when we are ready to take on the world, you come, like a beggar to our back door, saying "*This is the way, I am the Way*". So thank you, Lord, for coming again and keeping us right, and showing us you care for us and for all people.

Confession: When we failed to honor your work and your being, your Word of Wisdom entered creation in Jesus to share with us the joy and pain of our humanity.

Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world – have mercy on us

Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world – have mercy on us

Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world – grant us your peace.

Through Christ, life rises from despair.

In Christ, all things are made new.

Because of Christ, your Spirit remains with us,
and our sin is forgiven! Thank you God! Amen

A TIME FOR LISTENING

Readings from the Bible –

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, "*Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.*" Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "*When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.*" But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "*Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?*" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "*Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.*" So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live." Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it.

When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Matthew 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Lord may your word live in us: **and bear much fruit to your glory.**

Song: Together in song (TiS) 220 (ii) *This, this is the God we adore*

Reflection – something to think about ...

In the reading from the First Testament, "out of fear, the king/pharaoh commands oppression, forced labour, hard labour and even the killing of boys at birth. The kings fear meant that he forgot everything and reacted. This is often referred to as the fear of a coward. In contrast is the fear of the courageous, demonstrated by the midwives who feared God. For the midwives, their FEAR was to face everything and respond with courage and with the power of love, doing what was life-giving. ... In our journeys each day we are faced with situations that call us to reflect on our respond-ability. We ask ourselves, will our responses be life-giving and nurturing of ourselves and others."

How do you answer that question in your own journey and encounters?

Prayer: May our fears and feelings of insecurity be transformed into compassion by the power of your love. Amen

A TIME FOR RESPONDING

Song: TiS 573 A charge to keep I have

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

our prayers of concern for others, the world, the church, ourselves ...

Reflection-

“Transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12:1). Such a great statement of how our faith inspires and ignites us to innovative and inspiring change! Revitalisation through the Pentecost Spirit; renewal of our thinking and perceptions through the Way of Jesus. Our faith is both individualistic and also calls us to be communal. It requires daily commitment, deep listening, heartfelt loving, and courageous actions.

Rev Anne Hewitt

Our prayers of the people fill focus today on situations that need transformed thinking and living. I invite you to respond to the following bidding:

When I say: **God of the fragile and vulnerable**,
please respond with,

Hear our prayers.

Let us pray:

Loving God of grace, justice and mercy,
You who walk with us and all who are made in your image,
We come to you now, seeking your oversight, help
and mercy for all those who struggle in life.

We pray for our national and state governments, – grant our leaders and especially all ministers, wisdom, compassion, tolerance and integrity as they lead the people of this country and tackle challenging world and national social issues. Enlarge their world view and enable them to be open to the winds of change and working together in a spirit of unity and purpose.

God of the fragile and vulnerable...

We pray for the people of Spain, Greece, Canada and Hawaii, who have experienced the terror and dislocation of the recent fires, bless the efforts of those providing rescue and support, comfort those who mourn and who are fearful, bewildered and despairing, who have lost homes and towns—bring hope and courage in the face of adversity.

God of the fragile and vulnerable...

We pray for those who live in countries where violence and war mark the lives of many, in Ukraine, Africa, Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Middle East, –bring an end to war and killings, bring healing, bring reconciliation and renewed hope for all those who live in these dark places.

God of the fragile and vulnerable...

We pray for your abundant blessing upon the many people who work for a better future for migrants and asylum seekers, for the ASRC and the Brigadine Sisters and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Grant them abundant resources and compassionate staff and enable them to bring hope, material support and broader social acceptance for these people in their new homes; bring an end to offshore detention.

God of the fragile and vulnerable...

We pray for those who receive the care many charitable organisations bring; for the ageing, for children, young people and families, for those with disabilities, for those who are homeless and unemployed, and for those shackled by addictions. Lord we ask that in your name we and many others, may help to bring

hope, love and new life for all who struggle.

God of the fragile and vulnerable...

And for your church Lord here in Australia and all over the world, grant leaders wisdom, kindness, understanding and energy. Renew your people in mind, heart and soul through your gracious Holy Spirit, empower us to live lives that are compassionate, faithful and life changing for those who you lead us to. Fill us with faith, hope and love.

God of the fragile and vulnerable...

In silence we remember now any we know, who are in great need of your love and healing...

God of the last, God of the first,
God of all those in between,
Hear our concerns,
as we seek your presence in our lives
and in a world in need, we ask these things in Jesu's name.

Amen

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

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.

Song: TiS 569 *Guide me, O thou great Redeemer*

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)

Blessing on each other: TiS 779 *May the feet of God walk with you*

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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