

ORDER OF SERVICE - Sunday 21st March 2021 – Lent 5

Lectionary: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:30-23

Lent Covenant Symbols:

Lent 1 – Rainbow

Lent 2 – Fairy Lights (stars)

Lent 3 – River Stones (tablets of the law)

Lent 4 – Snake skins

Lent 5 – Rainbow heart painting (from Ann)

OPENING SLIDE:

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'
Jeremiah 31:33b

CALL TO WORSHIP

Saide

Come people of God

As we near the end of our Lenten journey

we remember the gift of the rainbow to Noah – the arch of God's love over all creation

the promise of descendants to Sarah and Abraham – the family of God's love within creation

the gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses – the law of love grounding our lives

and the promise of healing in the desert – God's faithfulness even in the hard places of life.

Come with open hearts and willing hands

to worship our God who is steadfast love.

SONG: O Holy One

Saide

1. O Holy One, we gather in Your presence

O Living One, we welcome all to hope

You are our God (You are our God)

We are Your people (We are Your people)

You are our God (You are our God)

We are Your people (We are Your people)

2. O Holy One, the Covenant of history

O Living One, we live and move in You

You are our God (You are our God)

We are Your people (We are Your people)

You are our God (You are our God)

We are Your people (We are Your people)

Amen (Amen)

SONG: O Holy On, by Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan, from Worldmaking, released May 12, 2004. Used with permission
<https://psalmimmersion.bandcamp.com/track/o-holy-one-an-invocation>

WELCOME

Saide

Welcome to worship on the fifth Sunday of the Season of Lent. We have explored the overarching theme of covenant, God's promise of faithful love. We have heard God's promises to Noah and to Abraham & Sarah. We received the Ten Commandments with Moses and explored the strangeness of serpents as symbols of life and death. Today we will hear God's promise to Jeremiah 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people'. And we will celebrate our Pastoral Care ministry of Hospitality, Compassion and Community as a review report is released this week.

We are God's people gathered in a community of love and care to worship God. So welcome here today in this space and online. I'm Saide and together with Ian, Clare, Jenne, Ray, James and the musicians we are privileged to lead the worship that we offer today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY (by video)

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.**

PRAYER OF ADORATION & CONFESSION

Saide

As we prepare to pray let's sing 'Create in a clean heart' words of longing from Psalm 51:10-12. Let us pray

SONG: Create in us a clean heart, TiS 712

[Create in us a clean heart, O God.](#)

[Renew within us a right Spirit.](#)

[Cast us not away from your presence, O Lord,
and take not your Holy Spirit from us.](#)

[Restore to us fullness of joy,
the joy that springs from your salvation.](#)

[Lighten our minds,
shelter our lives with your Spirit free.](#)

SONG: [Create in us](#), by Digby Hannah, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious
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Steadfast loving God
you call all people into relationship with you.
Your hospitality and love are boundless
From your abundance you provide all that we need.
Forgive us when we squander this abundance
when we create harm to the beauty of creation
when we do not share with those in need.
Create in us a clean heart, steadfast loving God.

Jesus, Son of God
you call all people to follow you, to lose our lives with you
Day after day on your journey to the cross
you shower the vulnerable, the lost and lonely with compassion.
Forgive us when we stumble along the way
when we fail to notice and reach out to people in need
when we fail to care for ourselves and simply live.
Restore to us fullness of joy, Jesus, Son of God.

Holy Spirit, dove descending
you sustain us with holy fire and life giving breath.
You draw us into community, to bless each other
to become the people of God, your hands at work in the world.
Forgive us when we close our hearts and drop our eyes
when we become wearied by the burden of care
when we forget that we are part of a loving community.
Lighten our minds, renew us Holy Spirit, dove descending. Amen

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Saide

From the book of Jeremiah we read

'No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.' Jeremiah 33:34

Come people of God and rejoice, for we can be confident that in the name of Jesus, son of God, our sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen

Let's sing again

Create in us a clean heart, O God.

Renew within us a right Spirit.

Cast us not away from your presence, O Lord,

and take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Restore to us fullness of joy,

the joy that springs from your salvation.

Lighten our minds,

shelter our lives with your Spirit free.

Children's time intro

Invite children down, and Amelia joining us, grab a cushion. Listen to Clare reading the Bible now. And listen out for one thing in particular – which part of the body is mentioned?

HEBREW SCRIPTURES: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Clare

31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband,* says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

CHILDREN'S TIME (continued)

Dave and Amelia

Ok, did anyone hear which part of the body is mentioned?

The heart... do you know anything about your heart...? Any fun facts? Give the kids a chance, then Amelia can jump in. Include something about the infinity symbol.

Then play the clip on interesting facts (approx. 1 minute). Already in Dropbox/liturgy/lent 5. Dave to give the cue.

Then invite the kids and other adults to lie on the floor, resting hands on your heart, as we listen to the heartbeat – the clip is in Dropbox/liturgy/lent 5 – Dave will give the cue of when to begin playing:

"I will write my words on their hearts... I will be their God... they shall be my people... approx. 2 minute mediation on the heart.

Finish – reminder that music is good for the heart, so we are going to sing.

SONG: I will set a bow

Saide

1. 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 grey sky meets blue.

2. I will place a 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.

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

4. I will offer pardon to all
as a sign of my love for you;
when the vow has been broken and trust destroyed,
I will offer pardon to you.

5. I will write my law in your heart
as a sign of my love for you;
love compels us to follow the Christ, my child:
Covenant restored and renewed.

SONG: [I will set my bow in the clouds](#), Words & Music: Daniel Charles Damon,
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REFLECTION INCLUDING GOSPEL READINGS

Ian and Jenne

Introduction

Jenne is going to read us a series of four short gospel passages during my reflection now. And those 4 stories come from here. Whenever we come to worship in this place we are faced by this extraordinary 133-year-old window. It is always there, usually unacknowledged, inviting us to view and engage with it as we are so moved. What do you see in it? What do you feel about it? [those of you on the sides or at home on the live stream won't be able to see it all – don't worry I'll put closeup images on the screen]

Today, as I reflect on our Pastoral Care themes Hospitality, Compassion and Community, I want to focus in on the images here and the four bible stories they tell and share with you some of the things I've noticed.

How does this window illuminate our identity and experience as we worship?

There are things I don't like about this window, and I'll get them out of the way first. I don't like the white, red headedness of Jesus. Speaking as a long-haired, bearded, white redhead myself I've never had have much trouble creating Jesus in my own image and I don't need reinforcement. I know that the body of Christ in this world is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-gendered body and I long to see that reflected in religious art. Here, I can't help seeing an image of colonial Christendom, an imposition of the religion of Empire.

I'll talk a bit more about that in a minute, and about the way the images in this window actually subvert the very thing they represent. But before that what else don't I like? Well, there are only two women among the 20 figures represented here – unless you are into conspiracy theories Dan Brown style and think that this unbearded image of John next to Jesus at the table is actually Mary Magdalene – otherwise, there are only two women represented and both are portrayed in servile roles. However, as we will soon see, these two women are among the characters most powerfully affirmed by Jesus in all the gospels, and he calls us to emulate their Compassion and Hospitality.

What's more, this whole window has a feminine overlay being dedicated as it is to a woman. The inscription says: "In Sacred Memory of Mary Louisa Buzaglo, the beloved wife of Evander McIver [the architect who designed this beautiful building] – a dutiful daughter, an affectionate sister, a faithful friend, a devoted mother, a loving wife, a consistent Christian. Died 1st October, 1887" – at the tragically young age of 37. We never knew you, Mary, but I pray that today I might exhibit some of your consistency.

Now let's have a look at the actual stories that have been chosen to memorialise Mary Buzaglo.

Part 1 - Anointing

First, we have this image of radical hospitality – a woman washing Jesus’ feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. Before we hear part of it read, can I note that there is an anomaly in this section of the window. This image is labelled with a reference to Mark 14:8. Now, the story of a woman anointing Jesus is told in all four gospels but only two of them describe his feet being wiped with her hair, and those two do not include Mark who describes a woman pouring ointment on Jesus’ head. The version represented here therefore is either from John or Luke. And while those gospels tell very different stories, there is nothing in this image to distinguish between them. So, I’ve chosen Luke today because his is a story about hospitality. But I note that in an article describing the installation of this window in the North Melbourne Advertiser, on Saturday 3rd March 1888 the correspondent writes: The subjects illustrated [in the window] are from the Life of Christ, ... [including] Mary anointing Jesus’ Feet. That would be Mary of Bethany and she is only named in John’s gospel – so maybe that journalist had some inside information about what is intended here – I don’t care, I’m going with Luke. Either way, it is definitely not Mark 14.

Luke 7:36-38 - Hospitality

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

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Such a powerful, passionate, even erotic act which Jesus interprets as radical hospitality. According to Jesus, the woman bathes and anoints his feet and kisses him offering welcome with the very acts of hospitality that his host withholds. In this telling she becomes a model of faith which in Luke means welcoming the welcomer and thereby receiving the hospitality of God. She is labelled a sinner, which means someone excluded by the mainstream, an impure outsider, an asylum seeker of the soul who has no place at that table. And yet, she welcomes Jesus into her life and simultaneously is welcomed herself into a central place of belonging in the Reign of Love, the Commonwealth of God.

Friends, she is the church that we are called to embody – a church which shows hospitality to Jesus by giving hospitality to the outsider and the stranger.

Part 2

Now let’s move to the second woman represented here. She is an illustration of Christ’s parable about the separation of the sheep and the goats.

Matthew 25:34-40 - Compassion

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we [did these things for you]?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

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The man and the child in this window are not literally naked, thankfully, but I take it that this woman is enacting Matthew 25 verse 36: I was naked and you clothed me. She is covering the cold and cowering pair with a richly coloured, beautiful cloak – the garment of compassion which warms, comforts and includes. And although Jesus is not represented here, the verse referenced, Matthew 25:40 points us to his presence in the poor: ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my siblings, you did it to me.’

Friends, this woman also embodies the church we are called to be – a compassionate body which meets Christ in the poor and needy.

Christians can easily be dismissed as do-gooders, but this image reminds us that there is more going on in our faith than just doing good for the reward of it. You know, actually I see this section of the window as an image of God: God crying out in the poor, God reaching out with compassion – a divine dance of love that we are invited into.

Part 3

Now let's turn to this image of community, a version of one of the most iconic images in Western Art, Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. Leonardo's painting represents the moment that Jesus announces that one of the 12 disciples with him at the table will betray him – they are shown reacting with a mixture of shock, disbelief, anger and despair. Notice that our window's interpretation of the scene comes in a few minutes later when they have calmed down a bit. There are 11 haloed disciples at the table with Jesus, while Judashalo notably absent, has already turned his back and is slinking out of the room.

Luke 22:14-21 – Community

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table."

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As we know, the community which remembers Christ in the breaking of the bread around his table is a vast global rainbow community without borders constituting the full diversity of humanity. And this is not a very diverse image of that community.

To reflect on this, I'm going to read you something that UCA minister and artist, Rod Pattenden, says about Leonardo's painting in this book A Place at the Table: Women at the Last Supper. Rod writes: no other depiction of the last supper has been so reproduced in the form of photographs, stained glass, paintings, tea towels, postcards and so on. The fact that it was painted by a person of such genius as Da Vinci only adds to its sense of authority and immovability in our cultural imagination. It is as if above all others Da Vinci had got the true and perfect model of how it should be conceived.

Da Vinci painted his work as a mural on the wall of the [dining room] of the Dominican monastery in Milan. As the monks ate their daily meals the [painting] reminded them of the central act of their communal life... Da Vinci painted the table as a [trestle meal table such as the monks used] with a local scene [through the widows] in the background. His intention was contemporary, that is to make the image and its significance present in the life of its viewers rather than locating it in some past historical moment.

This stained-glass interpretation of that painting sadly does the opposite. So, the challenge for us is, what do we put in front of it? What do we bring into this space to give us that sense of Christ in community here and now?

Today we have rainbows and contemporary art and refugee images, a touch of contemporary architecture and technology, we have modern music, we have women and children leading worship, we have facemasks on (how much more contemporary can you get than that?). What else might nurture that sense of contemporary communion with Christ here?

Part 4

Finally, at the top and in the centre of our window we have Pilate and Jesus in another common image from Western Art, the Ecce Homo of John 19:5. Ecce homo is the Latin translation of Pilate's declaration "Here is the man".

John 19:1-6a – “Here is the Man”

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to the crowd, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to the crowd, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Ecce Homo. Here is the Man. Pilate sits smugly on his throne with the violent threat of the military behind him. He has all the power – the power to judge and condemn, to torture and humiliate, to kill. He points to Jesus, presenting him to us, as if we are the mob. Jesus is flogged, bleeding, crowned with thorns and dressed in a royal robe – a parody of a king and a provocation to the crowd which cries, “Crucify him!”

Here, in an image of crushing injustice and irony, the violent power of the world dismisses and manipulates the vulnerable power of heaven, the power of love.

Over the years in religious art, the Ecce Homo has come to represent divine identity with suffering and the subversion of power – giving dignity and authority to the victims of human oppression and exclusion including those excluded by the white privilege of colonial Christendom.

Since Constantine, the challenge to the church has been: where are we, sitting on the throne with Pilate or standing before the world in humility with Christ? And I, for one, am OK with having that challenge up high and in the centre of my place of worship.

<https://fergusonandurie.wordpress.com/tag/evander-mciver/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Place-Table-Women-Last-Supper/dp/0858198835>

REFLECTIVE MUSIC – *musician's choice*

OFFERING with SONG: Beauty for brokenness, TiS 690

Saide

We offer our gifts to God. Please pass your offerings in the bowls by the font as we sing.

1. [Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,](#)

[Lord, in the suffering, this is our prayer.](#)

[Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,](#)

[sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase.](#)

2. [Shelter for fragile lives, cure for their ills,](#)

[work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills;](#)

[land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak;](#)

[voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.](#)

[God of the poor, friend of the weak,](#)

[give us compassion we pray;](#)

[melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain.](#)

[Come change our love from a spark to a flame.](#)

3. [Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,](#)

[cities for sanctuary, freedoms to share,](#)

[peace to the killing-fields, scorched earth to green;](#)

[Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.](#)

4. Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned, our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need.
God of the poor . . .

5. Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.
God of the poor . . .

SONG: [Beauty for brokenness](#), by Graham Kendrick, from [Together in Song](#),
Harper Collins *Religious*, Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

PASTORAL CARE REVIEW REPORT

Ian

Before we dedicate the offering I'd like to add something to it. This is the review report of our Pastoral Care ministry which was adopted by our Church Council at its meeting recently. This report was put together through interviews with many of you, many of the members of this congregation over the last months and for those of you who aren't aware we've been talking about hospitality, compassion and community today because those are the themes that shape our pastoral care ministry here at Brunswick Uniting Church. It's a long report, there's a lot in it. It offers strategies for improvement but there is a strong sense from the congregation that model we have is working, it got us through the pandemic and that we should continue to strengthen it and build upon it. This report is available online and it goes with the original vision for our Pastoral Care spelling out the ministries of hospitality, compassion and community and it is also available online. So I place it with our offerings this morning and ask God to bless the work that we do in caring for one another.

OFFERING DEDICATION

Saide

Let us pray

God of the poor, friend of the weak
You have showered us with blessings beyond our knowing.
We offer these gifts today from a place of deep gratitude.
May all that we offer today be blessed and used to
build a community of hospitality and compassion
in your holy name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Ray

Steadfast loving God you are our home, creator of all that is.
We pray for our planet, this wondrous resilient extraordinary gift of hospitality.
We give thanks for people everywhere working to halt the harm and restore beauty.
We pray for people throughout the world with no homes, displaced by war and greed.
and give thanks for hospitality offered, praying that world leaders will open their hearts.

Jesus, Son of God, you are the head and heart of the church worldwide.
We pray for church leaders that they may lead with love and compassion
We give thanks for ordinary people your hands and heart at work in the world
We pray for people who have been abandoned and hurt by the church.
and give thanks for the gift of compassion as we reach out to heal the harm done.

Holy Spirit, dove descending, you breathe life into our community.
We pray for those who are ill in body or mind, confused, lost, alone, out of work.
We give thanks for all who offer love and care within and beyond the church.
We pray for our congregation as we rebuild after a long year of separation
and give thanks for emerging ways of being in community as your people. Amen

NOTICES

Saide

It's time to share the news of our community. Please come, line up, take off your mask, same your name and share your notice in a sentence of two. You can keep up to date with news and events in the Olive Press, on Facebook and our website.

- Holy Week begins next week on Palm Sunday with an ecumenical walk with a real donkey.
See our website Events page and this afternoon's worship email for details of all the Holy Week services.

Natalie:

- Call for morning tea volunteers.

Ian

- Thank you to Jane Allardice and Gwen Arnold who with Ian, supported the Pastoral Care Review led by Ann Mallaby

SONG: Community, Tune In

1. Part of a family, interconnected, this is community
Welcoming strangers, visiting neighbours, this gives us dignity
Care for the earth and sea, we need to keep them free,
So we care for the earth and sea
Care for the ones we meet, love is the face we see,
When we care for the ones we meet

2. Part of a family, interconnected, this is community
Welcoming strangers, visiting neighbours, this gives us dignity
Sharing our joy and pain, praying and keeping faith
By sharing our joy and pain
Singing a song of rights, imaging God in life,
By singing a song of rights.

3. Part of a family, interconnected, this is community
Welcoming strangers, visiting neighbours, this gives us dignity
CODA
Talk to the lonely, bind up the broken, this makes community
A glass of water shared with the thirsty, this makes for dignity
This makes for dignity, this is community

SONG: Community, by David Brown, © 2004, from Tune In, Brunswick UC, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE 604502

BENEDICTION

Saide

God's law is written on our hearts, we are God's people
called to follow Christ into the world
to be the voice of love, the hands of compassion
creating and being a community of hospitality and care.

Let us be all this and more secure in the knowledge
of God's steadfast abundant life-changing love
inspired by the One who lightens the darkness
to bring God's message of love to all in need
and nurtured by the fiery life sustaining breath
of the Holy Spirit dwelling within and around us. Amen

THANK YOU

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Acknowledgement of Country:
Josh Calwell

Children's Time
Dave Hall
(CYYA Pastor)
Amelia Ware

Bible readings:
Clare Keogh
Jenne Perlstein

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Ray Cameron

Musicians:
James Balsillie (Coordinator)
Helen Burnham
Michael Cameron
Anthony Hinds
Alistair Hunter
Courtney Rohde

The Promise (recording)
Elaine Potter
Julia Potter

Welcoming:
Kirsty Brown
Amelia Ware

Tea & Coffee:
Meg Orton
Beth Shelton

Production:
Jane Allardice
Martin Brown
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson
Alistair Hunter
Dave Miller

CLOSING VERSE:

And the king will answer them,
'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'
Matthew 25:40