

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



6TH APRIL 2025

LENT 5C

**Uniting for
an inclusive,
connected and
just future.**



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.

WELCOME and INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to worship.

At church on Sunday, we have a special Guest from UNITING – Stacey Aslangul, who a month or so ago had to postpone her scheduled time with us due to the death of her Mum.

So, we feel very privileged to have her with us to share about the work of UNITING.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

We come to this place
because we want to know God,
**who helps us set aside the past,
to walk the path to new life.**
We come in these moments
because we want to know Jesus,
**who anoints us with the resurrection,
who shares our lives with us.**
We come with these people
because we want to know the Spirit,
**who shapes us for life with God,
so we may praise God forever!**

Thom Schuman

HYMN TiS 696: A Prophet Woman broke a Jar

PRAYER OF ADORATION / CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

ADORATION:

Let us pray
Lord Jesus,
preaching good tidings to the people,
proclaiming release to the captives,
setting at liberty those who are bound:
we adore you

Lord Jesus
friend of the outcast and the poor,
feeder of the hungry,

healer of the sick:
we adore you.

Lord Jesus,
denouncing the oppressor,
exposing the hypocrite,
overcoming evil with good:
we adore you.

Lord Jesus,
pattern of gentleness,
teacher of holiness,
prophet of the Kingdom of heaven:
we adore you.

Lord Jesus,
dying to save us from our sin,
rising to give us eternal life,
ascending to prepare our heavenly home:
we adore you
Amen.

CONFESSION:

As we declare our adoration for you, we know our adoration is too often hollow, thus we confess our sin:

Let us pray

Merciful father,

we confessed the blindness that is not even aware of sinning;

the pride that dares not admit that it is wrong;

the selfishness that can see nothing but its own will;

the righteousness that knows no fault;

the callousness that has ceased to care;

the defiance that does not regret its own sins;

the evasion that always tries to make excuses;

the coldness of heart that is too hardened to repent.

God, we are sinners: be merciful to us.

Amen

PARDON

God is love.

Through Christ our sins are forgiven.

Take hold of this forgiveness

and let us live our life in the power of the Holy Spirit

Our sins are forgiven

Thanks be to God

SCRIPTURE: Read by Marg Davis

PHILIPPIANS 3: 4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of

the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

JOHN 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him.³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said,⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?"⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial.⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

PRESENTATION ON UNITING:

On Sunday Stacey Aslangul is presenting to the Congregation on the MISSION and WORK of the Uniting Church Agency in Victoria/Tasmania, called 'UNITING'. Stacey's role is as **Program Lead** for Fundraising, Community and External Relations, for UNITING.

As background to her presentation the theme running through the readings set for Sunday - particularly the epistle (Philippians 3: 4-13) and gospel, is that of reckless, extravagant out-pouring of love (Mary washes Jesus' feet with ointment worth a year's wages.)

St John locates Mary's foot anointing of Jesus here, as a preview of the anointing of Jesus' body being prepared for burial, which highlights John's understanding of God's 'glory' (where the Cross and death of Jesus = true GLORY of God!).

In Philippians, the set epistle reading, (we won't be reading this in the Sunday worship), St Paul refers to his life and all he possesses as 'rubbish' compared to knowing Jesus the crucified-risen one. So, the overall theme is one of profuse, over-the-top, faithful reactions by Mary, St Paul and St John to the extravagant love of God, playing out in the life and death of Jesus.

I think this theme fits well with the work of UNITING, that is, 'pouring out' love in response to God's love for all his 'children,' and particularly for the more vulnerable of his 'family!'

'Indeed, what can we do other than pour out our love as a response to the overwhelming love 'we' know through Jesus' sacrifice of himself?

So, UNITING plays a remarkable role within the wider community on behalf of the UCA, one of sharing Christ's love for the world, particularly in regard to the vulnerable and needy in the community at large.

What follows is a brief summary of the mission and work of UNITING prepared by Stacey.
'Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania and shares the common purpose of other Uniting community service agencies around Australia to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.'

We are the largest provider of community services here in Victoria, and we also have a service footprint in Tasmania. We deliver over 600 programs across a broad range of community services including crisis and emergency relief, community support and homelessness, child and family services, housing and tenancy, disability supports, mental health, alcohol and other drugs services, training and enterprises, and carer services.'

Finally, I thought it might also be of interest to share some of the 'historical roots' about UNITING recently published in their new 'STRATEGY 2030.'

'How we do things is as important as what we do. We celebrate diversity, strive for equality, recognise the dignity and strengths of all people, and speak out for justice.'

'We do all this as a contemporary expression of the Church, responding to the call to stand in solidarity with the marginalised and to participate in God's restorative work in this time and in this place, in partnership with the wider Church.'

All praise to UNITING for the wonderful work they undertake as an expression of the love of God, expressed supremely in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Amen

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE: Prepared by Warwick Barry

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

Inasmuch

Lord Jesus, most merciful and compassionate,
you meet us in unexpected places and people.
Help us to be alert to meet you,
that you may heal our wounds and make us ready to serve you
in the needs of our neighbours.

Where you are hungry and homeless and displaced,
Like the people of south west Queensland and the people of Myanmar and Thailand,
help us to be your loving people,
giving food and shelter and support for the long road to recovery ahead.

Where you are imprisoned, or oppressed,
help us to be your liberated people,
giving comfort and hope,
pressing for change and release along with other nations.

Where you are anxious and despairing,
help us to be your concerned people,
sharing, hope, and encouragement,
and providing programs of social support.
Where you are sick and dying,
help us to be your consoling people,

standing at your side with our presence, comfort,
patient love and a steadying hand,
and our prayers.

Where you are the victim of violence and warfare,
We especially remember the people of Gaza and Ukraine and those in Israel who have lost loved
ones,
Even Jewish people who have suffered unjust racism and persecution in many places, including
Australia,
help us to be your peace filled people,
active in peacemaking and rich in love.

And to you alone,
ever living and ever-loving God,
be the praise of our lips and the service of our lives
now and forever.
Amen.

(Rev Bruce Prewer – Australian Prayers adapted)

And we pray together as Jesus taught us:
**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**

HYMN TiS 660: Myrrh-bearing Mary (TUNE: TiS 624 BONNIE GEORGE..)

DISMISSAL:

And now, God sends us out into our communities,
**not to cling to a faded past,
but to share all the new things God is doing.**
And now, Jesus calls us to notice those around us,
**to shower them with hope,
to feed them from our deep pantries,
to welcome them as family.**
And now, the Spirit anoints us with grace,
**to make a way through the injustices around us
so we might walk with our sisters and brothers
into the kingdom springing forth in our midst.**

(c) Thom M. Shuman

BENEDICTION:

Christ, give us the grace to grow in holiness,
to deny ourselves,
and to take up the cross and follow him;
and the blessing of God almighty;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us,
and remain with us,
always.
Amen

WORD OF MISSION:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen

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