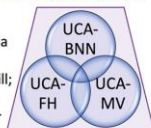
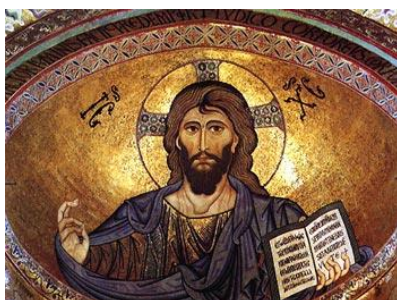




The Uniting Church in Australia
Congregations of: Blackburn
North / Nunawading; Forest Hill;
and Mountview (Mitcham);
in a shared ministry together



Sunday 20th November 2022 Christ the King



Introit 768: Praise God
Heide Nadine 2012 Md 1800
<https://youtu.be/RBz7vuJ2b1A>

Welcome

May the worship be a blessing to you

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place
We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.

Amazing Grace

Gurrumul & Paul Kelly from Gurrumul's The Gospel Album
Gurrumul Official 2015
<https://youtu.be/MVORrx9jiiE>

Call to Worship

In Jesus, all things in heaven and on earth were created

All things visible and invisible were created by God

All things have been created

Through Jesus and for him

We will believe and follow Jesus. We will embrace his gospel

For sake of all creation, we will follow Jesus and embrace his gospel

Prayers

Lord, in you we find God
We find a new beginning and creation
You are the image of our invisible God
In you we find the cosmos and creation
You have brought us peace through your love for us
You have gifted us redemption and forgiveness through your compassion
We praise and give thanks to you for setting us free
For forgiving us and redeeming us.
You are the head of your church and we are your body

Send your spirit upon us as.
We come before you now with our brokenness, our regrets and pain
our gladness and sorrows our joys and longings.

Lord, we come before you with all that's on our hearts
Lord, forgive us, free us, heal us

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"
THANKS BE TO GOD

Hymn 143 Immortal Invisible – St Paul's Cathedral Platinum Jubilee Service 2022

<https://youtu.be/PS3QinSmPHI>

Readings

Colossians 1:11-20

¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled^[a] you^[b] to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.^[c]

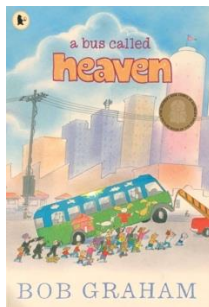
¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶ for in^[d] him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in^[e] him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Luke 23:33-43

³³ When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus^[a] there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [[³⁴ Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.']]^[b] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵ 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^[c] of God, his chosen one!' ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him,^[d] 'This is the King of the Jews.'

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding^[e] him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah?^[f] Save yourself and us!' ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' ⁴² Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into^[g] your kingdom.' ⁴³ He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' ©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Young at Heart – A bus called Heaven



How do we go out into the world to serve God, preach the gospel to all creation, and create God's community?

Hymn 659, The Lord is my Shepherd

Composed by Brian Boniwell from the Album People of the Resurrection 2015

Brian Boniwell music

https://youtu.be/4sZaJpllj_c

Sermon – Who is Jesus? Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen

Today is Christ the King Sunday and Jesus' throne is a cross. This can be confronting. We tend not to like crosses, especially the saying, *'Take up your cross and follow me.'*

The gospels offer different perspectives of Jesus' death on the cross and today I will preach a reflection that is a narrative of different perspectives about Jesus and his relationship with us.



Jesus is portrayed in different ways in the gospels.

John didn't consider Jesus' death on the cross as a defeat. It was a moment of God's glory, where God's love triumphed.

Mark and Matthew spoke of the Roman centurion who experienced conversion after witnessing Jesus' crucifixion and death on the cross. He declared: Truly this was God's son.

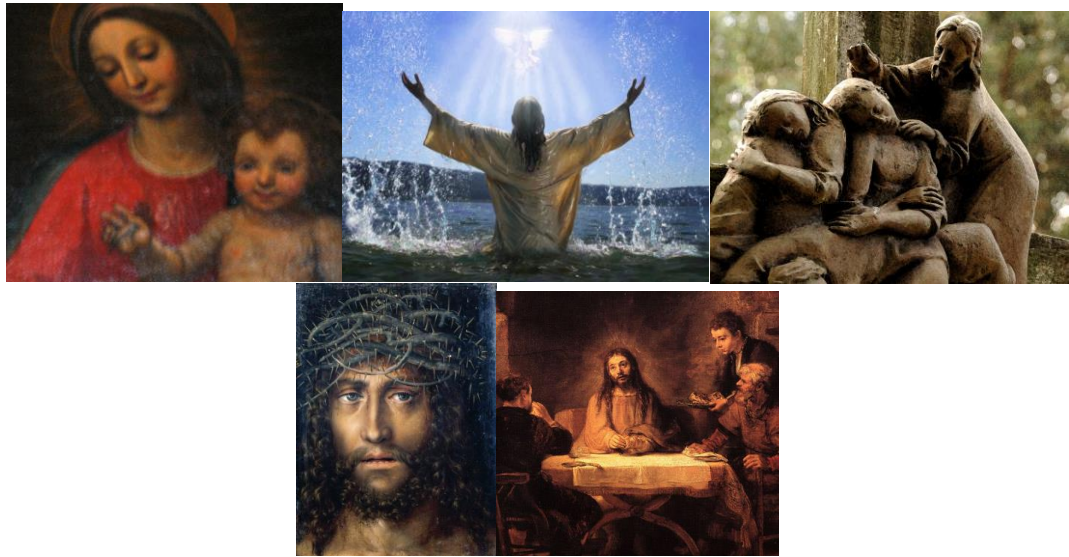
Matthew's gospel offers a Jewish perspective where it is the end times and the dead rise. It is an eschatological and cosmic event with signs on earth and in the universe. Elijah was mentioned. The Temple curtain that hid the holy place from all but a Rabbi, was torn in two. Now God is revealed to all. Jesus' death is a new creation in all time.

Today's gospel from Luke offers us another perspective. It is a moment of redemption for all people. For those who crucified Jesus, *'Forgive them Father they know not what they do.'*

And the thief on the cross, the one who defended Jesus. He is told by Jesus, *'Today you will join me in paradise.'*

There is a sign on the cross saying: *"The king of the Jews"* which was meant as a dig by the Romans against Jewish leaders. It is with some irony that Christians claim Jesus as: *"The king of Heaven"*

I've found images of Jesus on revised common lectionary and taken photos on my travels. Jesus as a baby, sleeping, and praying, baptised, welcoming children, praying for sleeping disciples at Gethsemane, and tired after caring for so many disciples. What an amazing life and death and resurrection.

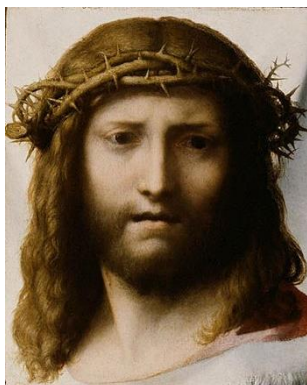


Photos – Tina Lyndon and Revised Common Lectionary

I've heard people die as they have lived. Jesus' life, death and resurrection spoke of his love for God and for us and of God dwelling within Jesus. I found an image of God holding Jesus when he was crucified. Moltmann, a theologian, answered the question, 'Where was God when Jesus died on the cross?' He said, 'God was there, holding Jesus.'



Jesus was the Son of God and was born and many images speak of his incarnation. But we cannot have the incarnation without the crucifixion. They both speak about God within Jesus, coming amongst us and redeeming all.

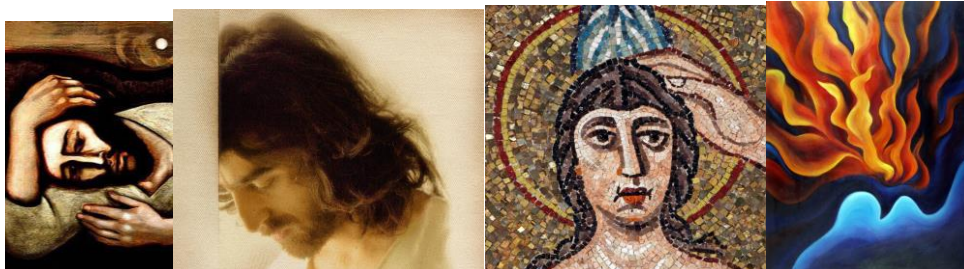


Jesus is portrayed as the king of Heaven. There are many images of him with a crown with thorns but also with a halo and cross within the halo, which are crowns that speak of God's glory in Jesus and through Jesus.



We struggle with how Jesus was both human and divine. He needed to rest, eat, sleep, and pray, just like us. He stood in solidarity with us, and we can relate to him because of this.

Colossians offers another perspective. Jesus is the cosmic Christ, of all creation, the cosmos, and the universe. He is the image of the invisible God. This remains a mystery to us. Where all things have been created through Jesus and in him before time began. He is embodied wisdom and spirit. He is the first born of the dead and in him was the fullness of God. We can only pray and ponder about this deep and profound mystery.



Revised Common Lectionary

Jesus loves us. Why else would he come for us and offer himself up for us?

The gospels speak of him as the lamb of God. Where his life force or blood was offered up for our redemption. Perhaps this was well understood by Christians from a Jewish background and perhaps many of us understand its symbolic meaning.



Tina Lyndon

We come to know it in our hearts as we know Jesus feeds us, calls us to be like a child of God, knocks on the door of our heart, prays for us and is always present to us.

All this moves us to say: Who are we in Christ?

What is our identity? Paul speaks of Jesus as the head of the church and the church as his body. We are the body of Christ. We are called into community and to follow Jesus all the days of our life and afterwards when we join him in heaven.



Revised Common lectionary

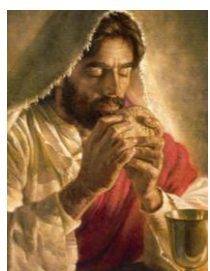
We seek God in buildings and in the world, in nature and the cosmos. We reach out to God and others and spend a great deal of time pondering about the meaning of life and our faith. We have a heart that longs

and thirsts for God and we are often restless. We are called to bring the gospels to all creation and to witness to our faith to others in word and deed.



God dwells within us. God's spirit moves our hearts to love. We may be cracked vessels, but the light of God shines through the cracks and God works through us and our wounds to bless others.

Thomas Merton, a writer, and mystic spoke of communion as the greatest form of communication. He said, 'Communion with God is beyond words, where we are drawn into the heart of God.' We become one with God, where we come close to God and experience union with God. We experience communion with God, with Jesus, during Holy Communion. It is an intimate moment with Jesus where we receive our spiritual food and open our hearts to God.



Photos – Tina Lyndon

We are the body of Christ, babies, elderly, mums, and dads, all of us. We praise God, pray to God, and moved by the Spirit to love. The good news is he is risen. There are signs of this everywhere. Artists are given the gift to communicate this to us and we know it deep within ourselves.

Out of all this rises our hope for now and the future. We keep on persevering and journeying and knowing in our hearts no matter what happens in life, God has a plan for each one of us. As God's beloved child, we come to know God only gives good things to us, no matter what challenge and hardship we face and no matter what blessings we receive. We continue to praise God and give thanks and pray for others. We live and die for the Lord. **The Lord be with you**

Hymn 228 Crown Him with many crowns V1,2,3,6

From the Big Sing - HiMaachen 2012

https://youtu.be/s7OCs0d_4vM

Offering prayer

(about offering up ourselves and giving thanks to God for all we have)

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom all for transformation through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen

Prayers of the People – Heather Barnes

Dear Lord, as your people we bring our prayers to you this morning.

Today in the World Prayer Cycle we are remembering our near neighbours – the Republics of East Timor (Timor

Leste), Indonesia and the Philippines. These countries consisting of many thousands of islands have much unrest, poverty, and unequal distribution of resources. In addition to political and economic turmoil, they are prone to devastating natural disasters.

We give thanks for all those, who following the example of Jesus, search, and work for peace, seek greater understanding among the different religious groups and advocate for an end to violence.

We pray for their governments that they will be able to stem the corruption and strive for true justice and peace.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle today we are praying for the parishioners and clergy at St. Philip's Catholic Church in Blackburn North; and for the Warrandyte U.C. Community; together with all associated with Uniting's Wesley Mission, Victoria. Bless them all as they seek to serve you in their communities.

Here we are rejoicing in the recent decision to form the Whitehorse Uniting Church and pray for our Ministry team of Rev. Tina and Rev. Peter as they lead and guide us. We pray for their good health and strength.

We uphold before you the preparations for the Election Day fund raisers and for the organisations and folk who will be assisted by these means.

Dear Lord, a number of our community are experiencing troubling times with serious health concerns whether it be illness, surgery or mental health worries. Others are grieving or facing difficult family situations. Be very near to them Lord and comfort them with your peace. May your love be reflected in all that is said and done in your name.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be Your name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven

Give us today our daily bread

And 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 for ever, Amen.



Communion

The Spirit of the Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord

It is right to give our thanks and Praise

Archangels sound the trumpets, angels teach us their song

Saints pull us into your presence, and this is our song:

Holy, Holy, Holy God

Our life, our mercy, our might

Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory

Save us, we pray, you beyond all

Blest is the one who comes in your name

Save us we pray, you beyond all

Holy God, we remember your son,
 His life with the humble
 His death among the wretched
 His resurrection for us all
 Your wisdom, our guide
 Your justice, our strength, your grace, our path to rebirth

And so we cry, Mercy:

Mercy!

And so we cry, Glory:

Glory!

And so we cry, Blessing!

Blessing!

Holy God we beg for your spirit,
 Enliven this bread, awaken this body
 Pour us out for each other
 Transfigure our minds, ignite your church
 Nourish the life of the earth
 Make us though broken, whole
 Make us, despite death, alive

And so we cry, Come, Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit!

And so the church shouts, Come, Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit!

And so the earth pleads, Come, Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit!

Praise now Praise tomorrow Praise forever

And so we cry, Amen

Amen!

Life-giver, pain-bearer, love maker.
 Source of all life that is and shall be
 Father and mother of us all
 Loving God, in whom is heaven:

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
 The way of your justice be followed by all peoples of the world!**

Your heavenly will be done

By all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom

Sustain our hope and come on earth!

With the bread we need for today, **Feed us**

In the hurts we absorb from one another, **Forgive us**

In times of temptation and test, **Strengthen us**

From trials too great to endure, **Spare us**

From the grip of all that is evil, **Free us**

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever, **Amen**

Christ is the bread of joy

Who shares food with sinners

Christ is the cup of life
Who revives the faint hearted
 Let us receive what we are
 Let us become what we receive
THE BODY OF CHRIST

Invitation

This is the table of the Lord
 It is an open table where all are welcome
 These are the Gifts of God for all the People of God
May we who Share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us

We have the bread and wine together
Bread first
Then wine

The body of Christ keep us in eternal life
Amen

Pause

The blood of Christ keep us in eternal life
Amen

Prayer after Communion

Blessed be God who calls us together
Praise to God who makes us one people
 Blessed be God who has forgiven our sin
Praise to God who gives hope and freedom
 Blessed be God whose word is proclaimed
Praise to God who is revealed as lover

Blessed be God who alone has called us
Therefore, we offer all that we are and all that we shall become
 Accept, O God, our sacrifice of praise **Amen.**
Accept our thanks for all that we are.
Our hands were empty and you filled them.

Hymn 459 In Christ there is no East or West

St Martin in the Fields, London.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpITJOSHix0>

Dismissal

Go forth into the world in peace
 Be of good courage
 Hold fast to that which is good
 Render no one evil for evil
 Strengthen the faint-hearted
 Support the weak
 Help the afflicted
 Honour all people
 Love and serve the Lord
 Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit
Amen

Blessing

We go in Peace in the love of God in the Power of the Spirit
 May the Lord Bless and Guard us
 May the Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us
 As we bring Christ's love and peace to the world. Amen.

Hymn 779 May the Feet of God

Robyn and Dorothy Mann 2015

<https://youtu.be/WfOFIWxGaP8>

Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina



As we grow older, we may become more aware of how many years we have left, and hope we can live them well, God willing. Some of us may lament. Others may desire to embrace new beginnings. Some of us may prefer to spend time with families or travel or begin a new hobby or volunteer or begin a new career. We have many options and choices. Two of my role models are Sarah and Abraham. Look what they did with God's promises, which came true for them when they were aging. Even if at first Sarah laughed when things seemed impossible. It is never too late to embrace a new beginning. The theme of our advent study is new beginnings. It's timely, considering our church is becoming one church in Christ. It's a new beginning and how things unfold will depend upon God's will for us and our willingness to pray and contribute as best we can. Joan Chittister in her book: *The Gift of the years (Growing Old Gracefully)* wrote the following about aging: "Old age," in Louis Kronenberger's view, "is an excellent time for outrage. My goal," he went on, "is to say or do at least one outrageous thing every week." Some of us may like to try this out. Joan wrote also the following about how to embrace the future:

The "future," after seventy, is not a social boundary, a geographical place, a psychological presumption. It is a state of mind. One of two, in fact. We have all heard both of them expressed so often that we long ago stopped listening. The one state of mind says, "We're all getting older. You just can't do those things anymore." The other says, "I've always wanted to see the Pyramids of Giza, so this year I'm going. I've always wanted to take mandolin lessons, so now I will." The future is a very sweet part of getting older. It is something to be grasped with fervour. It gets more intense, more alive, more essential every day. To those who have finally become aware of the presence of time in their lives, the future is no longer "out there." The Future is here, snapping at the heels, becoming more and more demanding as we go. (Used with permission)

That's ok if we have good health and the energy. No matter what age we are we can still come up against God's timing. We cannot push things forward or hurry them. We may lament about our pace slowing down where we don't have as much energy as we once had, and many tend to feel frustrated about this. But, God's timing is for all ages. God's will cannot be forced or hurried up. Things happen when they are meant to happen. We need to be gentle with ourselves. Perhaps prayer and allowing God's Spirit to take charge is the better way to go. Tennyson once said: *Travel at the pace of nature*. We have forgotten how to do this after living with a pace that is almost insane. We are not made to live at the pace of machinery and technology. This is a poem by Peierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881-1955) that reminds us about a gentler pace. God's pace.

Trust in the slow work of God

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—
and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

In Christ alone my Hope is found

Adrienne Liesching – Hadliegh Baptist Church 2020

<https://youtu.be/rn9-UNer6MQ>