

Order of Service – 10/03/24, Lent 4B

GATHERING

Here, we cross a threshold – we move into a sacred space, and a sacred time, a space and time ‘set apart’ for the purpose of communal prayer.

During the service the congregation is invited to stand and sit for different parts of the service, however you are welcome to stay seated if you wish.

A quiet retreat room is available for those who need it.

The worship area is wheelchair accessible.

There is a children’s corner with books and activities.

Opening verse:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16

Greeting

Saide

The leader greets the people in God’s name and calls us into a worshipful space and state. The bible is carried in and Christ Candle lit – we usually stand (if we are able and comfortable to do so) while this happens.

Good morning and welcome to worship, please come and find a seat as we prepare to worship God.

Song – Hamba Nathi, MV 45

We usually stand during the songs.

Let’s stand and sing ‘Hamba nathi’ – You are holy’ as we welcome the Word and the Light

Hamba nathi mkhululi wethu (x4)

Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu (x4)

You are holy, you show us the way (x4)

You show us, you show us, you show us the way (x4)

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

Come let us worship God.

Come and know that you are loved.

The Holy One will show us the way

To freedom from fear and judgement.

Let’s sing again

You are holy, you show us the way (x4)

You show us, you show us, you show us the way (x4)

Hamba nathi mkhululi wethu (x4)

Mkhululi mkhululi mkhululi wethu (x4)

Acknowledgement of Country

Saide

We acknowledge the people of the land on which we worship

We acknowledge and respect
the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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

People are welcomed, those present and those online. The themes of the service are laid out.

Welcome to worship here in this space and to all joining us online now or later. I'm Saide, leading worship today with Mick Pope as our preacher, Cath, Kenna, Peter, the musicians led by Natalie and the AV team. Mick is an eco-theologian and member of our congregation. He's a regular on the music roster.

Today is the fourth Sunday in the Season of Lent. We join the Israelites in the desert as they make their complaints against God and we listen to Jesus speaking about being lifted up, about darkness and evil, light and love. In our Lenten questioning Mick will invite us to reflect on turning away from the fear of judgement.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Saide

We pray in adoration, praising and adoring God for being God; and in confession, bringing before God the incompleteness and brokenness of the world and our lives. In response we hear God's word of healing grace.

Now let us breathe together, offering our prayers of adoration and confession to God.

God of light and love, justice and peace, we adore you.

In love you created the world, filling it with many good things

With light you break through the darkness of violence and destruction.

Jesus light of the world, lover of all, we adore you.

In love you walk with us, showing us the way to eternal life.

With light you break through the darkness of our fear.

Holy Spirit, breath of joy and hope, we adore you.

In love you pray with us, lifting us up to follow Jesus.

With light you break through the darkness that binds us.

Amen

Creator God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, we bring our confessions.

We confess the brokenness of your creation, we long for healing.

We confess our fearful inadequacy, we long to walk in your light.

We confess our secret hidden burdens, we long to be free.

Amen

Word of Grace

Saide

In John's gospel we read ; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

Believe then and be confident that in the name of Jesus, the Holy One our sin is forgiven. **Thanks be to God**

HEARING AND RESPONDING

We hear the story of Jesus, Wisdom Incarnate (in the gospels); the story of God's dealings with Israel (in the Old/First Testament); and the story of God's people through history (in Acts and the New Testament letters). As we hear this story, we are reshaped and formed by an alternative perspective on life – the perspective of the gospel, the good news. The story is told through proclamation, which may include reading the Scriptures, reflection on Scripture, symbolic action, art, music, multimedia resources and silence.

Hearing the story requires a response. We respond by making an offering (of ourselves, our gifts, our money, and our prayers for others).

Gospel Reading - John 3:14-21

Peter

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Early Word

Cath

Lenten cloth around the lantern – light of the world.

Testimony – Ros Mather

Activity – papier mache world

Song – God is love, Ross Langmead

*God is love and love is giving,
God gives me the life I have.
The life I have leads me to singing.
Sing that God is love.*

SONG: [God is love \(a round\)](#), © Ross Langmead, 1981, from [On the Road](#)
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Hebrew Scriptures – Numbers 21:4-9

Kenna

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the

people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

LAMENT for a people with a dulled heart (S. Whelan 2013)

Just as the Israelites lamented in the wilderness, let us too lament in this season of Lent.

*Why do we listen and fail to hear?
Why do we see and not perceive?
We have turned away and our heart has grown dull
Heal us, help us to grieve
Heal us, help us to grieve*

*Ooh... Ooh... Oh... Oh...
Ooh... Ooh... Oh... Oh...*

*Why do we listen and fail to hear?
Why do we see and not perceive?
We have turned away and our heart has grown dull
Heal us, help us believe
Heal us, help us believe*

*Ooh... Ooh... Oh... Oh...
Ooh... Ooh... Oh... Oh...*

SONG: Lament, by Shawn Whelan, 2013, written for the BUC Boundless Plains series, used with permission.

Reflection

Mick

Offering with Song – Our God who weeps, Tune In

Saide

We usually remain seated for the singing of the offering song, standing together when the offering is carried forward.

We offer our gifts to God for the work of God's mission in the world.

You are welcome to make an offering of money by placing it in the bowls as they come around or by using the account details on the screen.

We offer our money, time, gifts and skills here in this space, this community and in all the places and spaces that we live, work and play.

Let's sing 'Our God who weeps', a plea for God to fill us with love.

I will invite you to stand when the offering is ready to be brought forward.

*See our God with the tear-streaked face
With words that heal
And arms that embrace,
See him now with his nail-scarred hands
Your Kingdom come, Lord, The Promised Land.*

1. *When people plead in far-off lands
And no-one heeds their out-stretched hands
Yet in the poor we shall find you,
Help us work in the world for you
Fill us now with your love anew.*

2. *They lock up the weak behind barbed-wire fence
And too few speak in their defence
Yet in the prisoner we find you,
Help us work in the world with you
Fill us now with your love anew.*

3. *When death has taken those held dear
When faith is shaken, despair draws near,
May those who mourn find strength in you.
Let us weep for the world with you
Fill us now with your love anew.*

SONG: [Our God who weeps](#), by Kate Scull, © 2006, from [Tune In](#), Brunswick UC. Reproduced with permission.

Offering prayer

O God with the tear-streaked face
we bring you these gifts of money and the offering of our lives
to work in the world with you, to weep with you, to fill the world with love.
Bless all that we offer this day and every day. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Clare

We offer prayers for the world, for Christ's people in the world, and for those in need. After the prayer the Christ Candle will be taken to the chapel space where you are invited to light a taper for your own prayers at the end of the service. During the prayers we will sing

O Lord hear my prayer', TiS 741

*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.*

SONG: [O Lord, hear my prayer](#), by Jacques Berthier,
from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious, WORD OF LIFE

God of light and love, justice and peace, we pray for the world.
For nations and peoples at war, immersed in conflict we pray for peace.
For rainforests, deep waters, wide open spaces we pray for restoration.
For refugees, asylum seekers, displaced people we pray for welcome.
For all who work in the world with you we give thanks.
We sing 'O Lord, hear my prayer'

Jesus light of the world, lover of all, we pray for the church.
For church leaders, people of faith throughout the world we pray for strength.
For our Uniting Church exploring a new way we pray for hope and joy.
For our congregation and community of communities we pray for resilience.
For all who work in the church with you we give thanks.
We sing 'O Lord, hear my prayer'

Holy Spirit, breath of joy and hope, we pray for the community.
For all who mourn, who suffer in body and soul we pray for comfort.
For all who are homeless, seeking work, struggling with study we pray for relief.
For families in all shapes and sizes, for children and adults we pray for love.
For all who work in the community with you we give thanks.
We sing 'O Lord, hear my prayer'
Amen.

BEING SENT

Having heard the word, we are sent forth on God's mission of love. We are again on a threshold, encouraged to go into the world to continue the worship of God in our daily living.

Notices

Saide

We share the life and work of our community with each other as we prepare to be sent out. It's time to share the news of our community. Please come and share your name and your news in a sentence or two. The weekly email, website and our Facebook group always has lots of information to help keep you up to date.

Thank you to everyone who leads and supports the offering of worship every week. I will be preparing the April & May roster in the next week or so. Please let me know if you would like to join in the fun and work of worship.

Please join us for morning tea in the hall through this door for good food and great conversation.

Sending Song – Forgive us now, Tune In

As we prepare to leave this space let's sing Forgive us now.

*1. Forgive us now O God of love
for all the pain that we have sown
for all the broken hearts we've left
and all the words we've left unsaid
forgive us gracious God of life*

*2. Forgive us now O mother love
For all the idols we have built
For all the time we've worshipped there
In company of dark despair
Forgive us mother of all hope*

*as we forgive may we be healed
as we reach out may you be near
and take our hand to comfort bring
so we can face the start again*

*3. Forgive us now O holy one
for crimes committed in your name
for all the holy wars we wage
for all the children we enslave
forgive us now O holy one.*

*4. Forgive us now O Jesus Christ
for all the pride before the fall
for all the times our heart was cold
for all the monologues we've told
forgive us Jesus of new life.*

Blessing and Sending

Mick

The leader gives a blessing to the people for the next stage of the journey.

May the love of Christ fill your hearts and minds with peace and joy.

May the love of Christ cast out all fear of judgment and all love of darkness.

May the love of Christ bring you blessing and make you a light and blessing to all you meet.

Thank yous

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

Liturgist:

Saide Cameron

Prayers of the People:

Saide Cameron

Postlude Song: Lament,

Shawn Whelan, 2013,

written for the BUC

Boundless Plains series,

used with permission

Musicians: Natalie Sims,

Shawn Whelan

Bible readers:

Kenna Morrison

Peter Williams

Musicians:

Natalie Sims

(co-ordinator)

Michael Cameron

Early Word:

Cath James

(Minister: CYYA)

Glenice Cook

Quilan Goff

Leigh Johnston

Bronte Potter

Reflection:

Mick Pope

Shawn Whelan

Images:

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Editing / Production:

Ray Cameron

James Clough

Fiona MacDowall

Closing verse:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16