

Wesley Uniting Church
Epiphany 3
22nd January 2023
9.00 am service

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.

Song: A voice is heard

*Come, let us praise our God,
come, let us sing for joy.
With a heart of thanks we you honour.
You are our mighty God,
you are the source of life.
Creator God, we give praise.*

From the deepest seas
a voice is heard.
From the highest hills
a voice is heard.
From the rich dark earth,
a voice is heard,
all creation sings!
God is heard!
Come, let us praise ...

from All Together Whatever
Word & music Trish Watts and Monica
O'Brien
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Through the darkest night
a voice is heard.
Through the breaking dawn
a voice is heard.
Through the heart of life
a voice is heard,
all creation sings!
God is heard!
Come, let us praise ...

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.

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, 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.

Time with children

Children's song Jesus put this song

Jesus put this song into our hearts,
Jesus put this song into our hearts,
it's a song of joy no-one can take away,
Jesus put this song into our hearts.

Jesus taught us how to live in harmony,
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony,
different faces, different races, he made us one,
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony.

Jesus taught us how to be a family,
Jesus taught us how to be a family,
loving one another with the love that he gives,
Jesus taught us how to be a family.

Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing,
Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing,
changed our tears of sadness into rivers of joy,
Jesus turned our sorrow into a dance.

from All Together Everybody
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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.

Message Karyn Burchell-Thomas

The Summons

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 you 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.

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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 song: The Pilgrims song

We believe in God in whom the universe
in all its beauty was born.
We believe in Christ, the Saviour of the world
and the Spirit who travels with us.

*For we are the people who travel in Christ's way.
Yes, we are the people seeking God's new day.
We are the people the Spirit binds as one.
Together in faith we journey on.*

We believe in Christ, God come as one with us,
who died to set the world free.
We believe Christ lives, his Spirit is with us
that in our lives God's new world will come.
For we are ...

There will come a day creation will be free
and love will rule all the world.
Until then we'll seek to care for all the earth
and to live for the glory of God.
For we are ...

from All Together All Right
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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.

Worship team:

Rev Karyn Burchell-Thomas, Rev Dr Geoff Dornan,
Paul Chen (Reader)

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

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