

Wesley Uniting Church
September 29th, 2024 10.45am
Pentecost 19

The Gathering of God's People

Prelude *Elegy* by Herbert Sumsion (1899-1995)

Introit music: Welsh melody, arr. John Barnard
words: F Pratt Green (1903 – 2000)

What shall our greeting be?
Jesus is Lord!
Sign of our unity,
Jesus is Lord!
May we no more defend
barriers he died to end:
give me your hand, my friend:
one Church, one Lord.

What is our mission here?
One world, one Lord!
He makes his purpose clear:
one world, one Lord!

Spirit of truth descend,
all our confusions end:
give me your hand, my friend:
Jesus is Lord!

He comes to save us now,
Jesus our Lord!
To serve him is to know
life's true reward.
May he our lives amend;
all our betrayals end:
give me your hand, my friend!
One church, one Lord.

Welcome and Lighting of the Community Candle

Call to Worship

Friends, God's wisdom guides us to reflect, yes, but also to act. Will you be a people who act with wisdom?

We will respond to wisdom's call with our actions.

God's wisdom may call you to speak when it's safer to be silent, to resist when it's easier to back down. Will you be a people who act with wisdom?

We will respond to wisdom's guidance wherever it takes us.

God's wisdom may call us to accountability, to recognize and reconcile when we have missed the mark, and to hold others accountable when they do harm. Will you be a people who act with wisdom?

We will respond to wisdom's counsel with humility and grace.

Beloved, this is the time, here and now and in every moment after, to live out God's uncommon wisdom in the world.

**We will follow the path of God's love with wisdom as our guide.
Amen**

Hymn 137 For the beauty of the earth

Prayers of Adoration

Prayers of Confession

Today, O God, we ponder what you say to us through scripture and wonder what has changed. In the story of Esther, we hear about the abuse of power and the exploitation of women. We learn about the planned destruction of foreigners in the land. Each of these issues concern the use of power to take advantage of those who are powerless - major causes still of people being denied the possibility of experiencing lives of dignity and worth.

Forgive us if our actions, or lack of action, have contributed to continuing powerlessness in people's lives.

In today's Gospel reading - the disciples want to make decisions about "who's in" and "who's out" among Jesus' followers. It sounds all too familiar as we often make similar decisions on the basis of people's theology; their sexual preference; their cultural background; their political stance.

Forgive us if our actions, or lack of action, have contributed to whether people feel welcomed into, or excluded from, our fellowship.

Jesus declares that those who are welcoming and caring and do not cause others to stumble, are indeed blessed. We are to be 'salted' with the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, so that we shall not be contaminated by selfishness and self-seeking, by resentment and anger and envy.

Forgive us if our actions, or lack of action, have contributed to whether we are "salty" followers of Jesus or not.

Strengthen us all to witness to our faith
with a freshness that attracts,
a sincerity that convinces,
and an integrity which confirms our allegiance
to Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

James entreats us to “confess our sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that we may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16) We have confessed our sins to one another, and to God, and we believe that prayer is powerful and effective. In that belief, I declare to you, in Jesus Christ we are healed and forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Gloria - 125 v.6

The Peace

The Service of the Word

All age message

Prayer for Understanding

Old Testament Esther 7: 1 – 6, 9 – 10; 9: 20 - 22 page 390

Epistle: James 5: 13- 20 page 983

Hymn 414 There’s a spirit in the air

Gospel: Mark 9: 38 - 50 page 821

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

Anthem composer: LJ White words: St Richard of Chichester (1197 – 1253)

O holy Jesus, most merciful redeemer,
friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly,
and follow thee more nearly. Amen.

Preaching

Hymn 193 God, you are clothed with light

Offering

Organ solo - *Adagio con affetto* by Conrad Schneider (1673-1752)

Prayers of Intercession

The Sending Forth of God's People

Announcements

Hymn 168 For the fruits of all creation, thanks be to God

Commission and Blessing

Postlude *Festive Trumpet Tune* by David German (b. 1954)



Liturgist: Graeme Brown

Preacher: Rev'd Dr Bruce Stevens

Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul

Organist: Dr Lorraine Macknight

Wesley Music Scholars: Phoebe Bourke, Martin Magill, and Evangeline Osborne (choral), Tanya Boag and Anika Chan (violin)

Bible Reader: Jan Tarbotton

Flowers: Ann Sutton