

Order of Service 18/10/20 Pentecost 20

Welcome and Call to Worship

Welcome to the online service of Brunswick Uniting Church.
I'm Natalie, and this is my home, which I share with Shawn and Daniel.
We're glad you can join us, from wherever you are.
Today, with Moses, we reflect together on seeing the face of God,
knowing the presence of God.

Although we cannot see the face of God, God's presence surrounds us in all of creation,
Although we cannot hear the wind of the Spirit, she binds all believers across time and space,
Although we cannot sit at the feet of Christ, we know the love of Jesus through the stories
handed down from generation to generation.

Let us worship together.

Candle Lighting

Alison Nixon

In lighting this candle I'm going to read from Ephesians 3:17-18
And I pray that you being rooted and established in love may have power together
with all the faiths to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of God

Song: TiS 143 Immortal Invisible, God only Wise

1. *Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.*

2. *Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, but ruling in might;
your justice like mountains high soaring above,
your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.*

3. *You give life to all, Lord, to both great and small,
in all life now living, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on a tree,
then wither: but ever unchanged you will be.*

4. *Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;
of all your rich graces this grace, Lord, impart –
take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.*

5. *All praise we would render: reveal to our sight
what hides you is only the splendour of light;
and so let your glory, Almighty, impart,
through Christ in the story, your Christ to the heart.*

SONG: *Immortal, invisible, God only wise*, by Walter Chalmers Smith,
from *Together in Song*, Harper Collins Religious, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Acknowledgement of Country

Beth Shelton

We acknowledge and respect
the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation,
the traditional custodians of this land
since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land
is not ours to own, but to look after;
and that if we listen,
we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.
**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves
to work for justice, reconciliation,
and care of the earth.**

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Natalie

Immortal, unknowable God, creator of all that is,
Invisible, Holy spirit, full of wisdom,
Ancient and living Christ, source of forgiveness,
How we long to see your face,
 to know the intricacies of your creation,
 to understand your mind,
 to know what lies before us.

God who first loved us,
Hold us in our anxiety, forgive our impatience and self-interest,
Hold our world, and our worries for the world, in your arms of love.

Help us, in this time of rest, to abide in the healing love that you provide.
In the midst of our despair, remind us again of your love and compassion...

Let us continue to pray in song.

Song: Tune in: God's mercy (as prayer of confession)

*Like the sun upon my skin
I can smile and soak it in
And my wounds begin to heal
That's God's mercy*

*Like a fragrance in the air
Scent to lighten my despair
Loving kindness always there
That's God's mercy.*

*When I'm feeling lost from all that's good
When I'm failing all the good I would
When I fear that all I ever could become lies wasted
When I can't reach out, accept, forgive
When it's hard to change the way I live
When my need for care, for love, to give, are all frustrated*

*Like a flower opening wide
Glow of love that spreads inside
Humble gift to breach my pride
That's God's mercy*

*Loving gaze upon my soul
Seeing all complete and whole
Healing vision to console
That's God's mercy*

When I'm feeling . . .

*Gentle breath upon my heart
Warm embrace that takes my part
Place of strength from where I start
That's God's mercy
For me,
For me,
For me.*

SONG: God's mercy, by Sheree Anderson, from Tune In, Brunswick UC, Reproduced with permission

Word of Grace

Sisters and brothers, God knows you by name.
God knows your sorrows: for yourself, for our world.
God loves you, God loves the world, with an everlasting love.
Through Christ, in Christ, and because of Christ, our sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

With the Children (Ark of the Covenant introduction) **Dave, Sam Coath**

We were introduced to the story with some assistance from Indiana Jones.

Bible Reading: Exodus 33:12-23

Fran Barber

Moses said to the LORD, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people'; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."

The LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The LORD'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." And the LORD continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

Song: Tune In

*Tune in
Tune In
There's a message coming in
Tune in*

*And see the signs of God's love
Don't let static drown it out
Or fill your head
With fears and doubts
Tune in
So you can hear God's call.*

SONG: [Tune In](#), by Natalie Sims, from [Tune In](#), Brunswick UC Songbook, Used with permission

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13

Christine Hornby

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Reflection – Seeing the Face of God

Ian

Moses wants reassurance from God that this wilderness journey he is on with his people will not be in vain. He wants to know for certain that God will be with them. “You’ve asked me to do this radical thing, leading this people to freedom through the wilderness, but how do we know we can trust you? Show me your ways, let me know you, let me see your glory, your presence with us. Let me see and know.”

I can’t help but relate Moses’ request to our current predicament, this interminable journey that we are on through the desert of lockdown. We are committed to this path, but there are so many voices of doubt – are we doing this the right way, is this the best path, are our leaders to be trusted? Like Moses, I’m also inclined to want the reassurance of certainty. How does God come to us in these uncertain times and places? What spiritual reassurance can we call on, what divine certainty can we grasp?

“Let me see you and know you” says Moses. And God replies with a mixed message. First God says, “My presence will go with you.” Our translation has removed a metaphor from this verse. “My Presence” is literally “My Face”. “My Face will go with you” – then a few verses later God says, “you cannot see my face – but here’s a glimpse of my behind.” My face will go with you, but you cannot see my face.

Last week I was walking across a park and somebody called out to me, “Ian!” I looked and saw a man waving at me. He was masked, as he should’ve been, and he was also wearing a beanie and a hoody (it was a cool morning) and I had absolutely no idea who it was. I said to him, “Who am I seeing?” And he told me his name. It was one of my dancing partners, someone I know so well that if I saw his face there would be instant warm recognition. I was also wearing a beanie and a mask, but he said he recognised me by my plait. Have you had this experience? Not recognising people, or half recognising them – “is that so and so or isn’t it?” and then they’re gone – because we can’t see one another’s faces.

My face will go with you.

Does God even have a face? We’re obviously talking in metaphors here. In Xn terms we might say, we see the face of God in the face of Jesus and we see the face of Jesus in the faces of his Spirit filled people, in one another’s faces, but most particularly in the faces of the world’s outsiders, the so called “lowly” ones whom Jesus comes to raise up and with whom he

identifies. OK, but why is the word “face” used in Scripture and in ancient cultures in general to mean the whole presence of someone?

Modern English is also liberal in its metaphorical application of the word “face”. Consider these uses:

The sun shone over the face of the earth.
They climbed the north face of the mountain.
She put on her face.
He put on a brave face.
She pulled a face.
His face fell.
She was two faced.
He suffered a terrible loss of face.
She saved face.
He flew in the face of her every objection.
She didn't take him at face value.
They came face to face.
They faced off.
“Just face it.” He said.
“Face up to yourself.” She replied.

Your face is the front of you, that part of you with which you “face” the world, metaphorically your presence, your status, your personality and expression.

When I am out and about with a mask on, it is not just the recognition of familiar faces that is an issue. I also find it very disturbing that I can't read people's faces. Normally I would often acknowledge strangers when I pass them in the street, but I've come to realise that I do this mainly through facial expression, a little smile, a raise of the eyebrows. Now it's all blank stares and I can't tell the difference between a smile and a scowl, between an open expression of friendly connection and a hard expression of “what are you looking at leave me alone”. Because we communicate and connect with our faces. We read the world with the active senses in our faces. We are present to one another through our faces. Perhaps I am beginning to learn something of the experience of those on other parts of the neural spectrum to me? In the age of digital communication we know that being face to face is not the only way to communicate and connect, but what do we miss out on when our faces are hidden from one another by religion or protective necessity or neurological difference? What is the power of the face?

My face will go with you,” says God, “My very presence, the expressive, sensing, communicating, world facing, attentive, personhood of me.”

My face will go with you, but you cannot see my face.

How can we truly know someone without seeing them face to face? Perhaps our relationship with God is more analogous to all those online relationships that people are forging these days. What is it in the nature of God that means I cannot see God face to face, that she remains in light inaccessible hid from my eyes, and I only get partial glimpses of her presence? Is our relationship destined to stay virtual? Why the mystery?

The ancient biblical traditions of our faith do say that God is too big, too bright, too transcendent for our minds to encompass, like the infinity of the universe. But our scriptures say more than that. Moses tells God, “I want to know you, to see you face to face.” And God says to Moses, “You can't, BUT I know you.” You cannot see my face, but I know you by name – the most intimate form of ancient knowing. God remains in mystery, and yet God enters into relationship with us, with creation.

Moses wants to know, but Moses is known. And that is the certainty of our faith. In the divine mystery of unknowing, we are known. In the divine mystery of loving, we are loved.

Is that enough for you? Is it enough, in this time of uncertainty and incompleteness, to say with Paul, *Now we see in mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

Song: TiS 723 Holy holy holy

*Holy, holy, holy. My heart, my heart adores you!
My heart knows how to say to you: Holy are you Lord*

*Santo, santo. Mi Corazon te adora!
Mi Corazon to sabe decir: Santo eres Dios!*

*Holy, holy, holy. My heart, my heart adores you!
My heart knows how to say to you: Holy are you Lord*

SONG: Holy, holy, Anon. (from Argentina), from Together in Song, Harper Collings *Religious PUBLIC DOMAIN*

Offering

Natalie

Let us now make our offerings to God who knows us and loves us.

Let's take a moment to think about what we have and what we can offer from our hearts. The work of our hands, gifts of money, time, and skills, all from God's abundant gifts to us. May they be used to build God's kingdom on earth, a place where suffering is no more.

Prayers of the People

Jim Kilpatrick

Loving God who sees us and holds us
We pray for the world: may wise leaders feel inspired to lead with integrity and passion.
May we all feel the wind settle and finally see a way through this storm.
May we see the face of God in our world.

As Moses asked 'Please, show me Your glory'
Please, show us Your glory.

We pray for the Church: may the people of the Church find meaning, strength, hope.
May church communities that cannot gather, feel connected to us all.
May the Merri Creek continue to be a real and symbolic link between many of us:
a small place of dreaming, and spirit. May we see the face of God in our community.
As Moses asked 'Please, show me Your glory'
Please, show us Your glory'

We pray for those in need. We pray for those struggling with their mental health and their carers: may they feel held. May they feel our compassion, and our admiration.
We pray for those mourning lost loved ones: may they find peace.
May they feel hands reaching out to hold them as they grieve.
We pray for those mourning friends:
may they suddenly recall a hilarious moment, and laugh again.
May we see the face of God in our loved-ones.
As Moses asked 'Please, show me Your glory'
Please, show us Your glory'

In the name of Christ, son of Mary: the brother who walks with us. Amen

Notices including Anne Mallaby video

Matthew and Michael

Good morning.

I'm Matthew Cameron

And I'm Michael Cameron

And this is the BUC News

There's always a lot happening, people meeting on Zoom for all sorts of reasons.

That is true and one is a task group formed to update our database.

If you received an email last Sunday inviting you to update your details please respond as soon as you can.

The group is also working with other people to make phone calls to help with this task.

Contact Saide if you want to know more.

All Saints Day is coming up on 1st November.

And this year it's a Sunday.

It certainly is.

This is a beautiful opportunity to commune with the saints who have died

You are invited to send in a photo and/or the name of loved ones family and friends who have died in the last 12 months – or longer.

Send your contributions to Dave Hall. Details are on our website and Facebook Group

The Climate Action Group is excited about all the commitments being made.

There's so much variety including personal steps, recycling, upcycling, advocacy and more

Visit the Earth Button to find out what people are committing to

And click on the Commitment sheet link to make and send in your own pledge.

Olive Arts continues to meet on Wednesday. Contact Ann if you want to join.

If you want to join in recording Christmas Carols contact Shawn, Natalie, Elaine or Alistair.

Olive Pesto meet to knit and knatter twice a week. Contact Ann or Linda to join the fun.

Join Ian for a post worship Zoom Chat at 10:30am.

The link is on the website.

But for now let's hear something about pastoral care.

Goodbye and thanks for listening.

Pastoral Care Review - Anne Mallaby Introduction Video

Sending Song: Icon of Grace

May we see Christ's loving face

May we be an icon of his grace

SONG: Icon of Grace, by Trish Watts & Monica O'Brien, from All together okay, Openbook Publishers,
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Blessing and Sending

Ian

Jesus, you are the beginning in the face of the end.

Pour out upon us your compassion, your healing,
your Spring time grace, your communion, your comforting tears,
your fresh growth, your openness, your light, your stillness,
your love, your justice, your peace, your new beginning.

Help us to see your face in all your Spirit filled people

Bless us to know you as we have been known

We pray in your holy name calling on the living source of all
Through the ever present Spirit who unites us in love. Amen

Thank You's

Liturgist:
Natalie Sims

Lighting of Christ Candle:
Alison Nixon

Acknowledgement of
Country:
Beth Shelton

Children's time:
Sam Coath
Dave Hall
(Pastor: Children, Youth
and Young Adults)

Images:
www.freebibleimages.com

Bible readings:
Fran Barber
Christine Hornby

Reflection:
Rev. Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the people:
Jim Kilpatrick

Musicians:
Shawn Whelan
(Co-ordinator)
Sheree Anderson
Alistair Hunter
Natalie Sims
Daniel Whelan

Notices:
Matthew Cameron
Michael Cameron

Production:
Jane Allardice
Saide Cameron
Dave Hall
Lydia Jacka
Ian Ferguson
Shawn Whelan

Closing verse:
1 Corinthians 13:12b Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.