

Opening verse

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. 1 Corinthians 12:26

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Saide

Good morning, please find your way to the pews if you are here in the worship space. Let's stand together as we welcome the word and light.

Kirsty brings in the Bible followed by Fiona to light the Christ Candle.

Feel your feet on the floor, bring your awareness to your bodies.
Consider the wonder of this gift, muscle, bone, skin, blood.
And now bring your awareness to the church, the body of Christ.
Consider the wonder of this gift, many voices, many hearts, many bodies.
Let us worship God among us, in us, around us.
Let us worship God who shows us the way.

Song of praise - Hamba Nathi, MV 45

*Hamba nathi mkhululi wethu
Hamba nathi mkhululi wethu
Hamba nathi mkhululi wethu
Hamba nathi mkhululi wethu*

*Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu
Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu
Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu
Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu*

*You are holy, you show us the way (4x)
Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu (4x)*

*Come walk with us, the journey is long (4x)
Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu (4x)*

SONG: [Hamba Nathi](#), from [More Voices](#), United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.
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Acknowledgement of Country

Saide

Let us 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

Saide

Welcome to worship this morning, here in this space and online, a lovingly held sacred space. I'm Saide, your liturgist joined by Kirsty, Meg, Helen, Fiona, James leading the musicians in offering worship. We are grateful to Ray, Michael and Martin, our AV team.

We welcome Rev Deacon Fiona Bottcher as our preacher. Fiona is a member of our congregation and is the Coordinator of the Port Philip West Mental Health Ministry. She will help us to reflect on Jesus' proclamation in Luke and Paul's letter to the Corinthians, to wonder and ask questions about our bodies, about who we are, how we are as the body of Christ.

In the coming weeks worship may be a combination of in person and pre-recorded segments. Today Meg's Bible reading and Fiona's reflection will be offered as recordings.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession including Word of Grace

Saide

with SONG: The Spirit Of The Lord (Isaiah 61)

So now let us pray together, breathing breath into our bodies, feet on the floor, hands and hearts open. We begin singing 'The Spirit of the Lord'.

*The Spirit of the Lord
Is now upon me
To heal the broken heart
And set the captive free
To open prison doors
And make the blind to see
The Spirit of the Lord
Is now on me*

SONG: The Spirit of the Lord, Isaiah 61, adapted by Elaine Loukes, from Tune In, UC Songbook, Reproduced with permission

God of all creation you surround us with wonders untold.
You breathe life into plants and creatures of astonishing diversity.
You breathe life into our bodies, into this paradox of strength & fragility.
You have gifted us with care for all this abundance, we are humbled.
And yet too often we have drifted away from this gift of care
caught up in the immediacy of our own needs. Forgive us.
Fill us again with your breath, your abundant love, your strength.

Jesus, son of God, only recently revealed to us as a fragile baby,
now filled with the power of the Holy Spirit you reveal yourself
proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom for the oppressed.
You call us to follow you, to proclaim this good news to all bodies.
And yet too often we have drifted away from this call
immersed in despair at the immensity of need. Forgive us.
Inspire us again with the power of your words, your journey.

Holy Spirit, wind and fire, you lift us up and turn us around.
You shake us up, opening our eyes to the joyful complexity
of our own immediate bodies and the body of Christ, the church
revealing new possibilities, new ideas, new ways of being.
And yet too often we get caught up in the busyness of life
and fail to see wonder of who we are together. Forgive us.
Blow through us, heal our broken hearts, shape us anew for love. Amen.

*The Spirit of the Lord
Is now upon me
To heal the broken heart
And set the captive free
To open prison doors
And make the blind to see
The Spirit of the Lord
Is now on me*

Word of Grace

Jesus says to the people of Nazareth
'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'
Hear also that in Jesus's name our sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Epistle - 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Kirsty

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

With the Children

Saide

Fiona and I started planning the service over a week ago. We had a conversation about our bodies which we were all set to share with you. Unfortunately Fiona is unable to be with us in person as her son was confirmed as being positive with COVID yesterday. She is very disappointed not to be here in person. Instead I will be chatting with Kirsty who stepped in for Fiona after being asked at 8:30 this morning.

Kirsty: "Hi Saide... Wow, I really like today's reading about how the different members, all of us with our different skills, come together as the body of Christ. And after hearing that reading, I'm

wondering; how might we imagine the “body of Christ” if we pictured it as an actual person. What would it look like?”

(if actual kids present time for what do you think...?)

Saide: “Well, according to a National Geographic study in 2011, the typical human looks something like this – a 38 year old Chinese male” **pause for image**

Kirsty: “Hmmm, So what do you think.... Could this be a helpful way of us trying to imagine the body of Christ today? As the “typical or average” human?”

Saide: “Well, I wonder if instead of being the average of everyone, that the body of Christ might look like the best of everyone, that every single person’s unique gifts would come together. Like the scripture says: “in the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body”.

Kirsty: “Interesting... because if every single person is invited to become the body of Christ, the body must include people of all races and abilities – like it says, Jews and Greeks, slaves and free. So... Scientists and skateboarders. Transgender and non-binary. Neurotypical and neurodiverse. It reminds me a little bit of Noah’s ark really, every size, colour and expression of God’s good creation!”

Saide: And it also means - like it says about the hand and the foot being different, difference is a really important part of who we are. And difference includes disability. So as part of the recent Paralympics, a movement began that you might have seen called “We The 15”. And it was focussing on Persons with disabilities who make up 15% of the world’s population. So... perhaps 15% of this body we’re trying to imagine, the body of Christ, is disabled”

Kirsty: “Huh, that’s interesting. But also a bit odd. I mean, it’s hard to imagine Jesus or God as being disabled, we’re used to the image of Jesus as being the perfect person”

Saide: “Yeah but what’s to say the disabled person, or the neurodiverse person, or the gender fluid person isn’t the perfect body? Listen to this bit in the reading “the members of the body that SEEM to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect”. And: “God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member”. It’s like he’s saying we’re looking at it all the wrong way. That what we think of as weakness or disability may not actually be how it is at all.

Kirsty: “Wow Saide! That gives us so much to think about... because it challenges us to notice which members of our community are missing, or which members are finding it hard to walk through the doors and be part of who we are as the Body of Christ, or who’s voices are missing and REALLY do something about it! Like - what do we need to change to make sure people with all kinds of “differences” – visible and invisible – are supported and included?”

Saide: They’re good questions. And I thought this video from the “We The 15” campaign I mentioned might be a good place to start. Because it reminds us that inclusion isn’t about “pitying” or “curing” or even “saving” people, it’s about meeting people’s needs and supporting them to be fully themselves and valued for who they are.

play video “we are the 15” video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHCDvdCaJhI>

... then a “so there you go, something to think about as we go out in the world ...

Song - Body Song, GG1

*1. Oh, a body can’t walk on its nose,
And a body can’t eat with its toes,
‘Cos each little member has*

*a special work to do,
To make the body grow.*

*Oh, I can't do without you and you can't do without me.
'Cos each little member has a special work to do,
to make the body grow.*

*2. What if the body were all hair?
And, how can an eye sit on a chair?
'Cos each little member has
a special work to do
To make the body grow.*

SONG: Body Song, from God Gives . . . Songs for Kids 1, JBCE,
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Gospel Reading - Luke 4:14-21

Meg

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Reflection

Fiona

Intro - hello from isolation here in Brunswick West, just down the road from those who are gathered in the building today! My thoughts are particularly with the many of you who are also in isolation this morning, or are worrying for loved ones currently isolated with COVID.

But I am also incredibly grateful that I am still able to offer you this reflection, which is testimony to all the wonderful thought, hard work, and grappling that the BUC community has done during this pandemic to ensure that both the spiritual and physical needs of our community are met. And it's with this sense of the hard work and grappling that comes with change that we approach today's readings, readings that speak to us of beginnings and renewal.

So let us pray: may the words from my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, our God, rock and redeemer. Amen.

We have some really rich readings today, with much to unpack – so I am going to stick with just a couple of the themes that come through for me today. The first is the importance of law – or, another way to interpret this word, the scriptures. Every reading today, including those from the Psalms and Hebrew Bible, points to the importance, and the divine beauty of “law”. And another strong theme we encounter, is the importance of radical inclusion and with that, difference. And

weaving amongst these themes of hope and renewal is the reminder that we don't do this alone. The encouraging, hopeful message, the good news that we hear today, is that in times of change and challenge, we are called into renewal and regeneration *in and with the reviving power of the Holy Spirit*.

The readings begin with Psalm 19, which is the very psalm that the opening prayer both Ian and I, and others, often use comes from: It acts as a soundtrack for our reflections today - we have this beautiful song, or poem, that speaks to us of God's glory in Creation *and the Law*. "The heavens are telling the glory of God... Day to day pours forth speech and night to night declares knowledge" (Psalm 19:2). "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul". So then, we say: Holy Spirit, in the glory of God's good creation and in the glory of the precious words of Scripture that have been gifted to us "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and redeemer." (Psalm 19:14).

As Christians, we have a tendency to think of the word "Law", especially in "Jewish Law" in a negative – or a legalistic and rule focussed way. And we picture Jesus challenging and rejecting this legalistic mindset. But when we read "law" in the Psalm, or hear Jesus reading in the synagogue on sabbath day, "as was his custom" (Luke 4:16), we hear words of wisdom, truth and hope that come through generations of scripture and generations of communities grappling and wrestling, and teaching, with these sacred words. And in our reading from Luke, we encounter Jesus teaching and proclaiming the word, (or the Law), "filled with the power of the Spirit." (Luke 4:14). These are not dry, legalistic words, they are the living words of hope and renewal in praise of our God of divine Creation.

In Luke, Jesus returns to Galilee, teaches in the synagogues, and is praised by everyone. Not because he is a Scribe, or a High Priest, because of his teaching. He is so immersed in scripture, and so dedicated to knowing, discerning and teaching the word of God. And then, as the people gather around him saying "wow! who is this guy saying these amazing things?" He surprises everyone by placing himself within the scriptures of his ancestors saying: "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing". This is the Glory of the Law of which the psalmist sings.

Lead by the Holy Spirit, and inspired by his deep immersion in scripture, Jesus places himself into the Isaiah story. Now, let's consider Paul's letter to the new Christian community in Corinth - a community grappling with its own new identity – can we hear in Paul's words, a similar invitation to place ourselves – and specifically our worshipping community - into Jesus' story?

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

As we heard earlier, the words written in Paul's letter can still sound as radical to us today as they would have to those early Christians in Corinth many hundreds of years ago. And I think the hard thing for us to admit is that historically we've connected with the call to be charitable to the poor and the weak, asking ourselves "what can we do for them?", but not to genuinely and lovingly include them in all that we do.

When we put ourselves into Jesus' story, without grappling with how the words from scripture, like the ones we hear from Paul today, challenge us to think differently, we project ourselves onto Jesus. We think we're being like Jesus if we go out to the people and feed them and clothe them and this becomes our image of Jesus. But if we truly and sincerely immerse ourselves in Jesus' story, the way Jesus immersed himself in the words of Isaiah, we have to hear what the scriptures tell us about what Jesus actually does. Jesus doesn't simply go out to the people, he is with the people. Eating, teaching, healing, praying, listening. And it makes me wonder whether part of our difficulty with truly identifying with Jesus is that it's hard for us to think of Jesus as "one of them", rather than "one of us". What does it mean for us to think of Jesus as being more like those that he was with, than being like those who are sheltered in a more privileged life?

Now as I say this, I want to acknowledge that I am firmly placing myself within the “we”. In my ministry, I have found myself wrestling with these questions often. If I’m not careful I can too easily identify with a Jesus that goes out into the world, and whether I want to admit it or not, tries to “fix” and “help” people. But Jesus was with the people, he was, and is, at home with them. Paul isn’t telling us to be more “charitable like Jesus”, it’s a lot more radical than that. He is saying “be more inclusive like Jesus”. Because we can only be the full body of Christ when all “the members have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25). And even more radically, we are only the full and complete body of Christ when we clothe the members we think less honourable with greater honour and we treat our less respectful members with the greatest respect! (1 Corinthians 12:22-23). This is not just inviting people into our house as equals, this is bringing people into the house and asking them to tell us what we need to hear. We, and once again I most definitely include myself in this, speak for others far too often. We tell their stories through our charitable lens, and we need to change. We need to treat the “members of our body” who “seem to be weaker” in the words of Luke (Luke 12:22) as truly indispensable. We’re not a body without them. We don’t simply welcome and accommodate them, we need them for what they bring to us with their own unique perspectives and gifts and personalities, and we are less without them. We need to move from thinking of the “weaker” in terms of what they lack, and acknowledge what we lack when they are not with us.

And here, in this place, there is so much hope for new beginnings and renewal in all that BUC has done to be an inclusive space during this pandemic. COVID has made us change fast. Too fast at times. Things that seemed totally inconceivable, like online worship and pre-recorded reflections, is now part of who we are. And after a couple of years of wrestling and grappling with what we thought would be temporary changes, some changes have started to take root and we now we ask how these changes are going to inform us as a renewing and growing community and as a church into the future. But we don’t do this alone. May we invite the Holy Spirit into our story and be guided by the glory of God’s good creation and the words of scripture that he has written into our heart.

Amen.

Offering with Song - We are part of Christ’s own body

*We are part of Christ’s own body
working toward a single goal,
each of us essential members
in the beauty of the whole.
As we need each varied feature,
for the body to survive,
so the church must cherish diff’rence
for our work to grow and thrive.*

*But when difference is excluded
— age, ability, or race —
our mosaics turn to mirrors
that reflect a single face.
So we widen deep divisions
we were called to bridge and heal,
and we miss the truth and wisdom
only diff’rence can reveal.*

*We are part of Christ’s own body,
each unique in gift and call,
yet alike in common mission
for the flourishing of all.*

*Give us faith, O God of welcome,
not to fear what you embrace,
but to celebrate each difference
as an icon of your grace.*

SONG: [We are part of Christ's own body](#), David Bjorlin, © 2021 GIA, Inc. Tune - Holy Manna

Let us pray
We are part of Christ's own body
May we all that we offer
Contribute to holding the of the body of Christ
With humility, love and tenderness
That all may hear Jesus' call on their lives
And know that wonder of God's love
Amen

Prayers of the People

Helen

Hi, I am Helen, and I am doing our prayers of the People. At the conclusion I will take the Christ Candle to the chapel space, where you can lite a taper for your private prayers at the end of the service.

Holy One, three in One,
We pray for our world, your creation. For the billions of people who walk this earth.
Where there is fighting, war, we pray for peace
Where there is disease, we pray for health,
For those who are exhausted we pray for rest
For Refugees we have imprisoned, we pray for release and safety.
We pray for those who are abused, live in poverty, or with disaster, earthquake, flood, fire, drought.
We pray especially for the people of Tonga and across the Pacific who have been impacted by the tsunami. We pray for people's safety, for those whose homes have been lost or damaged and all those anxiously awaiting news of loved ones. We hold their fears that help provided by overseas will bring COVID to their already struggling communities.
For all who live with discrimination of race, colour, sexuality, age, or religion.
For your earth, as we face rising temperatures, we pray for unity of purpose in Governments, to fight for the future, for our children and grandchildren.

Mother and Father Of us all.

We pray for your Church across the world, and our Community. We pray at this time when we are separated, for strength, resilience and hope. That we reach out to share your love, not just with our Church community but with everyone we meet. We are your body, your hands, your feet, your heart, and your speech, in this world of need.

We pray for open hearts, to share your love.

For open ears to hear when you speak.

For open eyes to see where you lead.

For open mouths to speak when the world is silent.

And may our every breath be a prayer, in the name of Jesus, who was born, lived and died for us.

Amen

Notices

Saide

It's time now to share the news of our community. Please line up here to my right, take of your mask, say you name and share you news in a sentence or two. If you are worshipping online please send an email with any news you want to share in our Olive Press newsletter available by email and on the website.

Sending Song - We Will Sing A New Song

1. *Now's the time and now's the day we can sing our life again
Everybody come along to create a brand new song
We will sing a new song to the world*
 2. *We've grown tired of the refrain. Calls for vengeance mark our day
We will sing down all these walls, make a chorus fit for all
We will sing a new song to the world*
 3. *All the saints from history sang a faith that set them free
We will play their tunes again, find arrangements for today
We will sing a new song to the world*
 4. *We will welcome all the poor and their notes that are not scored
We will recreate the chord of the voiceless and ignored
We will sing a new song to the world*
 5. *We will play in all the keys and the rhythms God receives
In this multilingual earth let this music be rebirth
We will sing a new song to the world*
-

SONG: [We Will Sing A New Song](#), by Dave Brown, from [Tune In](#), UC Songbook,
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Blessing and Sending

Saide

We are part of Christ's own body each unique in gift and call.
As the year unfolds before us, let us hold on to this truth.
May we greet each human that we meet with love and joy.
May we hold each gift of creation gently with love and care.
May we treasure each moment gifted to us with love and humility.

As you travel through the year
May you accept God's call on your lives with full hearts.
May you meet Jesus on the way guiding your footsteps.
May you know the breath of the Holy Spirit shaping you.

May the Christmas gifts of hope, peace, joy and love
always be yours. Amen

Postlude Song - Thuma mina, TiS 749

1. *(Thuma mina)*
Thuma mina, Thuma mina, thuma mina Somandla.
 - 1a. *(Send me, Lord)*
Send me, Jesus; send me, Jesus; send me Jesus; send me, Lord.
 2. *(Lead me, Lord)*
Lead me, Jesus, lead me, Jesus, lead me, Jesus, lead me, Lord.
 3. *(Fill me, Lord)*
Fill me, Jesus, fill me, Jesus, fill me, Jesus, fill me, Lord.
 4. *(I will go, Lord)*
I will go, Lord; I will go, Lord: in your name, Lord I will go.
-

SONG: [Thuma mina](#) from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious; *copyright uncertain*

Thank yous

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Bible readers:
Kirsty Brown
Meg Orton

Children's time:
Kirsty Bennett
Saide Cameron
*based on conversations
with Fiona Bottcher*

Reflection:
Fiona Bottcher
(Deacon)

Prayers of the People:
Helen Burnham

Musicians:
James Balsillie
(co-ordinator)
Brad Coath
Hudson Coath

Sam Coath
Anthony Hinds
Bronte Potter
Courtney Rohde
Bridie Turner

Postlude song:
We Will Sing a New Song,
by Dave Brown, from Tune In,
UC Songbook, Reproduced
with permission through ONE
LICENCE # 604502
Musicians: Dave Brown,
Gabriel Brown

Editing / Production:
Jane Allardice
Martin Brown
Michael Cameron
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron

Images:
Ian Ferguson

Jesus Mural of Faith, Hope, Love,
and Peace, from **Art in the
Christian Tradition**, a project of
the Vanderbilt Divinity Library,
Nashville,
TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56412> [retrieved
January 16, 2022]. Original
source:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/36847973@N00/3342340183-CC-BY-2.0>.

Scroll of Isaiah from Qumran,
from **Art in the Christian
Tradition**, a project of the
Vanderbilt Divinity Library,
Nashville,
TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54196> [retrieved
January 16, 2022]. Original
source:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/korepotos/2472547083/>.

Closing verse on screen:

Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."
Luke 4:21