



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

<http://www.woden-valley.uca.org.au/>

Jesus practised radical inclusion! All are welcome here.

Sunday 17 March 2024

Lent 5: Transformation

Leader: Janet Kay

Reader: Merrelin Robbins

Reflection: John Schmidt

Music: Brendan O'Loughlin

We Gather as People of God

The Gong is struck three times. We hold silence. We listen to the gong, calling us to gather, calling us to be present.

Prelude music

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Call to Worship

Lighting of the candle

The light of existence flows through the whole universe, from distant galaxy, to each life form on our earth. We light this candle as symbol of the Christ spirit within us all, and within our gathering.

The community candle is lit.

Opening Sentences

We gather to worship and to be present to God:

source, essence, and aim of all things, spirit that enlivens all beings.

Let us follow the way of Jesus:

who found God in himself and shared a way for others

to find God in themselves.

Let us be guided by the leadings of the love we find in him:

to be compassionate to all beings, to live and serve in community with others,

to ask for and offer forgiveness. Amen

SONG TIS 52 Let us sing to the God of salvation

People stand as they are able, to sing

Welcome

Act of Awareness

Each morning brings a newness that we need but step into.

It can wash us,
lift us,
heal us,
hold us
just as each of us has need.
May we be open to the power that lies dormant within us.
May we be full with a confidence in our own strength.
May we move from the routines that we follow
to the fullness of life that we might live (*G Vosper*).

The Peace

Leader: May a heart of peace rest within you.

And also with you.

You are invited to share the peace of God with your neighbours, in whatever way is comfortable for you.

Lent Ritual

The theme for this year is Metanoia. It is about creating a new mindset - thinking new thoughts and using Lent to see things differently - in line with the original meaning of the Greek word metanoia .

Over the centuries this word has been translated as 'repent'. Often the word 'repent' is used during Lent, particularly with a negative connotation. However, as we have been reminded in previous weeks, a better translation of the Greek word 'metanoia' is 'to think new thoughts' - to see things differently, - to have an open mind, leading to our transformation.

So Lent is not about giving up something or regretting. It's about uncovering the blindness in our perception and being open to what others have to share with us. Ironically, when we give up our narrow perspectives, a whole new world is opened to us and life becomes expansive and joyful.

The Cairn represents our journey towards Easter, a signpost for the way. We add the fourth stone, as a reminder of being on this journey, and to open our eyes, ears and minds, leading to our transformation. (A new stone is added)

Let us join in the responses:

'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near, open your mind and believe in the good news'.
(Mark 1:15)

This is the time of fulfillment.

Metanoia: think new thoughts

The Kingdom of God is near

Metanoia: see things differently

Peace through justice is near

Metanoia: open your mind

Let us celebrate the good news!

Let us join together singing verse 5 of TIS 681

Lord, let me love, love more and more:
Love the loveless and the fragile,
help them be what they can be,
Love the way that I would like them to be
looking after me,
For to know you is to love them
and be free;
And in love Jesus Christ will be found.
Lord, let me love.

Poem: Open Hands

We are born with the ability
 to wrap our fingers around another,
 to hold tight to what we know.
 Maybe that's where the instinct comes from— this clinging,
 this sinking,
 this holding on.
 From the very beginning
 we've known how to hold tight.
 So I pray:
 open up my hands.
 Uncurl my fingers
 one by one.
 Loosen the grip
 that I hold unyielding.
 Remind me that birds must fly
 and children must grow
 and leaves must fall.
 And even though
 we are born with the ability
 to hold tight,
 we can learn how to love
 with open hands.

Poem by Rev. Sarah A. Speed / A Sanctified Art LLC / sanctifiedart.org

Song TiS 667 How shall I sing to God.

People stand as they are able, to sing

We Reflect on the Word for our Time

Prayer before the readings:

Reader: Into this day will break moments of awareness,
 tiny shards of light that illumine
 the whole reality of existence.

May these readings be such a moment

and may we be blessed by their gift. *(Gretta Vosper - adapted)*

Psalms 51:1-12

(Music David Isele in Psalms for All Seasons 51G)

Cantor: What does the Lord require?

Response: **The sacrifice you accept O God
 is a humble spirit.**

Jer. 31: 31-34

John 12: 20-33

Reflection**We Respond to the Word**

Song: TiS 607 Make me a channel of your peace

People stand as they are able, to sing

Offering Your offering will now be received.

Sung offering prayer: TiS 774 For the life that you have given

Remain seated.

Prayers of the People *The Care Candle is lit.*

Abba Prayer

**God – heart of the world, revealed through every aspect of creation,
understood through our awareness.**

**May we honour the holiness of creation, and act accordingly
so that your love is reflected in the way we live.**

**May we always be thankful for the food we eat
and the friends we have.**

**May we forgive those who transgress against us
and be forgiven for our own transgressions.
In the freedom of love may we live as your heartbeat
And not be compromised by hesitation.**

**Through our freedom, may your justice
be seen and heard and experienced
forever and ever. Amen** *(Rev Sherri Weinberg)*

Song TIS 421 Where the Spirit is, there's freedom

People stand as they are able, to sing

Words of Mission

Let us embrace the wonder of this coming week
with expectation and imagination,
open to thinking new thoughts and seeing things differently.

Blessing

Postlude . Candles are extinguished.

'This week' at Woden Valley Uniting Church

Joys and concerns; Church notices; significant birthdays, anniversaries & events

Gretta Vosper, *Holy Breath* (Centre for Progressive Religious Thought, Brisbane, 2010)
Songs from Together in Song, CCLI Licence 546647