

# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



18 AUGUST 2024

PENTECOST 13



# WORSHIP AT HOME

## THEME: Living Wisely

*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. We join with them all.*

*Go to your prepared place OR prepare a space in the house; a comfortable chair, a lit 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.*

**“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”**

**“And also with you”**

## Focussing ...

The scripture readings this week remind us that through encouragement, example, prayer, and story, to take care and remain attentive to the way of God, phrased as the way of wisdom. Faith communities are encouraged to practice Godly wisdom and care in words and actions. These two, word and action, always go together. The faith community, your church, study group, prayer fellowship, may as a gathered community or maybe at home alone yet connected can practice and cultivate wisdom's ways of care, healing, peace, love. This may be described as filled with the Spirit. Among those practices are such as singing or reading the Psalms, hymns or spiritual songs. Also, acts of prayer, reading or praying the scriptures. The reading from Ephesians chapter 5 prompts reflection on practices that help us live a life shaped by the gospel of Jesus.

**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.

## Joining the scattered community

Here, with the community gathered on Sunday, we begin another week, weaving together the fabric of our lives, in all their different textures and colours, their changing forms and flows. Here we mark the things that have gone before and look forward in hope for newness to come. Here we celebrate each other's place as one thread in the weaving and cherish the moments when the fabric of our lives become whole.

## Greeting & Call to Worship

Sing psalms and hymns,  
sing spiritual songs together.  
Sing! Make music for our God.  
Let us give thanks to God always,  
In our hearts, and here as one people of God

Hymn/Song – TiS 155 O Lord my God, when I in  
awesome wonder

# Psalm 111 Good News Translation

111 Praise the Lord!

With all my heart I will thank the Lord  
in the assembly of his people.

<sup>2</sup> How wonderful are the things the Lord does!

All who are delighted with them want to understand them.

<sup>3</sup> **All he does is full of honour and majesty;  
his righteousness is eternal.**

<sup>4</sup> **The LORD does not let us forget his wonderful actions;  
he is kind and merciful.**

<sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who honour him;  
he never forgets his covenant.

<sup>6</sup> He has shown his power to his people  
by giving them the lands of foreigners.

<sup>7</sup> **In all he does he is faithful and just;  
all his commands are dependable.**

<sup>8</sup> **They last for all time;  
they were given in truth and righteousness.**

<sup>9</sup> He set his people free  
and made an eternal covenant with them.  
Holy and mighty is he!

<sup>10</sup> The way to become wise is to honour the Lord;  
he gives sound judgment to all who obey his commands.

**God is to be praised forever.**

## Song TiS 626 Lord of creation, to you be all praise

### Prayers of praise & thanksgiving

followed by our **confession** and an assurance of the promise of God's loving forgiveness.

Lord God, we praise you!

We see you in all that we do.

You are never far from us.

We are blessed to share in your wisdom.

It greets us each day and calls us to live with justice and faith.

**Remind us again, what you desire of us,**

**Because we desire to be your people.**

**Come Lord, meet us in our songs and prayers.**

(Words for Worship)

#### Confession:

God of the wise and not so wise,

How is it that we need to be reminded again and again of what we value the most?

We are so distracted by the many things around us,

From new gadgets to new hobbies,

From enticing wants to undesired needs,

From self-serving to service of others.

**Gracious Lord, In our humility, hear our prayer.**

We can easily forget to see the simple joys you bring before us.

We forget to honour the people we love.

We forget to give thanks for the generosity that comes our way.

We forget to listen to precious stories that someone wishes to share.

We forget the moments of peace where we hear creation sing your praise.

We forget, and even stifle, the gifts your Spirit grows in us.

**Gracious Lord, In our humility, hear our prayer.**

(Seasons of the Spirit)

Silence

**Assurance:**

God calls to us all, "Come join with me!"

Live in the Wisdom that is yours to hold.

Celebrate the gifts of the Spirit, knowing they are there,  
rekindling your faith. Be at peace, as you share in God's wisdom.

(Words for Worship)

## WE LISTEN

Lord, your Word is a light for our feet, **a lamp for our path!**

**Scripture readings** – Read by Robyn Mulder

**1 Kings 3:5-14 NRSV**

Introduction: *Following the death of King David, his son Solomon, even though still young, becomes King. Solomon seeks the guidance and blessing of God.*

<sup>5</sup>At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup>And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup>And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup>And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup>I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you. <sup>13</sup>I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour all your life; no other king shall compare with you. <sup>14</sup>If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

**Ephesians 5:15-20 NRSV**

<sup>15</sup>Be careful, then, how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Song: TiS 143 Immortal, invisible, God only wise.**

## Reflection on the Word

The Biblical 'heros' are complicated characters. David rose to power from being a shepherd boy to king. A powerful ruler, called by God, a womanizer and murderer. David's son Solomon no less complicated growing from a young 'humble' ruler seeking God's wisdom to display a mixture of faithfulness and revengefulness. OT theologian Howard Wallace comments Solomon's request for wisdom is probably genuine but speaks also of political manipulation but through Solomon's story we are made certain the Lord continues to work with his people. In spite of the foibles and failings of the most noble of the Lord's people, the call for loyalty to the Lord, the need for genuine (divine) wisdom, the demand to 'walk in the Lord's ways', never cease. We glimpse the

full nature of God's grace even as we are aware of our human failings. We also understand that faithfulness and loyalty to the Lord are the very key to life itself.

In Psalm 111 the writer notes that wisdom comes through humility in relationship with God and as God provides wisdom to the Solomon the Gospel writer of John 6:51-58 shows that Jesus provides spiritual nourishment to the people. This follows the previous weeks readings about people seeking physical sustenance (bread) and Jesus provides even more that sustains our faith and relationships.

Together these passages of scripture affirm the centrality of God's gift of wisdom in the life of faith. Together, in shared giftedness, we help to sustain each other.

Paul, in the letter to the Ephesians, encourages a life both individually and communally, being shaped by the gospel of Jesus; a life of humility and responsibility; paying attention to both our words and action; avoiding behavior that clouds good judgment; in short being filled with the Spirit.

*(Resources 1. Howard Wallace. 2. Seasons of the Spirit)*

## Prayer for the week ahead ...

God of wisdom, God of love, guide us in your way of peace, so we may find and nurture healing in our broken world. That we may live lives filled and guided by your wisdom.

Amen.

## WE RESPOND

### Offertory

### Song – TiS 596 Fill my whole life, O Lord my God

### Prayers of the people – Prepared by Warwick Barry

Concern for others, the world, the church, ourselves ...

"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 the candle.*

So many voices,  
so many signs,  
so many choices and opinions  
all promising wisdom  
and the life it brings.

It's tempting to listen,  
tempting to try these well-marketed principles  
especially now, when so much is at stake.

But, then we remember,  
wisdom is not an idea,  
not a method or technique,  
not a formula to buy or sell.

It's much simpler, and much more difficult than that,  
for it requires the unpredictable,  
the time-consuming,  
the vulnerable work  
of relationship with you, God.  
So, here we are, to lose ourselves in you again,  
and to let your wisdom find us.  
So where there are those who go hungry,

there are parts of this world that are battered and bruised, torn and tormented,  
there are those who are imprisoned in despair.

Help us to discern how to respond.

Where rain forests are destroyed  
to exploit immediate resources for short term profits,  
we pray that your life would teach us restraint;  
Where human waste piles up and poisons the earth,  
and the lives of the creatures in it,  
we pray that your life would teach us wisdom;  
Where the growth and nurture of children is stunted,  
by poverty and inequality and abuse,  
we pray that your life would teach us generosity and compassion;  
Where life in all its various expressions is denied and suppressed  
by hatred, self-interest, war and megalomania,  
we pray that your life would teach us love and humility.  
Give us wise hearts and compassionate minds,

as we seek to pray, to serve and to live well in these challenging times.

Where there is conflict – may it cease and be still,  
where there is poverty – may there be fullness,  
where there is inequality, maltreatment and transgression – may there be justice and  
compassion.

We follow you, Jesus,  
today as we worship;  
In words of love and devotion  
sung and spoken,  
In service and kindness,  
in shared life and sacred meal.

And all we need do to follow you  
as we leave this place  
is to continue saying and doing  
– to others –  
what we bring to you in this hour.

And so we pray for praise and affirmation  
to empower our families and communities;  
For confession and forgiveness  
to reconcile personal and national enemies,  
and lead us into integrity and goodness;  
For thanksgiving and generosity  
to curb our greed,  
and overcome poverty;  
For intercession and compassion  
to heal the broken,  
defend the weak,  
and guide the powerful.

Breathe love into lives ruled by fear

Soften hearts that are hardened by pride

Whisper gently to those bound by chains

Sow peace where conflict divides

For we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen

(Sacredise, Faith & Worship adapted)

## The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray.

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 forever Amen.

## WE BLESS

Song TiS 407 Breathe on me breath of God

### Commissioning

Step out this week knowing you are valued.  
Step out this week valuing what you know.  
God is with you, and does not break the covenant.

### Blessing

Feel warmed by the love of God that greets you.  
Feel inspired by the wisdom of the Spirit in your midst.  
Feel purposeful and hope-filled by Christ's call to live with justice. **Amen**

Sung benediction/recessional TiS 670 Jesus put this  
song into our hearts

*(during this hymn the Bible is processed out)*

## Postlude

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

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Music: Karen Roberts

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## NEWS & NOTICES



