

Order of Service – 03/04/2022 Lent 5

Opening verse on screen:

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” *Luke 23:42*

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Amelia

Good morning, as we gather for worship in person and online I ask you to think the days that have passed during this season of Lent. Here in Brunswick we have seen the darkness lengthen and each day grow shorter as we move through Luk, Eel Season into the beginning of the Waring, Wombat Season, a long season that will last until the end of July, when cool rainy days follow misty mornings and migrating birds arrive from Tasmania and Lyrebirds can be heard singing.

As we prepare to worship God, we remember that life is made possible because we live in a world created by constant change and renewal. Please remain seated as we sing together.

Gathering Song

Remain seated

Jesus Remember Me **TiS 730**

*Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.*

SONG: [Jesus, remember me](#), by permission Ateliers et Presses de Taize Ltd., from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*

Acknowledgement of Country (recorded)

Matilda

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.**

Song of Praise - Hamba nathi MV45

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

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

Amelia

Welcome to worship on this fifth Sunday during Lent, a time of reflection and preparation for Easter.

Today we will hear the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, as we continue to explore the themes evoked by Rita Broadway's depictions of the events as seen through the eyes of Jesus. Please join us for morning tea in the hall after worship.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession, Word of Grace

Amelia

God, Loving Creator,
We reflect on what it means to be your people,
attempting to grow in your image.
Your process is one of continual evolution,
Help us to move with the seasons and see your world with the eyes of an artist,
able to be interpreted in many different ways.
Forgive us for expecting perfection from others and ourselves,
encourage us to persist and learn from our experiences,
in the hope that what we reflect will gradually move closer to your example.

Jesus, living Word,
Through you we understand God's empathy and love for us.
Knowing that we are remembered by you, we are free to follow your call to love one another.
Forgive us from the times that, through fear or distraction,
we have not seen or listened to others with the intention of understanding.
Remind us of your example of vulnerability and selflessness
as we endeavour to nurture our love for others.

Holy Spirit, centre of our being,
Your presence calms us as the world turns relentlessly,
enabling us to keep our balance.
Forgive us for thoughtless words and actions
as we allow ourselves to be swept up in the tumult
Let us to seek your in our panic and guide us towards peaceful outcomes.

Amen

As we do our best to work for the Kingdom,
believe the Good News that comes from God: In Christ we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

With the Children

Dave

Dave and Ian invite children down. Gather near the foot of the cross. Circle there, and a rope laid out in the shape of a semi circle a bit further out. A large dice at foot of the cross. Sour wine and sponge at foot of cross.

This is a hard part of the story of Jesus. It's sad, and hard to hear. Especially the way people treat Jesus while he is on the cross. So, let's sit quietly and listen – especially to what people say and do to Jesus...

Gospel Reading - Luke 23:32-43 (recorded)

Jason

The Crucifixion of Jesus

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Jesus. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they rolled dice to divide his clothing.

And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!"

The Roman soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"

There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

With the Children part 2

I wonder what you heard from that story, just now? Any bits that stood out? That you'd heard before, or were confusing?

How were they treating Jesus?

There were ever increasing circles of people mocking Jesus, teasing him, being really mean to him.

First the inner circle – the leaders of the Jerusalem Temple
(then up and walk out further to the rope.)

Then a bigger circle were being mean to him – the Roman soldiers
(then walk to back of the pews)

Then a bigger circle – the crowds in general
(then walk to the glass doors)

And finally, even a criminal who was also being crucified – even he was being mean to Jesus.

But alongside him was another criminal, also on a cross. Did anyone catch what he was saying to Jesus? (Ian and Dave to help here...)

This criminal had turned, and believed in Jesus. In this desperate moment, when they are both near death, this criminal – we don't know his name – decides not to go along with the crowd, not to join in the mocking and meanness to Jesus, but to believe he is God's son. He turns and believes. So let's sing about that turning now – remembering the way Jesus turns the whole world upside down from the very outer circle, not the inner circle where the important people are.

Song - The canticle of the turning MV120

1. *My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,*

*So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?*

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

2. *Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.*
3. *From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.*
4. *Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around*

SONG: Canticle of the turning, from More Voices, United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.
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Bible Reading - Psalm 63:1-8

Ralph

On Eagles Wings TIS48 refrain only

Refrain:

*'And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'*

SONG: On Eagles' Wings, by Michael Joncas, from Together in Song, Harper Collins Religious
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O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.
My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Refrain:

*'And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'*

Reflection

Ian

Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

So, where is paradise? And who belongs there?

Let us pray...

In my life I've met two people who have committed murder (two people that I know of!) – and don't worry, this reflection is not about their crimes, I don't actually know the specifics of what they did. When I met them, both had been convicted and had spent decades in prison. It was then determined they were sufficiently rehabilitated to be safely released into the Australian community. The twist for both these people – and this is how I came to meet them – was that neither of them was born in Australia and neither of them had got around to taking out Australian citizenship before committing their crimes here. They both identified as Australians, having lived here for most of their lives, they both have Australian families including children who still want something to do with them, and neither had any connection with the countries of their birth. But, much like the Romans in the ancient biblical world with their inflexible crucifixion policy, in Australia we take a hardline approach to such people. Serious criminals, who aren't technically Australian, have no place among us, they are not welcome here even if they have no other place to belong. We do not accept or consider any repentance, rehabilitation, reform, renewal or reconciliation. We simply detain and deport them. I get that crime and its impact on victims is complex and profound and traumatic and life shaping, but is this a good enough response?

I mention it, because today our gospel reading provides us with an alternative model for the treatment of repentant criminals. And if indeed we are a nation based on Judeo Christian values perhaps this might be relevant to us.

Where is paradise? And who belongs there?

The gospel takes us to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, today. 3 different groups of people mock Jesus as he hangs on the cross there, and, as we heard earlier, the 3 have increasing distance from the centre of belonging. First the religious leaders, high status insiders who define belonging, define who has citizenship in the Kingdom of God – they say: "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God!" Then Roman soldiers, foreigners, gentiles, outsiders who belong only as colonisers, say: "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" And finally, deported out beyond the margins of status and belonging altogether, the two criminals crucified beside Jesus. Luke doesn't say what their crime is – Matthew and Mark call them thieves – they are nameless nobodies who have forfeited their humanity by their crimes, they are extreme status-less outsiders cast aside to die in debasement by crucifixion. And even one of them laughs down at Jesus, as if Jesus is of even lower status than him, lower than low. "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

The whole scene is drowning in irony as all these figures mock Jesus for being a king on the margins without status or power, a king without a kingdom. To quote Herod from Jesus Christ Superstar (join in if you know the words), "You look so small, not a king at all."

Irony is saying the opposite of what you mean, right? “Are you not the Messiah, God’s King?” Meaning, no, you’re obviously not. But actually, Yes, he is – it’s reverse irony – this is what God’s Messiah now looks like, a crucified criminal.

“Save yourself and us!” – meaning you couldn’t save us if you tried. But that’s exactly what Jesus is doing – reverse irony again – this is what salvation now looks like.

The second criminal gets it, somehow he understands, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He sees that here amidst the death, decay, and dehumanisation of Golgotha, here outside the circle of status and belonging as defined by the religious leaders and the colonising rulers of the world, here the criminal sees that in his dying Jesus is creating a new centre of belonging, a centre on the margins. And the faithful criminal who had thought himself beyond hope suddenly finds himself right at the centre, right at the gates of paradise.

Where is paradise? And who belongs there?

Back to Australia’s deportation policy. Let’s be frank, most of the criminals being dumped overseas from Australia these days are New Zealanders like me. Recently, in frustration, NZ prime minister Jacinda Adern, said, “I have heard countless cases of individuals [deported to NZ] who on any common-sense test identify as Australians.” Last year, for example, Australia secretly deported an unaccompanied 15-year-old child, who has lived in Australia since he was a baby, to NZ during the pandemic when the country was in lockdown, forcing the child into two weeks of quarantine isolation. (1) And it is fair to say that NZers weren’t very impressed by this – “white-hot anger” is the phrase I saw used to describe the feeling on the ground there. Jacinda Adern, publicly rebuked Scott Morrison saying, “Do not deport your people and your problems.” But we keep on doing it anyway, we don’t care, we’re only (quote unquote) “taking the trash out”, as one federal cabinet minister put it with what might seem like extreme insensitivity, if we didn’t realise that this is actually a popular vote winning policy in Australia. Our leaders have in fact drafted even tougher deportation laws this year to make it easier to exile non-citizens, and, of course, to wedge the opposition on this issue in the upcoming election. (2)

Where is paradise? And who belongs there? I have to say, it’s beginning to sound like it might be on the other side the Tasman.

Paradise – what comes to mind when you hear that word? – is it the lush green bush and awesome mountain country of New Zealand or something else? We tend to use paradise to mean the most beautiful of places, don’t we? So, I bet you’re not thinking of Golgotha.

The word paradise literally means garden or park, specifically a royal park for Persian kings. Our translation of Genesis 2:8 says: And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden. The ancient Greek translation of the same verse says: And the LORD God planted a paradise in Eden. The biblical paradise is the garden of Eden, God’s royal park, the original creation as God first sings it into being with perfect harmony. The word paradise is also used in the book of Revelation for the garden of the new creation, paradise restored at the end of time. Thus, the Xn bible begins and ends in paradise, in the garden of God. But what about now between the beginning and the end, our time of paradise lost? Where is paradise today? Ancient Jewish scholars writing around the time of Jesus thought that paradise is currently hidden on top of a really high mountain, a mountain so tall that it reaches into heaven. We know there is no mountain that high and no heaven above the sky to hide paradise from us. But before we go the full metaphysical and turn the myth of paradise into an entirely spiritual place that our souls go to when we die, let’s note the radical thing that these scholars are doing by situating paradise on earth right now as a physical place. They’re saying, Paradise is planted in creation. This warming earth is the ground of paradise, not some disembodied heaven. Salvation is about the cultivation of paradise here on earth today, not escape from this earth to a perfect place somewhere else.

Where on earth is paradise? And who belongs there?

For a few years pre-pandemic I was attending the now defunct high security Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre once a month to lead worship. Most of the people in that centre at that time were ex-prisoners awaiting deportation. They told me it was worse there than in prison, because at least in prison you know why you're there and you have an end date. Immigration detention is open ended, so it is hard to hold on to hope.

I would turn up there and guards would escort me from security screening to a locked windowless room where the few detainees who chose to come were admitted after being strip searched. They generally didn't talk about why they were there, and I didn't ask. But at different times, two people revealed to me that they had been in prison for killing someone. They are both in other countries now, and I won't say anything more about them than that. But where did I meet them?

I met them in the place where we throw our human refuse, whether or not they are repentant, rehabilitated, reformed, renewed or reconciled. I met them in that human rubbish dump, our Golgotha, and I met them there in worship. We worshiped Jesus Christ together in that horrible place, in that stuffy dark room with the broken air-conditioner. We sang together there: songs like "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." We shared Holy Communion together in a circle there (as we all will here in a moment). We made a circle with Christ there in his brokenness and shame, there around his table, the new centre of belonging on the margins.

I met them there, faithful criminals, and we stood together at the gate of paradise. Jesus, remember them when you come into your kingdom.

Let us pray

Open our hearts to your word dear Jesus and help us to respond to the challenge of where you go, where you are found and the people who surround you, who gather with you. Help us to follow you to the edge, to the margins and beyond. Give us that faith. Amen

(1) <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/mar/21/it-starts-with-one-child-white-hot-anger-in-new-zealand-as-australia-deports-15-year-old>

(2) <https://www.9news.com.au/national/deportation-laws-australia-draft-laws-to-make-it-easier-to-deport-criminals-set-up-preelection-fight/e26d0596-7357-4059-bef0-93d27febc1a9>

Offering with Song When his time was over TIS357

Ian

Let's make an offering in response to the gospel. During the singing of this song you might place some money in the bowls at the back of the church there by the font or you might make a transfer through your phone to the account on the screen. The money we give is for the work of Christ's kingdom on earth, for the cultivation of Paradise here. So let us sing.

-
- When his time was over the palms lay where they fell.
As they ate together he told his friends farewell.
Jesus, though you cried out for some other end,
love could only choose a cross when our life began again.*
 - Secretly they planned it, with money changing hands;
in the quiet garden a kiss betrayed their man.
Priests and elders tried him. Soldiers crowned him king.
We were in the crowd that day when our life began again.*
 - Women wept to see him; he said, 'Don't weep for me.'
Many laughed and mocked him: 'Forgive them, they don't see.'
Jesus, please forgive me, you know what I am;
I was one who nailed your hands when our life began again.*

4. *There was one who asked you, 'Remember me this day.'
Jesus, when I'm dying, remember me that way;
when my life is over, be with me, my friend,
like the thief upon the cross, when our life began again.*
-

SONG: [When his time was over](#), by Robin Mann, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious,
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Let us pray

We stand to make our offering, the offering of this money for the work of the church
and the care of the poor and the offering of our lives in Christ's service.

Gracious God, giver of every good gift, bless us in our giving.

and fill us with the faith to follow. Amen

Prayers of the People

Jim

Jesus Christ, journey-maker

We pray for the World:

We pray for the ordinary people of Ukraine.

We imagine cities sieged; lives changed.

We pray that they feel our support.

May we all see hope on the horizon.

*Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.*

We pray for the Church:

we pray for Uniting Church congregations and
other congregations facing flood damage in Queensland.

We pray for congregations in Lismore and Byron Bay,
New South Wales, facing flooding.

May they rebuild homes, and community.

*Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.*

We pray for those in need: may those stunned by change, find peace.

May those stunned by bereavement, feel our circle of prayer.

May families who cannot meet, feel connection. May carers find rest.

We pray with transgender people celebrating transgender visibility:
may they feel respected and upheld.

We pray with those watching at home: may they feel part of our circle.

May we all feel able to connect again.

*Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.*

*Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.*

In the name of Christ, flame of hope, renewing us, bringing the Kingdom.

Praise. Amen.

Holy Communion

Ian

Servers: Shawn, Claire, Max, Amelia, Ian, Dave

Introduction and Invitation

- One circle even if we are not receiving. People at home on the livestream part of the circle too.
- At this sensitive time in the pandemic, please don't feel bound to receive communion, but please do still come and be part of the circle. If you would prefer to leave your mask on and receive a blessing, simply cross your hands on your chest.
- Remain in your seats if you wish or are not able to stand
- All servers will hand sanitise and keep masks on
- Gluten free bread
- As you move into and out of the circle for Holy Communion today you are invited to take a pen, go to one or more of the paintings near you and draw the sign of a cross and write a word of prayer on one of the pieces of paper beneath the paintings. Offer this as a prayer to cultivate paradise on earth.

Communion Song

Jesus remember me, TIS 730

*Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.*

Thanksgiving

We are the body of Christ

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to God who is Wisdom and Love.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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

we thank you

for Jesus your beloved Son, who reigns from the cross,

we thank you

for your Holy Spirit in her grace,

we thank you

And with the whole realm of nature around us,
with earth, sea and sky,

we sing to you!

With all the saints before us and beside us,
with brothers and sisters,

east and west, north and south,
we sing to you!

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

Holy, holy, holy (TIS764)

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

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
who on the night of his betrayal
took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body given for you.
Whenever you eat it, remember me.

In the same way, after supper,
he took the cup saying:
This is the cup of
a new covenant in my blood.
whenever you drink it, remember me.

Come now, Holy Spirit of our God,
love us into the unity of peace
through this bread and wine. For:
Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!

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

Lord's Prayer
Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name,

***your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen***

Breaking of the Bread

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

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

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

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

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Distribution

Music: *musicians' choice*

The Peace

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

Exchange a sign of peace without touching.

Draw a cross and/or write a word of prayer on the sheets of paper beneath the paintings.

Notices

Ian

- Ian:
- Ukraine donations total
 - Tuesday night Lenten reflection
 - Wes Trigg's 95th birthday next week
 - Palm Sunday ecumenical procession next week.

Sending Song

Ian

In the shape of a cross, Dave Brown - Tune In

*O Spirit God to you we pray
For the healing of the nations
Within this space extend your grace
For the healing of our neighbours.*

- 1. Love enter our shattered world of tears
Soothing the pain of all our loss
Breaking the locks on all our fears
Forging the truth inside our years
In the shape of a cross.*

2. *Love enter our marvellous refrain
Silently saving what was lost
Lighting the spark of hope and faith
Bring your forgiveness to our day
In the shape of a cross.*

3. *Love enter our lives at darkest hour
Be with us as we count the cost
Wanting to follow where you lead
Painting the picture of your power
In the shape of a cross.
In the shape of a cross.
In the shape of a cross.*

SONG: [The shape of the Cross](#), © David Brown, 4/2004, from [Tune In](#),
Brunswick Uniting Church Songbook, Used with permission

Blessing and Sending

Ian

Friends go now in peace to love and to serve.
Go with the blessing of our God who meets us on the margins
to create a new centre of belonging.
Go to cultivate Paradise on earth
in the name of God, source of all life,
the word of all love and the spirit of all joy and peace.
Go with that blessing in the name of Christ. Amen

Thank yous

Thank you for joining us, and thank you to...

Liturgist:
Amelia Ware

Acknowledgement
of Country:
Matilda McClintock

Bible readers:
Ralph Eduardo
Jason Minator

Children's time:
Ian Ferguson
Dave Hall
(CYAA Pastor)

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Jim Kilpatrick

Musicians:
Natalie Sims
(co-ordinator)
Steph Gesling
Clare Keogh
Bronte Potter
Maggie Somerville

Images:
Ian Ferguson
Artwork:
Rita Broadway

Editing / Production:
Hugh Brown
Saide Cameron
Ben Hon
Lauren Reader

Closing verse on screen:

He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." *Luke 23:43*