

## Opening verse:

May they all be one (John 17:20)

## Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Ian

Welcome friends, come take your seats as we gather for worship.

Thank you for continuing to wear masks as we protect the vulnerable among us from Covid and other Winter illness and as way of showing respect for the hospital workers who are under pressure. Ongoing apologies for the lack of a heater.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.

### **And also with you**

Let's breathe deep together and know the Spirit of the Living God breathing in us, gathering us, uniting us, making us one body together in worship. Breathe deep and know that God is with us. I light this candle as a sign of God's presence, light in the darkness. Let's sing together to gather into this place of worship. *Remain seated as we sing. Bible is carried in.*

*Gathered here* (NCH742)

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*Gathered here in the mystery of this hour.  
Gathered here in one strong body.  
Gathered here in the struggle and the power.  
Spirit draw near.*

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SONG: [Gathered here](#), By Phil Porter ©1990 , from [New Century Hymnal](#), Pilgrim Press. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

## Acknowledgement of Country

Ian

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

Ian

Sing praise to the Creator Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the renewer and transformer of life, who has been known in this land since time immemorial and is present today in life-giving ways.

*Creator of this great land* (Ross Langmead)

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*Creator of this great land, we adore you.  
Renewer of your people, hear our praise.  
Transformer of all life, you often take us by surprise.  
Continue to be present in life-giving ways.*

*Descant: Creator we adore you.  
Renewer, hear our praise.  
Transformer you surprise us,  
Be present in life-giving ways.*

*Creator of this great land, we adore you.  
Renewer of your people, hear our praise.  
Transformer of all life you often take us by surprise.  
Continue to be present in life-giving ways, Great God.*

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SONG: Song of Praise, Written for the Commission for Mission by Ross Langmead  
for Synod worship, September 1996. Used with permission

## Welcome and Introduction

Ian

Welcome to worship this morning. I welcome you in the name of the God who gathers us into one body here. We've just been through the darkest week of the year. Yes, we've passed through the Winter Solstice, if we were in the northern hemisphere we'd be celebrating Christmas now but instead we're marking the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia – almost as good. Today we mark that anniversary and begin a Winter focus on the psalms. We'll sing two psalms today and enter deeply into reflection upon one of them.

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Ian

Let's enter into prayer together in song ....

*Deep in our hearts (MV154 – 3 verses as below)*

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*Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
telling Creation that we are one.*

*Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;  
Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,  
justice and peace in harmony.*

*Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;  
Deep in our hearts there is a common current,  
flowing to freedom like a stream.*

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As we continue to pray with open hearts filled with God's vision for creation.

Let's breathe, breathe into the depths of our soul.

Breathe to open to God, the deepest truth of our being,  
who we are before God in joy and in pain, in strength and in grief.  
We bring the vulnerability, the frailty of our humanity to you God.

Our hearts would sing for you, Holy One.

Come to us when your song is silent in us.

We would live our lives according to your purpose, Healer Christ.  
Come to us when we falter on the way towards the goal of love.

We would flow with your grace and peace, Spirit Comforter.  
Come to us when we cut ourselves off from the source.

Amen.

### **Word of Grace**

This is the best of all:  
when we are empty, God fills us;  
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate;  
when we are wounded, God brings healing;  
when we confess our failure to love, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,  
our sin is forgiven.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **Gospel Reading – John 17:20-23**

**Christine**

Jesus said, "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

**Thanks be to God**

### **With the Children – UCA 45th Anniversary Commemoration – Psalm 23 Ian**

Children invited to play a birthday party game – pass the parcel – because it is the birthday of our church. Sing a very old song – a song from the bible – Psalm 23. Different tune for each verse representing the different traditions that make up our church. Thank you to Janet Reus-Smit for the idea for our Worshipping with the Psalms in Winter.

Each layer of the parcel contains a tea light which is lit after each verse. The centre of the parcel contains a large candle which is lit for the unity of the whole church.

**Each verse is sung twice, once by a soloist, then by the congregation. Pause between each verse for the lighting of a candle.**

First verse sung to KILMARNOC TIS247 the tune set in the Methodist Hymn Book.

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*1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.  
He makes me down to lie  
in pastures green, he leadeth me  
the quiet waters by.*

---

Light a candle for the Methodist Tradition.

Second verse sung to WILTSHIRE TIS122 the tune set in the Presbyterian Hymn Book.

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*2 My soul he doth restore again;  
and me to walk doth make*

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*within the paths of righteousness,  
ev'n for his own name's sake.*

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Light a candle for the Presbyterian Tradition.

Third verse sung to CRIMOND TIS10 the tune set in the Congregational Hymn Book.

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*3 Yea though I walk in death's dark vale,  
yet will I fear none ill:  
for thou art with me; and thy rod  
and staff me comfort still*

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Light a candle for the Congregational Tradition.

Fourth verse sung to BELMONT TIS514.

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*4 My table thou hast furnished  
in presence of my foes;  
my head thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.*

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Light a candle for other Christian traditions, including those in Brunswick: Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Salvation Army, Orthodox.

Fifth verse sung to BROTHER JAMES'S AIR

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*5 Goodness and mercy all my life  
shall surely follow me:  
and in God's house for evermore  
my dwelling-place shall be.*

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Light final candle as a prayer for unity among all Christ's people.

## **Bible Reading – Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20**

**Christine**

Sung Response: *O Lord, hear my prayer* (TIS741)

I cry aloud to God

I cry that God may hear me.

**In my time of distress I have turned to God;  
With hands uplifted I have prayed all night,  
But my soul refuses all comfort.**

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*O Lord, hear my prayer,  
O Lord, hear my prayer:  
When I call, answer me.  
O Lord, hear my prayer,  
O Lord, hear my prayer,  
Come and listen to me.*

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SONG: *O Lord, hear my prayer*, by Jacques Berthier,  
from *Together in Song*, Harper Collins Religious, WORD OF LIFE

Then I recall your deeds, O God!  
I remember your wonders of old.  
I recount all your works and ponder the things you have done.  
**O God, your ways are holy.**  
**What god is as great as you!**  
You are the one who works wonders;  
you have shown your strength among nations.  
**By your arm you redeemed your people,**  
**the children of Jacob and Joseph.**

---

*O Lord, hear my prayer,  
O Lord, hear my prayer:  
When I call, answer me.*  
*O Lord, hear my prayer,  
O Lord, hear my prayer,  
Come and listen to me.*

---

The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and churned in fear;  
**the seas trembled to their depths.**  
Clouds streamed water, the heavens rumbled;  
**your arrows bolted on every side.**  
The voice of your thunder was heard in the whirlwind;  
**lightning lit up the world, the earth quaked and shuddered.**  
Your way was through the sea;  
**your path, through mighty waters;**  
your footprints could not be seen;  
**but by the hand of Moses and Aaron,**  
**you led your people like a flock.**

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*O Lord, hear my prayer,  
O Lord, hear my prayer:  
When I call, answer me.*  
*O Lord, hear my prayer,  
O Lord, hear my prayer,  
Come and listen to me.*

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## Reflection – responses to Psalm 77

Ian, Saide

Including:

### A prayer from deep water

#### Photo 1

God of deep waters, crashing thunder, lightning.  
We tremble before you and yet we are not afraid.  
We open our hearts and pour out our deepest fears.

#### Photo 2

Who will save us from the destruction of our fragile earth?  
Who will save us from war, famine, greed, hatred?  
Who will save us from loneliness, despair, illness?  
Who will save us from arrogance, pride, fear, ignorance?  
Who will save us from closed borders, closed minds?  
Who will save us from barriers to wholeness and acceptance?

### Photo 3

We turn to you wonder working God, show us your way.  
We turn to you Jesus, pour out your compassion.  
We turn to you Holy Spirit, we seek your comfort.  
We turn to you God. Your way, O God, is holy.  
Amen

Saide Cameron

## Offering with Song

Ian

In response to God's word you are invited to make an offering, an offering of faith, an offering of life, a concrete sign of giving towards God's work in the world. If you would like to make a cash offering there are bowls up by the baptism font or you might like to transfer some money to the account on the screen. As we give in response to God's love we sing, let's stand together and sing 'Stand by me' (Tom Kendzia)

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*When the storms of life are raging,  
Lord, stand by me.*

*When the current pulls me under,  
Lord, stand by me.*

*When the rising waters toss me  
like a ship upon the sea,  
You who rule the wind and water,  
Lord, stand by me.*

*Stand by me, stand my me.  
Lift me up from the restless sea.  
When I am lost, when love can't be found,  
when no one cares, Lord, stand by me.*

*In the midst of persecution,  
Lord, stand by me.  
When my enemies surround me,  
Lord, stand by me.  
When the tyrant wields his terror  
and the armies wage their might,  
when the darkness overwhelms me,  
Lord, stand by me.*

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## Offering Prayer

Let us pray

Receive and bless these gifts Holy One

And bless us in our giving that we may stand with You as you stand with the world even through the storms of life. Bless us in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Prayers of the People

Natalie

**When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled.**

*[sound (very loud!)] = Storm Away, Brontology (play about 30 seconds then fade]*

God of the storm, the rain, and the waves, we bring our world to you, confident that you are strong enough to overturn injustice and to put an end to violence.

We pray for places at war, or under threat of war,  
For those suffering the effects of natural disasters: earthquakes, floods, rising seas,  
For world leaders, that they will work for safe lives for all communities,  
For those seeking asylum, and all those who are unsafe in their home country,  
For indigenous communities around the world, and all those whose land has been taken from them.  
In your mercy, hear our prayer.

**The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered; your arrows flashed on every side.**

*[sound = Storm Away, Brontology (play next 30 seconds then fade)]*

God of the storm, the rain, and the waves, we bring the church to you, confident that you are strong enough to heal divisions and difficulties and lead us in the way we should go.

We pray for our own community here,

For our sister churches in Brunswick,

For those in churches that face division within their congregations, or between congregations,

For the Ecumenical movement around the world and for peaceful interfaith dialogue

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

**The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.**

*[sound = Storm Away, Brontology (play again from the beginning about 30 seconds then fade)]*

God of the storm, the rain, and the waves, we bring to you those we love, confident that you are strong enough to drive away pain and bring healing in the most difficult of situations.

We pray for those who are unwell, and those who are caring for the sick,

For those who are lonely,

For those facing violence or disharmony at home,

For those who are grieving,

For those who do not know where to turn for help.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

**Your way was through the sea, your path, through the mighty waters; yet your footprints were unseen.**

**You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.**

Lead us, God. May we be your hands in the world.

In your mercy, hear our prayer,

Amen

## Notices

Ian: speak to our COVID policy. Keep masking through winter in support of vulnerable folk, because we sing and can't adequately maintain social distance, to see through the winter scourge of illness (not just COVID) that is everywhere right now, and to help ease the pressure on hospital staff.

## Sending Song

*Hamba Nathi (MV45)*

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*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)  
You show us, you show us you show us the way (4x)*

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SONG: Hamba Nathi, from More Voices, United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

## Blessing and Sending

Ian

Sisters and brothers, go in peace to live out your worship of God, the Holy One.  
Go with the blessing of our God who is the Source of all life,  
The Word of all love, the Spirit of all joy and peace.  
Go with the blessing of our God, in the name of Christ. Amen

## Thank yous

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

Liturgist:  
Rev Ian Ferguson  
(Minister of the Word)

Bible readers:  
Christine Hornby

Children's time:  
Ian Ferguson  
Steph Gesling

Reflection:  
Ian Ferguson  
Saide Cameron

Prayers of the People:  
Natalie Sims

Musicians:  
Elaine Potter (co-ordinator)  
Helen Burnham  
Michael Cameron  
Glenice Cook  
Quilan Goff  
Joanne van Ravenswaaij

Postlude Song:  
Gathered Here (acapella)  
Musicians: Shawn  
Whelan, Daniel Whelan,  
Natalie Sims,  
Saide Cameron

Images:  
Ian Ferguson  
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Photo by [Jeremy Bishop](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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## Closing verse:

Your path was through mighty waters; but your footprints were unseen (Psalm 77:19)