

# Order of Service 25/10/2020 Pentecost 21

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OPENING VERSE: Love God with all your heart, soul and mind. Matthew 22:37

## Welcome and Call to Worship

Jenne

Good morning, I am Jenne your Liturgist for this BUC service of Worship.

Our readings from Deuteronomy and Matthew speak of Love – to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and might and to love all as ourselves.

Let us come to Worship the God of love, as part of God's loving creation.

Embracing God's love in our hearts, feelings & bodies and 'with each other'.

From Psalm 90: 'Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.'

O Loving God we come to worship You, bound in your love, responding to your call to love.

We are in God's sacred space. **In Jesus name Amen.**

## Lighting the Christ Candle

Maggie Haines

As I light this candle please reflect on the words of Rumi with me

Do not worry if all the candles in the world flicker and die

We have the spark that starts the fire.

## Song: Love divine, loves excelling TIS217

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- 1. Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.*
- 2. Come, almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
never more thy temples leave:  
thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.*
- 3. Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be,  
let us see thy great salvation,  
perfectly restored in thee:  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love and praise.*

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SONG: Love divine by Charles Wesley, from Together in Song, Harper Collins; PUBLIC DOMAIN

## Acknowledgement of Country

Andy Calder

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

Jenne

*With SONG Pure love pure truth, as backing*

Let us pray. Let us invite Gods loving Presence.  
Let us sit quietly for 1 minute being embraced by Gods's loving arms around us.  
Breathe in that love, let it well up in your heart and immerse your soul. PAUSE

We praise you O God, for Love  
It is your creation, we are part of it, bound eternally through love to you oh God.  
We praise you oh God for our mind that can prompt us to loving,  
our heart that loves and letting our soul be love.  
Oh God we praise you for your passionate love, your patient love,  
your demanding love, your yearning for us to love you in return.  
For the living, loving, beating heart of your Son who offered up life itself.

We confess O God, we do not love ourselves enough  
nor are we always compassionate enough to love those close, much less those far.  
We confess that we have tried but our love is restless and fragile, ego bound,  
demanding, tentative & uncertain.  
But we have shown up here, at least, Oh God, to be present here in your love.  
You yearn for our love, you made us for love.  
Out of love Moses walked and lead your people to the promised land,  
even if he didn't reach there himself.  
God you ask that of us, to be loving like Moses, like the loving sacrifice of Your Son.  
Take us to the edge, Oh God, to peer into the promised land,  
loving enough and standing in your promise, like Moses, that your Love is enough.  
May we know this love with all our heart and soul mind and might  
that God is one & God is love.  
We claim your forgiveness for our lack of love, through the Love of your only Son,  
who leads us into the Promised land. Thanks be to God Amen

## With the Children

Dave and Clara Hall

The death of Moses on Mt Nebo, next to the Jordan River, overlooking the Promised Land.  
Joshua becomes the next leader.

## Hebrew Scriptures: Deuteronomy 34: 1-12

Robert Sargent

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the LORD showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. The LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” Then Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, at the LORD’s command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated. The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended.

Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

## Song: Love the Lord your God

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and all your soul and all your mind  
and love all humankind  
as you would love yourself, and . . .*

*Love the Lord your God  
with all your heart  
and all your soul and mind  
and love humankind*

*We’ve got Christian lives to live  
We’ve got Jesus’ love to give  
We’ve got nothing to hide  
Because in God we abide  
Love . . .*

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SONG: Love the Lord your God, from God Gives . . . Songs for Kids 1, JBCE,  
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## Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:34-40

Fiona Bottcher

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

**Thanks be to God**

## Reflection

Ian

Friends, the end is in sight! Yes, today our reading from Deuteronomy brings us to the end – the end of the wilderness journey, the end of Moses who dies today at the ripe old age of 128 (although Deuteronomy tells us, “his sight was unimpaired and his vigour had not abated”) – still Moses ends today, as does the Torah. The Torah is the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, known by Christian scholars as the Pentateuch – that holy sequence of scripture revered by our Jewish siblings in much the way that the gospels are revered by Christians. Today’s story is the closing passage of Deuteronomy the fifth and final book of the Torah.

*Then Moses went up to Mt Nebo and GOD showed Moses the WHOLE land*

Here’s a picture I took of Mt Nebo looking across the Dead Sea through the window of a moving bus near Qumran in the promised land (otherwise known as the occupied territories of the West Bank). This is the opposite view to the one Moses gets in our reading today and I wonder if we can see what he sees? If we looked out from Mt Nebo today across the Jordan, we would see a divided land suffering under occupation. But Moses sees a vision of God’s promise fulfilled. Can we see it too? Even in the broken places of the world, can we see springs of peace welling up from the reconciling depths; fields of justice ripe for harvest; streams of compassion overflowing through floodplains of need; and over it all the rising sun of grace shining the light of hope, bringing forth the growth of love. That’s the view, and it is so very close for Moses, just down the hill and across the river, the answer to our prayer: “Your kingdom come your will be done”, and it is coming, says Jesus, “the kingdom of heaven, the reign of love, has come near.” Moses sees it today – can we.

The fulfilment of God’s promise is so close for Moses, but in one of the all-time great anticlimaxes, after 40 years of travelling, Moses arrives at Mt Nebo, stands on the brink of the promise and dies – The End.

Now we know the story will continue in subsequent books through Moses’ successor Joshua but that is season two yet to come, today we are at the season one cliff-hanger where we discover that the way into the promise will be an intergenerational journey (something like the mitigation of climate change). Today we are invited to stand on the brink with Moses, between the vision and the reality, between the promise and the fulfillment – this vulnerable place where our souls face the challenge of the future: the river between us and the promise fulfilled is so wide – how are we ever going to get across? Moses can’t take us. Where is our Joshua going to come from?

You probably know that Jesus is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew name Joshua, but before we leap to “Jesus is the answer”, I want to look at the way Matthew has integrated the story of Mt Nebo, the ending of the Torah, into his gospel. First of all, Matthew wants us to know that Jesus is the new Prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15, “God will raise up for you a prophet like Moses from among your own people”. Jesus is that new Moses according to Matthew and he draws many parallels between them: they both escape the slaughter of children, they both come out of Egypt, they both lead people to freedom through water, they both spend 40 years or days in the wilderness, they both give mana or bread to their followers, they both teach commandments from mountaintops.

And going deeper, the very structure of Matthew’s gospel points to Moses. The gospel is structured around 5 discourses, 5 long speeches by Jesus, 5 blocks of teaching echoing the 5 books of the Torah. And at the end of each of those 5 speeches Matthew repeats the same simple phrase that was used of Moses when he finished his teaching in Deuteronomy.

Here then is a new Torah from the mouth of the new Moses. And when it comes to the end, when Jesus has finished all that he came to do and to teach, Matthew borrows from the ending of the Torah by sending Jesus to a mountain. In the closing passage of Matthew's gospel, the risen Jesus meets his disciples on a mountain top and they look out to see the whole world stretched before them – it's the same view Moses got on Mt Nebo, a vision of possibility and promise. Yes, here we are again, teetering on the brink of the promise – the reign of love has drawn near, but we are not there yet. Like Moses, Jesus died too soon, before the hope of God's promised new creation of Peace and Love was fulfilled – and we still live in the incompleteness of that. But just as the death of Moses is an ending that leads to a new beginning so too with Jesus. At the gospel's end, he comes to us on that mountain and he sends us, his disciples, out to continue the story. He sends us into the divided, broken and incomplete world where God's promise is still coming to fulfilment. He sends us to work for that promise, that hope of justice, peace and love for all creation. He sends us out, but he does not send us alone. For he is our Moses AND our Joshua. So, hear the final words of Matthew's gospel spoken with Spirit infused love from the mountaintop. Jesus says, "Remember, I am with you always. I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

## Song: In the Lord I'll be ever thankful

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*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful  
In the Lord I will rejoice  
Look to God, do not be afraid  
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near  
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near*

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SONG: [In the Lord I'll be ever thankful](#), from the Taize community WORD OF LIFE

## Offering

Jenne

We bring you our offerings oh God, in love.  
For the work of this community we offer ourselves in love,  
we offer love to others, for **whoever saves a single soul saves a whole world.**  
Through the love of God we respond in our giving. **In Jesus name. Amen**

## Prayers of the People

Kirsty Bennett

As I lead us in our prayers of the people today, I would like to share a painting with you that I love. It is a famous painting by the Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer, but it is not of a famous setting. It is a scene of ordinary life, and it shows us how the ordinary can be special and is something to be cherished. Let us pray as we look upon this painting:

God of love, of the ordinary which is extraordinary,

*We see a street scene with houses*

We pray for people who do not have a place to live,  
whose homes are not peaceful, are not safe, are not places of love.

-May we remember how precious it is to have somewhere  
to live and strive to make this possible for everyone.

*We see a house that is part of a neighbourhood, with a seat at the front*

We pray that our neighbourhoods will be welcoming and inclusive,  
with good public transport and community spaces.

We pray that we will make the most of our street frontages,  
using them to offer a welcome to those who go past, and a place to gather and connect.  
-May we make our neighbourhoods better places for everyone.  
May we welcome our neighbours, and invite them to stop and talk.

*We see women working*

We pray for people who are without work, and are looking for work,  
for people who work hard and do work that is often undervalued.  
-May we celebrate all types of work, paid and unpaid.

*We see a woman darning*

We pray that we may take skill and care in whatever we do.  
May we use our skills to repair, to reuse and  
repurpose our possessions as we care for the earth.

*We see people doing ordinary things, in their neighbourhood.*

We are called to be faithful, wherever we are and whatever we do.  
May we know the value of doing the ordinary things that are expected of us,  
as we live God's love in our day to day lives.  
Amen.

## Notices

Saide

Good morning. I'm Saide.

Next Sunday is All Saints Day. This will be a beautiful service when we commune with the saints who have died, now gathered around Christ's table in the glorious cloud of witnesses. We invite you to contribute to All Saints Sunday – to send in a photo and/or the name of loved ones – family and friends who have died in the last 12 months and longer. They will be honoured and remembered during worship. Details are on our website and Facebook group.

Next Sunday our first ever online Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal catalogue will be launched. Matthew and Michael will be back next week to share some of the delightful offerings featured in the catalogue.

This afternoon a letter will be emailed to BUC people about plans to postpone our Congregational Meeting and Election of Elders until we can meet again in person. Please read the letter and let us know if you have any questions.

Last week we met Ann Mallaby. Ann is gathering stories as part of the review of our Pastoral Care Ministry. She will be visiting groups and committees as part of this process. Ann is also interested in hearing from individuals. Contact Ian if you want to contribute.

The Climate Action Group is keen to continue receiving your commitments to Climate Action. This is an important part of our response to the Climate Crisis and will help to prepare us for further responses to the plan as a congregation in 2021. Please visit the Earth Button to access the pledge sheet.

Thank you to everyone who has shared stories through Riding the Waves and Candle Lighting. If you would like to participate in either of these series, please let us know. Meanwhile go to the website to enjoy Vilma & Richard talking about their dog, the ABC and courtship.

Join Ian after worship for the regular weekly Zoom Chat.

The November Olive Branch will be published next Sunday, set aside some time to enjoy all the news and stories. Keep an eye on the Olive Press for weekly news and stay connected through Facebook.

## SONG: Love will come again (TiS 382)

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- 1. Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
Wheat down in the dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.*
  - 2. In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain,  
Thinking that he never would awake again,  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.*
  - 3. Up he sprang at Easter, like the risen grain,  
He who for the three days in the grave had lain;  
Raised from the dead my living Lord is seen:  
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.*
  - 4. When our hearts are saddened, grieving, or in pain,  
Then your touch can call us back to life again –  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love has come again, like wheat that springs up green.*
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SONG: Love has come again, by John Maclead Campbell Crum, from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious, Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

## Blessing

Ian

Hear this, People of God, you shall love the Eternal One your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. And you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

Go now in peace to love God, by loving others.

Love is not the destination:  
love is the way.  
Love is not the answer:  
love is the question.  
Love is not the reward:  
love is the task.

And may love surround you  
love uphold you  
and love lead you,  
for God is love  
and those who live in love live in God  
and God lives in them.  
Amen.

## Thank yous

Music: Love the Lord your God with all your heart

Liturgist:

Jenne Perlstein

Bible readings:

Robert Sargent

Fiona Bottcher

Notices:

Saide Cameron

Lighting of Christ Candle:

Maggie Haines

Reflection:

Rev. Ian Ferguson

(Minister of the Word)

Images:

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Garden close ups - Ian

Ferguson

Acknowledgement of

Country:

Andy Calder

Prayers of the people:

Kirsty Bennett

Production:

Jane Allardice

Ray Cameron

Saide Cameron

Dave Hall

Ian Ferguson

Children's time:

Clara Hall

Dave Hall

(Pastor: Children, Youth  
and Young Adults)

Musicians:

Natalie Sims (Co-ordinator)

Catherine Leslie

Shawn Whelan

Dan Whelan

CLOSING VERSE: Love your neighbour as yourself Matthew 22:39