

**Wesley Uniting Church  
September 17th, 2023  
Informal Liturgy  
9am  
Pentecost 16**



**The Gathering of God's People**

**Preparing Ourselves: Meditation with Music**

**Affirmation of First Nation's People & Celebration of Mutual Acceptance**

**Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity**

**Lighting of the Paschal and Community Candle**

**Invitation to Worship Together**

You are a God who saves, who liberates.

*You are a God who creates room for people to live.*

You are a God of freedom.

*You are a God who teaches us to live in mercy and forgiveness.*

**Opening Song:** 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin (c) 2011

1. The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning  
it's time to sing Your song again.  
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,  
let me be singing when the evening comes.

*Chorus*

2. You're rich in love and You're slow to anger,  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind.  
For all your goodness I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

*Chorus*

**Chorus:**

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, oh my soul.

Worship His holy name.

Sing like never before, oh my soul.

I worship Your holy name.

3. And on that day when my strength is failing,  
the end draws near and my time has come,  
still my soul sing Your praise unending  
ten thousand years and then forevermore.  
Forevermore!

*Chorus*

I will worship your holy name.  
God I'll worship Your holy name.

**Chorus:**

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, oh my soul.  
Worship His holy name.  
Sing like never before, oh my soul.  
I worship Your holy name.

## **Prayers to Begin: Thanksgiving and Confession**

### **Celebration of Our Forgiveness**

We are children of God's mercy and kindness.  
We are free to be people of mercy and kindness.  
*Thanks be to God.*

## **The Peace**

### **Hearing & Thinking Together**

#### **The Children**

**Children's Song:** I Will Sing Unto the Lord

Trad. Israeli, text from Exodus  
15:1-2, sourced from Hymnary.org

(sing each section x2):

I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously,  
the horse and rider thrown into the sea.

The Lord, my God, my strength and song  
has now become my victory.

The Lord is God and I will praise him,  
our Father God and I will exalt him!

### **Prayer for Understanding**

In our struggle to hear your word,  
teach us to value the questions  
to which we may not have answers.  
Enable us to carry our doubts with elegance.

First Reading: Exodus 14:19-3, pp. 53-54 - 'Escaping Oppression'

Gospel: Matthew 18: 21-35, p. 800 - "Forgiveness and Mercy"

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

## Thinking together...

*We make our offering as we sing together.*

**Offering Song:** The Spring Has Come

Colin Gibson, words by Shirley Murray

1. The spring has come, let all the Church be part of it!  
The world has changed, and God is at the heart of it!  
New light, new day,  
new colour after winter grey.  
New light, new day,  
the spring has come, let all the Church be part of it!

2. The sun is warm, let all God's children play in it!  
The world expands, let's spread the Gospel way in it!  
New leaf, new thrust,  
new greening for the love of Christ.  
New leaf, new thrust,  
the sun is warm, let all God's children play in it!

3. The spring has come, new people are the flowers of it.  
Through wind and rain, new life is in the showers of it.  
New bud, new shoot,  
new hope will bear the Spirit's fruit.  
New bud, new shoot,  
the spring has come, new people are the flowers of it!

## Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Today we pray for the peoples of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. We also pray for the peoples of Morocco and Libya.

Bidding: O God, in and through Jesus Christ,

***Show your mercy.***

***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 forever. Amen.***

## Leaving to Live Out the Week

### Announcements

**Closing Song: We Belong to God** Trad. Mexican, trans. and arr. Iona Community (c) 2002

1. When we are living, we are in the Lord.  
When we are dying, we are in the Lord.  
For in our living, and in our dying,  
we belong to God, we belong to God.

2. Each day allows us to decide for good,  
loving and serving as we know we should;  
in thankful giving, in hopeful living,  
we belong to God, we belong to God.

3. Sometimes we sorrow, other times  
embrace;  
sometimes we question everything we face.  
Yet in our yearning is deeper learning:  
we belong to God, we belong to God.

4. Till earth is over, may we always know  
love never fails us: God has made it so.  
Hard times will prove us, never remove us;  
we belong to God, we belong to God.

**Commission and Blessing**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

*In the name of Christ*

*Amen*

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**Liturgist and Preacher:** Rev'd Dr Geoff Dornan

**Music Coordinator:** Jade McFaul

**Musicians:** Nancy Xu (piano), Phil Knight (vocals)

**Bible Reader/Prayers of Thanksgiving & Confession:** Lorraine Clode

**Flowers:** Heather Hart

**A Commentary to Today's Theme**

In the readings today, we continue the themes of last week: forgiveness and freedom.

The Hebrew reading is arguably the most important reading within the whole of the Hebrew Bible – it is a privilege to read it – concerning the liberation of the Hebrew slaves (*apiru*). Christians often make the error that redemption (salvation) is a spiritual thing, disconnected from material reality. Redemption is always a concrete thing that has to do with the building of the reign of God in the real world: a situation marked by justice, freedom and mercy.

The New Testament readings of Romans and Matthew take up these themes in new ways, arising from their different contexts. For Paul, the challenge is to navigate Christian faith so that it may become a source of life for people, not something that is rule bound, frozen in time. The Gospel, the story of the unmerciful servant, deepens the idea of Jesus' reading of what justice means: liberation through forgiveness, with an economic and political twist: his understanding of the Hebrew idea of the Jubilee: a blueprint for social reform.

In any case both the Hebrew and New Testaments readings concur in their assessment of life's fundamental values.