

Whitehorse Uniting

**Sunday 28th January
2024**



RCL – Love and Happiness



Introit: Be still

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here;
come bow before Him now with reverence and fear:
in Him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here.

Words and music: David J Evans

Welcome

May the worship bless you.

Call to worship (Psalm 111:1-4 & 1 Cor 8:6 adapted)

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

**Great are the works of the Lord, full of wonder and majesty,
are the works of the Lord our God.**

From whom all things exist and for who we exist

Let us love God with all our being and be united in Christ.

Prayers of adoration, invocation, and confession

Yvonne Morland, Hay and Stardust (Edit. Ruth Burgess) Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. www.ionabooks.com Used with permission. (adapted)

Lord our God,
revealed and hidden,
we welcome you, into our midst.

Lord, you strengthen us as we meet,
in fellowship, unity, and love,
guarding us with your cherishing embrace.

Lord, you challenge us when we engage,
in dialogue and debate.
You provoke us to undermine,
walls of division between us,
and make us one united people in Christ.

You remind us to listen,
and remember Christ's passion,
brought light to the world,
and glad hearts to those suffering, oppressed and mourning.

Lord, we rejoice in our call to be your people,
and love you with all being.
Lord, you love us and know us,
and help us know we are loved by you.
Through your love Lord, we come to love ourselves,
and love others as ourselves.

Invocation

Lord, send your spirit upon us now.
Come Holy Spirit, come.
Come Holy Spirit, come.



Confession (From a week of prayer for Christian unity)

John Harvey, Hay, and Stardust (Edit. Ruth Burgess) Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. www.ionabooks.com Used with permission. (adapted)

Lord, forgive us,
for any way in which we have hurt or dismembered your body, the church.

Lord, forgive us,
for any way we have thoughtlessly or deliberately hurt our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lord, forgive us,
If we have prayed for unity and done nothing or very little to bring it about,
or have acted in a way that has brought division.

Lord, help us,
To be active, where we empower others in your church, to be one in Christ.



Lord, remind us,
Of who we are and who we serve.

Lord, in this moment of silence we come before you, asking for forgiveness and the grace to forgive.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God.

Young at Heart

We have a sign at our Mitcham site that faces a busy road. For years now Lorraine Grant and her dog, Barney, have been doing the sign, but sadly Barney is not doing so well, and the other day Lorraine said this is his last sign. And what a sign it is. *Love yourself. Love others.* How many of us truly love ourselves? Perhaps we have grown up and been treated in a way that has wounded us and we do not love ourselves or we have been told it's not ok to love yourself and we come to believe it's ok not to love and care for

ourselves. These wounds and beliefs can oppress us. Today's theme is about loving God and being known by God in a way that sets us free, like Jesus set the oppressed man free and made him whole.



If we come to know how much God loves us through loving God and being known by God, we will be healed and come to love ourselves. Then we will be set free to love others. How we treat others mirrors how we love ourselves.

Hymn 534 Love is his word. Love is his way.

James Kilbane 2021

<https://youtu.be/FB0lj7Wbs?si=y6l7KmoxSYAxeB6>

Readings

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

8 Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ² Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge, ³ but **anyone who loves God is known by him.**

⁴ Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵ Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords— ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷ It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ **“Food will not bring us close to God.”**^[a] We are no worse off if we do not eat and no better off if we do. ⁹ But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister for whom Christ died is destroyed. ¹² But when you thus sin against brothers and sisters and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never again eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He^[a] commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

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Sermon – “Anyone who loves God is known by God”. Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.



Old Master Painting

Paul is writing to a church that is experiencing a crisis because of factions and people insisting on getting their own way, at the expense of others.

Three leaders baptised members of the congregation and people wanted to stay loyal to them. They were Apollos, Peter, and Paul. Those baptised by them formed groups and wanted the congregation to worship in their buildings. Some of them thought they were more important because they had wealth and they believed they had knowledge and thought their knowledge allowed them to eat meat offered to idols and do their own thing and insist on having the freedom to eat this meat, even if it was causing division and tempting those who thought it was wrong to eat meat.

Paul writes to the church in Corinth calling for unity and reminds the church real knowledge comes from being known by God. He teaches them there is one God, and one Lord Jesus Christ and all things exist, including themselves, because of God and our lord.

Paul says: “Food will not bring us close to God.” Perhaps he might have also said: Buildings will not bring us close to God.

Partnered with the letter by Paul to the Corinthians is the gospel which reminds us, who has real authority, God in Jesus Christ.

I’ve got to know you over the years and know you as a community who embodies the love of Jesus and lives out your faith, with love in action.” Most people are motivated by values. Perhaps we are motivated by values such as caring, sharing, acceptance and compassion, values that help us plant seeds that grow love.

The reading from 1 Corinthians makes it clear creating divisions or factions where people insist on getting their way, at any cost can damage communities.



Tina Lyndon

Paul challenges members of the congregation to remember who they are, and that God made them and most of all, to love God, so they are known by God and to act with love so they draw closer to God.

The other day my grandson left his jacket behind, and we were not sure if it was at the playground next to Warrandyte Bakery or the seats outside the bakery. He remembered when we got home. I rang the bakery and spoke to a young man and asked him whether he could find it for us. He put me on hold and went and searched for it and found it in the playground. He didn’t have to do that. I said I’d drop by the following day to collect it and couldn’t do so until after 3:00PM because my granddaughter was unwell. By then he had left to go on holidays, so we passed on our thanks to the boss. My grandson said he had washed the jacket for him. He didn’t

have to do this for us. It was an act of love. He went the extra mile for us. When he returns, we will drop by, and my grandson will personally thank him. Love goes a long way.

Love also has a ripple effect. When I was at Synod and lined up for a coffee someone paid it forward and paid for ten coffees and I got a coffee for free. I'm sure the ten of us who received a free coffee will be motivated to do something similar and pay it forward.

People are remembered for their love. Congregations are remembered for their love.



Old Master painting

I wonder what the connection is between love and authority. 1

Corinthians teaches us love is important, loving God and being known by God. The gospel reveals Jesus has authority. I wonder what kind of authority Jesus had which made the people feel awe and astonishment?

All of us have had experiences where we exercised our authority, to benefit others. One of my first jobs was at Marysville in a guesthouse. I shared a dormitory with six other girls aged about my age, which was around eighteen. We used to go the local pub because it was the only place open on a Saturday night in this small town at the time. One

night one of the girls must have unintentionally invited two of the kitchen hands to our dormitory. Much to our horror they turned up, with a box of beer, and they were middle aged.

All the girls, including the one who may have encouraged them, hid in the bathroom, or froze. I met them at the door and asked them not to come in. One of them said: *Are you the bouncer?* I replied: *I guess I am.* Thinking, hope he doesn't hit me. Fortunately, they left. Next day the two men were in the kitchen, and we got talking and they told me their story. They were friends and had been in the Vietnam war and both had PTSD. The younger one had been trying to get on a helicopter when he got shot by a machine gun and the older one had been a prisoner. We were ok after that. We respected each other and worked well together. This taught me at a young age that everyone has a story that explains their behaviour. However, this is not the kind of authority the gospel is focused on.

Another time my family and I were in a small ketch that was crossing the bar at the entrance to Mallacoota Inlet and the wind blew up where the ketch began to roll from one side to another and almost tip over each time. My family were afraid, and I remember turning green with sea sickness and fear. But the captain of the ketch remained calm and took charge and steered the ketch through the bar into the inlet, to safety. We trusted him and accepted his authority because of his experience. Again, this is not the kind of authority the gospel is focused on.

Jesus taught and healed in a way that set people free and made them whole. All who witnessed what Jesus taught and his actions, knew in their soul the authority of God was in Jesus. Jesus was acting with God's authority and their response of awe and astonishment witnessed to that realisation.

When Jesus healed the man possessed by an unclean spirit, which may have been an illness, he taught the people about the love of God. He set the man free and made him whole. He revealed the purpose of our faith is to set us free from oppression, suffering, guilt, sin, remorse, the compulsion to control and grasp power for ourselves, fear, hate, unforgiveness and all else that creates barriers between God and us. If we love God, and are known by God, these barriers are defeated. If we turn to Jesus for wholeness, these barriers are healed and defeated. Because of Jesus, only love can dwell in our hearts.



Quiet time

Hymn 650 Brother, Sister, let me serve you.

St Laurence's Church 2021

The Northumbria Community Music Group

<https://youtu.be/OJahFRDrSCs?si=4t6akVKUWdBrIPib>

Offering prayer

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom all for transformation through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Savior, amen.



Prayers of the People – Rev Kevin

God of grace, in whose company we are made whole,
we bless You for Your generous love.
Holy Spirit, may You teach us how to pray,
as we offer our thanksgivings,
all that You have given us and who we are,
in praise and service;
for Your glory and in Jesus name.

Gracious God, as the disciples brought others to Jesus that He might lay His hands upon their lives and bless them, we offer our thoughts and prayers for people we bring to You now. And, like the disciples, we bring ourselves as well.

We come to You who is able to do so much more than we can imagine,
we come to You because already, risen and ascended Jesus,
before the throne of God You pray for us and for all whom we would bring to You.

Living God in your love

Receive our prayers

Receive our prayers O Lord:
some are for people we love,
others are for people we find hard to love,
some are for people who are happy,
others are for people in pain,
some are for people we know,
others for people known by You.
In quiet moments we pray.

Pause

Living God in your love

Receive our prayers

Jesus, Saviour,
we pray today for a world so often in turmoil,
caught up in fear or war, injustice,
the neglect of the vulnerable, and of creation.
Teach us how best to use the freedom we have been given
to serve You and to make common cause with all who seek the wellbeing of others.

Living God in your love

Receive our prayers

We pray for people in positions of influence,
remembering the Internet and other forms of mass communication.
May we have the wisdom to nurture what is good and guard against what is harmful.

Living God in your love

Receive our prayers

We pray for all who advance knowledge and extend the frontiers of science,
 thanking You for the many benefits we enjoy as a result.

Living God in your love

Receive our prayers

God only wise, may knowledge be used for good alone.

May we return often to the well-spring of wisdom,
 that we may share what You have given us
 to drink with a thirsty world.

Saviour Jesus, Son of God,
 we discover in You that already life has overcome death,
 goodness has triumphed over evil,
 forgiveness has won the victory over sin,
 love has conquered hate.

Living God in your love

Receive our prayers

In you we renew our faith and commitment to Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.
 Glory be to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God, now and for always. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

And with Jesus we pray:

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 always Amen

Thank you and farewell for Rev Kevin – Julie Hawkey



Blessing and Prayer for Rev Kevin

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
 The Lord make his face shine upon you,
 and be gracious unto you;
 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
 and give you peace. Amen



Hymn 768 Praise God Stacey plays hymns 2023

https://youtu.be/UPwFLDPZ-GM?si=e9EwcBmi_5rjr_Wm

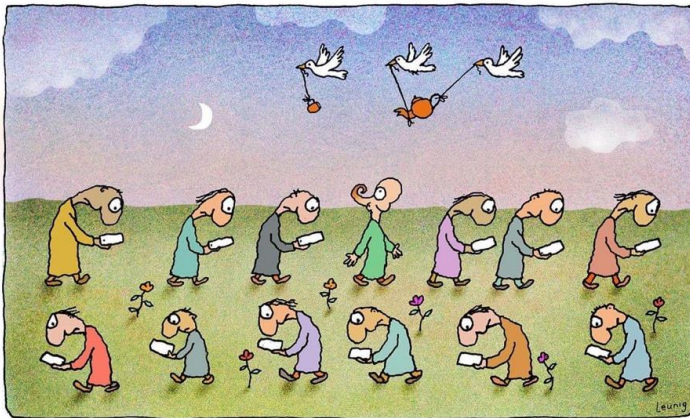
Blessing

We go in peace,
in the love of God,
in the Power of the Spirit.
May the Lord Bless and Guard us.
May the Lord make His face shine upon us, and be gracious unto us,
as we bring Christ's love and peace to the world. **Amen**

Hymn 640 Kneels at the feet of his friends. tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tyNO9QVVK4&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=21>

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



Leunig, used with permission.

Over the Christmas break I found myself monitoring my grandchildren's screentime. Their parents do the same, whether it's TV, iPad, or the latest Nintendo. I also receive a screentime report on my phone each week, usually telling me it's about four hours.

Everywhere I look people are doing screentime. Parks, cafes, families sitting together at restaurants having lunch, buses, and trains and even the thousand steps. I even walked out into a carpark and there were three people on their phones and got the giggles and they saw the funny side and had a laugh.

We even need to watch our screen time during worship and not spend the entire service looking at the screen but take time to pray and sit quietly and ponder and connect with God or look at one another and connect.

Holidays are an opportunity to get away from screens and notice the little things and nature's beauty and be free and have quality time with family. When I went for a walk I noticed a swamp wallaby, a feather, and a bee on flowers.



Take time out to enjoy nature and be free of screens. May you find peace and joy.