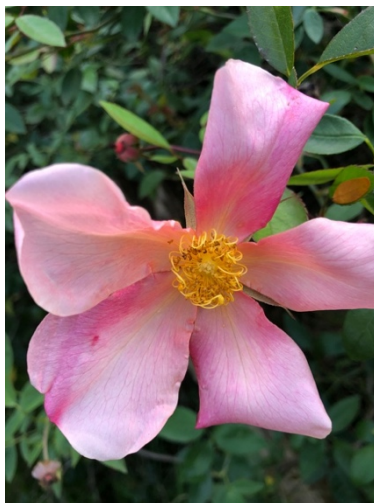


Introduction to Worship
10th May 2020 – Easter 5



Happy Mother's Day to all the mums. I hope you have a good day.
 I'm sure your family will be doing their very best to show their love to you.
 Despite all the challenges we face with social distancing and lockdown,
 family will use whatever resources they have to try and communicate their love.

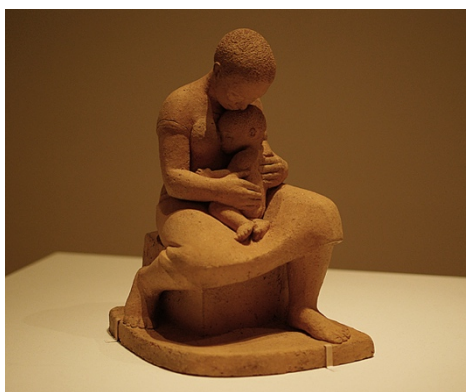
The readings this week speak of living stones that build a spiritual home for God
 and Jesus preparing dwelling places for us in heaven. Home is our focus at the moment.
 Many people have been cleaning and renovating their homes, gardening or spending time indoors or outdoors.
 Home means many things for people and there are many different kinds of homes.

Ultimately, it's people who make the home and we don't need a lot of things to make a home.

We remember Margaret E whose funeral was held on Friday and her son, Alastair, who will be experiencing his first Mother's Day without his mum. Please hold him in your prayers. *[Funeral video link is on our website]*

It seems like we are living like monks, with all this time for reflection and with silence and isolation.
 Today, in the extra worship resources we will explore some of the early churches communities who lived on
 remote islands like Lindisfarne and Iona in little stone huts. And other communities who lived in caves in
 rockfaces and caves hollowed out in chimney like structures, at Cappadocia in Turkey.

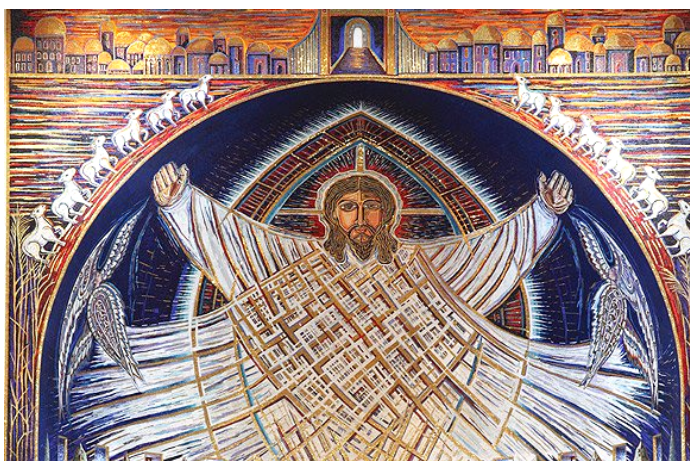
For many of us, the origins of our spirituality began in these kinds of places.



Mother & Child – Elizabeth Catlett

Mountview Worship @ Home

Sunday 10th May 2020



Christ in Glory – Church of the Transfiguration, Orleans, MA

Praise God

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below
Praise God above, you heavenly host
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost**

Thomas Ken 1637-1711 alt.

Welcome to our Service

We come before our Lord, with praise and thanksgiving, remembering we are all living stones that build a church that embraces the whole world and remember all those who have been living stones over the centuries who have contributed to our faith in Jesus Christ today.

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.



Call to Worship

O give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever.

Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession *(from today's readings)*

Loving God, our times are in your hands, and we trust you,
for you have let your face shine upon ours and have saved us in your steadfast love,
we come before you now, Lord, our rock and fortress,
loving and trusting in you, and surrender into your love,
we give you thanks and praise for all our blessings.
Jesus, our Lord, the cornerstone of our faith, who shapes us as living stones,
who prepares dwellings for us and lives in our dwellings,
you show us God and through you we come to know God in our hearts,
we give you thanks and praise for all our blessings.
Holy Spirit, who dwells in our house, our soul, a spiritual house, a living stone,
we give you thanks and praise for all our blessings.

Come Holy Spirit, open our hearts to the Word, and help us know God more.
 And Lord, if we need forgiveness or to forgive, help us,
 calm our hearts and transform us, give us a fresh start, a new beginning each day,
 and new eyes of faith to see Jesus as the way, the truth and the life,
 in silence we come before you with all that's on our hearts

Silence

Hear then Christ's Words of grace to us

'Your sins are forgiven'

Thanks be to God

Scripture Readings

Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16

31:1 In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.

31:2 Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

31:3 You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me,

31:4 take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

31:5 Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

31:15 My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

31:16 Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

1 Peter 2: 2-10

2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk,

so that by it you may grow into salvation- 2:3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

2:4 Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and 2:5 like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 2:6 For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a

cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 2:7 To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," 2:8 and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people;

once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

John 14: 1-14 27

14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

14:2 "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to

myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 14:4 And you know the way to the place where I am going."

14:5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

14:7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

14:8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

14:11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 14:12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do

and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 14:13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14:14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

**14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
 Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.**

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For the Young at Heart

Prayers at night help us sleep soundly. We think about our day and give thanks to God for blessings.

We make our peace with God by asking for forgiveness and forgive those who have hurt us.

Sleep is about trust and surrender, where we place ourselves in God's hands. Before we sleep, it's good to ask for a peaceful sleep. The image is of a child getting ready to sleep and it's from a little Golden Book called: *God*



Sermon

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



Jesus the Cornerstone of our Faith

These are two images of Jesus, side by side. One is from Santa Sophia in Istanbul, also known as Hagia Sophia. It was completed in 537 CE and was the Eastern Orthodox Cathedral. It was the third church to be built on that site. It became a Mosque, from 1453-1931, and during that time this image was whitewashed. Over the years the whitewash has slowly been removed to reveal this image and others. I've visited this cathedral which is now a museum and the images of Jesus, which are mosaics which so much expression in the faces, are truly beautiful works of art. The other image is modern. In my previous placement one of the members of the church asked for an image of Jesus for worship, where he didn't look stern or serious and instead looked carefree and happy.

Peter spoke of Jesus as the cornerstone of our faith and as chosen by God to be that cornerstone. A cornerstone or foundation stone of an ancient building was said to be the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation and that all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. Jesus is precious to us and loved by us and is the foundation of our faith, our faith is built upon him.

The challenge for us during the in-between time from birth and baptism to when Jesus comes for us to take us home to God is to be living stones of a vast spiritual house, where Jesus is our cornerstone. We look to him to know how to live that time as good and faithful servants of God. We consider how Jesus lived his life, his teachings and ministry, how he died and was raised, and the love he revealed in all he said and did, and we do our best to follow his example. There were 2.3 billion Christians in 2015 and now there are over 2.5 billion. That means we are part of a worldwide Christian church, all living stones, with one cornerstone who set the foundation for a church that began 2020 years ago.

Every person counts in the church, like in the hymn, *I am the Church*:

I count if I am ninety or nine or just a baby,
there's one thing I am sure about, and I don't mean maybe:

Refrain: I am the church! You are the Church! We are the church together!

All who follow Jesus all around the world, yes, we're the church together!

Richard Avery & Donald S. Marsh (Hymn 467)

We look to Jesus and come to know the complete unity that exists between God and Jesus and hope to find that unity for our self, through trust and surrender.

The psalmist knew his times were in God's hands and surrendered up his soul and life, to God in trust. In many ways we are like a chain of love, a chain of people who have been shaped by Christ's love over the centuries and by the loving actions of others who have shared the gospel with us in their love for us. When Jesus departed his disciples became the priesthood of believers, a community of believers who carried on his ministry in the world. We build each other up in love and as the priesthood of believers Peter spoke of all those centuries ago, we live out the gospel too, by continuing Jesus ministry in the world.



Living Stones

Building a cathedral out of living stones, stone by stone,
all built upon the cornerstone of our faith has taken centuries.

It is a spiritual home, a living house of believers, all dependent on our cornerstone, Jesus Christ our Lord.

As his spiritual household, Jesus reassures us we can ask him for anything in his name and it will be done. In the midst of the challenges we face today we can ask for the peace he offers us, peace that reassures us and calms our hearts and opens our hearts to God's love and grace, blessings and spirit. Jesus is our way to God and our inner peace is a sign that we believe in him in all circumstances and this peace can bring an overwhelming sense of trust in God where we can surrender to him and find wholeness and fulfilment and every blessing. That is God's Shalom.

God makes us to be loved by God and are God's beloved and we are made to love others. I watched a woman complete this heart on the beach at Mount Martha. It must have taken her hours to make and when she'd finished it, she walked past me, looked at me and smiled, and I smiled back. She made it to share with others, including me and left me feeling hope. It's the selfless and generous acts of others that touch our hearts and leave a mark. I've shared this photo with people from many churches and her simple act of love has touched many people's lives.



Today's gospel offers an antidote for troubled hearts. The invitation to trust Jesus, who calmed storms and led his people to lead us through life, where his presence amongst us brings peace and reassurance.

Rev Tina

Offering Prayer

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

**Lord and giver of every good thing wwe 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 and the Lord's Prayer

Heather Barnes has prepared the Prayers of the people for you today

Let us commence the Prayers of the People with these words,
which although not written for today are never the less very appropriate.

"O Saviour Christ,
in whose way of life lies the secret of life,
and the hopes of all the people,
we pray for quiet courage to meet this hour.
We did not choose to be born or live in such an age.
But let its problems challenge us,
its discoveries exhilarate us,
its injustice anger us,
its possibilities inspire us,
and its vigour renew us,
for your kingdom's sake. Amen."

Dear Lord, today we remember the People's Republic of Bangladesh, along with the Kingdoms of Bhutan and Nepal. We give thanks for the beauty of the mountains but we are aware that often there are violent storms, landslides and extensive flooding and we give thanks for those who offer assistance and support at such times. We pray for strength for those Christians who live as a minority amid our Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu brothers and sisters.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray today for the Whitehorse Stairway Church Community while in our Presbytery we pray for Forest Hill UC and the Strathdon Faith Community. May those who minister and those who worship know your love as they seek to serve you. We also uphold before you all those associated with Box Hill Uniting Age Well, be they carers or residents. May they be aware of your presence each day.

Here at Mountview, we ask for Rev. Tina as she ministers amongst us in these very challenging times. Bless her and keep her in good health.

Heavenly Father be with those who are experiencing grief, sadness, family or health problems. May they experience the comfort of your love.

In particular we ask for -

- ✠ Alastair Edgington, following the funeral of his mother Margaret last Friday;
- ✠ Des Kidd, as he approaches the half way point of his treatment; and
- ✠ we rejoice with Judy Ralston, that the treatment is "holding" her cancer.

As well, we bring before you dear Lord others for whom we are concerned.

In these very challenging times, we ask for our Federal and State leaders who have the heavy responsibility of guiding us in these uncharted waters. May they continue to steer a course that is considerate of all.

These past weeks have not been easy Lord and today as we remember and honour our mothers, again we are not able to meet as we would have wished.

Gracious God, You know our needs before we ask.

Grant our requests as may be best for us.

This we ask in Jesus' name who taught us to pray –

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Dismissal

Go out into the world in the power of the spirit and in all things at all times remember Christ is with you.
 Make your life your worship to the praise and glory of God. Amen

Shalom to You Now

Prayerfully read the words; Imagine your family in Christ and send them heartfelt blessings from the Lord

**Shalom to you now, shalom, my friends.
 May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.
 In all your living and through your loving,
 Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.**

Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942- © CCLI 122303

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(I have provided extra resources to accompany you on the journey, Rev. Tina)

Extra Worship Resources

It seems like many of us are currently living like hermits and monks, with silence and isolation.

But we have not chosen this lifestyle. It's been imposed on us.

Perhaps it is an opportunity for us to learn from those who chose this way of life and whose writings about their experiences have enriched the churches faith and spirituality.

These photos are of caves and chimney like formations that monks lived in at Cappadocia in Turkey from the 4th century, possibly even earlier. At one stage it was said 5000 people, both women and men, lived like monks in caves which they hallowed out as little rooms or large kitchens, dining and worship areas, for when the community came together. The Orthodox church benefited from their writings. One of the well-known books written was the Philokalia (love of the beautiful), which was written between the 4th and 15th centuries. It contains many writings of the desert fathers. For example, St Diadochos wrote: *'Spiritual knowledge comes from prayer, deep stillness and complete detachment. While wisdom comes from meditation on Holy Scripture and through grace given by God.'*



Cappadocia

Around the same period of time, from the 5th century to the 12th century onwards, monks and nuns came to places like Lindisfarne and Iona. The first photo is of what's left of stone hut that Saint Aiden and others lived in next to the sea at Lindisfarne, where the only sounds were of geese and the waves. It was an isolated place. Today, people can only get to the island at low tide and need to be back on the mainland before the tide starts coming in or they risk getting stuck on the road between the mainland and the island when the waves roll over their cars. There are a series of little huts on stilts along the road, for those who aren't quick enough.



Lindisfarne

Iona

At Iona Island, a series of small wooden and stone huts were built beside the sea with a chapel in the middle, by Saint Columba and fellow monks. At that time Iona was a sacred place where kings and saints were buried.

It is said that forty kings are buried on Iona, including Macbeth. In the 12th century a small chapel was built in the middle of the graveyard, called Saint Oran. Saint Oran was a companion of St Columba. One story told about Saint Columba was that as he was praying on a small green hill, now called the hill of angels, he saw the heavens opened and a ladder with angels descending and ascending. There are many stories from Iona.

It is a place where the book of Kells was written and Celtic Spirituality was born.

Saint Aiden came to Lindisfarne asking his fellow monks to:

'listen to the breath of the Spirit and hear the heart that speaks in each person we meet along the way.'

Today in a book called, *Anam Cara or Soul friend*, John O'Donohue shared the spirituality of the Celts.

He considered aging an invitation to solitude and stillness. He said:

'Few people are able to inhabit their present time because they are too stressed and rushed. One of the joys of aging is that you have more time to be still. Pascal said that many of our major problems derive from our inability to sit still in a room. Stillness is vital to the world of our soul. If as you age you become more still, you will discover that stillness can be a great companion. The fragments of your life will have time to unify, and all the places where your soul-shelter is wounded or broken will have time to knit and heal. You will be able to return to yourself. In this stillness, you will engage your soul.'

Perhaps now is an invitation for us to experience the blessings that come from solitude and stillness.

David Adam, who lived on Lindisfarne wrote the following:

Prayer before Prayer

I weave a silence on to my lips
 I weave a silence into my mind
 I weave a silence within my heart
 I close my ears to distractions
 I close my eyes to attractions
 I close my heart to temptations

Calm me O Lord, as you stilled the storm
 Still me O Lord, keep me from harm
 Let all the tumult within me cease
 Enfold me in your peace

A Poem you may appreciate from YouTube: Desiderata (click on the link; 4:46)

<https://youtu.be/CaVaF6TkSUU>



Christians throughout the world have been invited to say the Lord's Prayer every day.

Please join them:

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.

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 forever. Amen

Rev Tina, for Mountview Uniting Church. © 2020 Mountview UCA

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