

Morialta Uniting Church 26th April 2020 VIRTUAL CHURCH – Paper Copy

As you know worship is now differently located. We are physically separated but united in the fellowship of the church at Morialta. Today and for the next weeks we shall be offering worship at home, yet still connected to the church family. As always we encourage you to be safe and if you are struggling, don't hesitate to reach out to neighbours, friends or those of us in the church. So let us join together in worship today

Acknowledgement of Land – We meet in many places, on the Kurna land, and other traditional lands where you are located today. We pay respect to first peoples' culture, tradition and spirituality and we ask that we may tread this land gently.

Call to Worship: In our Gospel story today, we read of two pilgrims, travelling the road from Jerusalem, are joined by a stranger. He speaks about what has happened - and he seems familiar - but they cannot work out why until they invite him in and he breaks bread. Then their eyes are opened.

A prayer: The two people on the way to Emmaus did not have a clue that it was Jesus with them. We certainly don't want to be clueless, so we pray that we will be attentive and receptive to whatever you have to show us today.
Amen.

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.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen

Luke 24.13-35 (William Barclay Translation)

Now—look you—on that same day two of them were on the way to a village called Emmaus, which is about seven miles from Jerusalem; and they talked with each other about all the things which had happened. As they talked about them, and discussed them, Jesus himself came up to them and joined them on their way. But their eyes were fastened so that they did not recognize him. He said to them, “What words are these that you are exchanging with each other as you walk?” And they stood with faces twisted with grief. One of them, called Cleopas, answered, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that happened in it in these days?” “What kind of things?” he said to them. They said to him, “The story of Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to sentence of death and how they crucified him. As for us—we were hoping that he was the one who was going to rescue Israel. Yes—and to add to it all—this is the third day since these things happened. Yes and some women of our number astonished us, for they went early to the tomb, and, when they did not find his body, they came saying that they had seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And some of our company went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said—but they did not see him.” He said to them, “O foolish ones and slow in heart to believe in all the things that the prophets said! Was it not necessary that the anointed one should suffer and enter into his glory?” And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he made as if he would have gone on; and they pressed him. “Stay with us,” they said, “because it is towards evening, and the day is already far spent.” So he came in to stay with them. When he had taken his place at table with them, he took bread, and blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them; and their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, “Was not our heart burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, as he opened the scriptures to us?” And they arose that very hour and went back to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together and those with them, and found that they were saying, “It is a fact that the Lord has risen, and he has appeared to Simon.” So they recounted all that had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.

SONG (TiS 459) In Christ there is no east or west

**In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.**

**In Christ shall true hearts everywhere
their high communion find,
his service is the golden cord
close-binding humankind.**

**Join hands, then, people of the faith,
whate' er your race may be;
who serves my Father as his child
is surely kin to me.**

**In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north,
all Christlike souls are one in him
throughout the whole wide earth.**

SERMON



The Protestant theologian, James Denney, said that he envied the Catholic priest his crucifix because he too would like to go around holding aloft this representation of the death of Jesus and saying: 'God loves like that!'

And it was the crucifixion that two people were discussing as they journeyed together, just the two of them...Today, with Coronavirus restrictions, I've been thinking about the contrast we see between the crowds in the Crucifixion scenes, and today's Gospel story...not about crowds, but about a couple of people.

There is a legend that Luke was a skilled painter. He was also a Greek physician and an artist. Luke was a gentile, and he has the unique distinction of being the only New

Testament writer who was not a Jew. He was a Greek physician by profession and maybe that very fact gave him the wide sympathy he possessed. It has been said that a minister sees people at their best; a lawyer sees people at their worst; and a doctor sees people as they are. Luke saw men and women and children and loved them all.

Such is today's story. So let's set the scene. Cleophas and his companion walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They were walking towards the sunset. perhaps that is why they did not recognize the stranger. The sun was sinking, and the setting sun so dazzled them that they did not know who it was. That companion must have been Cleophas's wife, otherwise another name would have been mentioned in the context.

Where exactly is Emmaus? According to some experts, Emmaus was not really a village...but rather it was a group of barracks, barracks of the Roman occupational forces. The two, being Jews, must have been servants in these barracks.

Maybe they had taken a weekend off to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

It is obvious from the story that they had heard that Jesus had been received as a king in Jerusalem the week before Easter. It is also obvious from the story that Cleophas and his wife had great hopes that Jesus of Nazareth would manifest himself as the Messiah, changing their whole world. Maybe it had been that hope that made them ask for the Passover weekend off. They had hoped he would end their endless struggle for justice, and that bread would be shared.

A stranger joined them on the road. He asked them "What words are these that you are exchanging with each other as you walk?", so they told him their story. He explained to them what had happened. They listened, but did they hear? They heard, but did they grasp what they heard? Maybe they understood, but they did not see.

Arriving at their shelter, he said he wanted to go on. They told him that he should not do that, because the night was too dark, and since nothing had changed as yet in this world, there were dangers everywhere. He stayed, and then, he took their bread. Though he was the guest and they the hosts, he took their bread, and broke it. He gave a piece to her, and he gave a piece to him. (Did this act remind them of the Matzah broken at Passover? Matzah is the bread of poverty and affliction.)

Then he took their bread and broke it, giving each one a piece of it.

The sharing had started. Then he disappeared from their sight.

It was at that moment that they suddenly *saw*.

When he took the bread, and broke it, they saw, and straightaway a new life started.

Draw your own conclusions. There they were, with that piece of bread in their hands ...

What are we supposed to do? ... to do our part so that this world is changed into a place where bread is shared by all. Suddenly they understood, suddenly they saw: From now on, it was up to them.

Now instead of walking towards the sunset, they were walking towards the dawn.

SONG (ATOK 413) Will you come and follow me

**Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?**

**Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?**

**Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?**

**Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?**

**Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.**

A Prayer for Dispersal (by Rev. Ann Perrin)

Ever-living, ever-present God,
You are with us.
We come before you this day
knowing we are to be dispersed,
sent out into your world
to be your church in new ways.
If we are resistant to this change Lord,
hear our prayer of confession
and bless us with forgiveness,
patience and resilience
for we are committed to care for each other as we care for ourselves.
So help us to discover new ways to share
why we live our lives committed to sharing the promises of the gospel.
During this time of upheaval, we will remember those whose groups meet in our buildings
that are no longer available to them
and the new ways they will need to be community.
We remember planned baptisms and weddings
And pray times for rejoicing will not be too far away.
We remember those for whom this time is one of uncertainty and challenge
those who now live with fear and in isolation.
and those for whom this time is one of anguish and death.
Hold all those in need of your love at this time.
Holy God, you encourage us when doubtful to draw closer to you.
Allow us to recognise your Holy Spirit as our guide, comforter, and companion.
And so with the hope you instil in us
and when the time is right and this season of our church is over
we will return as your gathered community with the joy of Easter,
celebrating our resilience, knowing our communities are stronger than ever
to continue your work to help build a flourishing world where ever we find ourselves.

Amen

SONG (200 ATA) One more step along the world I go

**One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go
From the old things to the new
Keep me travelling along with you.**

**And it's from the old
I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.**

**Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn,
All the new things that I see,
You'll be looking at along with me:**

**And it's from the old
I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.**

**As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go,
You'll be telling me the way I know:**

**And it's from the old
I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.**

**Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough.
Leap and sing in all I do
Keep me travelling along with you:**

**And it's from the old
I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.**

**You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me.
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you:**

**And it's from the old
I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.**

Blessing

Lord, today we have met with you on the road.

We pray that we will go, newly aware of your presence with us,
and with hearts open to everyone we meet on our journey through life.

Amen.