

Words and music used in this Service are used in accordance with one or more of several licences St Margaret's Uniting Church holds for use in public Worship,
INCLUDING LicenSing # 604624 -
Copyright cleared music for churches CAL Copyright Licence # 3257 (Copyright Agency Limited)
CCLI - Church Copyright Licence #158456
CCLI Photocopy Licence - #158463 (Christian Copyright Licencing Asia – Pacific)
APRA (Australian Performing Rights Association) [No Number]
Public performance and/or communication of copyright music.

St. Margaret's Uniting Church Mooroolbark

**Sunday 14th October, 2018
21st Sunday after Pentecost**

This Service of Worship will be led by Rev Arnie Wierenga and the Preacher is Mrs Rebecca McDonald – a member at St.Margaret's – her first Reflection.

Welcome

All are invited to share morning tea following the service

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD:

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all ... **and also with you.**

WE SING TIS 137 'For the beauty of the earth'

1

For the beauty of the earth,

for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

2

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light,

3

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight,

4

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild,

5

For each perfect gift divine
to our race so freely given,
graces all of your design,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven,

6

For the church that evermore,
lifting holy hands above,
offers up on every shore
the pure sacrifice of love,

CALL TO WORSHIP

When God seems distant,
we seek what we long to find.

When life overtakes us,
we seek what we long to find.

When trouble is near and danger is close,
we seek what we long to find.

Come find in this place the One we both long to find and who longs to find us.

OPENING PRAYER

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD:

SHARING THE EARLY WORD

WE SING TIS 690 'Beauty for brokenness' (*Graham Kendrick*)

1

Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
Lord, in the suffering,
this is our prayer.
Bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset
your kingdom increase.

2

Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak;
voices to plead the cause
of those who can't speak.
God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love
from a spark to a flame.

3

Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,

freedoms to share,
peace to the killing-fields,
scorched earth to green;
Christ for the bitterness,
his cross for the pain.

4

Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned,
our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with
the things that we need.
God of the poor.....

5

Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation
and bring you their praise.
God of the poor

THE PSALM 22:1-10

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

**O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.**

Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

**In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.**

To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and not human;
scorned by others, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me;
 they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
**‘Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—
 let him rescue the one in whom he delights!’**

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
 you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.

**On you I was cast from my birth,
 and since my mother bore me you have been my God.**

THE GOSPEL Mark 10:17-31 *The Rich Man*

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.”’ He said to him, ‘Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.’ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, ‘How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, ‘Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, ‘Then who can be saved?’ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.’

Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

... for the word of the Lord, **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

... know that, whatever may be going on in your life, you can boldly turn to God, who offers grace and mercy over and over and over again.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

REFLECTION ON THE SCRIPTURES

Rebecca McDonald

Where is your focus?

The man in the story of the rich man very clearly admired and respected Jesus – falling at his feet and calling him Good teacher. Jesus did not like being called good – sharing that no one was good but God alone, showing even Jesus strives to be like God. After Jesus quoted some of the ten commandments, the man responded by saying 'I have kept these since I was a boy.' At this Jesus looked at him and loved him. Going on to tell him to sell everything, upon hearing this the man's face fell.

When our face falls what does it mean? Our face falls when we are deeply saddened and when we are grieving. We grieve when we have lost something important. So, what has the man lost? Possibly it is his wealth as he already knew he would follow Jesus. I wonder how quickly he got over his grief, when by losing his wealth he inherited the kingdom of heaven.

So, what is the message for us and our world from this story.

The key message for me is one of focus. Jesus is showing us that worldly possessions can drive a wedge between us and our relationship with God. Focusing our attention on gathering worldly possessions to keep up with others, can end up leaving us with no time to strengthen our relationship with God. In the story of the rich man Jesus listed some of the ten commandments. One of the commandments Jesus omitted from the list was the 10th commandment, 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house'. Focusing on what others have; the size of their house, the type of car they drive, the holidays they go on – and working to compete, to have more – will fill every minute of the day and more. It will become our sole focus, it will drive us, leaving us with little or no time to invest into developing relationships – with God, family and friends. But only if we allow it to. After all does it matter what others have? In my opinion the only thing we should worry about is our relationship with God as well as the family and friends who help us grow in this relationship. This where our focus should be.

Let me compare two lifestyle choices:

Firstly, a life focused on worldly possessions. What does this look like? Working day in day out. Never having enough. Never enough time. Never enough money. Focusing purely on physical possessions and things of this world. Gathering more and more things.

What do I gain – possessions. Possessions that means something one day but are not enough the next, they will never be enough. There will always be something newer, something shinier or someone who has more.

What does Jesus tell us about the possessions of this world. In Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus tells us: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

What do I lose following a life focused on possessions? I lose the ultimate treasure: Relationships, relationship with God, family and friends.

A second lifestyle choice - a life focused on relationships. What does this look like? Spending time with others, feeding into their lives, contributing to the people they are and grow into, just as Jesus spent his time here on earth. Taking time. Devoting time for self and developing a deeper relationship with God. As with any relationship, we need to devote time so that our relationship grows and strengthens. Time to talk but also time to listen. To have a strong relationship with God, we need to take time to listen and to hear what God wants for us and our lives.

What do I lose? Possessions that in a day, week, month or year will mean nothing. What do I gain – treasures of heaven – a relationship with God. In Mark 12:28-31 one of the teachers of the law asked Jesus about the greatest commandment – Jesus responded 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this 'love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these. This puts a spotlight on the importance of relationships in the eyes of God and highlights the lifestyle God wants for us his children.

Following the lifestyle God wants for us - Living a life focused on relationships rather than possessions can be as simple as.

1. Acknowledging the difference between needs and wants
2. Fostering relationships that are two way

Firstly: To be safe and secure all people need some possessions – a safe place to stay, clothing and food. I don't believe God wants us to live in poverty, but simply wants us to put relationship with Him first. Taking pleasure in the simple things – spending time enjoying God's creation – listening, hearing and reflecting. Then sharing, speaking and investing

in others. 'Many who are first will be last, and the last first'. God wants us to focus on others first. Leading me to my second point.

Relationships. There are many types of relationships, both those that build us up and those that break us down. The relationships I believe we need to fill our lives with our two-way relationships were all members feed into and grow from them. The way individual members contribute might be different, however all members spend some time truly listening. When we truly listen 100% of a focus is on the person speaking.

We have all been involved in relationships which are one sided, relationships that take too much to maintain, relationships that cost too much, both financially and emotionally. It is important in our relationship with God that once again we listen and hear – rather than always speaking. To hear and listen we need to follow and devote time to reflect and wait. Wait and look for signs of God speaking into our lives and the wider world, through people and situations.

In closing I would like to share a poem I wrote reflecting on the story of the rich man.

A reflection on the rich man

I've been a good since I was boy

You want more

You want me to sell everything

To give it all away

You say come follow me

But ... I have ... I've been good

You want more

I feel sad, I have so much stuff

But wait...I want more

I want you

I will follow you

Take me

Lead me

I am yours. Rebecca McDonald

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD:

WE SING 'Take my gifts and let me love you' (*Shirley Murray*)

Take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me,
Gave me light and food and shelter,
Gave me life and set me free.
Now, because your love has touched me,
I have love to give away;
Now the bread of love is rising,
Loaves of love to multiply!

Take the fruit that I have gathered
From the tree your Spirit sowed,
Harvest of your own compassion,
Juice that makes the wine of God;
Spiced with humour, laced with laughter-
Flavour of the Jesus life,
Tang of risk and new adventure,
Taste and zest beyond belief.

Take whatever I can offer-
Gifts that I have yet to find,
Skills that I am slow to sharpen,
Talents of the hand and mind,
Things made beautiful for others
In the place where I must be:
Take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me.

OFFERING

PRAYER

Loving God – the One who is with us in times of uncertainty as well as in times of security and optimism – we dedicate this offering to you today in the Name of Jesus. May it help to bring your love to those who are suffering terrible uncertainty and daily pain, and give hope to those despairing because of what life has brought them. Inspire us all to actively work for creative changes, that reflect your compassion, love and care. Amen.

WE SING

May new patterns for Christ's mission,
in a small or global sense,
help us bear each other's burdens,
breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision,
words of challenge, said with care,
bring new power and strength for action,
Made companions, free and fair.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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 for ever. Amen.**

SHARING FROM THE CHILDREN

SENDING FORTH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

WE SING 'Will you come and follow me' (ATOK 413)

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.

SENDING OUT & BLESSING

BENEDICTION TIS 781 'Father, bless us as we go'

Father, bless us as we go,
Jesus, walk beside us.
Holy Spirit, guide us.