



AgeWell Sunday
October 2019

THE SERVICE OF THE LORD'S DAY
AgeWell Sunday – 6th October 2019

Introduction

AgeWell Sunday is held in conjunction with Seniors' Week which is celebrated in October each year. It is a time to celebrate the contribution Seniors have made/continue to make in our communities, within our families, and in the church, our faith family. It is an opportunity to acknowledge ageing, affirming that it is one of the stages in life (to be embraced, not ignored). It can also be a push to consider the practicalities of our worship services: are they 'Senior friendly'? (seating, timing, hearing aids, warmth etc).

Worth Pondering

"If we can go to special places, built by humans, which are designated as sacred, surely we can go to special places, shaped naturally, which are recognized as sacred..."

There is a strong monotheistic tradition of cutting down the sacred groves. What we need is to realise that to have a sense of sacred place is not tree worship...

but is rather the acknowledgement of the awesome, and the overriding and the overwhelming" *(Jerome Stone)*

Call to Worship:

At this time, and in this place, and with those around us, let us worship God. Through our lives, we celebrate life.

We praise God for the gift of life.

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily live for you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Greeting:

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Welcome and Introduction

Good morning everyone, and welcome to worship today.

In Uniting Churches, today is AgeWell Sunday. Today we are reflecting on what it means to be a faith community of people who are continually ageing.

We are all together in this ageing transition process; we are all slightly older than we were at breakfast time this morning.

Some of us are experiencing faster ageing transitions than others, which can be uncomfortable, disorienting and hard to accept. This has implications in our church community for education, planning and pastoral care. As the people of Jesus Christ, we need to consider and prepare as a church community for the life-long transition called ageing.

Also today in Uniting Churches across Victoria & Tasmania, we acknowledge and pray for the work of Uniting AgeWell, the aged care agency of the Uniting Church in this Synod.

HYMN: TIS 53

**Come, sing praises to the Lord above,
rock of our salvation, God of love;
with delight into God's presence move,
for the Lord our God is king!**

*God is king above the mountains high
the ocean deep, the land and sky;
mighty continents and islands lie
within the hollow of God's hand.*

**Come to worship him and bow the knee,
praise our shepherd with humility;
humble creatures in his hand are we
sing the praise of God the king!**

God is king above the mountains high

**Hear the story of God's people now,
you with stubborn hearts who will not bow;
learn what happened long ago and how
God can show you who is king.**

God is king above the mountains high

**Forty years God kept the prize away,
made them wander till they would obey,
exiled all of them until the day
they would honour God as king.**

God is king above the mountains high

Prayers of Adoration:

As the morning sun falls on tiled rooftops and spreads warmth in community,
my whole being rises to give praise; my every fibre rejoices in God.

Blessed be your name, Giver of sunlight.

Blessed be your name, Author of Life.

Glory be to you, Lord of our city.

Glory be to you, Renewer of life. Amen

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

We give thanks, O God, for a society where people can look forward to long lives
for the wisdom of older people, for their faith and experience,
for the sense that older people give us of family, tradition and identity,
for the leadership they offer, for the things they teach,
and all the ways in which they contribute to our families, our community and our
church.

We give thanks, O God, for the blessings of life, and our experience of its
different seasons,
for friends, family, children and grandchildren, for the experiences and
opportunities of our lives,
for our survival through struggles and griefs,
for your presence throughout our lives and for the hope of the life to come. .

Amen.

Prayers of Confession:

Gracious God, we know that there is a time to be born, a time to grow old and a
time to die.

We know that ageing is a part of life.

Yet sometimes we forget.

Sometimes we fail to embrace the life of our older people.

We confess that we sometimes do not hear
the voices of our older people; their needs and concerns.

In our busy daily life, sometimes we just don't stop and listen.

Forgive us when we close our ears to our older people.

We confess that we sometimes become reluctant
to share precious resources of life with our older people.

In this competitive world, too often our priorities go
to where we readily see new life, youth and the promise of worldly success.

**Forgive us when we participate in the unjust allocation
of resources.**

We confess that many Indigenous Australians never know old age, or become old before their time, through the struggles in their lives.

Forgive us when we fail to notice and act.

Loving God, the Lord of Life, bring to us the awareness that our life depends on each other.

We are called to uphold each other, especially those who are weak, frail and vulnerable.

Fill us with your compassion, love and grace,
the grace that walks with us, embracing even our death.

In the name of Christ,

Amen

The Peace –

BIBLE READINGS:

From the World Around us: “The Longing of Nature”

John O’Donohue. Eternal Echoes/14-15.

Celtic spirituality reminds us that we do not live simply in the thoughts, feelings or relationships.

We belong on the earth.

The rhythm of the clay and its seasons sings within our hearts.

The sun warms the clay and fosters life.

The moon blesses the night.

In the uncluttered world of Celtic spirituality there is a clear view of the sacrament of nature as it brings forth visible presence.

The Celts worshipped in groves in nature and attended to the silent divinity of wild places.

Certain wells, trees, animals and birds were sacred to them.

Where and what a people worship always offers a clue to where they understand the source of life to be.

Most of our experience of religion happens within the walled frame of church or temple.

Our God is approached through thought. word and ritual.

The Celts had no walls around their worship.

Being in nature was already to be in the Divine Presence.

Nature was the theatre of the diverse drama trudes of the Divine Imagination.

This freedom is beautifully echoed in the lyric poem:

Ah blackbird it is well for you,

Wherever in the thicket you nest,

Hermit that sounds no bell,

Sweet, soft fairylike is your note. (Trans. Myles Dillion)

The contemplative presence of nature is not ostentatious or cluttered by thought.

Its majesty and elegance drift into voice in the single, subtle note of the blackbird.

GOSPEL: Luke 17:5-10 (*Inclusive Text*)

The apostles said to Jesus, "Increase our faith."

Jesus replied,

"Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

"Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say when the servant returned from the fields,

'Come and have your meal immediately'?

"Would you not be more likely to say,

'Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards'?

"Must you be grateful to the servant for doing your bidding?

So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say,

'We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty.'"

HYMN: TIS 442

1. **All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.**
2. **He bids us build each other up;
and gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.**
3. **The gift which he on one bestows
we all delight to prove;
the grace through every vessel flows,
in purest streams of love.**
4. **Even now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree;
concentred all, through Jesus' name,
in perfect harmony.**

5. **We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable.**
6. **And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet.**

Charles Wesley 1707-88

The WORD –

HYMN: TIS 156

1. **Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing
fresh from the word.**
2. **Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
sprung from completeness
where his feet pass**
3. **Mine is the sunlight;
mine is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day.**

4. **Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing
fresh from the word.**

E.Farjeon

OFFERING: Your freewill offering to the work of the extension of God's kingdom will now be received.

Offertory Prayer: We dedicate this money (and these gifts), Lord, for the work of your church, asking that you use all that we have, and all that we are, in your service.

Amen.

NOTICES, News, Joys and Concerns:

Prayers of the People:

Almighty God,

We hold before you the older people of the world.

We thank you for the blessings which have come to us through those who have gained knowledge and wisdom through the experiences of life.

We are grateful for their guidance, counsel, and leadership.

We pray that you will continue to bless the ill in our Uniting AgeWell communities and everywhere.

Lord of all ages

Hear our prayer

May Australia be a community of mutual respect and tolerance, compassion and patience.

May we dare to dream of community where youth and age work and live side by side with a mutuality which embraces life in its entirety.

Lord of all ages

Hear our prayer

In gratitude we bring before you all community services and agencies and their staff involved in caring for us as we grow older.

We ask that they will know their kindness renewed and find fulfilment in their work.

We especially pray for our Church's Uniting AgeWell services; for senior staff, managers, care staff, chaplains and volunteers, as they seek to give excellence of care for all older people in their living and their dying. Lord of all ages

Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

HOLY COMMUNION:

Invitation

Friends, this is the table of the Lord and he calls us to this sacred feast. Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak; come, not because of any goodness of your own, but because you need mercy and help; come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more; come, because he loves you and gave himself for you. Lift up your hearts and minds above your cares and fears and let this bread and wine be to you the sign and pledge of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN: TIS 538

1. **Feed us now, Bread of life,
in this holy meal;
let us know your love anew:
we hunger for you.
Feed us now, Bread of life,
come and live within;
let your peace be ours today,
Lord Jesus, we pray.**

2. **Piece of bread, cup of wine:
Lord, this food is good:
love and mercy come to us
your promise we trust.
Piece of bread, cup of wine:
who can understand
how his mercy works in these?
Yet, Lord, we believe.**

3. **God is here, O so near,
nearer than our thoughts.
Stay with us where'er we go;
Lord, help us to grow.
God is here, O so near,
in this heaven's meal.
May we always feed on you -
on the bread that is true.**

Robin Mann 1949–

Prayer of Preparation:

**Almighty God, you know us better than we know ourselves.
Help us to open ourselves to hear your word,
that we might better love and serve you and each other,
through Christ our Lord. Amen**

A time of silence

Jesus took bread; when he had given thanks, he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said:

This is my body which is given for you; eat this and remember me.

After supper he took the cup; when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said: This is the new covenant poured out for all; as often as you drink it remember me.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:

The God of glory be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts in thanksgiving.

We lift them towards God.

Let us offer our thanks to God.

It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

It is right that we give you our thanks and praise, O God, creator of all things. You revealed your glory in creation, in the way you lovingly formed us in your image and entrusted us with the task of revealing your glory in the world. When we failed and turned from your ways, you did not abandon us but spoke to us through the prophets.

You shaped the conviction in the prophets that your people would respond to the crushed and broken of the world and give them shelter and comfort, like lambs by a shepherd; that the oppressed of the world would be liberated by loving acts towards them.

And so, with all the company of heaven and earth we praise your holy name singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed are you O God, and forever blessed are the people of this world since you chose to break into our history in the person of Jesus.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be for us the life of Christ and that we may make that life visible through our serving as Jesus served, comforting as Jesus comforted, and loving as Jesus loved.

Amen

Breaking Bread:

The bread we break
and the cup we now take
are a sharing in the life of Christ.

Distribution:

Prayer After Communion:

Gracious God, we give you thanks for this holy meal shared in the Spirit together. Strengthened and refreshed, we go from here prepared to live revealing your image in the world so that love and faithfulness meet together and righteousness and peace kiss.

Amen

Closing SONG: TIS 779

**May the feet of God walk with you,
and God's hand hold you tight,
May the eye of God rest on you,
and God's ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and God's breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and God's love bring you home.**

Aubrey Podlich 1946-

Word of Mission:

May the Lord of all generations, whose love spans our years, keep us ever mindful of the wonderful gift of life; childhood to fulfilment of age, that we so rejoice in each other, that we live our days with respect, compassion and mutual responsibility; to the glory of Christ.

BENEDICTION:

Go, blessed with
the great love of God,
the presence and peace of Jesus Christ
and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

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–