

## **Sunday Service 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 - Leura Uniting Church**

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

CALL TO WORSHIP (Led by Mark Hillis)

O sing to the LORD a new song;

**sing to the LORD, all the earth.**

Sing to the LORD, bless God's name;

**tell of salvation from day to day.**

Declare God's glory among the nations,

**the marvelous works among all the peoples.**

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

**who is to be revered above all gods.**

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

**but the LORD made the heavens.**

Honour and majesty belong to God;

**strength and beauty are in the sanctuary.** (From Psalm 96:1-6)



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**Together in Song Hymn 162, verses 1-5, Thank you for giving me the morning**

SCRIPTURE (Read by Merrill Hillis)

**Romans 16: 17--27**

Your word is a lamp to my feet

**and a light for my path.** (Ps 119:105)

**Matthew 22: 15—22**

In this is the Gospel of the Lord:

**Praise to Jesus Christ, the Word!**



PRAYER OF ADORATION, CONFESSION & THANKSGIVING

We consider the wonders of nature: the exuberant song of cicadas in the trees, on fences, around our homes. We marvel at the birds in flight: their speed and their calls to one another. We rejoice in the flowers blooming in all their glory. We rejoice in the sunshine, the mist, and the wind all around us. In all these things, gracious God, we see your glory. We also give thanks for the Scriptures, in their wonderful complexity. Even from this vast distance in time, God, we can understand the ways of human beings: their glory, their shame and their sorrow. We give thanks for the way Saint Paul discerned your eternal nature in the person of Jesus. Paul's life was changed for the better and he became living evidence of your forgiveness and grace, just as we may too. We now know that it is enough to see Jesus and to seek to reflect his glory; to see your goodness in those who are faithful and those who inspire us and in the wonders of your world.

We are saddened and at times dismayed by the cruelty that is done by our species: the disregard for life; the false values, the lies and the selfish greed that abounds. Yet, like Paul, we won't give up if you will show us the true way to be and to live. We won't give in to despair if you will demonstrate amongst us the mercy and grace of Jesus, the hope of redemption, the defiance of fear. Strengthen our resolve to follow you more closely: not to be overwhelmed by evil, but, by your Spirit, to overcome evil with good!

*(ending with the following words from Psalm 96)*

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

**but the Lord made the heavens.**

Honour and majesty belong to God;

**strength and beauty are in the sanctuary. AMEN**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*Gracious God, forgive us our sins*

*as we forgive those who sin against us ....*

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
Are yours, now and forever, AMEN.**

A MOMENT OF SILENCE

SHARING THE WORD: ***Who deserves tribute?***

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Opposite, we see Rembrandt's c.1636 drawing entitled, *The Tribute Money*. The ancient practice of tribute tax was enacted between nations, especially when one held power over another. In Jesus' time it was a 'head tax' payable to the Romans. Unlike taxation in Australia, which is meant to fund the work of a "commonwealth," countries which were controlled by great empires, like Rome, required tribute to be paid by their 'vassal states.'



When Jesus is asked a leading question by those who would like to be rid of him, he answers very thoughtfully. We, the readers and hearers of the Gospel, are informed that some people are out to trick him into speaking subversively against the Roman occupation. We are well aware that Jesus, as a holy man and teacher, would see God as the only one deserving tribute. However, by asking to be shown a coin, he adopts a simple principle: if the coin belongs to the Emperor of Rome, then he may keep it or have it returned to him. God is looking for a different kind of tribute. It is possible that Jesus also exposes the hypocrisy of his opponents, who carry the Roman coins around with them.

Jesus' words are so perceptive that his opponents have no sensible response to offer. Although not consciously addressing this theme, I consider that verses 2 and 3 from the John Bell and Graham Maule hymn *Inspired by love and anger* (Together in Song 674) reflect the intent of Jesus' reply. Today it is evident that the gaps between rich and poor in the world are widening, as fewer and fewer people collect more and more of the world's money. The hymn verses emphasize how the poor and the rich can be trapped by their opposite economic circumstances.

If people really give the tribute due to God, by serving God and their neighbours with all that they are, the worst of human divisions and enmities could be overcome! Christ, who (with us) bears the image of God in his person, can lead us into the most important choices life puts before us. Despite the torrid and cynical times in which we live, let's become a community who offer tribute to the one who receives it with grace and returns it with generosity.

SILENT MEDITATION

***Together in Song Hymn 674, verses 1,3 & 5, Inspired by love and anger***

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS-IN-ASSOCIATION TO LEURA UNITING CHURCH

ELDER (Peggy Goldsmith): The Uniting Church in Australia provides for members of another Christian denomination who, for the time-being, participate in the life of a congregation of this Church to become members-in-association. Such members join in the corporate life of the Uniting Church while retaining membership in their original denomination.

ELDER: *I present to you Anna and Ian Randall to be received as members-in-association of this congregation.*

MINISTER: Anna and Ian, do you reaffirm your allegiance to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord?

*Each, in turn, reply: I do.*

MINISTER: Do you accept membership-in-association in this congregation, Promising to share in the life and worship of the Church? Do you accept the way in which the Uniting Church in Australia orders its own life, without forsaking your own denomination?

*Each, in turn, reply: I do.*

MINISTER TO CONGREGATION:

Will you welcome Ian and Anna into the fellowship of this congregation; and will you offer them your friendship and support?

*Replying together: We will.*

MINISTER: We pray: God our divine Parent, we praise you for calling us to faith and for gathering us into the Church, the body of Christ.

We thank you for this congregation of your people and rejoice that you have added Ian and Anna to our number, our brother and sister in the faith.

ELDER: Together may we live in the Spirit, building one another up in love, sharing in the life of the Church, and serving the world; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

MINISTER: Anna and Ian, as a sign of our welcome, we greet you with acclamation!



## OFFERINGS AND DEDICATION

### NOTICES – OUR OFFERINGS OF TIME

#### THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (Prepared by Mel MacArthur)

Loving and Eternal God,

We come before you with our prayers for others and that in a time made very difficult by external events, and by ourselves. Lord the pandemic is wreaking havoc for many people we think of those people who are particularly vulnerable; people in nursing homes, threatened by the virus itself and isolated from friends and relatives. They are really in the time of trial and our prayers are for them, for the pandemic to finally run its course, or for a vaccine to be discovered, and for friends and relatives to be able to visit once more bringing an end to the exile.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our prayer.**

We think of school students undertaking HSC examinations at the end of what has been a much interrupted and stressful year. We pray for clarity of mind for discipline to enable them to manage the anxiety of it all. And for those who are involved in the designing of school

assessments, for fresh thought about designs for assessment that are less intrinsically stressful for students than the current arrangement.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our Prayer.**

We pray also for those people who have lost jobs and businesses through the pandemic and for those people struggling to repay mortgages from reduced incomes. We pray that there be responses to these situations that can preserve hope, for the many people whose hope is fading. We pray for wisdom and compassion from leaders that will bring the marginal people to the fore in their thinking.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our prayer.**

The stresses of the pandemic have also seen an increase in domestic violence and child abuse, which are straining the current systems capacity to cope. We pray for the staff of the community services who are providing their best efforts to cope with these situations with less than adequate human resources. We pray for resilience for them and for a commitment on the part of authorities to provide more adequate resources and services, to help rebuild the lives of victims.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we also recognize that we bring disasters upon ourselves. Our climate is changing, and yet we do little in the way of addressing it. We ask that we will gain a little wisdom to realise that we are in a perilous situation, and one that is becoming more perilous by the month. Lift us from our apathy and complacency. We ask that the arguments around the issue of climate lift above the level of bombast and rhetoric and that the issues can be presented in a manner that does not seek to manipulate.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our prayer.**

And Lord, we pray about that ever-present issue of war; the ever-present problem of the increasing amount and sophistication of weaponry. May we realise that another large-scale conflict is one where every side will lose. Bless the work of the peacemakers; for those people and organisations that strive to avert conflict, for those who seek to resolve differences by peaceful means, and for each individual who seeks to live life in a peaceful manner as a disciple of Christ.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our prayer.**

And lord for those people in our congregation here in Leura, who are facing the challenges of ageing and illness, we pray for them. We pray for your comforting and consoling presence in their time of trial and may we, who are yet to face those trials, provide an encouraging and caring presence for them, for Christs sake.

*Lord in Your mercy*

**Hear our prayer. AMEN**

INVITATION – HOLY COMMUNION

***Together in Song Hymn 259, verses 1,4 & 5, Among us and before us, Lord, you stand***

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

With all we are, we give you glory,  
Trinity of love, the one and Holy God,

Sovereign of all time and space.  
We bless you for this wide, red land,  
For its rugged beauty, its changing seasons,  
Its diverse peoples, and for all that lives upon this fragile earth.  
You have called us to be the Church in this place,  
To make community and give voice to every creature under heaven.  
We rejoice in all you have given,  
As we join the company of the universe in their song,

*Holy, Holy (If sung – TiS 756)*

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.***

As we acknowledge Christ's shared mortality with us;  
and affirm the words of the Church through countless generations,

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

## NARRATIVE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AND BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed,  
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying,  
'Take this and eat it.  
This is my body given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper,  
he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it to them, saying,  
'Drink from it, all of you.  
This is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, whenever you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.'



**By your Word and Holy Spirit,  
bless these gifts** that we may truly share  
Christ's body and blood, and become, by grace,  
his body given  
for the sake of the world.

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

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The minister takes the bread and breaks it in full view of the people, in silence or saying:  
Jesus is for us the Bread of Life.

The minister lifts the cup in full view of the people, in silence or saying:  
Jesus offers us the Cup of salvation.

The minister holds out the bread and the cup to the people and says:

*Let us receive what we are.*

*Let us become what we receive: **The Body of Christ.***

## LAMB OF GOD

Jesus, Lamb of God, **have mercy on us.**

Jesus, Word made flesh, **have mercy on us.**

Jesus, redeemer of the world, **grant us peace.**

## THE COMMUNION

Receive this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ,  
and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

*The following words may be said by the minister  
before all take each of the Communion elements.*

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

"As we ask that you stay with us,  
and we watch what you are doing,  
then our eyes begin to open,  
for we see you in the breaking of the bread."

**Amen.**<sup>1</sup>

## BLESSING

The grace of Christ attend you;

The love of God surround you;

The Holy Spirit keep you

this day and forever. **AMEN**



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<sup>1</sup> Verse 2 from a song, *As we walk along beside you* by Michael Perry, in *Faith forever Singing*. The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, 2000.