



Throughout this Season of Lent, the cross takes priority in our readings. We frequently and correctly think that the cross points us toward salvation. That is so. But seldom do we ask the question just what the cross points us away from? If we were to answer that, we could say, a way of life characterized by crucifying others. The cross suggests to us the possibility of a world *without* crosses, a world where we cease crucifying each other. Such a world demands of us a change of mind and heart, an internalization of the cross where we ourselves are not the first consideration, but the last. Oscar Romero put it this way: “*What a terrible thing: to have lived quite comfortably with no suffering; not getting involved in problems, quite tranquil, quite settled, lacking nothing, having everything. To what good? Living like that, we lose our lives*”. (Oscar Romero, 1917-1980, Archbishop of San Salvador, El Salvador, 1977-1980 (assassinated, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1980))

## GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY AND SAFE CHURCH STATEMENT

Let us acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,

The first inhabitants of this place,  
 part of God's good creation.  
 We honour them for their custodianship of the land,  
 on which we gather today.

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made  
 in the image of God, and so we accept every individual regardless  
 of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

**WELCOME IN THE NAME OF OUR GOD  
 AND LIGHTING OF THE COMMUNITY CANDLE**

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
 The Lord be with you  
**And also with you.**

**WE CALL ON GOD TO ACCOMPANY US**

Lenten travellers, when you feel the security of God's love,  
 affirmation of God's call;

**God comes near.**

When you feel deserted and alone, parched for a caring hand or  
 an encouraging word, troubled and uncertain as the ground  
 under you shifts like sand;

**God comes near.**

When you feel emboldened to act, inspired to speak, energized to  
 live as bearers of the good news that the Kingdom of God is here;

**God comes near.**

In all seasons of our lives, God comes near to us and does not  
 forsake us.

**God comes near. Amen.**

**OPENING SONG: Come, Now is the Time to Worship**

Brian Doerksen © 1998

Verse (x2):

Come, now is the time to worship.  
 Come, now is the time to give your heart.  
 Come, just as you are to worship.  
 Come, just as you are before your God.  
 Come.

*Chorus:*

*One day every tongue will confess you are God  
 One day every knee will bow.  
 Still the greatest treasure remains for those  
 who gladly choose You now.*

Verse

*Chorus (x2)*

Verse

### **A PRAYER OF CONFESSION: THE TIME**

Both the Hebrew and Gospel readings implore us to live a life that reflects the spirit and ethos of 'self-crucifixion', that which we refer to more commonly as "bearing the cross". This ethos is not about masochism, but about a clear-eyed understanding that in the scheme of things, 'it is not all about us', that as individuals, we do not come first. This is a rule for life that must be learnt and re-learnt. After each prayer the response is "**teach us the death to self that is our need**".

The time is here: be lifted, Human One,  
 to celebrate, to put the kingdom into action.  
**Teach us the death-to-self that is our need.**

The time is ripe: be planted, Faithful Seed,  
 to be the grain through which life abundant gives.  
**Teach us the death-to-self that is our need.**

The time is now: shine out, O Lord of Light  
 into our fragmented hearts,  
 into our broken societies,  
*into the shadowed earth;*  
 show us the way to love;  
 give us the sight to see beyond the norm, to see in an integrated way; **Teach us the death-to-self that is our need.**

The time has come: be lifted, Holy One,  
 to draw all people to your love;  
 as children of your light may we become  
 the ones who share your love through time and space. Amen

### **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

This is the beast of all:  
 When we are empty, God fills us.  
 When we are disheartened, God is compassionate.  
 When we are wounded, God brings healing.  
 When we confess our brokenness, God forgives.  
 In Christ, through Christ, and because of Christ,  
 our sins are forgiven.  
**In Christ we find strength and refuge.**

**THE PEACE:** *we greet each other.*

## THE WORD

### THE CHILDREN: A SHORT CONVERSATION ON TODAY'S THEME

#### CHILDREN'S SONG: Sizohamba (We Will Walk With God)

Trad. Eswatini, translation by John Bell © 2002

Pronunciation:

See zo ham ba na yeh, wo wo wo	1. Sizohamba naye, wo wo wo
see zo ham ba na yeh	sizohamba naye (repeat)
Goom shla wen ja boo la	Ngomhla wenjabula
see zo ham ba na yeh	sizohamba naye (repeat)

2. We will walk with God, my brothers,  
 we will walk with God.  
 We will walk with God, my sisters,  
 we will walk with God.  
 We will go rejoicing,  
 till the kingdom is come. (repeat)

HEBREW BIBLE: Jeremiah 31: 31-34 page 642

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33 page 875

This is the Gospel of the Lord - **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

## **THINKING TOGETHER: SOME IDEAS ABOUT THE CROSS AS A WAY OF LIFE**

*The Offering is received as the congregation sings. We remain standing as the prayers over the offerings are made.*

### **OFFERING SONG: Wondrous Love**

Traditional (anon.)

1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
To lay aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,  
To lay aside His crown for my soul!

2. To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing,  
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;  
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM,  
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,  
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on,  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be.  
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on.  
And through eternity, I'll sing on.

## **PRAYERS OVER THE OFFERINGS**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

We are asked to pray today for the peoples of the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We continue to pray for the peoples of Ukraine, Russia, Gaza, Israel, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

*We may offer our prayers quietly or vocally. If vocally, please use the microphone so those listening on YouTube may hear us.*

Let's pray together:

**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.**

**SENDING SONG:** Now As You Leave This Assembly of Lovers  
Amanda Udis-Kessler © 2019

1. Now as you leave this assembly of lovers,  
carry the gift that your heart has received,  
As you've been treated, go out and treat others,  
sharing the grace that is endlessly free.

*Chorus:*  
*Keep on blessing the world as you do.*  
*Welcome the stranger and offer a feast.*  
*Work to bring justice. Strive to show kindness.*  
*Surely the Holy will bless you with peace.*

2. Centre your mind on the things that are precious,  
all that is sacred and worthy of praise.  
Love all the world with a passion so reckless  
you will know wonder the rest of your days.

*Chorus*

**COMMISSION AND BLESSING**  
Whatever you do in word or deed,  
Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God through him.

The Grace of God attend you;  
the love of God surround you;  
the Holy Spirit keep you;  
this day and forever  
Our service has ended  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

Liturgist: Bruce Stevens  
Preacher: Geoff Dornan  
Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul  
Musicians: Jessica Cheng (piano), Anika Chan (violin), James Monroe (cello)  
Readers: Grace and Hyeuk Ryu  
Video and Sound: Philip Bruen and Robert James

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