

Ormond Uniting Church



.....and who is my neighbour?

Pentecost 5

July 13, 2025

Minister: Rev Sue Stott-Floyd

Chair of Council: Dr Mardie Townsend

Music: Peter Hurley

Worship at Home

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

Set aside time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the world who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you be still. This is something that doesn't need to be hurried.

Call to Worship:

When we ask, "what do we do?"

Christ leans in and whispers:

Love and be loved.

When we ask, "But how much?"

Christ pauses and says:

With all your being.

When we ask, "And then what?"

Christy laughs aloud and shouts:

You will live!

Opening Prayer:

Creator God, may your love, grace, and justice flow through us like a never-ending stream.

May we celebrate your goodness

and take time to notice moments of peace, truth, and wisdom.

May we continue to pray for each other

and build one another up

in love and faithfulness towards you.

Amen

Hymn: TiS 474 Here in this place

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Confession:

We give you thanks, loving God, for the many mercies of each day,

for the kind word given freely,

for the smile offered sincerely,

for the simple moments

when someone loves a neighbour.

We remember and pray
for people who care for others,
all of those whose compassionate attention to detail
enhances another's life.

In a new understanding of being a neighbour,
we give thanks for what we receive
freely from others
who choose to be a neighbour to us,
despite differences that may stand between us.
We pray for a greater understanding and awareness
that everyone is our neighbour.

We give thanks for every opportunity
to be a neighbour to others.
We pray for justice for those
who are mistreated by others.

Holy One, it is easy to say these words – living them out is often more difficult.
Please forgive us for the times we have not truly seen our neighbour –
whether that neighbour lives on our street,
in our city or half-way around the world.

Forgive us when we ask someone, “How are you?”
but then do not wait to hear their answer.

Forgive us when we do not pause to ask, “What can I do to help?”

Slow us down, dear God, so that our hearts and minds might catch up to what our senses tell us. Encourage
us and strengthen us, that we might hold our own worries more lightly – and thus be able to see others
more fully. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Hear the good news from Paul's letter to the people of Colossae:
We share in the promises God made to all people.
God forgives and sets us free to live new lives

.....and for this we say –

Thanks be to God!

LISTENING for GOD'S WORD

Readings:

Luke 10:25-37

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.* ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’
26 He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ 27 He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.’ 28 And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’

29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ 30 Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 The next day he took out two denarii,* gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ 37 He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

Colossians 1:1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters^[a] in Christ:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father.^[b]

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,^[c] who is a faithful minister of Christ on our^[d] behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,^[e] 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Reflection:

Living with hope over the past few years, I have been deliberately and intentionally trying to shed my lifetime's worth of accumulated stuff. Perhaps you have heard about Marie Kondo and various other self-help resources which encourage you to pick up and examine your physical belongings and wonder whether they are still needed. Moving houses has been a great help as I left a lot of stuff behind that was no longer needed. But as I have settled into my new place, I find myself in the practice of picking up and keeping a whole new set of things. There is a constant compulsion to accumulate “just in case”. As I reflect on this tension of holding on and letting go – I have wondered

about the way communities choose to hold onto some things, and I have few starting thoughts. Firstly, we are incredibly fortunate that we actually have enough resources in our communities that we are even able contemplate leaving things. There are many communities who do need to hold on to all they have as they may need to reuse or recycle things to adapt to any new circumstance.

Secondly, holding on tightly to things in their unchanged form may mean we miss out on the potential of new experiences or new ways of seeing the world.

Thirdly, the act of examination and letting go could be characterized as acts of hope. Perhaps driven by the understanding that in Christ, the best is yet to come.

Finally, living with hope does not mean discarding everything, but it can mean examining everything. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he was encouraging them into this practice of examining everything in order to let go of some things. As a newly forming community, he encouraged them to hold onto hope and he gave them the framework to be a community grounded in that hope. In summary he encouraged them to: ● Ground themselves in the knowledge of who they are: followers of Jesus Christ ● Restore themselves by their connectedness to the gospel through prayer and teaching ● Bear fruit in their witness to the world through good work, patience and joy. He did this so that each practice of the community could be measured against these criteria. Old habits could be let go, old practices could be discarded and old ways of thinking could be challenged.

This approach is so important to the story of the good Samaritan that we read in Luke. The parable is absolutely designed to challenge our thinking about what we hold onto and what we can let go. Thoughts, assumptions, prejudices, practices and profound self-preoccupation are exploded in this story. Instead, we can use the framework of hope to reimagine ourselves in this and in all scenarios in our community.

Written by Rev. Heather den Houting, Minister at Traralgon Uniting Church in the Presbytery of Gippsland for the Fig Tree Resource.

Hymn: TiS 689 Lord hear my praying

WE RESPOND

Prayers of the People:

As we continue to reflect on the words of Jesus, we realize the world has long and deep prejudices and hatred towards people who are different. In this world of wars and conflict, counterattacks and publicly expressed hatred of *the other*, we pray for people to find courage to love their enemies. In this country where First Nations people are often mistrusted, vilified or made invisible - because their presence represents an uncomfortable historical truth - we pray for courage to face truth, to walk a reconciling path, and encourage voices of those who are *unheard*.

In our church communities, where encouragement is needed, help us be people of deep prayer, celebrating those who journey with us in faith, even if they are different and frustrate us on this shared path.

We offer prayers that are in our hearts ...

A scholar asked Jesus how he would define “neighbour”. Jesus tells a story about a person who requires care. Those who are important and powerful walk past the abandoned man, but an outsider attends to his wounds. The outsider shows neighbourliness. Jesus instructs the scholar to do likewise.

In this context we pray:

Father

We have our minds on many things – they all seem important to us.

Help us to see and hear the voices of those who need care – the people on the edges who often don’t have a voice that can be heard.

We pray for:

- the first peoples of Australia calling for justice
- the lonely people desperate for a listening ear
- the people wanting food for their family
- the people cut off from social interaction because of their diseases or addictions
- and those continually seeking safe shelter

Help us, Father, to be mindful of these people and of your instruction to not only listen and see, but also to act as caring neighbours to the people on the edges. In our actions we will find you, Jesus, working beside us.

Amen

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray together, saying:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is 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

Hymn: TiS 687 *God gives us a future*

WE ARE SENT

Word of Mission:

Let us go from this sacred space we have found

being that someone
who can be called on when a neighbor needs help.

This is our calling,
this is how we honor God
who loves us and holds us dear.

Blessing:

And the Blessing of God almighty, Creator, Spirit and Loving Christ,
Be with you and keep you all, this day and always.
Go in peace.... *To love and serve the Lord. Amen*

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