

WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH



‘Dare to question and to act!’

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

Pentecost 4, 6th July, 2025



The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few (Luke 10:2)

(‘The Harvest’, Vincent van Gogh, 1888)

WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD

The gong sounds to settle us for worship

Prelude

Lighting the community candle

As light comes from this candle, may the light of Jesus Christ come to us and brighten our way. May the word of Christ bring life into the darkness of this world, and also to us as we gather in worship today and await his coming to make all things new. **Amen**

Acknowledgement of first peoples

For this Land in which we live, we give thanks! For the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples, who first cared for this site upon which we worship, we give thanks! We honour their sacred stories, and pledge ourselves to work together for the restoration of the land and for reconciliation among all her peoples.

Call to worship

Holy God, you come among us.

You are present here and we worship you.

You are present in the beauty of the world.

You are present in our relationships with others.

As we celebrate in worship today grant us your peace,

and through our worship help us to light up the faces of others, both near and far away. Amen

Hymn: Here in this place new light is shining, TiS 474, (Marty Haugen)

Welcome and introduction

A centring prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for bringing us together today and surrounding us in the fellowship of song, prayer and reflection on your word. Where there is anxiety,

grant us your calm.

Where there is doubt,

grant us your assurance.

Where there is worry,

grant us your peace.

Remove the shackles so that we may hear you, follow you, and go out into the world rejoicing, knowing that you are always with us and will travel with us through all the difficulties and joys of life. **Amen**

WE RECEIVE THE WORD FOR OUR TIME

A responsive reading based on Psalm 30 – ‘Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness’ (psalm for the day, paraphrased by Moira Laidlaw)

We will praise you, O God, for you have lifted us up
and have given our adversaries no cause to rejoice.
Hearing our cries for help, you have healed us;
bringing us from the depths of despair you have restored our lives.

**Let all faithful people give thanks,
and praise God's holy name.**

For your anger, O God, lasts but a moment,
while your graciousness lasts a lifetime.

**Weeping lingers for a night,
but joy comes with the morning.**

You have transformed our lives from mourning to joy,
 making our spirits dance and our hearts sing.
 May our praise never be silenced as we give thanks,
 and praise God for ever and ever. **Amen**

Reading from Luke 10:1-20

The Mission of the Seventy-Two (vv 1-12)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Woes to the Unrepentant Cities of Galilee (vv 13-16)

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Indeed, at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.

“Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

The Return of the Seventy-Two (vv 17-20)

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. Indeed, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

For the Word of God in Scripture; for the Word of God among us; for the Word of God within us:

Thanks be to God.

Reflection on the reading

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

We respond to the reflection with the passing of the peace

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you;
and also with you.

A reflection prayer (by Sarah Agnew, *Pray the Story*, sarahagnew.com)

When we go into the world, O God,
may we not go alone;
with sisters and brothers, with friends,
may we be companions for each other;
may we walk together, talk together,
sing songs and pray and listen,
listen to the story of you, and your love
for all that lives; listen to our
stories telling of encounters with the Divine;
listen in the silence for your still assurance.
When we go into the world, O God,
may we go free of burdens;
may we carry ourselves and the gifts
we have received, with humble confidence;
may we leave behind the extra bags,
the riches of comfort and privilege –
so that we may enter each new place
open to receive what is offered,
to learn more than to teach, to listen
more than we speak, to honour what, and who, we find.
When we go into the world, O God,
may we go free of fear:
may the peace we carry – your peace –
run deep enough to warm our unsheltered nights,
protect us when our peace is rejected,
settle us where we land,
give us joy to eat and drink with friends
who once to us were strangers;
may your peace be the wick for love, O God,
bringing light as we go into the world. Amen.

Hymn: Touch the earth lightly, TiS 668, (Shirley Murray)

Offering

In the offering of our gifts, as well as the living of our days, may we not grow weary of doing what is right, but commit to speaking up for the voiceless, healing the broken, feeding the hungry, and all those mercies which are such a part of your heart and hopes for all your children. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. (Thom Shuman)

Lighting the care candle

As we light this candle, we ask God to set our hearts on fire with love for our neighbours and the world, so that all may experience the wonder of God's care. **Amen**

Prayers of the people, followed by the traditional Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

Song: Sent by the Lord am I, Spanish words by José Aguiar; translated by Jorge Maldonado; sung to a traditional Nicaraguan melody (Youtube Christian Aid Autumn Appeal Song, 2020)

Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.
Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.

The angels cannot change
a world of hurt and pain
into a world of love,
of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do,
to set it really free.
Oh, help me to obey;
help me to do your will.

Closing prayer

Jesus has said: “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few”. Though, like the seventy-two, we might feel we are sent as lambs in the midst of wolves, let us go out with joy, for we know that we walk with Jesus. Sent by the Lord are we. The task is ours to do. May we travel with our Lord Jesus lightly, graciously offering and receiving hospitality, bringing messages of peace, and knowing that the kingdom of God is near. **Amen**

Extinguishing the candles

And as we extinguish our candles, we know that the light of the risen Christ continues to shine through the living of our lives.

Postlude

Notices; celebrations; tea and coffee

Today's service

Leader: Roger Mauldon

Reader and prayers: Willa Mauldon

Music: Joan Pratt

Technical: Lachlan Facchini and Melissa Sinn (Curtin),
Edis Elgueta (Goodwin)