

Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Jenne

The God of steadfast love and faithfulness be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us worship the Great Name
the God of Abraham and Sarah,
who gives the law of life through Moses to guide us,
and renews the covenant of love with us at the table of Christ.

When life in the world seems so confusing
we trust in your light to give us direction –
light to show us true worship, true sacrifice,
true adoration from the heart.

We stand to welcome the word, singing of the feast that sustains our faith.

Song Table of Plenty AOV02-20

Refrain: Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Come to the table of plenty!

*God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.*

1. *O come and sit at my table
where saints and sinners are friends.
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely
to share the cup of my love.*
 2. *O come and eat without money;
come to drink without price.
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit
with faith and fullness of life.*
 3. *My bread will ever sustain you
through days of sorrow and woe.
My wine will flow like a sea of gladness
to flood the depths of your soul.*
 4. *Your fields will flower in fullness;
your homes will flourish in peace.
For I, the giver of home and harvest,
will send my rain on the soil.*
-

Acknowledgement of Country

Koen Dubrow

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.***

Welcome and Introduction

Jenne

Welcome to Brunswick Uniting Church those present in person, those joining us on the live-stream, and those in the overflow space.

Today is the third Sunday in the season of Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter Sunday. Throughout this season we will be exploring the big theme of covenant, God's promise of faithful love. So far, we have remembered God's covenant with Noah, represented by the rainbow, and God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah, the promise of descendants like stars in the sky represented by the fairy lights here. Today God gives Abraham's descendants (including us!) the ten commandments, written on tablets of stone, bringing the covenant down to earth. We will also hear the challenge of these commandments in the gospel as Jesus upsets the institutions of worship in the Jerusalem Temple.

So, children of Sarah and Abraham, children of God's promise, welcome to worship today, wherever you are. The Christ Candle remains unlit through Lent, awaiting the day of resurrection. I'm Karlien your liturgist – I'll be leading worship with our preacher for today, Ian, our musicians, and a number of others from our community.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Jenne

Holy One, we thank you and praise you for the rainbow covenant of your love.

We rejoice in the promise of your faithfulness, 'I am with you'.

Thank you for your grace accepting us as we are,
all your children through all generations, a multitude like the stars.

We praise your wisdom, O God, in recognizing the frailty of our humanity,
giving us guidance in stone and your Spirit in our hearts.

Thank you for the commandments which impel us to stop
and reflect on your Holiness alone, to respect others,
to take up our responsibilities and do justice.

But law on stone is not enough.

We praise you for the ultimate step in the covenant of love,
the gift of Jesus Christ your Son, by whom you write your law on our hearts.

Thank you for calling us beyond the external signs of faith,
obedience to rules, the sacrifice of animals and offering of money,
to the love made known to us in Jesus.

We confess though, the forgetting of the Law of Love,
not following the lead of Jesus,

or stopping as we might to praise and worship you authentically.

Forgive us our lack of love, of authenticity,
of righteous outrage at injustice in us and our world.

Lead us beyond selfish priorities to be love
and to live the essence of your law.

O God, we confess and ask your forgiveness.
Through Jesus name. Amen

Word of Grace

Ian

Jesus gave so much that we might live.
Receive, again and again, his word of grace:
Our sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

With the Children

Dave

Three things to listen out for in the Bible Reading

1. Which festival is happening in the story?
2. What tool does Jesus make?
3. How long have they been building the Temple?

Gospel Reading – John 2:13-22

Robert

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Chat with children and Blessing of SMP Leaders

Chat about Passover (links to Moses, Egypt), Jesus with a whip, Temple being built.

We're now going to Bless the leaders and assistants of the Sunday Morning Program – those who lead you, teach you, so we invite them to all come down now, and the Children, Youth and Young Adult Committee. And Joel Hallinan who is chair of that Committee. Thanks Joel.

Joel: Thanks Dave. I'd first like us to say a huge thank you to two members of the Children and Youth Committee who have finished up: Anita Major has been the chair of the committee for a number of years, and on the committee since around the time Tilly was born – she's left a fantastic legacy. Anita is away for the long weekend, but tuning in via the live stream, so we'll thank her in a minute.

And Tim Winkler has moved up to Shepparton with Jacqui and their youngest, Josh – to be closer to family. They'll still be back at BUC from time to time.

So, we thought we might each go up to the camera and say "Thanks Anita, Thanks Tim!!"

Joel leads the way, others follow. Then after all the kids have done it, Joel gets the whole congregation to call out: "Thanks Anita, Thanks Tim!"

Joel: Ok, now that you have your voices warmed up... to the congregation:

Here at BUC we have committed ourselves to the *Keeping Children Safe Policy* of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. I invite you to reaffirm that commitment now.

Together as a congregation will you continue to listen, care and work with our children and

leaders to safeguard the vulnerable from abuse and neglect, and to promote their safety and well-being?

We will, for this is God's desire for all creation.

Dave: Remembering that it takes a whole congregation to raise a young person in the faith, do you commit to support our ministry with children and youth?

We do

Joel: Will you pray for the leaders, children and youth connected to BUC?

We will

Dave: To the parents:

Recognising the partnership between this congregation and you as parents, will you undertake to teach your children by example, that they may grow into disciples of Jesus Christ?

We will

Joel: To the SMP leaders and assistants:

Will you accept the responsibilities and privileges of teaching our children and youth the way of Jesus?

We will, God being our helper

Dave: Will you be diligent in prayer for BUC's young people, prepare well and use your creativity and skills to the best of your God given ability?

We will, God being our helper

SMP leaders kneel if able, and children lay on hands for the sung blessing.
Invite youth down to lay on hands at this point, too.

Blessing Song

May God's sheltering wings MV214

*May God's sheltering wings,
her gathering wings protect you.*

*May God's nurturing arms,
her cradling arms sustain you.*

*And hold you in her love,
And hold you in her love.*

SONG: [May God's sheltering wings](#), by Judith Snowdon, from [More Voices](#),
United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.
Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Children / youth exit for SMP

Bible Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

Karlien As Meg reads to us now, I will place a stone on the table for each of the ten commandments – a sign of the law of love carved in stone and written on our hearts.

The Ten Commandments

Meg Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;

Karlien I am your God who brought you Freedom and liberation. Place a stone from basket on communion table.

Meg you shall have no other gods before me.

Karlien Be focused and pure in heart with your worship and love justice ..not possessions or the ego. Place a stone from basket on communion table.

Meg You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

Karlien Keep god's love and relationship with God as the priority, not worshipping the earthly images and structures of religion. Place a stone from basket on communion table.

Meg You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Karlien Don't take the Spirit or the spiritual for granted
Place a stone from basket on communion table

Meg Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Karlien Rest, reflect meditate on God's word, take time to love and be with God.
Place a stone from basket on communion table

Meg Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

Karlien Care for family those who have loved and supported you
Place a stone from basket on communion table.

Meg You shall not murder.

Karlien All Life is precious Place a stone from basket on communion table

Meg You shall not commit adultery.

Karlien Show love, respect and commitment to partners and those you love
Place a stone from basket on communion table

Meg You shall not steal.

Karlien Show Justice and respect to all. Place a stone from basket on communion table

Meg You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

Karlien Speak truth tenderly and lovingly. Place a stone from basket on communion table

Meg You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Karlien Have your hearts on the best in life for you, the faith that God will provide not what others have that you don't. Place a stone from basket on communion table

Covenant Song

Ian

I will set my bow in the clouds (verses 1, 2 & 3 only)

*I will set my bow in the clouds
as a sign of my love for you;
as a sign of my promise to all the earth,
visible where gray sky meets blue.*

*I will place my child in your womb
as a sign of my love for you;
when you laugh at the wonder, remember this:
Abraham and Sarah did, too.*

*I will give to Moses my law
as a sign of my love for you;
be part of my justice in all the earth;
covenant to do what is true.*

Reflection

Ian

Anger & Transformation in the Temple

Jesus is ropeable today. And in his righteous rage he makes a whip and drives the sacrificial animals out of the temple courtyard where they are on sale to Passover Pilgrims – suddenly there are sheep and cattle stampeding, doves flapping everywhere. And then he's gunning for the money changers who are there because the Pilgrims can't make temple offerings using Roman coins which have the idolatrous head of the emperor on them. He sweeps their coins to the ground and overturns their tables. He is an angry man.

Now we all get angry, it's part of being human, but while Jesus' rage maybe righteous and positively directed towards justice and transformation, it is nonetheless violent with undescribed impacts on the traders and the bystanders. We all know the terrible impacts of unrestrained violent anger, male anger in particular – we've either heard stories or have experienced it ourselves. We've all been angry, and perhaps at times we have lost our tempers in ways that we regret.

I have all this in mind as the good news of God's creation renewing love comes to us this morning through the story of an angry man. I want to focus on the transformational power of anger, that natural feeling that we all have. But I acknowledge that the downside of anger is very serious and might touch on trauma. And so, I hope you will come with me as I introduce an element of comedy to lighten this discussion. I am not wanting to trivialise the subject, but to ask, how does the anger of Christ, his righteous rage, remake the world?

The comedy in question is one of my favourite COVID Lockdown TV bingeing experiences, the feelgood sitcom *Ted Lasso* on Apple TV. Ted whom we are hardly going to meet today, is an American football coach who is brought to England to coach a Premier League soccer team – a game he knows nothing about. The team is AFC Richmond, a fictional club on the bottom of the ladder facing relegation (and I confess, I do like the irony for Australians that the show has chosen Richmond to represent losing!). The person I want you to meet is the captain of the team Roy Kent. Roy is a legendary soccer player who in his youth was a great champion. But now he is old (for a soccer player), plagued by injury and nearing retirement. And the reason I'm introducing him to you, is because Roy is an angry man as the fabulous Keely, the club "branding consultant", is about to demonstrate for us. In this scene Roy has no shirt on because he's just burst out of the changing room in a rage.

So you get the idea. Roy is not Jesus, but he is a human being who feels anger, like Jesus, like all of us – although Roy probably feels it a bit more than most. The question is, where does that anger go, what does it achieve? I'll show you in a moment, but first I want to ask the same thing of Jesus.

Jesus, what are you actually seeking to achieve with this Temple Tantrum of yours? Interpretation over the years has tended to focus on the injustices of the temple authorities, the extortionate price gouging perpetrated on poor Passover pilgrims, the making of a marketplace from a holy place. But it's been pointed out lately that while Jesus indeed rails against the abuses of temple worship, he goes much further than that. He confronts and seeks to overturn the system itself, the very institution of temple worship, not just its abuses. He is seeking, in other words, to upset the status quo and reshape his world.

More on that in a moment, first back to Roy Kent for a demonstration of the way anger can positively change the world (at least in a sit-com kind of way). In this next scene, AFC Richmond is playing Everton, a team they haven't beaten for 60 years. Before the match, none of the players expect to win and they are depressed and lethargic, they need motivating. And eccentric coach Ted gives that task, the pre-match address, to Nate – Nate is the general

factotum who carries the water, cleans the boots and washes the uniforms, but he also knows the team better than anyone else. Here's what happens. WARNING: there is an expression of anger in this scene – just like there is in the gospel – furniture is overturned, but it is all in the service of world transformation and nobody gets hurt.

As we know, football in all its manifestations is only a game, right? – and Jesus is certainly not playing games today. But can we see in this cute fantasy some of the same dynamics as Jesus in the Temple. The state of things, the status quo is overturned – Richmond always loses at Everton, it is the way things are – until the otherwise self-destructive anger of one man is channelled in a positive direction.

This is what happens in the Temple today – Jesus is raging, upsetting the status quo, remaking his world. Because in this ancient context worship in the temple requires sacrifice – no animals, no worship. And worship in the temple requires that the temple tax be paid – no currency conversion, no temple, no worship. And Jesus overturns it all and drives it away.

Now I want to pause for a moment to observe the gaping interpretive trap that is opening up before us here into which we could easily now fall. That would be to say that Temple Worship represents Judaism and Jesus is replacing that with Christian worship. NO, we're not falling for that today! Because while John's gospel has lent itself to anti-Jewish interpretations through the ages, in fact John portrays Jesus as a devout observant Jewish man coming to the temple to practice his faith at his holiest festival, Passover. Jesus is not overturning his religion, no, like the Old Testament prophets before him he is confronting the institutional corruption of faith that takes divine authority upon itself. To quote biblical scholar Gail O'Day: *Jesus challenges a religious system so embedded in its own rules and practices that it is no longer open to a fresh revelation from God, a temptation that exists for contemporary Christianity as well as for the Judaism of Jesus' day.*

The question put by this story therefore becomes: where are the institutions and powers and authorities that would claim the place of God in our lives? – those institutions that want to make the world in their own image, by their own rules? – rules about who belongs and who is excluded, whose love is recognised and whose is rejected, whose faith conforms to a particular orthodoxy and whose is out of bounds.

It makes me so angry when churches behave in ways that confirm the popular story of Christianity told in our society – that we are blinkered, narrowminded, moralistic, sexist, legalistic, homophobic, abusive, science rejecting institutions that limit life. Jesus says, "I came that you may have life in abundance, life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). And it angered him to see his religious institution blocking that vision. I pray that my anger, our anger, might have the quality of Christ's – a divine passion for life and love that rages with transforming fervour against the life-blocks that humans build even within our religions.

I pray for that passion in myself and in my church, but at the same time I acknowledge the Roy Kent in me. The human frailty that struggles with the expression of hard emotions – what to hold back and what to let out, what to say and do when and where. It's hard and when it goes bad it goes really bad.

So, I pray further for the wisdom of a Nate-the-Great to be among us. May tune in to the Spirit of Divine Wisdom moving in this church, in our families and our community, helping us together to love, care, callout and support one another with compassion as we rage with Christ for life in its fullness.

Offering Song Inspired by love and anger TiS 674

- Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain,
Informed of God's own bias we ask him once again:
"How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind?"*

4. *To God, who through the prophets proclaimed a different age,
We offer earth's indifference, its agony and rage:
"When will the wronged be righted? When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?"*
5. *God asks, "Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?"*
6. *Amused in someone's kitchen, asleep in someone's boat,
Attuned to what the ancients exposed, proclaimed and wrote,
A Saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools
Has come to tip the balance with fishermen and fools.*

SONG: Inspired by love and anger, from Heaven Shall not Wait © Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Prayers of the People

Jim

God of the waves that wash upon the rocks of suburban beaches
We pray for the world: may the world feel safe again. May the world wake up, find inspiration, remember justice, remember faith. May we all be cleansed from secret faults.

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe, we watch, expectantly.

May tables be turned, may promises be made

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe, we watch, expectantly.

May tables be turned, may promises be made

We pray for the church: may church communities find inspiration, rebirth. May they listen, and know how to respond. May they know what to say, and speak their truth. We pray for the UCA Moderator-Elect, David Fotheringham, and the success of new Synod proposals on climate justice, family violence, gambling reform, online safety.

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe, we watch, expectantly.

May tables be turned, may promises be made

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe, we watch, expectantly.

May tables be turned, may promises be made

We pray for those in need. May those exhausted by responsibilities, find help, and, eventually, peace. May they find their rock and their redeemer. We pray for medevac refugees: may they find both spiritual hope and practical support. We pray for those with mental health issues, and their carers: may they find new hope. We pray for those in aged care and their carers: may they feel our care.

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe, we watch, expectantly.

May tables be turned, may promises be made

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe, we watch, expectantly.

May tables be turned, may promises be made

In the name of Christ: of Autumn leaves, yet, rising

Praise

Amen

Holy Communion

Ian

Servers: Ian, Karlien, Gwen, Shawn

Invitation

You are invited into this time
of shared communion
with one another and God.
You are invited just as you are.
If you've never been,
if you've been many times before,
if you haven't been for some time,
if you know Jesus well or don't know him at all,
come and hold one another at this table
and be held by the one who loves us beyond words.
Come in your struggles and questions,
your needs and hopes,
your hunger and thirst.
If you are comfortable and at home here
participate in a way that makes a place
for those who are not.
If you are uncomfortable here,
feel free to join in or to remain silent
as it is helpful to you.
This meal does not depend
on our understanding or familiarity,
but on the compassionate grace of God.
So you are welcome to come and join in the feast here.

Thanksgiving

We are the body of Christ
His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to God who is Wisdom and Love.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Father of goodness, Mother of kindness,
for creation in its wonder and mystery
we thank you

for Jesus your beloved Son in his compassion,
we thank you

for your Holy Spirit in her grace,
we thank you

And with the whole realm of nature around us,
with earth, sea and sky,
we sing to you!

With all the saints before us and beside us,
with brothers and sisters,
east and west, north and south,
we sing to you!

And with our loved ones,
separate from us now,
who yet, in this mystery are close to us,
we sing the hymn of unending praise:

Holy, holy, holy (TIS764)

*Holy (Holy), holy, (holy)
holy Lord of power and might.
Heaven (Heaven), earth (earth)
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
All glory to your name.
(All glory to your name.)
All glory to your name.
(All glory to your name.)
Blessed (Blessed), blessed (blessed)
is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Blessed (Blessed), blessed (blessed)
is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
(Hosanna in the highest.)
Hosanna in the highest.
(Hosanna in the highest.)*

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
who on the night of his betrayal
took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:

***This is my body given for you.
Whenever you eat it, remember me.***

In the same way, after supper,
he took the cup saying:

***This is the cup of
a new covenant in my blood.
whenever you drink it, remember me.***

Come now, Holy Spirit of our God,
love us into the unity of peace
through this bread and wine. For:

***Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!***

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ
all glory be to you,
Source of all Being,
Eternal Wisdom and Holy Spirit,
one God and Mother of all creation.

Amen.

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

Christ is the bread of resurrection:
new life for all.

Christ is the cup of life:
who revives the faint-hearted.

We who are many are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.

Let us receive what we are.
Let us become what we receive:
The body of Christ.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Distribution

All come forward to table down centre isles. Give offering. Remove mask. Each take bread and cup from plate and tray – no double handling. Put mask back on. Return by outside isles. Musicians first.

The Peace

The peace of Christ be always with you.
And also with you.

Exchange a sign of peace without touching – namaste

Notices

Jenne

Saide:

- Yoo Mi's Ordination
- Holy Week planning group
- Olive Pages

Linda's video - March 11: <https://youtu.be/CLPOvWb3U-k>

Ian:

- Discuss service themes – meet me after the service and we'll take a table in the hall.
- Baptism and Confirmation group being formed soon.
- Tea and Coffee in the hall after the service (building up to food).

Sending Song

We will walk with God – Sizohamba (Iona – One is the Body 134)

*Sizohamba naye,
wo wo wo,
sizohamba naye.
Ngomhla wenjabula,
sizohamba naye.*

*We will walk with God, my brothers,
we will walk with God.
We will walk with God, my sisters,*

*we will walk with God.
we will go rejoicing, till the kingdom has come.*

SONG: We will walk with God, Swaziland Traditional, translation by John L Bell, © 2002 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland, from One is the Body. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE #604502

Blessing and Sending

Ian

We are standing on holy ground:
may you walk from here with God's strength beneath your feet.
We are gathered in Christ's holy temple:
may his presence be always with you.
We are breathing God's Holy Spirit:
may her passion consume you as you follow Christ's way.

Walk softly.
Speak truthfully.
Love gently.
Breathe deeply.
Live wisely.
And go in peace.

In the name of Christ. Amen

Thank You

Recorded Music: *The Promise*

Liturgist:
written by Jenne Perlstein
offered by Saide Cameron

Acknowledgement of
Country:
Koen Dubrow

Children's time:
Dave Hall
(CYYA Pastor)

Sunday Morning Program

Blessing:
Dave Hall
Joel Hallinan

Bible readings:
Meg Orton
Karlien Kok
Robert Sargent

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Jim Kilpatrick

Musicians:
Alistair Hunter
(Coordinator)
Glenice Cook

Joel Hallinan
Natalie Sims
Bridie Turner
Joanne van Ravenswaaij

The Promise (recording)
Elaine Potter
Julia Potter

Holy Communion:
Ian Ferguson (presiding)
Gwen Arnold
Karlien Kok
Shawn Whelan

Welcoming:
Faye Findlay
Robert Sargent
Amelia Ware

Production:
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson
Alistair Hunter
Mal Rowe

Closing Verse:

Walk softly. Speak truthfully. Love gently. Breathe deeply. Live wisely. And go in peace.