

Order of Worship

St.Margaret's Uniting Church, Mooroolbark

7th April 2019, Lent 5 – Rev Dr Robert Stringer

INTROIT TIS 390 "Give thanks to the risen Lord" Verse 1

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,
alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.

1

Jesus is Lord of all the earth;
he is the king of creation.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

WELCOME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY & ANCESTORS

We gather together on the land that cared and nurtured the people of the Kulin nation. The land where the people of the Wurundjeri language gather and celebrated their stories, songs and dances passed on by their ancestors, and the Great Spirit of the Dreaming over countless generations.

We acknowledge these ancestors and give thanks for their memory. We also acknowledge and give thanks for the foremothers and forefathers of St Margaret's Uniting Church. All those who have given their gifts to be a shining light of God for the wider community. To this community of saints, living and dead, named and unnamed we pay our respects.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

We light the Christ Candle

We celebrate God coming to us in human form bringing light to the world.

CALL TO WORSHIP: (*Bruce Prewer*)

The costly love of Christ Jesus be with you all.

And also with you.

Nothing we can ever say will do justice to the God
who cherishes and nurtures us.

Nothing we can ever do will be sufficient thanks for the God who redeems us.

Therefore when you come to worship,
praise and exult as much as you can.

Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful Is the God of earth and heaven!

HYMN TIS 547: "Be thou my vision"

1

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art -
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;

thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3

Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight,
be thou my dignity, thou my delight;
thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower:
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

4

Riches I scorn and the world's empty praise,
thou my inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only the first in my heart;
high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5

High King of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God as we remember your Son Jesus as he draws near to the cross, help us to prepare a place where your divine life is cherished. In this place of worship, help us to see the expressions of love around us. Over the years, those who have gathered here have surrounded us with their prayers, with echoes of past music and singing and in grateful signs of their commitment to you O God as you are with us today. In the colours of the banners, the pleasure of the furniture, the light of the windows, we welcome the faithful and all those who meet here. In the word and the sacraments, we prepare the way for the welcoming of the Easter Christ.

Enter our place of hospitality, Holy Spirit.

here we wait to recognize your presence with us.

the signs of your engaging of our lives with your wisdom.

Come Holy Spirit, come. Amen

A WORD FOR THE CHILDREN

HYMN TIS 170: "Thank you, thank you, Lord" Verses 1 & 4

1

Thank you, thank you, Lord,
for everything that I can see:
dewdrops on a spider's web,
new leaves on a tree,
friendly faces in the street
smiling back at me;
thank you, thank you, Lord.

4

Thank you, thank you, Lord,
for everything that I can be:
friend of all, and helper too,

no one's enemy.
someone who has learned to share,
someone who is free;
thank you, thank you, Lord.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

O God, you lavish the universe with life, poured out from the bounty of your love.

You share the aroma of your holiness with all creatures, great and small.

We thank you for Jesus, who poured out his life that we might have the priceless gifts of salvation, forgiveness and mercy.

We confess O God, that while you lavish us with unconditional love, we have not always shared that love with others

On the feet of those who hate us

We have not poured the aroma of love With those who have hurt us.

We have not shared the fragrance of forgiveness.

On those who are at enmity against us.

We have not spread the perfume of peace.

On those who have difficulties expressing their love,

We have not lavished enough of the scent of gentleness on those who misunderstand us.

We have not offered the bouquet of patience.

On those who have loved us

We have not modelled the gentle humility of Christ in us

We confess, O Creator, that in our humanness

We have not always been kind

Silence

Before God and the people of God we confess to our brokenness, to the ways that we wound our life, the life of others and the life of the world.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear Christ word of love to us,

God forgives you,

Christ renews you

and the Spirit enables you to live in love.

Thanks be to God!

WE LISTEN FOR A WORD FROM GOD

Isaiah 43:16-21

But now thus says the Lord,

he who created you, O Jacob,

he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.

3 For I am the Lord your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,

Ethiopia[a] and Seba in exchange for you.
4 Because you are precious in my sight,
and honored, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
5 Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
6 I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
and to the south, "Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."
8 Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
who are deaf, yet have ears!
9 Let all the nations gather together,
and let the peoples assemble.
Who among them declared this,
and foretold to us the former things?
Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
and let them hear and say, "It is true."
10 You are my witnesses, says the Lord,
and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
nor shall there be any after me.
11 I, I am the Lord,
and besides me there is no savior.
12 I declared and saved and proclaimed,
when there was no strange god among you;
and you are my witnesses, says the Lord.

Philippians 3:4b-14

To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh![c] 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God[d] and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh— 4 even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ,[e] the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ[f] and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal;[g] but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Beloved,[h] I do not consider that I have made it my own;[i] but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly[j] call of God in Christ Jesus.

John 12: 1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 2 There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 3 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them[a] with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii[b] and the money given to the poor?" 6 (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it[c] so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. 8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

REFLECTION:

Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet

Women's values verses Men's values

Parallels Mt 26:6-13, Mk 14 14:3-9, Lk 7:36-50, Jn 12:1-8.

4 Stories of Jesus' visit to Bethany

Two take place in the house of Simon the Leper Mt 26:6-13, Mk 14:1-9

One in the house of Lazarus with Mary and Martha Jn 12;1-8

One in the house of Simon the Pharisee Lk 7:36-50

The event happened in the last days of Jesus.

Told as a preparation for Jesus' Burial (John)

In Luke the theme was forgiveness for the woman.

A subversive story about a woman disciple tells us about Jesus' attitude and relationships with women disciples.

Has similar theme as the Mary and Martha story but goes much further. In that story Jesus teaches women disciples.

The Context

Bethany – just outside Jerusalem about 5Km

House of Simon the leper – A Pharisee

House of Lazarus, Mary and Martha – Disciples
House of Simon the Pharisee – A Pharisee

1. Event takes place in presence of Pharisees or Disciples.

The Jewish leaders and future Christian leaders, the disciples, this is a story that prefigures the kind of confrontation that was taking place between these two groups in the development of the early church. That is the place of women in the early church.

2. A prophetic act by woman disciple.

In contrast to the social position of women of the day, who are not generally mentioned, this is a story that indicates that there were probably a considerable number of women disciples following Jesus.

In the Old Testament the prophet anointed the head of the Jewish King with oil as a public recognition of his high standing as both King and God's anointed. As Mary anoints Jesus' feet with oil this is a mixture of official recognition of Jesus' high standing with the anointing of the feet a recognition of a servant King/Messiah. Immediately understood when put alongside the story of the washing of the disciples feet. A prophetic sign-action by a woman.

Jesus – affirms the importance of the women's tasks.

The Woman/Mary anticipates Jesus' death, demonstrates her appreciation of Jesus and perhaps a premonition that something catastrophic was going to happen to him, what we now know as the crucifixion.

Taking the time out to be with Jesus Mary senses the importance of Jesus' mission. She is one of the few women disciples mentioned as listening in to the teaching of Jesus, in the Mary and Martha story. And now having taken this symbolic action Jesus assures us that whenever the gospel is preached she will be remembered. Mt 26:13, Mk 14:9

The anointing – recognition of Jesus as the Messiah (King)

Anointing the feet – recognition of the links with the washing of the feet, a servant King
Embalming of the body – prefiguring the death of Jesus.

Looking towards the death and resurrection not back to the raising of Lazarus.

It parallels Isaiah 43- looking forward to return to Israel. Not back to crossing Red Sea.

Ever wondered why women were first at the tomb to witness the Resurrection of Jesus?

This story might be a clue.

3. Gesture marked by superabundance of both quality and quantity of oils/perfume.

Indicates Mary's affection, trust and devotion to the person of Jesus.

A once only opportunity. A woman letting her hair down – not a good look.

Mary – foremost of Women disciples. Mary knew Jesus as a warm caring person, not scared to cross social barriers, in her wanting to be a disciple.

4. Crisis of values- Jesus turns the men's values upside down.

A symbolic action that was accepted by Jesus in contrast to the better judgment of men.

Judas raised issues about the cost and issues about justice (Poor)

Pragmatic economic values of men - Versus the symbolic prophetic action of Mary.

Jesus doesn't contradict men's values but says "Leave her alone, what she has done is a beautiful thing." A recognition of the importance of love expressed within a deeper symbolic significance.

Modern example. Minister rushed off his feet. An elder suggesting that they wash and anoint his feet. Imagine the embarrassment of other elders – symbolic – Rushed off feet.

Observations

- 1) Quality of faith and actions of women verses the pragmatism of men.
- 2) Internal freedom of Jesus to accept the symbolism absence of any ambiguity.
- 3) Women presented as model disciples with faith in Jesus, whose deeply felt affection, perception is presented as a challenge to disciples in all generations.

Mark 14:9, Mt 26:13, Now I assure you that wherever the gospel is preached all over the world what she has done will be told in memory of her.

It is good for us to think about how we can use symbolic actions to convey our understanding of the Gospel today.

HYMN TIS 696: "A prophet woman broke a jar"

1

A prophet-woman broke a jar,
by Love's divine appointing.
With rare perfume she filled the room,
presiding and anointing.
A prophet-woman broke a jar,
the sneers of scorn defying.
With rare perfume she filled the room,
preparing Christ for dying.

2

A faithful woman left a tomb
by Love's divine commission.
She saw, she heard, she preached the Word,
arising from submission.
A faithful woman left a tomb
with resurrection gospel.
She saw, she heard, she preached the Word,
apostle to apostles.

3

Though woman-wisdom, woman-truth,
for centuries were hidden,
unsung, unwritten, and unheard,
derided and forbidden,
the Spirit's breath, the Spirit's fire,
on free and slave descending,
can tumble our dividing walls,
our shame and sadness mending.

4

The Spirit knows, the Spirit calls,
by Love's divine ordaining,
the friends we need to serve and lead,
their powers and gifts unchaining.
The Spirit knows, the Spirit calls,

from women, men and children,
the friends we need, to serve and lead.
Rejoice, and make them welcome!

SHARING OUR COMMUNITY LIFE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

OFFERING and OFFERTORY PRAYER:

God who makes all things new,
you have entrusted to us
a ministry of reconciliation.
Empowered by your Spirit
may we use our gifts and our living
exercising that ministry
in Jesus' name. Amen.

HYMN TIS 753: "You are holy, you are whole

You are holy, you are whole.
You are always ever more
than we ever understand.
You are always at hand.
Blessed are you coming near;
blessed are you coming here
to your church in wine and bread,
raised from soil, raised from dead.

You are holy, you are wholeness,
you are present,
let the cosmos praise you, Lord!
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah, our Lord!

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Leader: The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

We thank you, Lord, our God for your loving trust in people

**In Creation, you first clothed us with dignity, called us not things, but sons
and daughters, and saw that we were very good.**

You did not hesitate, even then to offer what was most intimate to yourself — a share in
your creative power.

**Thus, from the beginning, it has ever been our vocation to fashion this world
ourselves in the image of your love. We, the whole of creation, in all our
frailty and mystery, with all our races and peoples, join hands around your
table — in doubt, in love, in risk, in hope — and offer you thanks in a new way:**

not by being lifted out of what is human, but by daring to be what we truly are — work of your loving hands.

God-touched and frail, yet possessing a dignity beautiful beyond belief, together we say:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, for your loving trust in people.

When we lost faith in the dignity of our call, when we doubted your love and cursed your law, you sent not your wrath to crush us, but your Son to be our brother.

He has come to our table and eaten our bread. He has walked in the cool of the evening with people he called his friends. His tears were real; his joys intense; his prayer — that we might learn to love one another.

Yet, the sorrow which finally crushed him was one in which we all played a part. For, on the night before he died, he was betrayed by a man, by one who offered a kiss, by one who called him, “friend”.

Yet, on that very night he gave the greatest proof of his love.

He took bread in his hands, and lifted his eyes to you, God, calling you, “Father”; he thanked you, blessed and broke the bread, and gave it to his friends with the words:

This is my body which will be given up for you.

When the supper was ended, he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it with them saying:

This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.

It will be shed for you and for all people so that sins may be forgiven.

Now, whenever we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we recall the days when the Lord walked this earth; we remember especially that night when he proved his love in one final, total offering, by laying down his life for his friends. Living, he taught us how to live; Dying, he truly set us free.

Therefore, Lord, our God we gather about this table in the name of your Son, at his own request. We place here bread and wine — simple gifts — signs of our faith in your world.

We are conscious that this offering of faith is the one unchanging sign which links us to ages of Christians, past and to come.

as nations rise and fall, as customs and cultures change with the years, yet, this, your sign, will ever remain: that people will recognise you, the living God, in breaking of the Bread.

So we do not approach your table lightly, but only in the spirit of faith, because you bid us draw near.

(The bread and the cup are shared.)

Since we in the Christian community, O Lord, are those who have not seen, and yet are called upon to believe this mystery of faith, send over us, we pray, your Holy Spirit —

The Spirit who brings us life; the Spirit who helps us love; the Spirit who makes all that we do, not easy, but full of meaning. Only with the Spirit’s help can we truly be the Church of Jesus Christ. The Spirit’s presence in our community gives more than human meaning to the support and love that we show to one another. It is through the Spirit that we are united in peace with all people, everywhere on this earth.

As we believe, so let us live. We pray that all people, looking upon us, your Christian

community, will say in all sincerity, "See how they love one another".

And wherever we have walked, the report will go around that the poor are clothed; the hungry, fed; the sorrowful, comforted; and all of creation proclaims the wondrous deeds of God.

All these things are possible, Lord, our God, only in Christ, and with him, and through him. For so you are praised and blessed on earth, in union with the Holy Spirit, today and all days unto eternity.

AMEN.

HYMN TIS 341: "My song is love unknown" Verses 1,2,4,6 and 7

1

My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.

O who am I
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh, and die?

2

He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow:
but all made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my friend!
my friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend.

4

Why, what has my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!
Yet they at these
themselves displease,
and 'gainst him rise.

6

In life, no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have;
in death, no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heaven was his home;
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.

7

Here might I stay and sing,

no story so divine;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend

BENEDICTION

Go into this week
blessed by the righteousness and love of God
and empowered by the Holy Spirit
to spread the fragrance of Christ wherever you go.

ASCRPTION TIS 779: "May the feet of God"

May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.