



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

<https://woden-valley.uca.org.au/>

10 a.m. Worship 1st August 2021



International Day of the Tree

Leader: Joan Palmer
Readers: Libby Coates Piers Booth
Music: Helen Swan, Anne Mann
Welcomers: Iris Elgueta Janet Kay

Jesus practiced radical inclusion! All are welcome here.

We Gather as People of God

The Gong is sounded three times

Light the Community Candle

Prelude Music

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Call to worship

L. We have gathered here this morning to worship God.

P. **We have come seeking comfort, inspiration, insight and community.**

L. We have come to open ourselves to the power of God's presence in our midst.

P. **We have come to offer up the seasons and the turnings of our lives, and to see God's help in our learning and in our growing.** (Mary Ann Neevel from Bread for the Journey)

Hymn: Morning Has Broken Tis 156 *People stand as they are able*

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Welcome & Introduction

Prayer - together

Gracious God, we thank you for all the good things with which you fill out lives, but most of all for the vision peace and justice and freedom in Christ that draws us into the future.

May we be your people in the world, in word and deed, in spirit and in truth.

Grant that we may not be play-actors, but people who show we truly care, like Jesus Christ, whose life was love. Amen

Passing the Peace

The Peace of God be with you.

Response: And also with you.

Please share a sign of peace with those around you bearing in mind Covid restrictions

Hymn Joyful, Joyful *People stand as they are able*
Henry Van Dyke Tune: Ode to Joy, TIS 152

Verse 1

Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, God of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before
you
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of fear and
sadness,
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Give of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

Verse 2

All your works with joy surround
you,
Earth and heav'n reflect your rays.
Stars and planets sing around you,
Centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and
mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain
Call to praise God joyfully.

Verse 3

You are giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest.
God our centre, Christ our brother,
All are yours who live in love;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to your joy above,

We Reflect on the Word for our time

Readings from the Bible and the World Around Us

Reading 1 *Daniel 4 : 10-12*

The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

.....and from *Revelation 22:2*

Down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the **tree** of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the **tree** are for the healing of the nations.

Reading 2 *Gum Tree Dreaming Adele Coombs from Barefoot Dreaming 1992*

Twisted and gnarled with hardship,
grandeur out of dry ground.
Rugged symbol of our struggle,
familiar with grief and joy.

Rough-smooth arms reaching upward, lifting
boughs of fragrance, soft explosions of flower,
shedding strips of yourself,
offerings for the earth

Wounded and scarred from a myriad creatures
who take succour from the life-giving sap
Oozing from your beating heart ——
bleeding Life-giver.

Laden with healing in your branches,
your arms.

Crushed leaves, sweet scent and touch
of life and strength in my hands,
bruised healer.

Guardian of the rainforest,
sapling torn by wind and rain,
reborn of the bushfire,
revive me again.

Touch the earth lightly TiS 668

1. Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder,
ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

3. Let there be greening,
birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden,
hope in God's children.
regeneration that peace will complete

Reading 3 Extract from 'The Hidden Life of Trees' Peter Wohlleben 2015

Trees connect to each other through their root system and it appears that nutrient exchange and helping neighbours in times of need is the rule and this leads to the conclusion that forests are superorganisms with interconnections much like ant colonies.

But why are trees such social beings? Why do they share food with their own species and sometimes even go so far as nourish their competitors? The reasons are the same as human communities: there are advantages to working together. A tree is not a forest. On its own, a tree cannot establish a consistent local climate. It is at the mercy of wind and weather. But together, many trees create an ecosystem that moderates extremes of heat and cold, stores a great deal of water, and generates a great deal of humidity. In this perfected environment, trees can live to be very old. To get to this point the community must remain intact no matter what. If every tree were looking out for only itself, then quite a few of them would never reach old age. Regular fatalities would result in many large gaps in the tree canopy, which would make it easier for storms to get inside the forest and uproot more trees. The heat of summer would reach the forest floor and dry it out. Every tree would suffer.

Every tree therefore is valuable to the community and worth keeping around for as long as possible. And that is why even sick individuals are supported and nourished until they recover. Next time, perhaps it will be the other way round and the supporting tree might need assistance. Every tree is a member of this community.

For the word of God in Scripture, For the word of God in poetry, For the word of God in song
.....**Thanks be to God**

Reflection

Music for Reflection

We Respond to the Word

Hymn We Are Many, We Are One *People stand as they are able*

Colin Gibson Tune: Hamilton

Verse 1

We are many, we are one,
and the work of Christ is done
when we learn to live in true community,
as the stars that fill the night,
as a flock of birds in flight,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine;
as the branches of a tree,
as the waves upon the sea,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine.

Verse 2

All division is made whole
when we honour every soul,
find the life of God in every you and me,
as the fingers of a hand,
as the grains that form the sand,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine;
as the threads upon a loom,
as a field of flowers in bloom,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine.

Verse 3

We will join creation's song,
make a world where all belong,
build as one in peace and loving harmony,
as the voices of a choir,
as the flames within a fire,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine,
as the snowflakes in the snow,
as the colours of a bow,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine.

Meditative Prayer for ourselves and others

The care candle is lit

Offerings

There are many gifts for which we are thankful today.....

We give thanks for the monetary gifts, through our collection plate or electronically.

We give thanks for faith and trust, hope and patience, which we bring with our offering today. Amen

We Go out into the World

Hymn You Shall Go Out with Joy X2

Steffi Geiser Rubin Tune: Trees of the Field, TIS 755

You shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace,
And the mountains and the hills shall break forth in singing.
There'll be shouts of joy, and the trees of the field shall clap,
shall clap their hands.

And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
And you'll go out with joy.

Blessing - To each other

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the gentle night to you
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you
Deep peace of Christ, the light of the world to you

The Candles are extinguished

Postlude: *a time for quiet reflection - please remain seated*

'This week' at Woden Valley Uniting Church

Notices

Significant birthdays, anniversaries or events (eg: decade birthdays)

Fellowship

Morning tea is now served. You are invited to share in the time of fellowship.

References for OOS: Image: istockphoto; CCLI licence#546647; <https://www.thesoulmedic.com/the-spiritual-power-of-trees/>; <https://gratefulness.org/grateful-living/the-spiritual-strength-of-trees/>; <https://mindful.stanford.edu/2015/04/tree-meditation/>