

**Wesley Uniting Church  
Epiphany 3  
22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023**

**10.45 am service**

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Lighting of community candle**

**Greeting**

We come today, as so often we do,  
with questions, yearnings, needs and hopes.

We come because possibly, just possibly,  
we might hear or see or sense something  
that will help us on our way in life.

Come for this is the time  
and this is the place,  
where it is all possible  
as we open ourselves to God  
through Jesus the Christ,  
who came for that very purpose.

**Hymn: All people that on earth do dwell**

**TiS 59**

**Acknowledgement of Country**

Before we begin this worship service,  
I would like to acknowledge and pay respect  
to the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet

– the Ngunnawal and Ngambri People.

I would also like to pay my respects to the Elders,  
both past and present and emerging

and to the Elders of other Aboriginal communities.

This is the place where God has been together with the first people  
for a long time. It is upon their ancestral lands that  
the Wesley Uniting Church is built and where we worship.

## **Safe place statement**

The Uniting Church in Australia

believes that all people are made in the image of God,  
and as such we accept every individual  
regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

Acknowledgement of Country

## **Opening prayer**

based on Psalm 27:1, 4-9

O God, you are our light and salvation.

Still, we fear.

There is so much that remains  
unknown and uncertain.

We push against you,  
but you will not push us away.

You hold us close.

When we wonder what the day might bring,  
you whisper,

“follow me, I will make you:

readers to little children,

bandagers of bruised hearts,

lovers of the forsaken,

pilgrims who show the way to others.”

We ask so much of you, O God.  
We want your beauty and comfort.  
We need your strength and peace.  
You hear our cries and answer us  
with your endless grace and love.  
You are our joy.  
Amen.

### **Call to reconciliation**

When we come to God with open hearts  
and honest words,  
we will not be pushed away  
but wrapped in God's loving  
and forgiving embrace.

Let us join together  
in confessing our lives to God, praying...

### **Prayer of confession**

Holy One, we have so many questions,  
but we don't pause to listen,  
to your still small voice,  
to your invitation to follow,  
to your call to serve, as

to your affirmation of our gifts.

We do what needs to be done,  
without aim or direction,  
responding to the most immediate  
demand for our attention.  
We cross it off the list and move on to the next.

Forgive us.  
Forgive us for our preoccupation  
and our sense of self-importance.  
Call us again to seek your face  
and follow the Christ.  
Amen.

### **Words of Affirmation**

The God of all life who is as near as breath  
has only gracious love to offer,  
encouraging new beginnings  
and endless possibilities for good.  
Know you are loved and forgiven.

**We are loved and forgiven.  
Amen!**

### **Peace**

Peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

**Hymn: Come as you are**

**TiS 693**

### **Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 9:1-4 (page 555)**

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.  
For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

**Reading from the Epistles: 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18 (page 926)**

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Reading from the Gospels: Matthew 4:12-23 (page 785)**

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

‘Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,  
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the  
Gentiles -  
the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,  
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light  
has dawned.’

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake - for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

## **Anthem**

**Message            Karyn Burchell-Thomas**

**Hymn: Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult**

**TiS 589**

**Offering**

**Announcements**

## Prayers of the People

Gracious God,  
you have called us by name  
and invited us to be your disciples.  
You have claimed us as your children,  
and we are grateful.  
We are grateful for the gift of this day,  
and this beautiful planet where we live,  
work, worship, and play.

Help us preserve its beauty  
and the natural life it supports.  
We are grateful for  
the communities in which we live.  
Grant us willing hearts and hands  
to make them places of welcome,  
work, and opportunity.

We are grateful for the people in our lives:  
our co-workers, neighbours,  
friends, and families;  
those near and far,  
those we see often,  
and those we can only  
see in our fondest memories.

We call on you to be  
near to those whose lives, bodies,  
and spirits are broken.  
We pray especially for ...  
*... include prayers for your own community.*

We call on you to give  
wisdom and prudence to our leaders,  
that they may seek to do your will.

We call on you to bring peace where conflict rages  
and comfort where despair looms large.  
Jesus, we have heard you when you call,  
and we pray as you taught...

## **The Lord's Prayer...**

**Closing hymn: A charge to keep I have**

**TiS 573**

## **Blessing**

Go now, beloved, to follow the love of God  
to be surprised by God's wonder  
to lift your voice for love and compassion.

Dare to believe that you are people on a mission  
of healing and grace.

Feel God's encouragement  
to be a blessing  
as you offer blessings  
with your heart and hands  
and know that you never,  
ever go alone.  
Amen.

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Worship team:

Rev Karyn Burchell-Thomas, Rev Dr Geoff Dornan,  
Garth Mansfield (Reader), Glenda McDowall (Organist)

With thanks to our musicians, A/V and steward teams

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