

WESLEY UNITING CHURCH
NOVEMBER 19TH, 2023
9am LITURGY
PENTECOST 25



The Gathering of God's People

Preparing Ourselves: Meditation with Music

Affirmation of First Nation's People and Celebration of Mutual Acceptance

News and Notices

Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

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 the wellspring of our imagination.

Help us to live as visionaries.

Welcoming Song: Today I Awake 'Slivers of Gold', John Bell and Graham Maule

1. Today I awake and God is before me
At night, as I dreamt, he summoned the day;
for God never sleeps but patterns the morning
with slivers of gold or glory in grey.

2. Today I arise and Christ is beside me.
He walked through the dark to scatter new light.
Yes, Christ is alive, and beckons his people
to hope and to heal, resist and invite.

3. Today I enjoy the Trinity round me,
above and beneath, before and behind;
the Maker, the Son, the Spirit together
they called me to life and call me their friend.

Our Adoration

God the Father, God beyond us, we adore you.
You are the depth of all that is.

We adore you.

God the Son, God beside us, we adore you.
You are the perfection of humanity.

We adore you.

God the Spirit, God around us, we adore you.
You draw us to Jesus and the Father.

We adore you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
God beyond, beside and around us.

We adore you.

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Let us listen to the voice of God in the stillness of the moment.

Silence

Drawn from the Gospel Reading of the Talents

It could be me, standing there with the spade,
the crate of money beside me on the ground,
thoughts as bleak as the late-day twilight,
house lamps all lit, but the darkness around.

Growing within,
where fists clench my soul
and I know by the claws
the cold-boned fear.

A hole
of its own,
shadows of despair.

It's the fear of 'the master' that
brings us to making more,
the fear of failure
that digs traps for faith,
conforming to everyone else's behaviour,
unquestioning, anxious, competitive.
Afraid to stand alone.

But maybe the story does not have to end
there – the one with dirt still on his fingers
standing alone. Courageous, faithful.

In the brightness of his light
we make a stand.
Life prevails.
Amen.

Celebration of Forgiveness

The Peace

Hearing & Thinking Together

The Children: Learning a new song: Advent Chant, Phil Porter & Elaine Kirland ©
1992

Twilight, then darkness,
night falls and candles glow.
Gently surrounding us
a new birth of hope.

Watching, waiting,
awakening a new birth of hope.

Prayer for Understanding

First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, pp.960-961 pew bibles
Daring to Live the future in the present.

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30, p. 807, pew bibles.
Living imaginatively. Challenging the status quo

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, Lord Christ

Thinking together...

Song: *We make our offering as we sing together.*

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Today we pray for the peoples of Timor Leste, Indonesia and the Philippines
We continue to pray for the peoples of Gaza and the West Bank, and Israel.

Sung Prayer Response: In Our Darkness, Jacques Berthier © 1984, Taizé

*In our darkness there is no darkness;
with you, O Lord,
the deepest night is clear as the day.*

Our Father....

Leaving to Live Out the Week

Sending Song: Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

Trad. Jamaican folk song, adapt. Doreen Potter, arr. Alister Spence, words by Fred Kaan © 1952

1. Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy;
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Chorus:

*Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound! (Repeat)*

2. Christ is able to make us one;
at his table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.

Chorus

3. Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God-Immanuel everywhere!

Chorus

Commission and Blessing

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Amen

Liturgist and Preacher: Rev'd Geoff
Music Co-ordinator: Jade McFaul
Musicians: Caitlin Launt and Lorraine Clode (vocals)
Reader: Jessica Cheng | Sonia Di Mezza
Sound: Harold Small
Flowers: Nancy Gibson
Powerpoint: Rev'd Geoff

Notes

The parable of the Talents is well known, but quite possibly seriously misinterpreted. On the face of it, the central idea is one of following Jesus imaginatively, creatively. It has been construed in two ways. The first interpreting "talents" as spiritual gifts, applying them for kingdom purposes. The second, has been a more perilous literal interpretation, particularly in stewardship campaigns. This has led to an indirect and 'perhaps' unintentional outcome of offering legitimation to market philosophy, associating Christianity with entrepreneurship. In recent times these concerns have encouraged a careful analysis and reassessment of the story of the talents, both in terms of exegesis and interpretation. Let's think through these recent ideas!