

**Service of Worship**  
**Saint Margaret's Uniting Church, Mooroolbark**  
**Sunday 6 January 2019**



**One = Alone**  
**Two = Team**

**Leader: Rev Ric Holland**  
**(Supply Minister)**

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## **THOUGHTS OF THE DAY**

“What a lovely surprise to finally discover how un-lonely being alone can be.”

*Ellen Burstyn*

“The best part of being alone is that you don’t have to answer to anybody.”

*Justin Timberlake*

“Language has created the word ‘loneliness’ to express the pain of being alone and it has created the word ‘solitude’ to express the glory of being alone.”

*Paul Tillich*

“Unity is strength. When there is teamwork and collaboration wonderful things can be achieved.”

*Mattie Stepanek*

“It is amazing what you can achieve if you don’t care who gets the credit.”

*Harry S Truman*

“Individually we are a drop. Together we are an ocean.”

*Ryunosuke Satoro*

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## Words of welcome and introduction

Rev Ric

### Lighting of Christ candle

#### Hymn

*Tune: Maccabeus 10 11.11 11 and refrain TIS 380*

Come now and gather, gather in the light of day.

Pilgrims on a journey, seekers of the Way.

Gently calls Her Spirit - listen, can we hear?

Always in the silence, mystery draws near.

*Faith is a story, rising from the dawn of life*

*Older than the world around us deeper than the night*

Come now and gather, gather in the name of grace

Cherishing that we are different, gathered in this place

Softly calls Her Spirit - urging us to care

Not just those around us, people everywhere

*Faith is a story, rising from the dawn of life*

*Older than the world around us deeper than the night*

Come now and gather, gather in the name of peace.

Let Her Spirit gently calm you, may all conflicts cease.

Strongly calls Her Spirit - stirring us to be

Champions of true justice; children of liberty.

*Faith is a story, rising from the dawn of life*

*Older than the world around us deeper than the night*

*David Pargeter*

#### Prayers

*All the lonely people, where do they all come from?*

### The peace & community news

#### Young people

#### Hymn

*Tune: Hyfyrdol 87.87D TIS 233*

Sharing meals can be fulfilling; they can build community;

But if ruled by strict exclusion will increase disharmony.

Table fellowship for Jesus was the way he constantly

Prized all people as more precious than the laws of purity.

Jesus welcomed poor and outcasts; treated them with dignity.

This displeased religious leaders; they saw this as blasphemy.

When he ate with 'unclean' people he affirmed humanity;

He gave hope and he gave promise built upon equality.

He accepted invitations from the rich who were corrupt;

At some meals religious leaders could abuse; they could erupt;

Jesus did not let their status or their riches frighten him;

He used every meal to challenge; each event, however grim.

Jesus' passion was God's Kingdom – taught through hospitality;  
He included on his guest list all caught up in poverty.  
Yet he used the conversations with the table's company  
To confront all exploitation, and promote his ministry.

George Stuart

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

### **The table is made ready**

M: This table sets before us the symbols of life.

**P: We give thanks to God for our life and the courage we are given to live it.**

M: We are here given the Sacrament to enlarge and enrich our life.

**P: We will receive it with thanksgiving and faith.**

M: The Lord be with you

**P: And also with you**

M: Lift up your hearts

**P: We lift them up to the Lord**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**P: That is what we will do.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **The Invitation**

Rev Ric

### **Our expression of hope**

M: May the Good Spirit of God accept us and renew our faith as we receive this sacrament.

**P: This is our hope.**

M: May the Good Spirit of God accept us and encourage us to be carriers of goodwill.

**P: This is our prayer.**

M: May the Good Spirit of God accept us and give new strength to our souls.

**P: This is the blessing we seek.**

### **The offering of the bread**

M: The bread is broken for us

**P: And our eyes are opened**

### **The offering of wine**

M: This wine is here for us to take

**P: We receive it as an act of commitment to new life**

### **Bible readings**

#### **The first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians. Chapter 3, verses 4 to 9**

For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

**THE GOSPEL according to Saint Matthew. Chapter 5, verses 23 & 24**

23 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister[a] has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,[b] and then come and offer your gift.

**Address**

## **One = Alone, Two = Team**

Everyone of us knows what it is like to be lonely. Consider then all the people in that situation. The Eleanor Rigby people...all the lonely people where do they all come from. I was standing in Stanley Street, Liverpool, England, looking at a wonderful statue of Eleanor Rigby...underneath of which are the words: "Dedicated to all the lonely people". A little person shuffled up to me.. a lady of about 80 and she said to me...looking at the statue "That's me". So obviously I had to get into conversation with her...to discover that she had been brought up in a lovely family with six siblings. She married and had three children of her own. She told me something of the wonderful life she had lived....but then of how after her parents died, she lost all her brothers and sisters and since then her husband and finally two of her children died with AIDS. She had not been in touch with her remaining child for over 20 years. She had no friends and eeked out an existence in a lonely, cold council flat. She was truly one of those lonely people. I found a companion friends group for her and her life changed. Her flat, didn't change, her meagre income didn't change, the family loss didn't change...but she was no longer ALONE. She was able finally to share her life with others and to

belong. And that's what she said to me..."I now feel as though I belong".

**Being ALONE is one of the most negative and destructive situations people can experience.** And it can apply to some of the most unlikely people. Remember Amy Winehouse...at the top of the pop singing world, wealth, fame, apparent success and yet screaming out to belong...and dying of a drug overdose at the height of her popularity. Being alone doesn't necessarily mean that you are isolated. You can be very alone and lost in a crowd.

And being alone can be very, very destructive. Let me tell you about Jimmy Boyle.....He was brought up in an environment well known to another famous Glaswegian, Jimmy Barnes. Jimmy Barnes starts his great book "Working Class Man" with a sentence describing the place where he was born and grew up before he escaped with his family to Australia. He describes this community as "One of the only places in the world you can get your heart broken and your jaw broken at the same time". Jimmy Barnes got out of it, but unfortunately Jimmy Boyle didn't.

Jimmy Boyle graduated like many kids of the street to the local street gang. I worked in this place with kids like this a few years later. He had obvious leadership skills and he quickly became the gang leader and finally one of the most infamous criminals in Glasgow. When he was finally arrested for many, many crimes he received a concurrent sentence amounting to over 250 years imprisonment and he was shipped off to one of the country's harshest jails. He had been described in the Scotsman newspaper as "the most dangerous criminal in Scotland". I met him when I was a prison chaplain. Previous to this he had been thrown out of every prison in Scotland for destroying cells and

attacking prison guards. He finally was put in a locked cage with no bed, window or company it was solitary confinement. And even then, because he would smear himself and the bars with his own excrement he could challenge the prison system. He was truly ALONE, destructive and bad.

Then there came to a tough tough prison in Glasgow, Barlinnie prison, where I was a chaplain, a wonderful prison Governor who wanted to try a whole new experiment in working with the hardest and most dangerous prisoners he could find. He built a prison within a prison and offered to take the country's worst offenders. He then had dumped on him the ten worst prisoners in the country, all lifers. The prison within a prison became known as the Barlinnie Special Unit. Imagine a large square space surrounded by prison cells all with unlocked doors so that prisoners could come and go within the unit. In the square were tables and desks and a range of equipment, including artists canvas, brushes, craft material, books, coffee machines, musical instruments and record players, areas to relax and talk etc. Did the prisoners trash it? NO. Did they fight with each other? NO. Did they attack the guards dressed casually not in uniforms and unarmed? NO.

I remember sitting in with Jimmy in his unlocked cell within this special unit. He told me that he had discovered classical music for the first time in his life, this uneducated lifer was reading philosophy, and most of all he discovered some amazing things about himself...he had the ability to lead and inspire the other lifers, he could talk current affairs and politics with the prison guards and he was a fabulous artist and sculptor. He completed an Open University Degree. He began to paint and create. I remember his first exhibition in an up-market gallery in a trendy posh part of Glasgow. He was taken there handcuffed to a guard on each wrist to launch the exhibition before being returned to

prison. He wrote a book “A Sense of Freedom”. Read this it’s an amazing story of how a destructive lonely isolated inward looking man became part of a team... indeed led the team and moved from being destructive to constructive, from a man of violence to a man of peace. Let me read from his book....He’s talking about the special unit: “Out of everything that makes up this Unit, the greatest thing costs nothing. It is the way in which staff and prisoners get together and talk. It is the one thing that has brought the best results...getting together.....it is a bunch of isolated individuals coming together and working towards building a community”

And this is what I want to emphasise .....that it’s not too difficult to move from isolation to community.

**The second thing I want to emphasise is that there is a huge difference between loneliness and solitude.**

In today’s constantly connected world, finding solitude has become a lost art. Marya Mannes in Psychology Today writes “that Western culture tends to equate a desire for solitude with people who are lonely or sad or have anti-social tendencies. But seeking solitude can actually be quite healthy. There are many physical and psychological benefits to spending time alone”. Sometimes our own church provides a special sacred space for people to seek solitude in the midst of a hectic city.

Benefits of seeking solitude:

1. It allows you to re-boot your brain and unwind. Constantly being “on” doesn’t give your brain a chance to rest and replenish itself. Being intentionally by yourself with no distractions gives you the chance to clear your mind, focus and think more clearly.

2. Solitude helps to improve concentration and ultimately will help you get more done in a shorter amount of time.
3. Solitude provides time for you to think deeply.....hum drum day to day tasks can be pushed aside to allow to engage in some serious thought.
4. Solitude can enhance the quality of your relationships with others. By spending time with yourself can enable you to gain a better understanding of the people you want to be with as well as helping you to come to appreciate them better.

**Do you see what I mean loneliness is awful/solitude is good.**

Jesus regularly sought solitude. Early on in his ministry he went away into the wilderness to think things through. This has become known as the Temptations. We know also that he went up into a high mountain for the same reason...this has become known as the Transfiguration. And towards the end that he sought peace and quiet in Gethsemane”.

**But Jesus also sought teamwork.** He of course called the disciples to be part of the team and Christianity has thrived on teamwork ever since. Paul when he is writing to the Corinthians is addressing that church, some of whom are claiming different leadership... some are saying I follow Paul, others say no we're with Apollos....Paul says no we all belong to the same team and we should work together as a team. (No it wasn't invented by Tony Abbot.....Paul beat him in using that term by 2000 years!)

Paul says each one has their part to play but together they can change the world.

And this is the message to us today. We're all different but together we're a team. WOW!

Enjoy quietness and solitude. Enjoy the time of reflection but go on from there to **really work together** to make a real impact in this city.

In the past I have played cricket. Not very well. But as captain of that team every year I would organise a trip to one of the big Test matches at Lords. To see some of the best players in the world match up to each other. It was a big event. We would all buy tickets for four days, book into a local hostelry and plan to really enjoy ourselves. Well in those days they did not have covered pitches. For those of you who don't know about cricket this means that when it rains as it does most of the time in England. The wicket gets wet and play can't occur. Now it had rained the previous day and for the first day of scheduled play it was sunny. Nevertheless according to the umpires the wicket had not dried out enough. We sat there at the ground with thousands of other cricket tragics and every 2 hours the umpires would walk out and "inspect the wicket" to see if it was fit to play. Now through a hot summers day they did this every couple of hours and declared that play could not commence. This continued through three days all without rain, but with the wicket never being dry enough to the umpire's satisfaction. Now remember we'd paid a lot of money, booked our holidays for this trip and had imbibed a certain amount of orange liquid. It was the beginning of the fourth day of no play on a glorious sunny day when yet again the umpires were trudging out when one of our team suggested that the next time they come out we're going to charge out as a group and tell these umpires how ridiculous it is when cricket was being played across the whole country. So as captain of our little team we stood and I ran towards the umpires across the hallowed Lords turf. I ran up to the Umpire and said to him vociferously now me and my team here.....me and my team...they'd all disappeared and there I was completely

isolated and alone with no team support. A lesson learnt! Good teamwork is rock solid. It's working together for the common good where **everybody** has a part to play.

I was listening to Susan Alberti recently talking about the launch of woman's AFL, and don't we all cheer that after years of preventing young women from playing our unique game. She said that the women's game even more than the blokes was all about teamwork.

Even when we think about the church as a whole. Take the churches in Victoria. Every shape and size and every type of churchmanship and theology. Then think of the footy....In the church as a whole there are the defenders.....the conservatives and orthodox. They would say the defenders of the faith. Hard to get past and fairly boring. Then there is the midfield fluctuating a bit, neither here nor there. Then, of course there are the forwards... that's us tackling issues head on, taking risks and totally committed to going forward.

You know the most lonely game to play is tennis...it's down to you and nobody else. And yet when you watch the tennis there is the greatest example of teamwork you could imagine. Do you know what I mean? The ball boys and girls. Working together like a well-oiled machine. A fantastic team of young people and exhibiting all the advantages of teamwork:

1. Creating energy when the sum is greater than the individual parts
2. Multi-disciplinary all responding to different aspects of the game
3. Being totally prepared for any eventuality which can be handled by the team when it would throw an individual

4. and there fostering flexibility and responding to change. This is what management consultants mean when they talk about the art of participative management.

This is us here in Mooroolbark. We will of course reflect and use our solitary moments effectively and we will work together responding to change and winning the church equivalent to the Premiership.

**Hymn**

*Tune: Church Triumphant 88.88 TIS 376*

When love, compassion, hope for peace  
Call us to make all hatred cease,  
Then Jesus speaks from Galilee  
To challenge and encourage me.

When crime, corruption rule the day  
The call comes for another way;  
Then Jesus speaks from Galilee  
To challenge and encourage me.

When justice, mercy, dignity  
Call us to build community,  
Then Jesus speaks from Galilee  
To challenge and encourage me.

When spite, revenge shout how to live  
The call comes for us to forgive;  
Then Jesus speaks from Galilee  
To challenge and encourage me.

When Jesus speaks from Galilee  
To challenge and encourage me  
To help the weak, combat all wrong,  
His gentle voice is always strong.

*George Stuart*

**Offering Prayer and Song**

**All Pray:**

Loving and generous God –  
as we offer You the fruits of our labours, may we  
also generously share with others the fruits of your  
Spirit. May our offerings help nourish people in  
crisis.

We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

**All sing:**

Give thanks with a grateful heart,

*TIS 717*

give thanks to the Holy One,  
give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son.  
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",

Give thanks,  
give thanks,  
give thanks.

### **Prayers of the people**

**Hymn** TIS 573 *Tune: Cambridge 66.86*

A charge to keep I have,  
a God to glorify,  
a never-dying soul to save,  
made fit for God on high:

to serve the present age,  
my calling to fulfil:  
O may it all my powers engage  
to do my Master's will!

Arm me with zealous care,  
as in your sight to live;  
and O your servant, Lord, prepare  
a strict account to give.

Help me to watch and pray,  
and on yourself rely,  
so shall I not my trust betray,  
nor shall I ever die.

*Charles Wesley 1707-88 alt*

### **Benediction**

#### **Commissioning:**

The world is waiting for us to emerge,  
the world is waiting for each of us to stand up for what is truth,  
the world is waiting for us to join hands in peace and fellowship.  
So,  
Go with courage into the costly path of Christ;  
Go with imagination in the creative life of God; and  
Go with freedom into the Life of the Spirit.

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