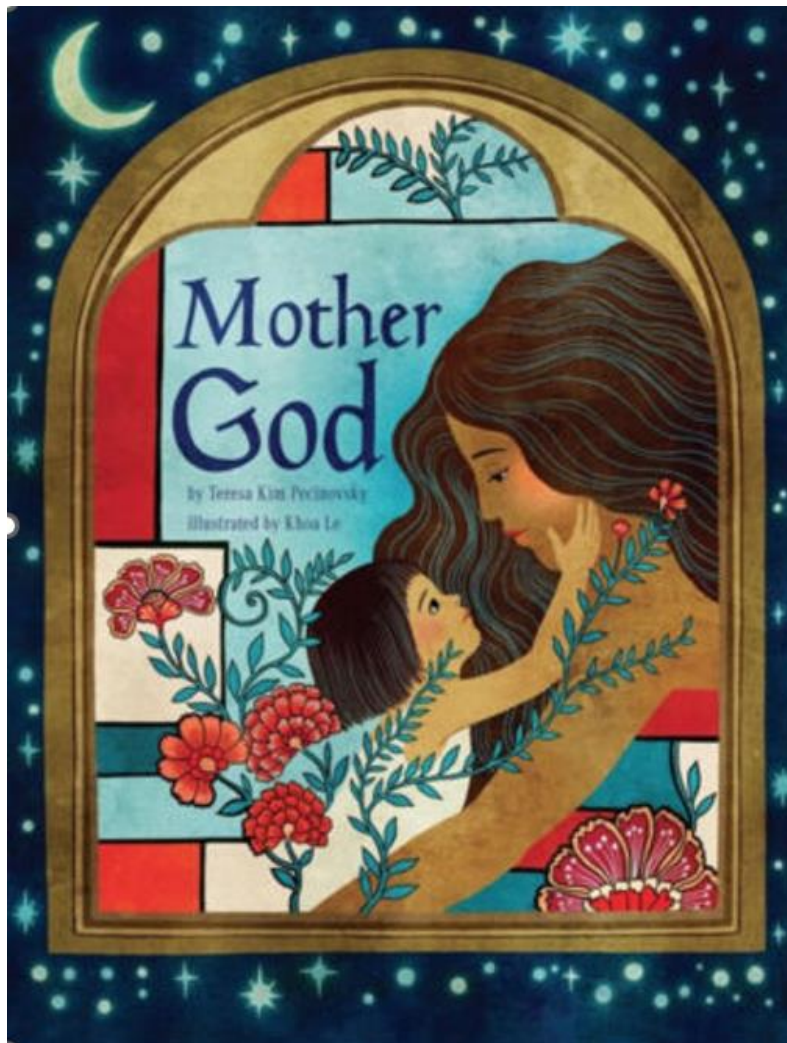


# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



12 MAY 2024

EASTER 7



Mother's Day

# 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.*

## OPENING:

Christ is Risen     **He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah!**

In John chapter 15, Jesus says “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”     Let us rejoice in the love of our Lord.

## THE GREETING:

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **AMEN**

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Today we celebrate Mothers and I'd like to wish all our mothers, grandmothers and maybe great grandmothers a very happy Mother's Day. As you have read in the notice sheets, today was also going to be the launch of the Green Faith Project, so the OUC Climate Change Action Group - Ron, Heather, Lachlan and Marg – offered to lead worship. However; as the Green Faith Project launch has been deferred until later this year, we have changed our focus to honour all Mothers.

## CALL TO WORSHIP:

We are the people of God.  
Together we are family.  
I am married,  
and single  
and in a covenant relationship.  
**We are the people of God.**  
**Together we are family.**  
I was married,  
and in a holy union,  
and never married,  
and married twice,  
and widowed.  
**We are the people of God.**  
**Together we are family.**  
I am older  
and younger,  
and inbetween,  
facing my first serious relationship,  
knowing the joy of love,  
enduring betrayal,  
tasting the grief of a dying partner.  
**We are the people of God.**  
**Together we are family.**

I am an only child,  
and have ten siblings  
and have raised two children  
and no children.

**We are the people of God.  
Together we are family.**

I am part of a family,  
the human family  
the family of faith  
my family of origin  
the family of my choosing.

**We are the people of God.  
Together we are family.**

I have a mother,  
and don't have a mum,  
and mum ran away,  
and God is a Mum,  
and in her we are one

**We are the people of God.  
Together we are family.**

Let us worship our Mother, God

*(Adapted from-2001, [Liturgy Outside](#))*

## HYMN TIS 182: Bring Many Names:

1. Bring many names,  
beautiful and good,  
celebrate, in parable and story,  
holiness in glory,  
living, loving God.  
Hail and hosanna!  
Bring many names!
2. Strong mother God,  
working night and day,  
planning all the wonders of creation,  
setting each equation,  
genius at play:  
Hail and hosanna,  
strong mother God!
3. Warm father God,  
hugging every child,  
feeling all the strains of human living,  
caring and forgiving,  
till we're reconciled:  
Hail and hosanna,  
warm father God!
4. Old, aching God,  
grey with endless care,  
calmly piercing evil's new disguises,  
glad of good surprises,  
wiser than despair:  
Hail and hosanna,  
old, aching God!

5. Young, growing God,  
eager, on the move,  
seeing all, and fretting at our blindness,  
crying out for justice,  
giving all you have:  
Hail and hosanna,  
young, growing God!
  
6. Great, living God,  
never fully known,  
joyful, darkness far beyond our seeing,  
closer yet than breathing,  
everlasting home:  
Hail and hosanna,  
great, living God!

*Brian Wren 1936-*

## PRAYERS OF PRAISE, CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:

*Let us pray.*

Strong, Compassionate God  
as a mother you tenderly care for all your children.  
You pick us up when we fall over.  
Your face constantly smiles on us.  
You sing songs to us of your love.  
You feed us from your hand.  
You search for us when we are lost.  
You bind up our wounds.  
You comfort us when are hurting.  
You forgive us when we hurt you.  
You are even ready to give up your own life for us,  
so we, your children can truly live.  
All praise be to you, Mother God!

And as we praise you, Mother God, we also offer our thankfulness for *those who have been mother figures in our lives.*

Especially, today we give you thanks for our Mums and the many gifts they have brought and still bring into our lives, and into the life of the World.

We thank you for their caring love,

- their nurturing of children and family,
- their willingness to give and not to count the cost,
- their tenderness and warm embrace.
- their influence and example
- their wisdom and resilience
- their endless feeding, cleaning, restoring and fixing.
- their tireless connecting.
- their protection and constant regard for their children's welfare.
- their coolness and awareness in a crisis.
- their faithfulness, prayerfulness, wisdom and guidance; and not least,
- their fierce love.

Mother God, bless all Mums this day and always.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Son of Mary.

**AMEN**

CONFESSION

Even as we acknowledge you as the astonishing incomparable Mother of us all, we acknowledge our contrariness to your ways of hope, peace, joy, love and forgiveness; preferring our own narrow ways and tarnished life.

Creating and forgiving Mother,  
we confess that we have not always loved  
you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength;  
we have not loved as Christ loved us.

Mother God, forgive us  
for the times when we have failed our Mums.

*A short time of silence.*

Forgiving, Mothering God, enable us by your grace  
to forgive our Mums anything that was or is hurtful to us.

*A short time of silence.*

We pray in the name of the Mother's Son, Jesus our Lord!

Our sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to our Mothering God!**

## THE PEACE: Marg Davis

The Peace of the Lord be always with you

**And also with you**

*We share the PEACE*

## THE WORD

### SCRIPTURE AND THREE BRIEF REFLECTIONS on 'MUMS':

READING:

God creates the universe and enjoys what she has created.

READING GENESIS 1:11 – 13: Marg Davis

God Spoke:

“Earth, green up! Grow all varieties of seed-bearing plants,  
Every sort of fruit-bearing tree”

And there it was.

Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties,

And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.

God saw that it was good.

It was evening, it was morning – Day Three.

READING JOB 38: 1-11: Marg Davis

And now, finally God answered Job from the eye of a violent storm. He said:

“Why do you confuse the issue?

Why do you talk without knowing what you're talking about?

Pull yourself together, Job! Up on your feet! Stand tall!

I have some questions for you, and I want some straight answers.

Where were you when I created the earth? Tell me since you know so much!  
Who decided on its size? Certainly, you'll know that!  
Who came up with the blueprints and measurements?  
How was the foundation poured, and who set the cornerstone, while the morning stars sang in chorus and all the angels shouted praise?  
And who took charge of the ocean when it gushed forth like a baby from the womb?  
That was me! I wrapped it in soft clouds, and tucked it in safely at night.  
Then I made a playpen for it, a strong playpen, so it couldn't run loose,  
And said, 'Stay here, this is your place. Your wild tantrums are confined to this place!'

REFLECTION 1: Heather Baxter.

When I was a child, our family enjoyed many car trips to the bush. A particular love of my mother's was having an opportunity to look at the magnificent array of native flowers in Victorian bush. She'd get out of the car and pick a little sample of this, and a little sample of that. Later on, she'd place the cuttings in tissues, between the leaves of a book. Then it was a matter of her identifying the scientific name of each of the cuttings.

Of course, these days this activity of picking native flowers is not allowed as a pastime. My sister has carried on the tradition of examining and enjoying plants and she uses her phone camera to good advantage to capture the information she needs. On our trip to Western Australia last year with my sister and her husband, we would stop the car – all four of us would get out to check the flowers near the car. We'd spend ½ an hour and see dozens of different flowers at each stop. A lot of them were so tiny and understated that you'd miss them unless you took the time to stop and examine the earth. Others were big and show-y yelling out "look at me". Hundreds of photos were taken. You can see some of them after the service.

Myself, I just love seeing the variety in nature. My favourite family is the acacia family. Brilliant yellows, mellow moderate colours, and pale lemons. Soft feathery leaves, sharp pokey hard leaves, long coastal leaves. Trees that seem to hide their tiny pale flowers. Hundreds of combinations – all of them magnificent and worthy of another Baxter photo.

And our grandchildren have taken up the challenge. As we drove from their home in Emerald to our house one holiday day, they pointed out all the Wattles they saw – delighting in finding more trees for me to see. During the lockdown days several years ago we challenged each other to find the smallest flower, the most colourful flower, the largest flower etc as we did our regulation walk. The grandkids threw themselves into each of these challenges.

My mother – birthing generations who are interested in, and delight in creation - the wonderful world of flowers.

"And God saw that it was good".

READING: PROVERBS 31:25-31 Marg Davis

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

READING: PROVERBS 22:6 Marg Davis

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.

REFLECTION 2: Lachlan Williams.

My Mum trusted her faith, despite being schooled by stereotypically brutal nuns, and was at peace with her choices in life. Mum's trust and belief in what awaited her after death enabled her to endure what beset her in life.

When I was little, I trusted Mum to keep me safe, and I would literally cling to her to feel safe and supported. I even recall taking shelter in her coat ... while she was wearing it – she didn't flush me out, just carried on whatever conversation she was having at the time, as if having a child under your coat was an ordinary everyday thing.

When I was growing up I naturally, but willingly, trusted the choices she made for me. I was quite proud to wear the clothes she chose for me and those she made for me. Not being a terribly fussy eater, I trusted what Mum put on my plate, and took particular delight in "cheese and raisin" pictures assembled from slivers of cheese and raisins. In retrospect, perhaps I was a fussy eater and burdened Mum with my requests for edible artwork. Reading formed a huge part of my childhood, and as I explored the world of the written word, I trusted Mum's recommendations on what I might like to read while using her as my living dictionary.

As an adult, I trusted Mum's advice. On financial matters, Mum was well informed, and although I knew she invested in shares it was only after her death that we discovered what an astute financial whizz she was. I would turn to Mum for advice on practical matters, especially my efforts to reproduce her success in the kitchen, and to rescue plants from my brown thumbs. Mum always offered life advice and support, generously and without judgment, and I still remember her barely disguised pleasure when Karen and I became a couple.

At the end of her life, I trusted Mum's choices and I think she trusted my decisions. As the primary accompanist to various specialists, I trusted her choices in the medical treatment she did and did not receive. When it came time to find a suitable aged care home, Mum's desire that she not be trapped in a literal multi-tier multi-storey us-and-them environment was quite clear (and non-negotiable). Mum trusted my decisions as her power of attorney, although I didn't always trust myself to handle her legacy to her level of acumen. Finally, a week or so before her death, we had an honest and frank discussion about her funeral arrangements and service, something that could not have happened without our mutual respect for one another.

READING: COLOSSIANS 3:12-15 Marg Davis

'Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.'

READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 Marg Davis

'Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.'

### REFLECTION 3: Ron Townsend.

When I was around 8 or 9 years old, I remember an incident that says a whole lot about my mum. She sent me off one day to purchase some cool drinks from the milk bar. On the way home I dropped the string bag with the 4 or 5 bottles of Lemonade and smashed all of them. (Woodroffe's screw top bottles were all made from glass back then.) When I arrived home, I burst out crying, and was really fearful about what would happen. Mum knelt down, pulled me into her arms, hugged me and re-assured me that it was all OK! Mum was a carer, a lover, a mender (not just of clothes either) and a peace-maker.

Now I say peace-maker, because, ours was not a well-off, nor harmonious household. I loved my Dad, but he was a hard man to live with – he carried a lot of frustration and anger (related to work.) But Mum was the constant. 'Making peace,' and she was superb at it. Holding the family together and she was superb at it. Living out love - with a difficult man and 3 sons, and she was superb at it.

Two other my-Mum characteristics. My Mum was really attractive, and had a real zany, creative side which was never really allowed to flourish! Let me explain. Yes, she knitted, sewed, did craft, cooked wonderfully, but when the art institution associated with Adelaide Uni offered her a "job" to be a nude model for their Art students, she happily said yes (it paid well too, and she enjoyed doing it!) But when Dad found out, he went ballistic! And that was the end of that! Such a pity!

Finally, I shared with you on Easter Day, her remarkable acceptance of others. You'll remember how I was the recipient of that acceptance, when, as a very nervous 15yr old, she revealed her unconditional love of me as I shared the deep emotion of my conversion to the Christian Faith.

So, I chose these two readings on love from St Paul. Mum's life reflected so much of what lies at the heart of Christianity, namely, that extra-ordinary love which was highlighted in the readings (though she never belonged to a church community\*). *'Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast... Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.'* And, *'above all...put on love, which binds everything together....And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.'*

\*A final note: Because my Mum was not a practicing Christian does not mean God was not in her and working within her and through her. That is true of all Mums – and Dads and every living soul of all people of all time. Yes, God calls us into membership of the community of faith but Her (Capital 'H') love for every person and part of creation is not limited by that membership. All praise be to our wonderful Loving, Living Connecting Mothering God.

## HYMN TIS 418: She sits like a Bird:

1. She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,  
hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;  
she sighs and she sings, mothering creation,  
waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.
2. She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,  
lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;  
she nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,  
nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.
3. She dances in fire, startling her spectators,  
waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;



she weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,  
nor can she be captured, silenced or restrained.

4. For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,  
gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;  
she is the key opening the scriptures,  
enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

*John L Bell 1949- and Graham Maule 1958-*

**MUMS – your thoughts:** Having read the three REFLECTIONS on ‘Our Mums’ above, what are your recollections of your Mums and your Mothering? Perhaps make a list and share with your friends, family, your Pastoral Link Contact Person from Ormond Uniting Church. One other question you might consider is “What about God as MOTHER!?” Think of how that might help (or hinder) you to understand more deeply the nature of God.

## SONG: Motherhood, sublime, eternal:

Meter 8.7 8.7 D – Tune ?? - lots of 8.7.8.7 D Tunes in TiS

1. Motherhood, sublime, eternal,  
lives in God’s great heart of Love;  
ever holds us, safe enfolds us,  
underneath, around, above;  
Patient, tender, kind, forgiving,  
though in devious paths we roam;  
gently chides us, ever guides us,  
and all-loving, leads us home.
2. Ev’ry wrong will sure be righted;  
ev’ry evil swept away;  
truth upspringing, justice bringing,  
ushers in the brighter day;  
Mother calls her earthly children,  
loves them, lifts them when they fall;  
striving, calling, fainting, falling,  
Motherlove enfolds them all.
3. God is love, and love forever  
in the Motherheart is blest;  
lives the longest, lifts the strongest,  
far outreaching all the rest;  
not by might, and not by wisdom  
comes our lifting from the sod:  
love’s pure glory tells the story  
in the Motherheart of God.

*Julian Stearns Cutler (1854-1930)*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: Heather Baxter.

"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."

*Light a candle.*

Let us pray

O loving God, bless all mothers. Bless their forgiving hearts, their open arms, and welcoming smiles.

Nurture their souls.

**As they nurture ours.**

Care for their bodies.

**As they care for ours.**

Pray for them.

**As they pray for us.**

Teach them mercy and kindness.

**As they teach us.**

Feed their hunger for wisdom.

**As they feed us.**

Share your wondrous stories with them.

**As they share with us.**

Love them always, despite their faults.

**As they love us.**

O loving God, bless all mothers.

Bless their forgiving hearts, their open arms, their welcoming smiles.

**Bless all mothers. Amen**

*Lisa Freemantle and Les Miller, Words for the Journey*

LORD'S PRAYER

**Let us pray together, the Lord's Prayer**

**Our Mother 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.**

## SONG: At the Table:

Meter: Verses - 8.7.8.7 and Chorus 8.7.8.7.7.

1. At the table, in his honour  
Martha served with all her care.  
Mary poured out her devotion,  
and the perfume was her prayer.

*Chorus:*

*Fill our hearts with such devotion.*

*May our love be strong and true*

*like the fragrance of her perfume.*

*Make our passion always new,  
make our passion always new.*

2. She anointed him for dying,  
she prepared him for the grave.  
While the traitor criticized her,  
Jesus' words were full of praise.

*Chorus:*

3. May our living be our service,  
may our vision be of you,  
and our loving adoration  
shine in all we say and do.

*Chorus: x2*

*Robin Mann*

## DISMISSAL:

From the comfort of this place,  
to the discomfort of discipleship,  
**we will go to serve your people,  
Loving Mothering God.**

Weeding community gardens  
which feed the hungry,  
tutoring children after school,  
**we will go to wrap others in your grace,  
Jesus our Brother.**

Listening to the stories of the ignored,  
learning the language of our newest neighbors,  
**we will go to discover the truth you share  
in every moment, Spirit of Wisdom.**

*(c) Thom M. Shuman*

## BENEDICTION:

May the God of peace  
who brought from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
by the blood of the eternal covenant,  
equip you with everything good;  
that you may do Her will,  
working in you that which is pleasing in Her sight,  
through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Mother-Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen**

## WORD OF MISSION:

Go in peace to love and serve the Risen Lord.  
**In the name of the Risen One, Mary's Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## Postlude

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

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Presider: Climate Change Group  
Music: Peter Hurley

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## NEWS & NOTICES