

Order of Service – Easter 5, 28/04/24

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:

Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. Acts 8:35

Greeting and Call to Worship

Helen

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.

Please come and find a seat as we are about to start the Service.

So let's sit quietly, close our eyes for a moment, listen to your breath as you breathe in and as you breathe out. Breathe in the peace, love and acceptance our God offers with open arms.

This has been a week filled with emotion as we have remembered the sacrifice made by so many on Anzac Day. We are also saddened by the news that we have lost of our loved members, Wesley Trigg. We sang Happy Birthday to Wesley as he watched online on April 7th. A lovely memory.

God gathers us from many places. We come with our brokenness, our sorrow, our joy and our laughter. We are many and yet we are one, different and yet the same in our search for a closer walk with God.

So let's stand, as we bring in the Word and the Light, and sing of the community we want to help create.

Song – Let us build a house, MV 001

We usually stand during the songs.

*1. Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:*

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

*2. Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.*

*Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:*

*4. Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:*

*5. Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:*

SONG: [Let us build a house](#), by Marty Haugen, from [More Voices](#), United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc. Reproduced with permission unde

Acknowledgement of Country

Helen

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

Helen

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

It's a double welcome today. One for all of you here in the Church or watching online, and we have a Welcoming Service for those who have decided to call our Church family, home. We didn't choose the readings, but you could hardly have more appropriate Bible readings for today. Our first reading is Acts 8:26-40, Phillip speaks to the Ethiopian Eunuch, an outsider and a foreigner. God speaking to the marginalized, and a first step in spreading the Gospel. The second reading is John 15:9-17. Here Jesus tells us he is the vine and we are the branches. We are not the same but we are all connected. So now let's join together in prayer, singing

Song –Holy Sacred Spirit, MV 15

*Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your breath on us.
Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your life in us.*

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Helen

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.

Holy one,

To You, who created the world around us in all its beauty, we offer our love and praise.

To You, who set the Sun, moon and stars in place,

and created this Earth that sustains and nurtures us, we offer our grateful thanks.

Our minds cannot comprehend the mystery and wonder of your Creation
and yet understand that you gave us your Son,

Jesus, to live a life with us and die to save us.

You open your loving arms to the world, never rejecting,

but offering grace, love and forgiveness, and giving us your

Sacred Spirit, to breathe your breath on us, to breathe your life in us.

Holy one, Jesus, Spirit.

You made us caretakers of your Creation, forgive us when we degrade and destroy.

You told us to love one another, forgive us when we fight wars through hate and greed,
when we discriminate because of race, religion, colour, sexuality.

You told us to forgive one another, forgive us when we hold on to hate,
and fail to forgive others.

You, who love equally, forgive us when we close our eyes
to the need and the inequality of our world.

Forgive our brokenness and breathe your breath and spirit in us so
that we show your love to a in need.

Amen

Word of Grace

Helen

Jesus, the Vine, has roots that reach into the heart of God.

We are the branches that reach into a world of need.

We are connected, we belong and grow together, and we know that

In Christ,

through Christ and

Because of Christ,

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).

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south[☒] to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?”[☒] ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip[☒] baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Early Word – Welcoming Ceremony

Cath, Peter

Scripture

In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes: Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:7)

Let us glorify God now by welcoming those who have come to be part of our community in recent times.

Invite welcomees forward

Introductions

Each person being welcomed (very briefly):

1. Introduce yourself by name.
2. Where have you come from?
3. Why have you decided to make BUC your community of faith at this time?

Questions

To those being welcomed

“Do you name the Brunswick Uniting Church congregation as your community of faith?

I do.

“Do you commit to actively participating within this community as the Spirit calls you?”

I do.

To the congregation:

“Do you joyfully receive these people as fellow travellers along the way of discipleship? **We do**
“Do you commit to maintaining the life of faith together with them as a community of Jesus Christ?” **We do.**

Song – God Welcomes all

1. *God welcomes all,
Strangers and friends;
God’s love is strong.
And it never ends.*

2. *Amen*

SONG: God welcomes all, from We will walk his way, Words: John L. Bell. Music: South African traditional, transcribed by John L. Bell at the Sunrise Hospice, Themba. Words © 2008. WGRG, Iona community, Glasgow, G. 2 3DH, Scotland. Music South African traditional. Reproduced with permission One License #604502

Gospel Reading – John 15:1-8

Payam/Shadi

Jesus the True Vine

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes^a to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed^a by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become^a my disciples.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Reflection

Peter

Offering with Song – Make Your Home in Me, ATW 487

Peter

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

*Make your home in me,
As I make my home in you
I am everywhere that you can be
Make your home in me*

*If you fly to the point of the day’s sunrise
Or westward across the sea
If you travel to the uttermost ends of the earth
There I will be.*

*I knew you and loved you before you were born
As a child in your mother’s womb*

*I have seen your struggles in the secret place
I know you through and through (and still I love you)*

*You will find me in the faces of the broken ones
In the sick, the troubled and the poor
You will find me in the wounds of your very own soul
I am knocking at your own heart's door*

SONG: Make your home in me, by Fay White © 1998, from All together whatever, Open Book Publishers,
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Offering Prayer

Peter

Prayers of the People

Lyn

We offer prayers for the world, for Christ's people in the world, and for those in need. After the prayer the Christ Candle is taken to the chapel space where people are invited to light a taper for their own prayers at the end of the service.

BEING SENT

Having heard the word and shared the meal together, 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

Helen

*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 busy community, of course you can find out all that's going on
by going to the Web site or to our Facebook page.*

Sending Song – Community, Tune In

Helen

*1. Part of a family, interconnected, this is community
Welcoming strangers, visiting neighbours, this gives us dignity
Care for the earth and sea, we need to keep them free,
So we care for the earth and sea
Care for the ones we meet, love is the face we see,
When we care for the ones we meet*

*2. Part of a family, interconnected, this is community
Welcoming strangers, visiting neighbours, this gives us dignity
Sharing our joy and pain, praying and keeping faith
By sharing our joy and pain
Singing a song of rights, imaging God in life,
By singing a song of rights.*

*3. Part of a family, interconnected, this is community
Welcoming strangers, visiting neighbours, this gives us dignity
Talk to the lonely, bind up the broken, this makes community
A glass of water shared with the thirsty, this makes for dignity
This makes for dignity, this is community*

Blessing and Sending

Peter

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

Thank yous

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

Liturgist:
Helen Burnham

Bible readers:
Payam Pourasghar
Shadi Shirinizaban

Early Word:
Peter Blair
Cath James
(Minister – CYYA)

Reflection:
Peter Blair
(Olive Way Pastor)

Prayers of the People:
Lyn Anderson

Musicians:
Michael Cameron
(co-ordinator)
Jane Allardice
Glenice Cook
Quilan Goff
Debra Langford
Elaine Potter
Shawn Whelan

Postlude Song: Send us
out, O God. © 1991 Monica
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Musicians: Natalie Sims,
Dan Whelan, Shawn
Whelan

Images:
BUC Library
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Editing / Production:
Jane Allardice
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
James Clough
Dave Miller
Fiona MacDowall

Closing verse:

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become^o my disciples. John 15:8