

Morialta UC Worship Sunday May 17th 2020

You may like to have a candle, a jug of water and bowl and a Bible with a bookmark in either Psalm 66 or John 14

Call to worship

God, who was there long before anyone ever gave you a name:

Light candle

We worship you!

God who meets people in their own place and in the depths of their own lives:

Pour water

We worship you!

God who speaks to us in our own language and through our own culture

Open the Bible

We worship you, for you and beyond all our names, God who is eternal and who so loves the world!

God of the ages, how can we presume to ask you to be present to us?

God of the universe, how can you notice us on this small planet?

God of the past, present and future, why would you pause and be among us now? And yet, this is our prayer in faith, that we will encounter you here, even in this prayer that is stirring in us through the love of Jesus Christ. Show us the beauty of your holiness today. Amen

Song TIS 409 O breath of life

*O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.*

*O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then in your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore: for this we plead.*

*O breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part.*

*Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
equip your church to spread the light.*

We acknowledge the Kurna people, the first inhabitants of this place. We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.

Welcome and introduction

Hello to you where you are gathered this day. We welcome you to our worship time, through Morialta Uniting Church. We gather in God's name. The peace of God be with you!

Meditation "Prayer as Invitation" By Earl Holt

The moment of prayer is an invitation to be calm
in the midst of the tumult of the world and our over busy lives...
To bring together thought and feeling,
mind and spirit,
and to find some center, some still point,
of perspective and peace.

Here in this sacred place which has been home
for so many secret thoughts and hopes, fears and desires,
may we feel free to look at ourselves honestly.
May we be unafraid to face
the decisions we have been trying to avoid,
the doubts and questions it has been easy to ignore,
the things we have tried to keep hidden not only from others
but even from ourselves.
May we come to discover that there are resources
within ourselves and beyond us...
New dimensions of the spirit...
May we be emboldened by these discoveries
to reach out to others in their need
and so finally to discover that to give
is not only more blessed than to receive,
but that to give to others
is to receive what we most need for ourselves.

Come apart from the busyness of family and work,
and dwell in the present-ness of the sacred, source of being.

May the silence which we now share
quieten us, touch our need, refresh our courage,
enlarge our wonder.

(Silence) you may wish to focus on the candle or some other symbol

Song: Jesus be the centre

*Jesus, be the centre
Be my source, be my light Jesus
Jesus, be the centre
Be my hope, be my song Jesus
Be the fire in my heart
Be the wind in these sails
Be the reason that I live
Jesus, Jesus
Jesus, be my vision
Be my path, be my guide Jesus
Be the fire in my heart
Be the wind in these sails
Be the reason that I live Jesus, Jesus
Be the fire in my heart
Be the wind in these sails
Be the reason that I live Jesus, Jesus*

Old Testament Reading Psalm 66:8-20 (adapted)

Celebrate your God, you people, let the songs of praise be heard loud and clear.
For God has given us a great living and has not permitted our feet to slip.
Surely our faith has been tested, like silver we have been assayed.
the pressures have fallen on us, and we have been kicked in the groin.
There are those who trample over us, we have gone through hell and high water.
Yet now we are led out of disaster and given an open space.
I will bring my offerings to your house, I will renew my vows to you;
I will fulfil the things my lips uttered, all that my mouth promised when in trouble.
I will give you the best of my possessions, like sweet incense my thanks will rise.
I will make an offering of my strengths, of the choicest that I have and am.
You who are in awe of God, come and listen, and I will tell of what has been done for me. I cried at the top of my
voice to my God and praised with a joyful tongue.
If I had nursed evil in my heart, God would not have listened.

But the truth is that God has heard and known my outspoken prayer.
Wonderful are you, loving God, for you have not been deaf to me,
or for one second removed your love and faithfulness from me.
In this is the word of God

Reflection/meditation "Somewhere someone:"

The kingdom of love is coming because:

**somewhere someone is kind when others are unkind,
somewhere someone shares with another in need,
somewhere someone refuses to hate, while others hate,
somewhere someone is patient - and waits in love,
somewhere someone returns good for evil,
somewhere someone serves another, in love,
somewhere someone is calm in a storm,
somewhere someone is loving everybody.**

Is that someone you? (Binkley. & McKeel/jke

https://www.rexaehuntprogressive.com/liturgy_collection/year_a_liturgy_collection/year_a_lenteaster/easter6a1752020.html

Song, Choose Kindness

*When you have a choice to make,
When there are two paths to take,
What will you choose to guide your way,
Decisions you make ev'ryday?*

*Choose kind-ness, choose ten-der-ness,
Choose pa-tience, choose love
Choose mer-cy, choose em-pa-thy,
Walk hum-bly with your God.*

*Choose jus-tice, choose faith-ful-ness,
Choose wis-dom, choose grace.
Choose good-ness, choose gen-tle-ness,
God's light will guide your way_____*

Scripture John 14: 15-21 take some time to read this passage through in your Bible

Sermon Promise of the Holy Spirit or "Where to from here?"

We've heard it stated a lot recently, that we are in interesting times.

One of the interesting times is the development and use of online communication, meetings, and connection. Fb, you tube, messenger and even ZOOM (for this who are not familiar with Zoom, it is a media program that allows multiple usurers to meet together via video conferencing in real time.

One of the things I have noticed is that occasionally, when someone is on zoom, there is some background noise – bird, traffic, dog barking or even another conversation. At times an unseen person enters the room and talks with the person on the screen talking to you. But you can't see that person but you know they are there or you can hear them. An unseen presence!

In the music industry, there is a term called uncredited background singers. It's an acknowledgement that there are others who have contributed to the record in some way, but not named so they don't take attention away from the lead artist. Sometimes the extra singer might be the maker of coffee who simply happened to be in the studio at the time and are softly whispering the backing vocals and even supporting the artist.

We can surely recognize a parallel here. Jesus tells his followers that the role of the Holy Spirit is, in effect, to whisper the lyrics of the *gospel song* into the ears of the faithful or to be the supporting backing artist.

When Jesus was present, he was the one who instilled in the disciples the right words, coached them through the proper verses, and taught them the commandments.

But now, in John's Gospel, as Jesus approaches his death, the disciples will be without him, and that task is to be handed over to the Holy Spirit: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth ..." (John 14:15-17).

The primary task, then, of the Holy Spirit is reminding the faithful of the truth, jogging the memories of the followers of Jesus about his commandments so that they can keep them in love, whispering the lyrics of the never-ending hymn of faithful obedience in their ears.

The Holy Spirit, as quiet, whispering teacher is reminding the people of God about everything that Jesus taught and commanded. This is whispering the gospel lyrics into the ears of the faithful, into our lives, our hearts and our minds. In an ever rapidly changing, chaotic, sick, challenged world, we are, as the basis of Union of the Uniting Church says, a pilgrim people, always on the way, always moving forward with the guidance of God's Spirit. We are always on the go, on the way and following the one who is the way.

We are not who we were or like we were 2, 5, 10, even 50 years ago. Never before have we been at this point in time. Yesterday was yesterday and today is today, and tomorrow, well who knows? But you know, as the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews says Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!

Sometimes change is brought upon us dramatically and sometimes it is gentle and over a period of time. The disciples, as we hear in the gospel reading, would face a dramatic change in their lives. Soon they would be without their beloved Jesus. We are in dramatic times – all across the planet

But Jesus calms their concern with a gentle word of encouragement, and the promise of his continuing presence. In a way he was asking them to dream the dream, to feel his presence in their lives, individually and communally. Jesus was encouraging them to recognise his presence, and to listen to his whisper in life, the message of the lyrics of the gospel.

What do we hear? What whisper? What is God calling, asking or seeking of us as the people of God, the body of Christ, the Church at Morialta? What are you hearing or feeling or sensing as we progress through Covid-19 and the lifting of restrictions?

Just this week, during a ZOOM gathering we ministers were challenged by someone who reminded us that the church should always and primarily be working **towards the margins, to the hurting to the needy, not to exploit, but take the Gospel to.**

To dream dreams and to have visions, in a theological sense, is to see, and to hear, and to feel and to discern what God is doing or about to do in our midst.

Historically, much of the church's mission and witness has come about by a dream or inspiration or a vision of what could be.

We may not be so sure of what God is saying right now, but I do believe God is speaking. Some people may feel an urge or a quiet nudge, for others it may be a passion or a fire in the belly, while others simply see a need. Sometimes opportunities simply present themselves. What do they say? Noting like a good crisis to present opportunities

Maybe we are being asked to simply walk among our community, and look with open eyes, and ask God to reveal to us some place or some people to whom we can engage and share the good news of the gospel, to look around and simply see the needs right on our doorstep.

Some of those dreams or whispers will require \$, others time, and maybe our own personal and communal investment.

I believe we are, as a church, in a time where God is whispering in our ear. The spirit is whispering the very lyrics of God into our community.

God is calling us to dream, to discern, seeking guidance on what is of God. Discernment occurs among the body as people pray, listen and question. Sometimes discernment is quick and at other times it takes longer and sometimes it's not altogether clear. It is then, that patience is required, for God's timing is always God's timing.

If we feel we have a dream or vision or idea, then I encourage us to pray on it, seek others thoughts and test it. Bring it before the leadership of the church or Church Council. Email it, write a letter Zoom it

God just might be whispering into your ear, for the rest of the body to hear.

We are in exciting times. Times of change. Times of opportunity. But let us never forget that we live by faith, and we live by the Spirits guidance. Our vision, our dream is first and foremost God's vision, and we need to be still to hear that, to have a humble and receptive heart.

I believe the church is, and always should be, on about people, serving, leading, and ministering. The church is and should be on about listening to the whisper of the gospel lyrics.

And so, we live by faith, listening, praying and watching

The Gospel lyrics sing into the community of faith, to those with ears to listen and those with humble hearts and those with eyes to see,

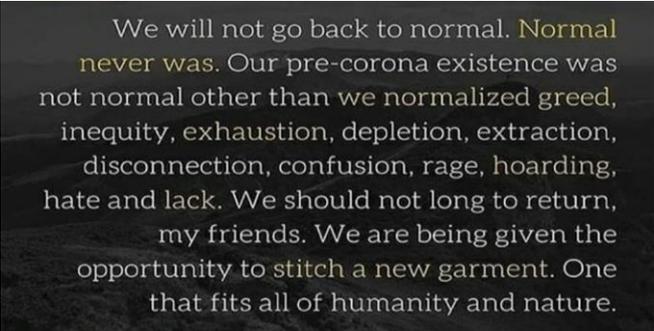
Scripture reminds us that it is not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.

May our prayer be like that of Samuel of the OT who, having heard the whispering voice of God, said, speak Lord, your servant is listening. Here I am Lord!

News and notices. How you going? Remember to contact each other, find new ways to stay in connection, support those who are finding things tough. We take this time to acknowledge the offerings that have been made that support the work of God's church in this place and beyond. We remind us all once again of the ability to make our offering via E Give or Direct Debit thought the church

Prayers re offering Many gifts are offered every day Gracious God. Gifts of friendship, connection, love and support. We recognise it is difficult to make our offerings in this time of physical distancing and isolation, and so in this moment we pause and give thanks for the offerings that have been given in whatever way. We lay these gifts before you, expressions of our love and response to your gospel in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our prayers for others today will focus around the Corona virus
We join together in prayer



We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.

God we know as Christ, forbid that we return to normal,
Other than what you would set as the your commonwealth of the common good which you call the Kingdom of Heaven.

Normal is just what we are used to,
It is the blinkering of our complacency, ignorance and apathy,
But you call us onward towards the promised end,
A new normal full of the discomfort of growth and change.

Our normal is too often an excuse for inaction,
For we simply accept things the way that they are,
But you hold a vision of a better us,
Better as individuals.
Better as communities
Better as the world,
Better in our connection with you and each other
Better in being closer to abiding in your will and way.

Much of our recent normal was full of greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack.

Greed is wanting and having more than we need

Inequity is having more than we need when others don't have what they need.

Exhaustion is the first step to burn-out, and is a place too many of us have known too often.

Depletion is when we use up the supply or resources or lessen the worth of something or someone without replenishment.

Extraction is the forcible removal of one from another, be it the removal of relationships or resources.

Disconnection is the breaking of relationship.

Confusion is the disarray of the mind or misguided thinking.

Rage is anger unharnessed, unleashed or uncontrolled, but also the hedonistic embrace of excitement and entertainment.

Hoarding is the keeping of amounts of things for oneself, be they material resources, relationships or other wealth.

Hate is more than a feeling but the active enmity or malice which drives an attack or offense against others.

And lack is absence and being without or not having enough.

Don't forgive our greed,

But transform our attitude to repentance.

Don't forgive the inequity,

But draw us into your truth that we might hear your call to selflessness.

Don't excuse our exhaustion,

But fill us with the Spirit so that we might draw on your strength and passion.

Don't forgive our depletion,

But help us to see others and the world through your love and grace.

Don't forgive our extraction,

But lead us into healing and wholeness.

Don't forgive our disconnection,

But draw us into communion and unity with you and each other that we might value our relationships in love.

Don't forgive our confusion,

But teach us and reveal to us your will and way.

Don't forgive our rage,

For it is not justified, instead grow in us the fruit of the Spirit as we centre ourselves in your compassion and grace.

Don't forgive our hoarding,

But remind us again of your call to leave all behind as we follow you on the way of the cross.

Don't forgive our hate,

But transform us to be more like you for in love there is no hate.

Don't forgive our lack, But fill us as we need, for in you we have no excuse for not having wisdom, grace, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness or self-control, for you hold all we need.

Christ, Lead us anew in your way, That in you we find the new normal,

As we join in your work of redemption and renewal.

This we hope and pray.

Amen. (Jon Humphries. Used with permission)

Song: Here I am Lord (Song TIS 658)

I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard my people cry.

*All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord;
is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

*I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send? (Here I am, Lord)*

*I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame;
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send? (Here I am, Lord)*

Blessing

Through the encouragement of Jesus, let the Spirit of truth be the abiding reality in your sleeping and waking, working and relaxing, praying and laughing. For in the God of Christ we live and move and have your being. May the love of God be the strength of your mind and heart. May the grace of Christ be the salve for your bruises and wounds. May the friendship of the Spirit be the joy of your resilient soul. Now and ever more. Yes, now and evermore. Amen!

<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocA/33EAST6.htm>