

Welcomes

Open Bible, light candle pour water

CALL TO WORSHIP

An altar, a pew, a seat in the bus. A kitchen table, a living room chair
All become holy places when we come together to worship our God.
Today in these holy places God meets us Hears and forgives us.
God empowers us with genuine love to share with a hurting world.

Song TIS 693 come as you are

**'Come as you are:
that's how I want you.
Come as you are;
feel quite at home,
close to my heart,
loved and forgiven.
Come as you are:
why stand alone?**

**'No need to fear,
love sets no limits;
no need to fear,
love never ends;
don't run away
shamed and disheartened,
rest in my love,
trust me again.**

**'I came to call sinners,
not just the righteous;
I came to bring peace,
not to condemn.
Each time you fail
to live by my promise,
why do you think
I'd love you the less?**

**'Come as you are:
that's how I love you;
come as you are,
trust me again.
Nothing can change
the love that I bear you;**

**all will be well,
just come as you are.'**

Acknowledgement of land

As we look upon the hills and valleys, we see the love poured out on this land by those who have cared for this land since time beyond measure.

We honour those who have gone before and those who are yet to come.

May we be mindful of the calling God places on humanity to care for creation

May we take the lead from the Kurna people whose stories are entwined with the stewardship of this place.

May we learn from them and walk in God's Covenant.

We also pay our respects to those who built our Worship Centres and maintained worship and service.

Prayer:

Living God we praise you for your truth which exceeds the grasp of our minds, and how it changes our lives. We praise you for your coming to us in Christ to make us your sons and daughters. We praise you for his coming into our lives so that your Word is given utterance even in our foolishness and weakness.

We praise you for the promise that broken hearts shall be mended, that the poor shall hear good news, that the imprisoned shall be liberated.

Thank you, God, for making us and loving us and for putting us into the world with so many other people.

Great God, we look for you in the majestic mountains, in the deep rivers and vast seas and oceans, in the noble words of the wise, in the grand and impressive things of this world. Yet you deem to meet us in the small, quiet corners of our lives- in the touch of a friend on our shoulder, a moment of quiet reflection in the middle of a busy day, the smile of a child, the One from Nazareth who came and lived among us.

We come to church to overcome our weaknesses, to grow in our faith, to become wise and more understanding, to share in worship with others, to be encouraged and uplifted.. Take us, not as the sure, competent, strong, and big people who we wish we were. Take us as we are - your unsteady, misunderstanding, immature, children in need of your love and care.

Lord God we thank you that in Jesus Christ you have made yourself most fully known. You have been so good to us, we rejoice in your love.

Creator God, you have entrusted the care of this place to us, making us caretakers of the world and its people and creatures, which is a mighty honour. And So God we take time today to offer you praise, Amen

Song TIS 717 Give thanks

**Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he's given
Jesus Christ his Son.**

Repeat

**And now let the weak say, 'I am strong',
let the poor say, 'I am rich
because of what
the Lord has done for us.'**

Repeat

Scripture

Psalm 145:8-14:

. The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
⁹The LORD is good to all,
and Creator's compassion is over all that is made.
¹⁰All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your faithful shall bless you.
¹¹They shall speak of the glory of your kin-dom,
and tell of your power,
¹²to make known to all people your^[a] mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your^[b] kin-dom.
¹³Your kin-dom is everlasting,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
The LORD is faithful in all words,
and gracious in all deeds.^[c]
¹⁴The LORD upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30:

¹⁶"To what will I compare this generation? It is like a child sitting in the marketplaces calling out to others, ¹⁷'We played the flute for you and you didn't dance. We sang a funeral song and you didn't mourn.'
¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'
¹⁹Yet the Human One^[a] came eating and drinking,

and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved to be right by her works."

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you've hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have shown them to babies. ²⁶ Indeed, Father, this brings you happiness.

²⁷ "My Father has handed all things over to me. No one knows the Son except the Father. And nobody knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I'm gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves. ³⁰ My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden is light."

Sermon

Today's text from Matthew about yokes and burdens is a well-known part of the Bible, for on the surface it sounds really nice and comforting. It sounds too good to be true to come to Jesus and off load our troubles and burdens on to him and walk away refreshed and lightened in life.

Well that's how I have read this in the past. But when you read it and read it and read it again, one might begin to think otherwise. The text doesn't say exchange my yoke for Jesus'. In fact there is no reference to my yoke, but only to Jesus' yoke.

So if Jesus has a yoke (like that which we talked about earlier), then we share his yoke. To be joined with Jesus means to share the load and to walk together, in his way "let me teach you' he says – a call to discipleship rather than a dump my burden and run!

Jesus says that the yoke *he* has for us is "easy." The Greek word (*chrestos*) is better translated as "well fitting, or good fit" "suitable," or even "useful." GOOD TO DO

So being linked to Jesus is a good fitting call, a call to the way of Jesus, to his way, to God's way.

So the invitation, is to come to Jesus and share his load, his way. We in turn, invite others and to link up with them, and with Jesus, and with others. This way of Jesus is none other than love, love one another, forgive one another, bless those who persecute you, seek justice for the needy. The burden of love ...is light!

The invitation to come to Jesus is an invitation to discipleship, that is, to follow him and his teaching. This is open for all – come to me, ALL... any one....

Everyone....Follow me, take my yoke upon you

Eugene Peterson captures the essence of this when in the Message Bible he writes:

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me— watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

How does Jesus know this? How can he offer this. Well a few verses before Jesus declares that the 'Father' ,God , Yahweh has handed all things over to me ; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Here Jesus is saying he is one with God, one with the very wisdom of God, the way of God. One as God. I will give you rest – my yoke. Jesus is nt saying the father's way, God's way , but come to me, I, my.

This is Wisdom speaking, this is the Spirit whispering, this is the Logos/the Word. When you connect with me, when you yoke up with me, you connect with Gods ways for God longs to connect with us, and **in Christ** comes the one who seeks to being relief, justice, liberation, peace and mercy, and calls us to share that with others, to live the Jesus way

When we look at the world its not all that difficult to notice its fractured nature and feel despondent

from poverty and unjust economic and power relations between rich and poor, to the slavery of human trafficking; from exploitation of the planet's resources, to corruption in business and government across the world; from wars between nations, to conflict between factions, families and individuals, the Struggle for rights and reconciliation, global pandemic and racism.

we might feel that human capacity alone cannot address the burdens and struggles we face. It is increasingly important then, that people of faith resist the temptation of cynicism and pessimism, and allow ourselves to be empowered and inspired by the Christ we follow.

It is increasingly necessary for us to live our faith in the daily choices that impact the realities of our world, and in extending Christ's invitation to others.

This doesn't necessarily mean preaching or seeking to convert others. It's more likely to mean , working alongside (being yoked with) the least to ease their burdens and to stand against the unjust people and institutions that oppress and enslave.

It means allowing our faith and hope to inspire how we choose to buy, eat, dress, drive and vote. It means praying, thinking and learning globally, while acting and contributing locally.

At it's heart, receiving Christ's invitation is more than just a personal experience of peace and rest. It is a call to be those who seek to draw others into Christ's rest along with us, and to spread Christ's peace and mercy as far as we can, in whatever way we can. It is a call to discipleship.

How do we live this out?

By recognising that the weary and burdened are all around us, in every family, every community and every neighbourhood. The broken and weary ones are us, and those we live with. This is why Christ's invitation is such a wonderful, life-giving promise.

We need only be committed enough to Christ's invitation that we will not keep it to ourselves, but seek to share it with those around us. It is when we open our arms and the doors of our churches to all – whoever they may be or however we may disagree with them – that we offer rest, love, inspiration, instead of the burden of judgement and guilt.

It is when we live simply and generously, resisting the temptation to hoard, accumulate and consume more than we need that we bring rest to those who struggle to survive each day.

It is when we work within our community to bring change to unjust laws, to take notice of the hurting and vulnerable ones, and to welcome those with whom we would normally not associate that we bring rest to others.

Its when this prayer becomes a reality – let us pray!

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

This prayer maybe counter cultural and not the way of the world, but it speaks of the Jesus way, a gracious, inclusive openness that can offer an alternative **way of being** in this often burdensome world.

Song TIS 607 Make me a chanel

**Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.**

O Master, grant that I may never seek

**so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.**

2

**Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.**

Refrain

**Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

Prayers –

Loving God you give without reward, love us without conditions and we have so little to give in response but, we give thanks for the gifts of your people be it by electronic means or in person. May these our gifts of your people maintain this community that it may continue to serve You.

In response to your word of sharing your love for the world Your pain in its suffering we pray for the forgotten the sick and the lonely and give thanks for those who care for them.

We remember the people of Victoria as they struggle with the effects of Covid 19

Comfort them, give them patience, fill them with the desire to care and protect each other.

We thank all who work tirelessly to bring this epidemic under control scientists and health workers and those whose task it is to legislate and control the actions of the community.

We pray for those who find isolation and loneliness give them peace

Give us the will to persist in caring, make us loving and kind to each other.

Grant us now your blessing as we join in the prayer on the screen

Lord's prayer

O God of all and in all,

Hallowed be your name,

May your way of love come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is 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 you reign in the glory and power that is love,
Now and forever. Amen

Song: TiS 585 I Heard the voice of Jesus say

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
so weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.**

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.**

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise,
and all your day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till travelling days are done.**

BH: Blessing

The LORD bless you-

and keep you;

²⁵ may the Lord's face shine on you-

and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD'S FACE BE TURNED toward you-
and give you peace."