

## Leura Uniting Church

Sunday 10 May 2020



## Happy Mother's Day

328

### Gathering of the People of God

*[As we come to our time of worship you may like to prepare a space where you can be peaceful and focus on being accompanied into the holy presence of God.]*

*You might like to light a candle. Be comfortable and warm wherever you are sitting.*

*I have included YouTube links for the hymns. If you want to listen to the hymns or sing along with music, click on the link, or copy and paste it in your internet page.*

*Remember you are not alone. You are in God's presence and have those whom you love and love you in your heart.]*

### Call to Worship

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:98-10 NIV

### Prayer of Adoration

[Rev Richard Fairchild]

O God, we thank you and praise you for this day and for the opportunity you have given us in this good land to worship you without fear.

Most Holy God, we pray that you would be with us in this time of praise and prayer and that through the ministry of your Holy Spirit you would form the minds of your faithful people into a single will.

Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that, amid all the changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joy is found and that our every action might show forth the light of your Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, he who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen**

**Song      Crown Him with many crowns**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuMh\\_ep\\_t-Js](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuMh_ep_t-Js)

1. Crown Him with many crowns,  
the Lamb upon his throne,  
hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns  
all music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless king  
through all eternity.

2. Crown him the Lord of life,  
Who triumphed o'er the grave,  
and rose victorious in the strife  
for those he came to save:  
his glories now we sing  
who died, and rose on high;  
who died eternal life to bring,  
and lives that death may die.

3. Crown Him the Lord of Love.  
behold His hands and side,  
those wounds, yet visible above,  
in beauty glorified.  
No angel in the sky  
can fully bear that sight,  
but downward bends his wondering eye  
at mysteries so bright!

Crown Him the Lord of years,  
the Potentate of time,  
Creator of the rolling spheres,  
ineffably sublime.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail!  
for Thou has died for me;  
thy praise and glory shall not fail  
throughout eternity.

George Job Elvey 1816-93  
Matthew Bridges 1800-94  
Godfrey Thring 1823-1903  
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**Prayer of Confession**

[Lectionary Generated Liturgy.]

Lord Jesus Christ, you show us the way - the risky way that you took. The way which challenges all that is evil and destructive. We confess that too often we choose the easy and non-threatening way which allows evil to triumph and denies people the opportunity to live an abundant life.

***Forgive us when we lose direction and so fail to follow your way.***

Lord Jesus Christ, you speak the word of truth which brings good news to the poor, freedom to those who are oppressed and enslaved, and healing to those whose lives lack wholeness. We confess that too often our minds are swayed by the media's 'truth' that can be often so contrary to the gospel.

***Forgive us when our lives deny the truth of your words and your deeds.***

Lord Jesus Christ, you give us the gift of life - emptying yourself of all self-serving power in order to empower others with your beautiful life and selfless love.

We confess that we like to use power to further our own purposes, even if – sadly - it contributes to the powerlessness of others.

***Forgive us, Lord, when our desire for power and status is stronger than our desire to make your life visible through us.***

Lord Jesus Christ, remind us that...

the landscape of God's grace becomes clearer when we follow your way.  
the sound of God's voice is easier to hear when our lives speak your truth  
the heartbeat of God's love throbs within us when our lives bear witness to your life.

**Amen**

**Assurance of Forgiveness:**

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you might proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." 1 Peter 2: 9,10.

I declare to you, our sins are forgiven:

***Thanks be to God!***

**Readings:**

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

**Sermon****We are the chosen people!**

Today is Mother's Day, a day when we remember our mothers, and as Denise reminded us last week, fathers as well. Mothers and fathers are the people we rely on as we are growing up to provide for us, protect us and love us. Mothers, especially have this quality of bringing comfort when we are hurting, worried or in need of love.

Jesus' disciples too were in a place when they needed love and comfort.

Jesus said to his disciples:

**"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. . In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."**

John 14:1-3 NIV

Jesus is speaking to his disciples. They are sitting around the table and the evening meal was being served. Jesus got up and got a bowl and a towel and washed his Disciples feet. Peter was upset that Jesus the teacher would lower himself to the servant level and do this for him. Peter objected.

Then Jesus told them that one of them would betray him. Shock, horror! Can you imagine the change in the atmosphere around the table? Then Jesus says that he would only be with them for a short while.

They would have been bewildered. What is happening to their nice little world?

Then Jesus says:

**"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me**

**Today**

Today, many people are worried and unsure about what the future holds for them and their families. They worry about the Coronavirus, unemployment, sickness, cancer, drought, bushfires, drugs, war, terrorism, to mention a few.

Many people just do not know how they are going to eat tomorrow, or where they can sleep. But Jesus is saying that no matter what happens, we can trust in God and trust in him.

But so often, when things go wrong, and people are really down, many people feel abandoned by God or they blame God. Jesus says we are to trust in God.

God does not cause bad things to happen, he grieves as much as we do, but we can turn to him and know that we can trust him to see us through.

This is what the disciples needed to hear, this is what John's readers needed to hear and this is what we need to hear here in 2020

**"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.**

One of the disturbing things Jesus was saying to his disciples in today's reading was that he would be leaving them. They had lived, eaten and slept together and listened and watched him for a couple of years. They were his disciples. That was who they were. Everything revolved around him, and now he was going to leave them.

Where was he going, and why couldn't they go with him? Would they ever see him again?

**In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**

This is the great promise Jesus made to the disciples, and to you and me. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you and me. What a wonderful thought. We will actually meet him face to face and live with him in the presence of God for eternity.

And there are many rooms. There is room enough for everyone. It is not a matter of first in best dressed. We will all have a special place, a place we will have for eternity.

And after Jesus has gone and got everything ready, he will come back and fetch us.

But where was he going? Where was the place? Where is the place?

It is not somewhere where we can find our own way. There are no GPS co-ordinates, or maps that we can follow.

Jesus said he **will** come back and take us to be with him.

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:4-6 NIV

Thomas is often put down as the doubter. But I see Thomas more as a special person, a person who is always ready to ask questions when he does not understand something. He does not just blindly follow. Thomas had to be sure, and especially here Jesus is saying some really heavy stuff. He wanted to understand what Jesus was saying to them.

Jesus answered that he was **the way and the truth and the life.**

Jesus said he is the way. He did not just stand there and give his disciples directions of how to get to heaven. He said, follow me and I will show you the way.

Jesus lived the life that showed how we are to live. He taught us how to live, to love God, love one another and love ourselves. He taught us to forgive one another, because we have been forgiven ourselves. It is by our love that we show people that we belong to him. This is the way.

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Through the Gospels we see God in the life of Jesus.

God came down into our world; he lived a human life, had to study and work just like us. He faced temptation, he taught us how to love and he died on the cross for you and me.

Jesus tells Phillip "listen to me, look at me and believe." He says the same to you and me here today.

**Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

Jesus did some miraculous things: healing the sick, driving out demons, feeding thousands of people, raising people from the dead while on earth.

Jesus ministered for a mere three years in a small area of Palestine. He had to walk nearly everywhere he went. He was limited by the physical environment in which he lived. After all, he was just one man.

But, when Jesus left to go and prepare a place for us, he did not leave us alone. He gave the Holy Spirit to live in the believers. The Holy Spirit empowered them to keep on loving for Jesus and to share his message. It was through the early Church that the Gospel was to go out into a bigger world, all around the Mediterranean, Africa and into parts of Europe.

It has been since then that the Gospel has gone out in to 'all the world'. And with the Gospel has gone education, medicine, social programmes to help people in the poorest nations.

Jesus did many miracles during his short time on earth. Many miracles occur daily in our time, and of which we take little notice. The advances in medical science, agriculture and technology would have been beyond the imagination of anyone in Jesus' time.

And there are still many miracles that happen in and through the lives and ministry of those who believe in God. People are healed by the prayer of faithful people. Lives are turned around by the love of individual Christians.

**Yes we will do even greater things than these**

Let us just trust in God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Let us believe that Jesus will soon come back to take us to be with him and God. Let us follow the way of life and faith that Jesus showed us when he lived on earth.

Let us go out into our everyday world and do great things in faith and love, showing the world that we belong to our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

Let us not be troubled, let us trust in Jesus and in God. For we are the chosen people, the royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. Let our praise be heard through our worship here and through our daily lives. **Amen**

**Song Amazing grace**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG0vH4WYChQ>

1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me,  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see.

2. Was grace that taught my heart to fear  
and grace, my fears relieved.  
How precious did that grace appear,  
the hour I first believed.

3. Through many dangers, toils and snares  
we have already come.  
T'was grace that brought us safe thus far  
and grace will lead us home.

4. When we've been there ten thousand  
years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise,  
than when we first begun.

John Newton  
Public Domain

**Notices:**

*[Do be sure to check our latest church bulletin and tune in to Zoom church].*

**Offering** *[While we can't place our offerings in the offering bags, you are reminded that you can made your offering by Giving Direct, direct debit (see bank details in the Bulletin) or putting money aside for when we can physically meet together.]*

**Offering Prayer**

[Lectionary Generated Liturgy]

Gracious and loving God, accept and bless these gifts and all that we do in the name of Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life. May our lives impart the truth of the gospel and our witness point others to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

**Prayers of the People**

*by Ross Neville*

*[This is a meditative prayer about mothers by Sarah Agnew*

*As you read this prayer pause and think of someone whom you have known at the end of each section and visualise them as you pray. ]*

We celebrate and give thanks, each of us, for our mother. The woman who carried us in her womb, gave birth to us, brought us into life.

We lament, each of us, separation from our mother at different times, through conflict, distance of place, death. We lament, seek to forgive and be forgiven.

We celebrate and give thanks, each of us, for those who have been as mothers to us; our aunts and pseudo-aunts, big sisters, friends, mentors and teachers. The women who have nurtured, taught, encouraged, shaped us with love.

We acknowledge there are women who may have abandoned or neglected us, mistakenly or intentionally caused us harm. We lament the hurt we have caused to women, our friends, colleagues, neighbours, sisters, aunts and mothers. We lament, seek to forgive and be forgiven.

We celebrate and give thanks, together, for the women in our communities. That women and men are different invites us into partnership, invites us to share the burdens and the joys of life. For the many strengths of women, their gifts of peace-making, nurture, education, entrepreneurship, healing, wisdom, creativity, endurance, collaboration, physicality – and so much more, we are grateful.

We celebrate, we give thanks, for you, our mothering God, whose wings enfold us like those of a mother hen, who gives birth to all that lives, who loves fiercely, protectively, and with great delight. We celebrate what we know of you, as like a mother.

Again and again, God welcomes us home, as a mother welcomes her children.

Again and again, God celebrates us, God's children, and delights in watching and helping us grow.

Come, now, under the wings of God; come, now, into the warmth of Love.

You are forgiven. You are loved. Precious child of your Mothering God.

PAUSE

***[Pray for the world as it is suffering through Covid 19.***

***Visualize some of the scenes you have seen about this suffering. Imagine Jesus ministering to their need by touching them hugging them blessing them. Reflect on this story]***

Suddenly Disney is out of magic,  
 Paris is no longer romantic,  
 New York doesn't stand up anymore,  
 the Chinese wall is no longer a fortress, and Mecca is empty.  
 Hugs & kisses suddenly become weapons, and not visiting parents & friends becomes an act of love.  
 Suddenly you realise that power, beauty & money are worthless, and can't get you the oxygen you're fighting for.  
 The world continues its life and it is beautiful. It only puts humans in cages. I think it's sending us a message:  
 "You are not necessary. The air, earth, water and sky without you are fine. When you come back, remember that you are my guests. Not my masters".

Thank you Jesus for caring for these circumstances that are making people pause and think. The people whose circumstances at this time need to hear your promise to be with them at this time

PAUSE

Let us pray for those who are suffering because of hunger, losing their home, being forced to move. Those in Australia suffering from lost houses, source of livelihood from bushfires and drought. Visualize the persons you have thought of.

Place Jesus in the picture with them.  
 What will Jesus say to them?  
 What would Jesus do to comfort them?  
 Thank you Jesus for your ministry to these people at this time!

PAUSE

We remember those that we know that are not well at this time.

In particular I remember.....

Please give them peace, healing, reassurance and a feeling of your love enveloping them at this time. Help them feel the warmth of your embrace.

Thank you Jesus for your care and unconditional love!

PAUSE

Let us remember in prayer those in leadership within our world.

The leaders do not know how to behave, react, legislate or initiate. They rely on worldly advice and wisdom and we know that is not enough. Lord we ask that you will move in the hearts of these leaders to help them realize they need more. Encourage, strengthen them give them wisdom and humility so they can make wise decisions that will enable all of humanity to live and be happy as you want all humankind to be. Showing, demonstrating love for each other and obedience and love to you our Creator and our God.

PAUSE

Let us now pray for ourselves.

Lord I need .....

Remind me continually of your presence your guidance your love.

Thank you Lord!

Say the Lord's prayer slowly and reflectively.

## THE 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.

[Matthew 6:9-13](#)

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

**Song** - TIS 653 This is a day of new beginnings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqORaqZtC9w>

1. This is a day of new beginnings,  
 time to remember and move on,  
 time to believe what love is bringing,  
 laying to rest the pain that's gone.

2. For by the life and death of Jesus,  
 God's mighty Spirit, now as then,  
 can make for us a world of difference,  
 as faith and hope are born again.

3. Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,  
 step from the past and leave behind  
 our disappointment, guilt and grieving  
 seeking new paths, and sure to find.

4. Christ is alive, and goes before us,  
 to show and share what love can do.  
 This is a day of new beginnings;  
 Our God is making all things new.

5. In faith we'll gather round the table,  
 To taste and share what love can do.  
 This is a day of new beginnings;  
 Our God is making all things new.\*

Brian Arthur Wren 1936-  
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## Benediction

[Seasons of the Spirit]

The Service is ended. The service begins.

Go your separate ways never forgetting the treasure you hold in common.

We are a chosen people, royal priests, God's own people, called to declare the wonderful deeds of the one who has died for us and has now gone to prepare a special place for each one of us.

May the blessings of his Father and ours go with us,  
 may the Holy Spirit uphold us and sustain us,  
 and may the Son shine onto the path we walk and guide us every day,  
 Till we join all the saints and angels and arrive in the place of everlasting glory.

**Amen**