

## > Holy Week Worship

**'Our doors are closed, but our hearts are open.  
We remain committed to worshipping our steadfast loving God in community.'**

We worshipped through Holy Week together in our homes. The worship committee (Saide Cameron, Kirsty Bennett, Amelia Ware, Natalie Sims, Helen Burnham, Jenne Perlestein, Jim Kilpatrick, Dave Hall, Valentina Satvedi) has delighted in working together in smaller teams to plan worship for Holy Week in these challenging times. Preparation for Holy Week has been the work of many voices, much thought, preparation and planning. So many thank yous to offer ...

- Valentina, our supply minister, who has offered a rich ministry in Holy Week in circumstances that none of us could have anticipated when she first accepted the call
- Dave and Clara and all the young people who helped to create the Lenten silhouette series and artworks offered for worship.
- music coordinators (Alistair Hunter, Shawn Whelan, Elaine Potter and Natalie Sims) and musicians who prepared and recorded music.
- Hannah Friebel, member of the Student House program, for her improvisation reflection on Easter Day
- David and Ray Cameron for knowledge and expertise in filming, sound and compilation as we have moved through the various phases of providing worship in this time of physical isolation

Thank you, thank you to everyone who participated, offering readings and prayers, offering support and encouragement and so much more.

### Palm Sunday

Welcoming us to worship Kirsty said and asked: *Today we will reflect on being a gathered community of faith, called to rejoice although we are in uncertain times. We are heading to new places with few instructions. Who is this that invites us into unknown territories, and what does this mean for us as we enter into Holy Week?*

Our liturgy took a different shape as Valentina responded to and reflected on each of the Bible passages in turn. First Psalm 118 - Valentina encouraged us to celebrate the



day as a gift, commenting that the Psalm speaks of God's steadfast love. She wondered *'In this time of COVID 19, how can we affirm the goodness of God? Can we trust in God's power, God's authority and God's love? GOD is our strength; God is also our song – God in Jesus is about to walk towards Jerusalem... Hear the shouts, hear the songs of victory.... God in Jesus is about to turn the tide. God in Jesus about to turn the tide....'*

Dave, Clara and Patrick brought the story of Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem to life in their own lounge room. Our second Bible reading Matthew 21:1-8 invited us to join the preparations for Jesus entry into Jerusalem. Valentina reminded us of the familiar parades in Melbourne's calendar and commented on the challenge for the disciples in following Jesus' instructions. She said *'It takes courage to go into places that we have never been before. It is possible that we are called to go into a place strange to us and where we are not sure what we might find or discover. Where are we being called to go this Sunday? What are we being invited to do?'*



Our third Bible reading took us into the heart of the parade. Valentina commented on the marches (not parades) that she had participated in during which she and others had called on the *'powers that be to release detainees and allow those seeking safety and sanctuary to be set free'*. She commented on the times that we live in now asking *'What might we find, as we walk into these unknown times? What might we discover as we walk through Holy Week? What truth might we find?'* Valentina invited us to walk with her metaphorically into Holy Week and concluded *'Hosanna! Know that we do not walk alone... God walks with us! God with us!!!'*



Geoff Thompson brought us Prayers of the People standing in the rain out in his garden. Later we celebrated a beautiful liturgy of empty hands. At the end of the service Kirsty invited us to place a branch or leaves somewhere

outside, to open our front gate, front door, door to our room.



Visit the [Palm Sunday post](#) for links to prayers, reflections, order of service and the full service on YouTube.

## Holy Week Prayers

Saide Cameron, Dave Hall, Peter Blair and Peter McKinnon offered prayers during Holy Week.



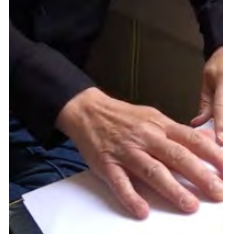
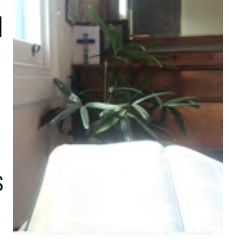
**Monday** Saide began the week in her backyard reflecting on Isaiah 42:1-9 and John 12:1-11 noting that the questions from Lent continue and the way in which Jesus' responses turn our world inside out. She prayed ... Sustain us as we walk with Jesus to the Cross, and on to the empty tomb'.

**Tuesday** Dave offered a time of meditation from his lounge room, reading from 1 Corinthians 1:18-23 and sharing the song 'Inspired by love and anger' from the Iona community.



**Wednesday** Peter Blair offered thanks and reflection on isolation and faith in Christ from the Grace Tree community where he lives. Reading from Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70; John 13:21-32 Peter invited us to pray '... Inspire us now with hopes and dreams of a new tomorrow ... inspire us with love ...'

**Saturday** Peter offered a reflection and prayer on John 19:38-42. He asks for us now 'What do we hope for, how will we rise out of this death of sorts?'



## Maundy Thursday

Worship on Maundy Thursday offered three invitations

- to wash our hands or feet, remembering Jesus washing his disciples feet
- to remember Jesus last meal, sharing bread and juice
- to walk with Jesus into the darkness, participating in a Tenebrae liturgy.

We began listening to the story of Jesus washing his disciples feet. Dave invited us to wash our own or each other's hands or feet in our homes saying 'As you do so, you may wish to pray, focussing on the humble, servant leadership of Jesus. Where he travelled with his feet... the dusty and rocky paths of Galilee and Judea. The way he used his hands, his healing hands, the people he touched and cured, and gave life to. While this sacred washing is taking place, we will listen to The Basin and the Towel.'

Valentina invited us to celebrate Holy Communion saying 'Today is another day on our journey towards resurrection. In the strangeness of an empty worship service pre-recorded and offered online we shared bread and juice each in our own homes saying together *'This bread is the Bread of Life' and 'This cup is the Cup of Hope'*.



Our service concluded with Tenebrae. Saide invited us into this liturgy saying *'We continue our Holy Week journey following Jesus into the deepening darkness of his last night. We will hear the story in five parts from Luke's gospel, and we will join in with a sung response after each. If you have candles at home please light them now as we sing together to begin.'*



As we listened to the readings we extinguished our candles one by one singing 'Stay with me' as the light gradually faded to darkness. We concluded in stillness, each in our own homes singing Julia Potter's song ['In Darkness'](#).



Visit the [Maundy Thursday post](#) for links to the order of service and full service on YouTube.



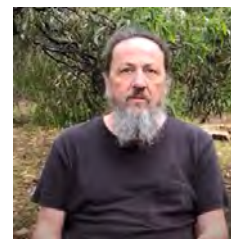
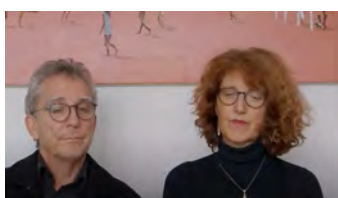
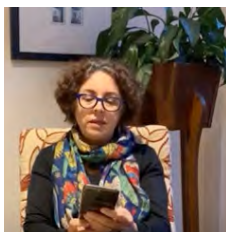


## Good Friday

Worship on Good Friday took us into the story of Christ's passion listening to and reflecting on John 18:1-19:42. Natalie welcomed us to worship saying 'Come, look, listen, and let's contemplate together the mystery of love.'



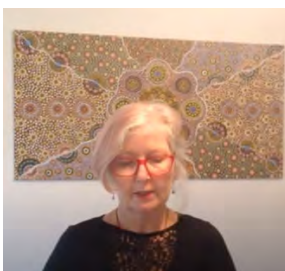
Saide invited us into an extended remembering of the story of Christ's passion. The readings were offered from people's homes. Responding to the readings we listened again to the questions and remembered the stories from our Lenten journey in company with the character silhouettes that had travelled with us.



After each reading and remembering Valentina responded with a reflection engaging with the characters from Lent and those who spoke to us from the story of Christ's passion. The questions continued in this story. Along the way she reminded us that people came to the garden seeking Jesus and he asked them 'Whom are you looking for?'. By the fire Peter is asked 'Are you not also one of this man's disciples?'. Valentina reminded us that we are called to identify as a disciple of Jesus. Before Pilate asks Jesus 'What is truth?'. Valentina affirmed that 'Jesus embodied the truth - I am the way the truth and the life... Jesus the truth, spoke to the powers that be. This is the Jesus that was handed over... Confronting blindness Jesus is flogged and crucified. Valentina asked 'Can you see?' She encouraged us saying 'In our restricted ways of being may we see hope, may we see the one who leads us through our suffering and in times of death.' Hung on the cross Jesus binds his mother and the beloved disciple in a new relationship. Valentina concluded the series of reflections 'We are invited to enter into relationship with God who is present to us in Jesus. As we step into the gardens around us, I invite us to look to the cross. Look around you what are the signs of hope? Where are the signs of life? Look for God's presence and activity. Look for the resurrection.



Jim and Natalie offered Prayers of the People after which Natalie invited us into a reflective space from which to venerate the cross in our homes, holding and passing the crosses we had brought with us for worship saying 'Bring your questions and listen for the voice of Jesus in your hearts.' Our final reading left us with Jesus laid in a new tomb in the garden. Saide sent us out into a time of prayerful, watchful waiting.



Visit the [Good Friday post](#) for links to the order of service and full service on YouTube.



## Easter Day



Kirsty welcomed us to this day of celebration inviting us to 'Listen for words of life and peace, listen to the sound of joy and hope renewed.'

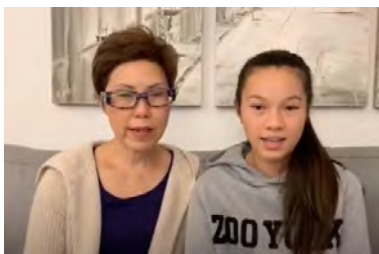
Bible readings were offered by Christine and Gwen with the Acknowledgement of Country offered by Joanne and Nina.

Offering the Easter greeting Saide invited us to 'light a new candle each in our own homes and to set the candles aside for worship in the weeks and months ahead until we can all gather to worship in our home congregations'.

We prayed together and journeyed one last time with the silhouettes.

Dave and Clara visited each of the characters in turn wondering where they might have been on day of Jesus' crucifixion.

They shared Jesus' Easter message in response to the questions asked by each of these characters. (See next page.) The gospel reading John 20:1-18 was spoken into the empty worship space and into our hearts by Saide.



In her sermon Valentina invited us to share a section of an Easter prayer written Indigenous elder Elizabeth (Betty) Pike who has been involved with Aboriginal Catholic Ministries here in Victoria. She asked us how we were feeling on this very different Easter morning and affirmed that even though much has changed the good news remains - *Christ is risen!* She shared her experience, growing up as a child in India, of the family ritual of going to the cemetery as early as 3am on Easter morning, of her fear of stumbling, falling, scraping her knee as she walked in darkness. Valentina invited us to walk with her and with Mary into the story, into the early morning darkness, into the confusion and the chaos. Speaking into the strangeness of our celebrations on this Easter Day she wondered if we are weeping as Mary did, standing outside the tomb - *'weeping at the slow destruction of mother earth'* and so much more. She wondered if we can hear Jesus speaking our names as he did to Mary in the garden. Valentina concluded speaking of Jesus' commission to Mary - *to go and tell others that the story is not over yet.* She invited us to keep looking for rebirth and reminded us that *God created the world out of chaos- God will continue to create and recreate. And when you see new life, "go and tell everyone that God is not done yet!"*

As on Maundy Thursday we celebrated Holy Communion into the empty space and through the recorded service invited everyone to celebrate in their homes sharing bread and juice, saying *'This bread is the Bread of Life, This cup is the Cup of Hope'*.

Later sending us out Valentina blessed us saying Be at peace and celebrate the joy of resurrection in your living and your being.





## The Lenten silhouettes Easter messages ...



## Imaginative Garden

Thank you to Leanne Salau, Natalie Papworth and Glenice Cook for the loan of their art installation **'Imaginative Garden'** which has added colour and beauty to our worship space and now graces our Tower Room Window display. The art work was created for the 2019 ['Let the earth speak'](#) art exhibition at Brunswick UC. Their statement for the exhibition was *'The earth speaks with its beauty. With all the different flowers. All different colours, textures, shapes. Variety of sizes and seasons.'*



Saide Cameron

## Nourish

Easter Stories - strange times, but lovely connections through online 'Nourish'

It was the first week of real lockdown. We had adjusted our plans for the kids in Lent two or three times over. I had been learning off-by-heart the beautiful sweep of the Easter story as shaped by Jerome Berryman. Dave had contacted families and planned and prepared. We were ready for Godly Play. But the world was changing rapidly, and it became clear we couldn't and shouldn't gather in person. What to do? Luckily some Universities I work with had already introduced me to Zoom - remember when few had heard of it? Dave Hall and I met in an empty Church and practised how he would move the laptop so the kids could see. We fiddled with lights and laptop angles. Finally we were ready.. how would this work? We went live, and one household after another of our sensational young people popped up on screen - I believe the first week there were a dozen families with about 17 children. They were so overjoyed to see one another! So much energy, such a strange medium. But still, there we were, and here was the story. How would we all go? The story is long, and strange and wonderful and even a bit funny. Would it travel? When we wondered together after the telling it was a bit hard to hear and see everyone, but the children brought such deep thoughtfulness to their art and their spoken responses that we were blown away.

The story cycle we were exploring is called "Faces of Easter" and has seven parts. We heard parts 1-5 in the first week, and added a part for each of our second and third sessions. In week three we also ran a separate session which for the kids of the whole Synod. Unfortunately some technical problems meant a few households could not join that session, so a couple of them joined our third evening session at BUC.

Godly Play is as nourishing for adults as kids This was a wonderful thing for BUC to offer to the wider church at this time. Thanks to Children and Youth for inviting me to take these sessions.

Janet Watson Kruse

