

THE OLIVE BRANCH

Holy Week 2023 Brunswick Uniting Church Congregation Worship - 9:30 am

> Recalling the Lenten journey

Each week during Lent this year we walked the purple path to the Cross following the Passion Narrative from Matthew's gospel.

The services offered much richness in experience and a lot to reflect on. We added symbols each week: oil for the woman who anointed Jesus, a plate and a cup for Jesus' last meal with his disciples, olive sprigs for Jesus' prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, feathers for Peter's denial and water to remind us that Pilate washed his hands. We wrote our dreams (or God's dream) for the earth, the innocent, the suffering and the persecuted, on paper and walked the Lenten path placing our dreams alongside the path.

Each week the response time included one of [Nick Cave's Seven Psalms](#) read by Blessing Mokgohloa or Oliver Turner. We concluded worship with a reflective song, offering time and space for quiet reflection.

Beginning our Holy Week journey on Palm Sunday we rewound the story to remind ourselves of how Jesus got here, then moved through to his last Supper and the journey to the Cross. On Easter Day we went to see the tomb with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary and celebrated the Risen Christ, the new beginning in the Gospel with baptism and Holy Communion.

This special edition of the Olive Branch offers the story of Holy Week in words and photos.



> Palm Sunday



Ian welcomed our congregation and the Brunswick Baptist congregation to worship on [Palm Sunday, 2nd April](#), to begin Holy Week. We sang Hosanna in response to Psalm 118, offered as the [Prayer of Adoration](#). Ian invited us to breathe into our [Prayer of Confession](#) guided by objects we had seen as we followed Jesus along the path to the cross through Matthew's gospel. Cath invited the children



to explore the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, wondering what sort of king Jesus might be. She reminded us that Jesus enters Jerusalem in a way that is humble and gentle of heart. We wondered together what power and liberation might look like when exercised with the humility and gentleness that Jesus demonstrates. We shared ideas about welcome and safety for refugees, our relationship with nature.



As the time neared 10am we moved out onto the steps where the Christ Church Anglican, Salvation Army and the Brunswick and Moreland Catholic Mission congregations joined us to begin the Ecumenical Walk. We followed Francesca to walk around the block through to the open space on Sydney Road.



We shared the familiar [Palm Sunday liturgy](#), including blessing of the palms, and were sent on our way with Bishop Lindsay sharing his delight in the our ecumenical gathering whilst also acknowledging the sad divisions that keeps apart as congregations.





We returned to our worship space with the Salvation Army congregation also joining us. We shared [Prayers of the People](#) offered by Jenna from the Baptist congregation and Julie from BUC. Phil Hudson offered the very moving song '[Boundless plains to share](#)'. Phil is a member of the Love Makes a Way group and also the Brunswick Baptist congregation. Ian was joined by Mark Payne (BB) and Alison Templar (SA) to offer the blessing.



[Read the Order of Service.](#) [Watch again on YouTube](#)

> Palm Sunday Rally



Thank you to everyone who was able to make it to the [Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees 2023](#) (and to Shawn for bringing our BUC banners)! Our BUC and Love Makes A Way contingents joined thousands of others around the country (including many other church groups) to call for permanent protection for all people seeking asylum, and an end to offshore processing regimes.



You can read more about the event and associated issues in the article "[Political prisoners: Palm Sunday protesters demand visas for refugees stuck in limbo](#)", from SBS.

Abi Benham-Bannon



> Maundy Thursday



On **Maundy Thursday, 6th April**, we continued following the path into the ending and new beginning of Jesus Christ's life. During this service, on Good Friday and twice on Sunday we remembered and meditated on the events of his death and resurrection.

Beginning in the Gathering space Ian invited us to enter into the story of the last night that Jesus had with his disciples reminding us that they came together to enjoy a special meal, the Passover, and that after the meal Jesus surprised his disciples by washing their feet and telling them to do likewise in a spirit of humble service.



We moved to the Worship space where we washed one another's feet and sang 'A New Commandment'.



Ian invited us to move into the hall where we sat around tables and shared Holy Communion by candlelight presided over by Cath, followed by a simple delicious meal. Later Ian offered Prayers of the People and invited us to share the names of people and places.





Then as the darkness deepened, we prepared to follow Jesus into the night that led to his death, extinguishing the candles as part of the Tenebrae service, listening to Matthew 26:36-56, read in 5 parts by Matlida McClintock, Ralph Eduardo and Jenne Perlstein.



Our plans to move out into the courtyard to conclude the service by the olive tree did not eventuate due to the heavy rainfall.

[Read the Order of Service.](#) This service was not live streamed

> Good Friday

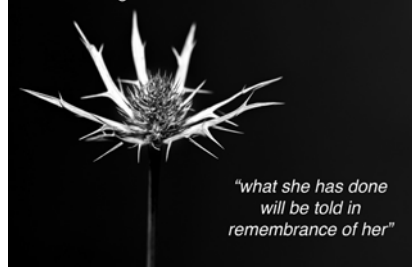
As we arrived at worship on **Good Friday, 7th April**, we were invited to spend time in the [Gathering Space](#) engaging with the symbols from our Lenten journey and to light a taper alongside them.



The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem



The Anointing



The Last Supper





The Garden of Gethsemane



"pray that you may not come into the time of trial"



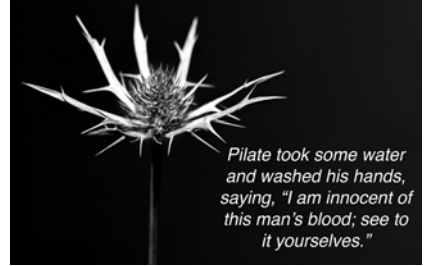
Peter's denial



"Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.



On Trial Before Pilate



Pilate took some water and washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."



Amelia offered an extended [Acknowledgment of Country](#).

Ian led us in prayer inviting us to sing the ancient gospel prayer: Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy as we remembered [Jesus' path to the cross](#).



Cath offered ['The Solemn Reproaches of the Cross'](#) by Janet Morley, in response to Matthew 27:27-66 read by Hugh and Jenne while Amelia and Saide responded creating tableaus with the crucifix sculpture.



The soldiers mock Jesus



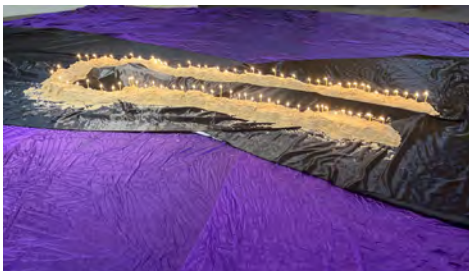
The crucifixion of Jesus



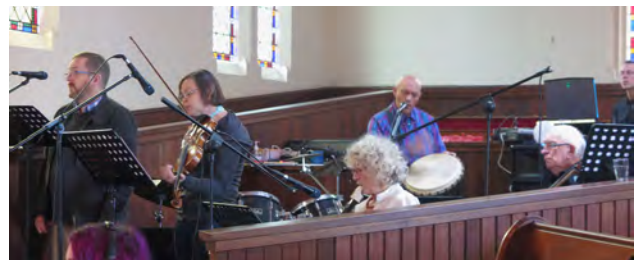
The death of Jesus



Jim offered [Prayers of the People](#) inviting us to respond 'We keep vigil at the cross, we wait expectantly. Has all hope gone?' Ian invited us to light and place tapers in the sand as we came forward to [Venerate the Cross](#). Amelia [prayed into and beyond Jesus' death](#) on the Cross. Ian [sent us on our way](#) to return on Easter Day.



[Read the Order of Service.](#)
[Watch again on YouTube](#)



> Good Friday Hot Cross Buns

We shared Hot Cross Buns for morning tea after worship. Our thanks to Ray Cameron for the four delicious home made varieties.



Traditional
White Chocolate & Cranberry



Chocolate Chip
Red Velvet



> Easter Dawn

On **Easter Day, 9th April**, we gathered around the fire at dawn, enjoying the warmth in the chilly air as the sky gradually lightened. Saide offered the Gospel reading, John 20:1-18, and Ian proclaimed the joy filled words 'Christ is Risen' and we responded equally joyfully 'he is risen indeed'.



We moved into the Gathering Space where a new Christ Candle was lit by Ian, Hamish and Raffa. We prayed, sang and participated in remembrance of baptism. During the Prayers of the People Ian invited us to name people and situations that were on our hearts.



[Read the Order of Service.](#)
This service was not live streamed

> Breakfast

We enjoyed a delicious breakfast of fresh fruit, yoghurt, croissants, savoury fillings, pull apart loaves and a sponge cake provided by Clare Keogh and Sophie Tripp. Thank you.



> Easter Day

9/4, [Easter Day](#),
Matthew 28:1-10;
Romans 6:1-8

[Ian welcomed us to worship](#) on 'the greatest day of the year' and proclaimed '**Christ is risen**' and we offered our joyful response '**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**'

The Christ Candle, first lit at dawn, was lit again.





The [Easter Garden](#) was created with the removal of the Good Friday black cloths and flowers provided by Helen Rowe and Maggie Haines brought in.



Saide offered the Gospel reading from [Matthew 28:1-10](#), as we went with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the tomb, where they enter into the great ending and new beginning of the gospel.



This was an especially joyful day as [we celebrated a new beginning for Shadi, Payam and Rozhan in Baptism.](#)

Ian presented them saying '*Friends, the church council of this congregation has received a request for baptism from Shadi, Payam and Rozhan. This important decision has been prayerfully and carefully considered.*

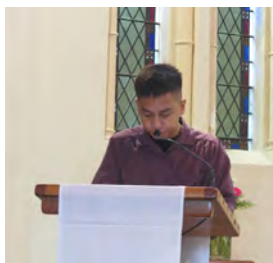
All of them have prepared for this time by participation in a preparation group and through personal discernment and prayer, and I am glad to welcome them here on this special day'.





As always we offered the baptismal promise:

With God's help, we will live out our baptism as a loving community in Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one another in prayer, and encouraging one another in service, until Christ comes.



Ian began his reflection asking ['What happens after the end of the world?'](#). He offered a number of images and possibilities for the end of the world as we know it. He then introduced us to a *post-apocalyptic nightmare of a TV show* called 'The Last of Us' noting that it *'goes to some extremely dark places, but also to some surprisingly beautiful ones'*. He went on to outline *'3 ways in which the risen Jesus is NOT like a zombie'*. Having done this he



said *'So, Jesus is not a zombie (or a hipster), he is not like the reanimated corpses in The Last of Us. No, he is like the 14-year-old protagonist Ellie'* and went on to explain the hope that she offers in the story, Ian then turned our attention to Matthew's gospel in which *'the world has ended when the women come to Jesus' tomb. ... Nothing will be the same after Easter, according to Matthew, because the resurrection of the dead has begun.'* He concluded *'So, what happens after the end of the world? We do. We happen after the end of the world – Christ's living body of hope – us together with every other life lived in love for justice and peace. Together, we are the resurrection and the life, the beginning of the new creation.'* Ian reminded us that baptism is our way of *'marking, celebrating, initiating, inspiring and encouraging that new beginning, that resurrection life in which we share'*. With Payam, Shadi and Rozhan's yes to a new beginning in Christ, God's yes to them and our yes in the promise that we made together Ian affirmed that *'we will be a community raised up with Christ, a baptismal community of resurrection, part of that new beginning for the world. What happens after the end of the world? We do. Let's embody that hope together.'*

Later Kirsty offered Prayers of the People and we joined in the feast of new life together in [Holy Communion](#).



After we had joyfully sung 'Thine be the glory' Ian presented [Shadi, Payam and Rozhan with their baptism candles and certificates saying:](#)



Shadi, Payam and Rozhan, you belong to Christ, the light of the world. Let your light so shine before the world that all may see your good works and give glory to our God.

[Read the Order of Service](#)
[Watch again on YouTube](#)



Ian blessed us on our way and the musicians treated us to 'O Happy Day'!



> The Easter Garden



> Thank you

The worship committee delights in the creative process that has shaped the seasons of Lent and Holy Week. We offer our thanks to the planning teams for the Holy Week services, to the music co-ordinators, musicians, Bible readers, liturgists and prayer leaders who have been the faces and voices of worship. We also offer our thanks to the AV teams who make it possible to share our services beyond our worship space; we often receive messages of gratitude from those who join us for worship in this way.

We are grateful to Valmai, Helen B, Faye, Helen R and Maggie who bring life to our worship space each week and offer our abundant thanks to Helen R and Maggie for the Easter Garden. And of we are always thankful for the hospitality shown by the welcomers and all who provide and serve morning tea and in Holy Week - special meals.

And on this Ian's final Holy Week with us, thank you Ian for your wisdom, passion and for your generous and inspiring creativity.

Saide Cameron

