

THE SERVICE OF THE LORD'S DAY
Sunday 24th February – (Epiphany 7)

We acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the traditional people
of this land on which we now meet and celebrate our faith.

Worth Pondering

“If you are searching for sacred knowledge
and not just a palliative for your fears,
then you will train yourself to be a good sceptic”

Welcome

Your presence here enriches all of us and our time of celebration together.

All are welcome here.

**Our church is a safe place for all people to worship, regardless of
age, race, creed, cultural background or gender orientation.**

The Gathering of The People of God:

**Speak, Lord, in the stillness, while we wait on thee
Hushed our hearts to listen in expectancy.**

**Speak, O Blessed Master, in this quiet hour;
Let us see thy face Lord, feel thy touch of power.**

Emily May Grimes 1868-1927

Call to Worship:

Come into this place.

Together we make it a holy place with our every act of celebration.

O light of life,

be kindled again in our hearts as we meet together this morning

to celebrate the joy of human community seeking a wholeness that extends
beyond ourselves.

Hymn: TIS 468

**We are your people: Spirit of grace,
you dare to make us to all our neighbours,
Christ's living voice, hands and face.**

**Joined in community, treasured and fed,
may we discover gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.**

**Rich in diversity, help us to live
closer than neighbours, open to strangers,
able to clash and forgive.**

**Glad of tradition, help us to see
in all life's changing, where you are leading,
where our best efforts should be.**

**Give, as we venture justice and care
(peaceful, resisting, waiting or risking)
wisdom to know when and where.**

**Spirit unite us, make us, by grace,
willing and ready, Christ's living body,
loving the whole human race.**

Brian Arthur Wren 1936–

The Commandments:

Jesus said:

Love one another as I have loved you.

(Silent reflection)

Act of Awareness:

Let go of the expectations placed on you by others—
and those they taught you to place on yourself.

Drop the guilt and the shame,
not to shirk accountability,
but in honest expectation of the possibility of forgiveness.

Let go of the thing you said the other day.

Let go of the thing you dread next week.

Be here, in this moment.

Breathe, here.

We pray:

Loving God, you have gathered us in your community.
You have made a place for us.

Let what we say and do here be real for us and honest to you
and prepare us for the life of the world. May it be so.

Hymn: ate 296

(1981 Dan Schutte SJ)

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.

Whom shall I send? *Here I am, Lord*

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.

Whom shall I send? *Here I am, Lord*

Centring Silence:

Let there be a quiet time among us.

(Silence)

May the silence remind us of the best hours we have known,
and strengthen our resolve to live in that spirit
which gives the better meaning to our lives.

(Silence)

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD:

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest.

⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.

¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have.

¹¹ I will provide for you there--since there are five more years of famine to come--so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.'

¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Luke 6:27-38

²⁷ "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.

³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven;

³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

In the testimony of God's people

We listen for the Word of the Lord

The Word –

Notices, Joys and Concerns shared:

Offering:

As we bring our gifts forward,
may our whole life move forward,
in good faith,
with good feelings,
and with a good belief about the future.

Prayers of the People:

We are people of all ages who enter this space bringing our joys and concerns.

Joys and Concerns shared

Silent Prayer

The Lord's Prayer:

Hymn: TIS 659

1. **The Lord is my Shepherd, and I want to follow,
wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.
Over the mountains, the waters and by-ways,
valleys and highways he's waiting for me.**

*I want to go to meet him there,
to lay myself down in his love.*

*The Lord is my shepherd, and I want to follow,
wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.*

2. **And while on the journey to where we are going,
he promised to be there to help me along.
And over the mountains we'll walk on together,
to know all the wonders he's given to me**

I want to go to meet him there

Brian Kerry Boniwell 1949–

Benediction:

May we go forth from this place
thankful for the life that sustains and renews us,
and open to the grace that surrounds and surprises us.

**May we go forth from this place
with openness and thanksgiving.**

Parting Words:

**As we prepare to leave this sacred space
where we have worshipped together,
let us return to our homes, our school, our work
enlivened and renewed...**

And now we take our leave.

**Before we gather here again:
may each of us bring happiness into another's life;
may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;
may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity.**

**And may we remain together in spirit
til the hour we meet again.**

Words of Blessing:

Go boldly into the future which has been claimed by God.
Know that the God who holds all things will be there,
that Christ who calls us friend will walk beside us,
and the Spirit who makes all things new
will mark our way with light and hope.

Amen. May it be so.

Hymn: TIS 778

**Shalom to you now,
shalom my friends.
May God's full mercy
bless you my friends.
In all your living
and through your loving;
Christ be your shalom.
Christ be your shalom.**

Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942–