



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

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

1 February 2026

(4th Sunday between Epiphany and Lent)

A NEW YEAR – RENEWING OUR COVENANT WITH GOD

Jesus practised radical inclusion! All are welcome here.

We Gather as People of God

Prelude Music

The Gong is sounded three times

Call to worship

Come, let us worship God,
who has called us to be a holy people,
and has established an everlasting covenant
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We come in spirit and in truth.

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Lighting of the candle

The candle is lit.

Song God has spoken by his prophets TiS 158

People stand as they are able, to sing

Welcome and introduction

Prayers of invocation and Confession

Following the prayer of confession:

The Holy Spirit moves in love towards us,
with generous gifts for life,
flowing through all that we are, in healing and grace.

We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

The Peace

The peace of God be always with you.

And also with you.

You are invited to share the peace of God with your neighbours

Song: The Power of Love Tune: Darvall (TiS 187) *(George Stuart)*

Not by the love of power, but through the power of love, Not by almighty force from some celestial source But deep inside God does reside; And prompts within to be our guide.	Not by the love of power, but through the power of love, Not with oppressive law demanding more and more, Our inner voice can guide our choice; And in God's love we can rejoice.
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We reflect on the Word for our time

Prayer before the readings:

May we open ourselves to the seeds of wisdom
that lie dormant in these readings.

And may our minds be fertile soil, in which it may grow strong and true.

Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Song: What does the Lord require of you? TiS 751

1 Corinthians 1: 18-31

The message about the cross sounds like a lot of mindless cock-and-bull to those who have thrown their lot in with this present world order and are going down with the ship. But to those of us who are being saved from that, it is nothing less than the power of God! God spoke about this in the Scriptures:

“I will expose the brilliant insights of your experts
and the wise counsel of your gurus;
I will expose them for what they really are,
a load of codswallop!”

So where are the intellectuals now? Where are the religious experts? Where are those who have an answer for everything? What have they got to show for all their cleverness now that God has turned all the conventional wisdom on its head and made it look foolish? Seeing that no amount of human cleverness had ever woken anybody up to God's ways, God made the wise decision to use

something that seemed utterly foolish to everyone — our preaching! — to rescue those who would trust the message. Most people want something more than this. Those with a religious world view demand to see miraculous signs to prove that it is from God. Those with a modern rational world view insist that it should have to prove its intellectual credibility. But what we are preaching is a Messiah who was strung up and killed. The religious people find this unthinkable, and the intellectuals regard it as primitive nonsense; but to those who have heard the call of God, whatever their background, it is the ultimate good news of God's chosen one — as miraculous and profound as one could ever wish for! When it's all said and done, the sum total of the human race's intellectual achievements don't even begin to stack up against the *foolishness* of God; and the combined force of all the world's powers is puny in comparison to the *weakness* of God.

Sisters and brothers, you don't have to look any further than your own experience of God's call to see the truth of this. Not many of you were academic hot-shots. Not many of you were movers and shakers in the corridors of power. Not many of you were feted as celebrities. But God chose you! God chose those who were dismissed as fools to expose the bankruptcy of the world's accepted wisdom. God chose those who were weak and vulnerable in the world to show up the corruption of those who wield power. God consistently chooses what is despised as the dregs by the world, things which are seen as worthless, to expose the worthlessness of things which are seen as being 'it and a bit'. Because of this, no one who is accepted into God's presence has any grounds for blowing their own trumpet. God and God alone is the source of the life you share in union with the Messiah, Jesus. It is only in Jesus that we have been able to tap into God's wisdom. And it is only in Jesus that our lives have been put back on track, given a clean bill of health, and set on the path to wholeness. For this reason, the scriptures make sense to us when they say:

"If you are going to blow your trumpet about something,
blow it about the Lord!" ©2002 Nathan Nettleton LaughingBird.net

Contemporary Word

Music for Reflection

We Respond to the Word

Song Lord Jesus, we belong to you, TiS 686, vv 1-2, 6-7

People stand as they are able, to sing

Offerings

Let us pray together:

**Generous God,
creator and giver of life;
through your goodness
we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use
the offerings of our hearts and our hands
for your glory
and the service of your realm. (Jeff Shrowder)**

Care Candle/Prayers of the People

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

(silence)

We name in our hearts: joys and celebrations; griefs and concerns.

And finally we pray for ourselves.

(silence)

Listening Response:

In caring for one another

May we be untiring.

In sheltering one another

May we be strong.

In holding one another

May we be tender.

And so we take a flame and light our Care Candle,

The Care Candle is lit

for ourselves, and for those named or remembered.

In all our joys and our concerns, may we be ever mindful
of the Sacred Presence among us,
and see the new possibilities of the now. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Divine Source of Love and Life,

Holy is your unspeakable name.

**May your Way of Love resound through earth,
heaven in our midst.**

All we need to live and thrive

we receive from you, Creator;

forgive us when we turn away,

as we forgive each other.

Keep us on the path of Wisdom,

away from wicked tyranny;

Spirit, ever breathe through us,

empower us with hope.

**From you, through you and in you,
are all things, now and always;
to you be all honour and praise. Amen.**

The Covenant

Introduction

In the Old Covenant,
God chose Israel as his people
and gave them the gift of the Law.
In the New Covenant,
he made the gift of his Son Jesus Christ,
who fulfils the Law for us.
We stand within the New Covenant
and we bear the name of Christ.

. . . .

Today we meet, as generations before us have met,
to renew that which bound them and now binds us to God.

The people renewing their covenant stand.

The leader continues:

Beloved in Christ,
let us again claim this covenant for ourselves,
and take the yoke of Christ upon us.

To take this yoke upon us means that we are content
that he appoint us our place and work,
and that he himself be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations
and material interests;
others are contrary to both.
In some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ
except by denying ourselves.
Yet the power to do all these things
is given us in Christ, who strengthens us.
Therefore let us make this covenant with God our own,
trusting in the eternal promises
and relying on divine grace.

The Covenant Prayer

Let us pray:

Lord God,
in baptism, you brought us into union with Christ
who fulfils your gracious covenant;
So with joy
we take upon ourselves the yoke of obedience,
and commit ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.

(silence)

The leader says:

I am no longer my own, but yours.

The leader and people say together:

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you or laid aside for you;
exalted for you or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty;
let me have all things, let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours,
to the glory and praise of your name.
Amen.

The people sit

Music for Reflection

Song TiS 779 May the feet of God walk with you

We return into the World

Blessing

The Community Candle is extinguished

Postlude (a time for quiet reflection – please remain seated)

'This week' at Woden Valley Uniting Church

You are invited to share in the time of fellowship.

Leader: Janet Kay

Reader: David Vickers

Music: Joan Pratt

References: Covenant Service Introduction and Prayers: *Uniting in Worship 2*; Prayer before the readings, and the Listening response in Prayers of the People: Gretta Vosper, *Another Breath*; Lord's Prayer: Sarah Agnew, *Pray the Story*; CCLI licence #546647