

Opening verse on screen:

'...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant' Mark 10:43b

Call to Worship

Kirsty

We gather
as pilgrims on a journey,
companions on the road of life.

Let us worship
the One who breathes through all time and space,
Jesus who came to serve, and
the Spirit who gives life to all creatures.

Acknowledgement of Country

Gwen

Annulus Billabong

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

Kirsty

Good morning and welcome to worship this morning. I am Kirsty, and with a team of people in front of and behind the camera, I will be leading our worship this morning.

Today we are focusing on what it means to live as a servant people. We are ringing a bell to sound the alarm for climate action, and joining with other Christians to speak up for the health of the earth and for its future. We do this as people who know that to be great we must serve others – other people, other creatures and the planet – if we wish to be first we must be like Jesus Christ, the servant of all.

Song: The Servant Song TIS 650

- 1. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.*
- 2. We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.*
- 3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.*

4. *I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.*
5. *When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.*
6. *Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.*

SONG: [Servant song](#), by Richard Gillard, © 1977, Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing
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Harper Collins *Religious*. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Kirsty

Through our worship today we will sound a bell to call us to prayer.

Let us pray:

Ian ring bell...

God who breathes through all time and space
You show us our place in creation as you remind us who laid the foundation of the earth.
You challenge our confidence in ourselves,
Our belief in the superiority of our knowledge,
And emphasize the small part we have in the vast diversity of creatures who live on this planet.

Ian ring bell...

Jesus who came to serve
You call us out when we seek status, when we want to demonstrate our own importance.
You show us what leadership means,
What sacrifice is,
How greatness is measured, and what is required of us.

Ian ring bell...

Spirit who gives life to all creatures,
You show us who our neighbors really are, and who we should love and serve:
People near and far,
Creatures large and small
The earth which gives us life.

Ian ring bell...

Forgive us, when we trust in ourselves and in own importance.
Forgive us, when we do not live in your way.
Forgive us, when we do not serve our neighbors.

Amen.

Word of Grace

Jesus forgives our misguided confidence
and offers us grace, giving his life as ransom for many.
And so in Christ our sin is forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

Chatting with Shawn about Job 38 and his new song, Where Were You, as an introduction to the reading and the song.

Bible Reading Job:38:1-7, 34-41

Matilda

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:
“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
Gird up your loins like a man,
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone
when the morning stars sang together
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?
... “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
so that a flood of waters may cover you?
Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go
and say to you, ‘Here we are’?
Who has put wisdom in the inward parts,
or given understanding to the mind?
Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?
Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens,
when the dust runs into a mass
and the clods cling together?
“Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
when they crouch in their dens,
or lie in wait in their covert?
Who provides for the raven its prey,
when its young ones cry to God,
and wander about for lack of food?”

Song

Where were you (Shawn)

*“Where were you when the universe sprang to life?
Where were you when I made the day and the night?
Where were you when the morning stars sang, to all the heavens’ delight?”*

*“Have you walked into the springs of the sea?
Have you dwelled where the gates of death are revealed?
Have your minds yet comprehended the breadth of all that I see?”*

***O God, you breathe through all time and space.
O God, we know you here in this place.
Help us learn to sit in silence, to open up to your grace.
Oohh...***

*“Do you know the mountain goat in the wild?
Do you know the way she nurtures her child?
Do you know the way I treasure the earth that you have defiled?”*

*“O behold the birds of air that I feed.
O behold the deadly toll of your greed.
O behold the sparrow falling, and all that you never heed.”*

*O God, your beauty all round us shines.
O God, we’re breaking your good design.
Help us learn a humble spirit, before we run out of time.*

*O God, we pray you make us anew
O God, our damage help us undo
Help us hear your call to change as we tend creation with you
Help us hear your call to change as we tend creation with you*

SONG: [Where were you?](#), Shawn Whelan, 2021, Used with permission

Gospel Reading – Mark 10:35-45

Jason

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

Thanks be to God

Reflection - Radical humility

Ian

Our two Bible readings this morning both speak of radical humility. What might that humility look like for us right now?

Here is Job. We met him last week suffering terribly and endlessly – he’s lost his family, his property, his livelihood and his health. And he wants to know WHY since he has done nothing to deserve any of it. And today God comes in a mighty whirlwind, to answer Job’s complaint. Here it is at last, the answer to undeserved human suffering. Bring it on

God gives a long answer. So, thank you, Professor Sean Winter, for passing on the following concise summary. It goes like this:

Job says to God, “Why is all this suffering happening to me?”

God says to Job, “Can you make a hippopotamus?”

Job says, “No.”

And God says, “Well shut-up then.”

Only God says it in sublime poetry for 4 chapters. Basically, God is saying, “I am God and you are not. You cannot comprehend my ways. You are a tiny dependent part in the wonder that I have made – the blink of an eye in cosmic time. “WHERE WERE YOU when I laid the foundation of the earth? – when the universe sprang to life?” God calls Job to a radical humility before the power and beauty of space and time, of the earth and its creatures.

God doesn't even directly address Job's terrible experience of loss, of economic decline, of physical and mental distress – the sorts of things that are so real to so many of us today. Does that mean God doesn't care about our ordeal either, that God only has bigger things on their mind? No it doesn't, because God does not dismiss Job's pain. It's not that our suffering doesn't matter, according to God in Job, it just needs reframing. God speaks from the whirlwind not to fix or explain human suffering, but to change our relationship to it. To call us beyond ourselves, beyond a blinkered focus on our own immediate concerns, to seeing ourselves as part of the grand, deep, wide story of God's love in creation. "It IS about you, but it is not all about you, it's about you in relationship with all creatures joining me in shaping creation with the creative power of love," says God to Job and to us. "Humility please," says God. "Where were you?" [gesture]

And speaking of a lack of humility, here are James and John in our gospel reading. Brothers, two of the twelve disciples, they are on the road to Jerusalem with Jesus, on the way of cross, the path of suffering, although they don't understand that yet. They can't imagine Jesus would go to Jerusalem just to suffer and die, despite him just telling them three times that is exactly what's going to happen. So, they assume he must be going to fulfil his glory as a military Messiah, Christ, the King of Creation. "Hey Jesus," they say, "when we get to Jerusalem and you defeat your enemies, overthrow the powers that be, inaugurate the Kingdom of God, and take your throne of glory; when you sit at the head of the great triumphant victory banquet with all creation at peace around you, with everyone out of lockdown united in a post-vaccination world, with open businesses and open borders, could we sit at your right hand and at your left?"

To be fair to Jim and John, it's not just that they want to belatedly share in Christ's glory, they really want to help out – they want to be the prime minister and premier for the Kingdom of God – someone's got to make the hard decisions, open the borders while protecting the borders, walk that fine line. "We'll do it!" say James and John. And the other ten disciples are like, "Ah, we wanted to do that, we wanted preselection, but the bloody sons of Zebedee have grabbed the news cycle and now everyone is talking about them!"

And Jesus says, "Pull your heads in, guys. Are you willing to drink from the same cup as me?" – and, by the way, James and John, he means the cup of suffering, the same one about which he will shortly be praying, "Take this cup away from me!"

"Look, here's what's going down," says Jesus, "here's what you need to know to be great, to be number one in this world of suffering, to rise above all this viral tyranny." Alright, let's hear it, Jesus! And Jesus takes a deep breath like God in the whirlwind with Job and says some crazy stuff: "To become great be a servant, to be first be a slave to all" – a slave, the last, the lowest, the least of humanity. "That's me," says Jesus, "that's what I'm doing here, not being served, but serving, identifying myself not with the first but with the last, not with the leaders but with the lowly ones, not with the wealthy and privileged but with the poor." Radical humility.

Here is Job called to radical humility in creation. Here are James and John called to radical humility in discipleship. And here are we. What does that humility look like for us?

Here is one idea I've been thinking about this week.

After agonising for ages in my own head, and in conversation with many of you, about how to open up our church after lockdown in a way that safely loves and includes those most vulnerable to COVID-19 and those who for various reasons don't want to share their vaccination status, I've finally realised that we can't make a hippopotamus out of it. We are not God. There is no PERFECT solution to our coming emergence that allows us to have doors that are open to everyone at the same time, at least while government vaccine mandates are in place and possibly even after that. And that grieves me and moves me to humility. I can't fix it. We can't be the church that models perfect inclusiveness on this issue and some people are already feeling hurt and excluded by that. No hippopotamuses here.

Instead, there is only the humble love of Christ. His radical humility. Being as servants to our brothers and sisters in their need, being as Christ to them, praying that we may have grace, that we may hold the Christ-light for one another in this night-time of division when coming back to worship still means being apart for some of us.

Saying there is no PERFECT solution doesn't mean we don't have plans. We are planning to continue loving one another through continuing pastoral contact, ongoing online offerings and smaller alternative in-person events for groups with mixed vaccination status, all while we open up our main service for those who are vaccinated. We are planning a single communion service across multiple times so that everyone can safely come to Christ's table. It is not perfect, but it is the love of Christ in action as we serve one another in separation, sharing one another's joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through to the day when we can all sing together with one voice.

So we live in humility with Christ.

Song

Kneels at the feet of his friends TIS 640

1. *Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet:
master who acts as a slave to them.*

*Yesu, yesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*
2. *Neighbours are wealthy and poor,
varied in colour and race,
neighbours are near us and far away.*
3. *These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love;
all these are neighbours to us and you.*
4. *Loving puts us on our knees,
silently washing their feet,
this is the way we should live with you.*

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Prayers of the People

Natalie/Read by Kirsty

Introductory words: *During these prayers there will be times of silence marked by the ringing of a bell for you to bring your own prayers to God. Church bells call us to worship and prayer, and today after this service we will be ringing the bell in our tower as a means of sounding the alarm on climate change, calling the world to a response.*

Let us pray together.

God who created the universe and all that is in it, we pray for our world.

For those who live in countries or regions that are at war, under the threat of war, or under occupation.

For refugees and for those whose lives are in danger because of their faith, ethnicity, sexuality or gender, particularly for those who are imprisoned here in Australia, or in off-shore detention.

For countries devastated by COVID-19 and for all those who are suffering its effects.
We pray for those who work in healthcare, particularly among people who are most vulnerable.
For leaders and politicians, that they build safer communities for all.
And for all those who work for justice throughout the world.
In your mercy; hear our prayer.

Bell sounds...

Silence held.

Holy Spirit who spoke through the early church, we pray for our church today.
We give thanks for the life and witness of this congregation, and pray for your guidance as we plan an inclusive way of meeting together after this lockdown.
We pray for all those in leadership within our congregation and for leaders in the Uniting Church: our president Sharon, our Moderator Denise, and our General Secretary Mark.
We pray for all those who work within the church to bring healing and wholeness.
For people who have had trouble connecting with a faith community during this time of lockdown.
And we pray for understanding, respect, and peaceful dialogue between all people of faith.
In your mercy; hear our prayer.

Bell sounds...

Silence held.

Loving Christ, who walks with us on our journey, we pray for our community and those most dear to us.
We pray for all who are sick or unwell, for those who care for them, and for their families.
We pray for those who grieve.
For those who are lonely or in difficult relationships.
For those who are struggling to make ends meet.
For those needing your comfort and healing.
And we remember those closest to us whose struggles we know most deeply.
In your mercy; hear our prayer.

Bell sounds...

Silence held.

We offer these prayers in the name of
the God of the Whirlwind who breathes through all time and space,
Jesus who came to serve, and
the Spirit who gives life to all creatures.
Amen.

Notices

Saide

Good morning I'm Saide Cameron bringing you the BUC News.

A few reminders to start with

- Applications for the new Olive Way Operations Coordinator position close on 31st October. Please share this opportunity with friends, family and colleagues that you think might be interested
- The Welcoming Ceremony is being offered as a Zoom chat event after worship next week. The worship committee is looking forward to seeing lots of people on screen receiving and offering welcome
- Today is the closing day for the written submissions for Emergence. Details of the Zoom event for the Opening night on 5th November are on our website. Save the date - it's going to be a wonderful joyful evening

The Assembly is encouraging everyone to add their voices to those calling for urgent action on the climate crisis. Today we are Sounding the Alarm after worship. Photos will be posted with hashtag #Faiths4Climate. You are also invited to send a landscape photo of yourself to Linda Wannan to add to the online action targeting Josh Frydenberg.

Carlynn Nunn, former member of our congregation and now chaplain at the University of Melbourne, is offering a series of Film Chats as an opportunity to talk about good, provocative or emotional films.

The Assembly UC National News offers lots to read and think about this week including the question of reopening, climate action, a Liturgy of Acknowledgement and Lament in response to anniversary of the national apology to survivors of institutional childhood sexual abuse, an invitation to pray the people of Lebanon, communities emerging from lockdown and the work of UnitingWorld.

On Tuesday we will be concluding the Eco-theology series led by Jan Morgan and Graeme Garrett. This has been a truly wonderful opportunity to reflect on some very big issues and ideas. Thank you to Jan & Graeme and everyone who helped make the series happen. There is an add-on session the following week to reflect on 'what next'.

Check out the website for all the details in the Olive Press, Events Calendar and Blog columns. Join Ian for a Zoom chat after worship.

Bye for now!

Offering

Ian

After our service this morning, with other churches around Australia, we will be ringing the bell in our tower to sound the alarm for climate change. We will also place these banners out on Sydney Road to show our commitment to serve in the world and to work for the health of the planet.

There is much to be done.

We offer our time, our energy, our money,
our skills, our patience, and our love.

May these banners bear witness to the preciousness of life,
to the need for humans to care for the earth
and to live in harmony with all creatures. Amen.

Sending Song

Sent out in Jesus' Name ATO 412

*Sent out in Jesus' name.
Our hands are ready now,
to make the world the place
in which the kingdom comes* *repeat*

*The angels cannot change
a world of hurt and pain
into a world of love
of justice and of peace.
The task is ours to do
to set it really free
O help us to obey
and carry out your will.* *repeat*

Blessing and Sending

Ian

Go now in peace
to make the world the place
in which the kingdom comes.

Go with the blessing of humility
from the Creator in the Whirlwind,
from the Servant Christ,
from the Lifegiving Spirit.

Go to love and to serve.
In the name of Christ.
Amen

Thank You

Liturgist:
Kirsty Bennett

Acknowledgement of
Country:
Gwen Arnold

Bible readers:
Matilda McClintock
Jason Minator

Children's time
Dave Hall
(Pastor: Children, Youth
and Young Adults)
Shawn Whelan

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Natalie Sims

Musicians:
Jane Allardice
Elaine Potter
Alistair Hunter
Shawn Whelan
Natalie Sims
Daniel Whelan

Songs:
Soundscape
(Prelude & Postlude)
Compiled by Ian Ferguson

Images:
Ian Ferguson
Shawn Whelan
Salvatore the Seal sourced
from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp_plhrqZLs
<https://www.museumoflost.com/salvatore-the-yarra-seal/>
whirlwind:
<https://www.firstchristianolympia.org/sermons/god-speaks-lesson-from-job-381-41/>

[org/sermons/god-speaks-lesson-from-job-381-41/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp_plhrqZLs)

Where were you?:

<https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/job-38-4>

clouds:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/wisdom-from-above-clouds-anthony-mills>

lion:

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/10/5a/bc/105abcf0d00ebee726a6192f3aa4ab00.jpg>

raven:

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/149955862582680092/>

Editing / Production:

Jane Allardice
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Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson
Dave Hall
Ben Hon

Closing verse on screen:

'...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant' Mark 10:43b