

Whitehorse Uniting Church
Written Worship
Sunday 7th May 2023



Hymn 703 As the Deer Pants for the Water

Martin Nystrom 1983 (Emmaus Music 2019)

<https://youtu.be/peZudXt9faU>

Welcome

May the Worship Bless you

Acknowledgment

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

Lord God, you are our Rock.

Our strong fortress

Lord God, you are our Rock.

In you we seek refuge and comfort

Lord God, you are our rock.

You hold us within your steadfast love and give us strength for the journey.



Prayers

Lord our God, you are our rock, our strength, our purpose for living.

We find our refuge in your strength and power.

You save us with your steadfast love for us, as your people, living stones of your spiritual house.

We are your pilgrim people

We give you our thanks and praise

Jesus our Lord, the cornerstone of our faith and of God's spiritual house.
You call us to be God's chosen people, called into the light, to be light bearers, as we follow you,
the light of the world.

**We are your pilgrim people
We give you our thanks and praise**

Holy Spirit, when we pray to God, you come and fill us.
You guide us, strengthen our hearts, and show us the way, as the people of God.
You fill our hearts with God's love and help us know God in our spiritual food which is spiritual milk, of God's Word
and Holy Communion.

You remind us we are called by God to be God's people.
You call us forward to witness to God's mighty deeds in our lives.

**We are your pilgrim people
We give you our thanks and praise**

Invocation

Come upon us today Holy Spirit
Come Holy Spirit Come

Confession

Lord, these are challenging times yet here we are willing to make a commitment to share and care for one another
as one united family in Christ.

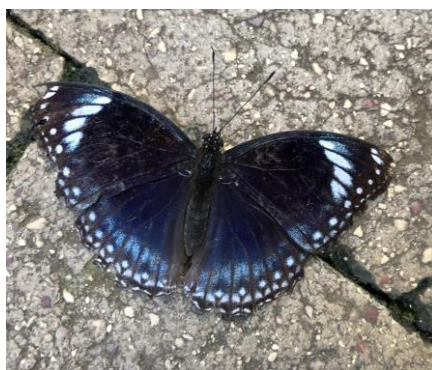
If there is anything we have done in the past to hurt another, forgive us Lord.

Transform our hearts and help us make a fresh start and a new beginning, with Jesus' help and guidance.

Lord, in this moment of silence we come before you with all that's on our hearts, as we seek your forgiveness.

Silence

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



Hymn 681 Lord let me See. tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8roH9ocFM&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=8>



Readings

1 Peter 2:2-10

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation. ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and 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. 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."

⁷ This honour, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,^[c] "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," 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.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people,^[c] in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. 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

14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe^[c] in God; believe also in me. 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?^[b] 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. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going."^[c] ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know^[c] my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." ⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 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'? 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.

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe^[c] because of the works themselves. 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. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If in my name you ask me^[c] for anything, I will do it.

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Young at Heart

Ponder on why we have the image of God as our rock and what it means for you.

Hymn 398 Come down O Love Divine.

Fernando Ortega 2017

<https://youtu.be/2DbytPhyJzo>



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

Sermon - Living stones – Rev Tina

Ponder on the words: *Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals, yet chosen and precious in God's sight.*

We hear and read the words: *"See I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. To you 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".*

We did not ask God to send Jesus and the Holy Spirit to us. It is God's initiative. It is God's power. God's power is a love so great that all darkness and evil is defeated, so that the light is the light for all of us, found in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Once we were not a people. Now we are God's people. Not by our initiative but by God's. Not by our doing but by God's doing. It is God's choice and by the power of God's love for us, that defeats all forms of power and darkness.

And there this light is in each one of us.



I remember being on Iona Island, in Scotland, many years ago. One of the members of the group staying on the island, who I hardly knew, gave me this wooden candle. She said to me: *I see God's light in you.*

It made me ponder about how God's light is in each one of us.

Let us all see God's light in one another and say to one another: *I see God's light in you.*

God sent Jesus because of God's great love for us, to bring this light into our lives. Because of God's love we are called by Jesus to look to him as the cornerstone of our faith. He set us an example to love, as he loved.

Our church's foundational document, the Basis of Union says the following:

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the faith and unity of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church are built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit confesses Jesus as Lord over its own life; it also confesses that Jesus is Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation, of a new humanity. God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself. The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which Christ will bring; the Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal; here the Church does not have a continuing city but seeks one to come. On the way Christ feeds the Church with Word and Sacraments, and it has the gift of the Spirit in order that it may not lose the way.

Our faith is built on Jesus Christ. He is the example we look to, on how to live our lives. He is the cornerstone which holds up all other living stones in the church, as God's spiritual building. Jesus is a living stone, and so are we. We are living stones and we are called to allow ourselves to be built into a spiritual house, the body of Christ, where Jesus is at the centre of our lives.

What does this mean for us today in our context?

It means the church is going nowhere until we start talking with God. It makes sense to talk with God. We are God's people. God chose us. We need to choose God and spend time with God. God chose us as his priesthood of believers to speak into each and every one of our souls, into our lives, our hearts, and to work through each and every one of us. We are God's own people. That's where we find our identity and purpose.

If we are God's own people, it makes sense to talk to God, through prayer. The secular world doesn't choose to depend on God like we do. Many choose to destroy creation and trample on it, to pollute it, poison ecosystems, kill people, and to make a profit through mindlessly extracting what they want which offers no future for generations of people.



That's not the world we are called to belong to. We may think, what can we do. We have no power. That is true. On our own we don't have much of a voice. But together as God's people, we do have a voice. Through God's spirit empowering all Christians and churches, we have a voice. A voice that can be loud.

There are many who are out for themselves in this world. Destroying the world for short term profit. We live within a world where it's often me first, where people are enslaved to individualism and consumerism and often live lives of quiet despair, loneliness, and pain.

We are called to a different way of living, where we find life and hope as the people of God on the way.

We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, called to live in a countercultural way and to speak out against anything that destroys creation and brings back darkness. We are here to proclaim God's mighty acts in our lives and to witness to God's grace and love in all we do. God has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. God of the cosmos, God beyond infinity and our comprehension. We must be bearers of God's light.

To do that we need to spend time with God, praying with God so we may understand God's ways.

We know our identity as God's people, pilgrims on the way, followers of Jesus. We need to spend time with God, praying for direction.

So far, signposts have emerged from our hearts during the recent consultation, signposts that speak of creating community and bringing God's light and love to the world, in a variety of ways. Such as extending our care, welcome and hospitality to the wider community.

We may ask where do we find the strength to do this?

Today's gospel in Peter's letter to the church offers us precious insights. He speaks of spiritual milk.

We are young at heart on the journey and dependent on God's strength. Spiritual milk is God's word and communion, both of which we receive today. This spiritual food feeds us on the way as the people of God.

We do not have to be anxious about the future. We need to build a strong spiritual house with Jesus as our cornerstone. Believe God already has a plan for us.

Imagine we are riders of surfboards. Imagine the Holy Spirit comes in waves over history. Waves that move amongst churches and our lives, waves that we ride boldly, without fear and anxiety. When we pray and talk to God, our hearts become sensitive to those waves, and we know when to ride them and to trust where they take us. That is why the church has received life over the past two thousand years. So, pray and get ready to ride the waves on your surfboard with boldness. Believe God will support and guide us all forward into the future.

Let us ride those waves with perseverance, let us speak out about injustices, let us love like Jesus loved, let us lay down our time, resources, and energy in doing this and build God's spiritual house and future together as we follow Jesus Christ, as pilgrims on the way.

The Lord be with you.

Offering prayer

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 – Margot Kemke

Dear Heavenly Father, we come together today to pray for all the people in our world. For all nationalities with many different cultures, religions, and beliefs; for all Australians, young and old; for our neighbours, our friends and our families.

We thank you for the privilege of living in this beautiful country and promise to care for our environment, the water, the soil and the wildlife. We thank you for the security of a stable government, an education and health system which caters for all the needs of the community, and especially for the carers who deliver these services to us all. May we be mindful of others around us who may need love and care too.

In our world prayer cycle today, we pray for the people and governments of Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a parliamentary democracy established in 1947 and is home to more than 243 million people

who live mostly in rural areas and face many challenges of illiteracy, poverty, corruption, and terrorism. Education is not compulsory, and many educated people are moving to other countries for employment.

Islam is the state religion and 96% of the people are Sunni Muslims and Islamic ideals and practices suffuse virtually all parts of Pakistani life. There is quite violent persecution against religious minorities, even other external Islamic influences. The population is increasing rapidly resulting in a growing middle class. O Lord, we pray for a balance between a theocratic state and those determined to pursue a more liberal progressive agenda. We pray also for social and economic reforms.

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, an island country with a population of 22million people, is made up of three main ethnic groups – namely Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim. Civil war, from 1983 -2009, triggered an economic crisis of increasing foreign debt, banishment of the Tamils, and suppression of human rights. The majority live in rural areas and work on plantations growing rubber and coconut trees, tea, coffee and rice. However, there is free education and health care, and 98% of young people are educated to year 9 standard, although this is not compulsory. Also the mining of high value gemstones, tourism and textiles are adding to the economy. O Lord, we pray for free speech and social and economic reforms for Sri Lanka also.

Here in Australia, we pray for our governments, Federal, state and local. Guide them in all the decisions made for the economy, environment and welfare of all Australians.

Locally we pray for the Stairway Church, Whitehorse, its leaders, and congregation; the minister and members of the Uniting Churches in Emerald, Gembrook and Tecoma, and for the community at the Nangare Independent Living Units. We ask you to bless, guide and encourage these communities and their leaders as they reach out and serve with love and care.

We pray for our own leaders, Rev. Tina and Rev. Peter. Be very near to them, guide and sustain them in their everyday devotion to you and to the congregation in their care. We pray for and ask for blessings for all who take on small responsibilities within our parish. We pray for any of our members who are coping with medical problems, family responsibilities or anxieties, loneliness, or disabilities. Comfort and embrace them, O Lord, and encourage us to be your servants, to share your love and concern with our neighbours and offer a helping hand where needed.

Heavenly Father, you know our needs and prayers – hear us, we pray.

We say together:

The Lord's Prayer

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 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.

Communion

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 our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Prayer continues ...

We proclaim your power in goodness and your might in compassion, as we say:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**
Prayer continues...

As he broke bread before the brokenness of his death, **(Break Bread)**
as he poured out wine before his blood was poured out on the cross, **(Hold up Cup)**
Prayer continues

Nurture us with your brokenness,
renew us with your poured out life,
empower us with your powerlessness,
that we may take root in your risen life and bear fruit in your world.

**You are our life;
you are our hope;
you are our peace;
and we praise you. Amen.**

The bread of life is offered to us. **We feed on the bread of life with gratitude**
The cup of the newness of life is offered to us. **We drink of the cup with gratitude.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.
May we who share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us.

Prayer after communion

**God of truth and love who calls us and leads us into the future, make us a blessing for others
Help us to see creation as being in the future and to love it into being.**

May we hold on to the hope You have planted in us,
believing the unbelievable, reaching for the unattainable,
trusting the things beyond seeing and the things beyond hearing,
loving and living with compassion, offering hospitality and hope,
until the people who walk in darkness see the great light and are glad and free.

Hymn 530 Now let us from this Table Rise.

Fred Kaan 1964 (Droles 94, 2012)
<https://youtu.be/BMUCmn7Madc>

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

778 Shalom to you Now – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=35>

Pastoral Care Tips from Rev Tina



Today I am offering some tips about how we can offer pastoral care tips to homeless people.

As a community we minister through the Op shop, Kids Hope, Centre 81 and through our pastoral care teams and in many other ways, in offering care and hospitality to the community and we support Whitehorse Churches Care in their ministry, but we are unable to offer emergency housing. I recently had an inquiry about emergency housing in our region from a woman in her 50's saying she is homeless, and I was able to access the following details.

If requiring housing (during office hours): [1800 825 955](tel:1800825955) (will likely point you to Community Housing Ltd as they are the access point for Whitehorse) or call Community Housing Ltd directly: [9856 0098](tel:98560098)

Outside of hours: [1800 627 727](tel:1800627727) (Free Call) Hours: After 5pm (Monday – Friday) and 24 hours on weekends and Public Holidays (St Kilda Crisis Centre)

During winter (June - August), there are winter shelters operating in Maroondah and the Yarra Ranges. Guests need to be assessed for suitability. Generally 25yrs old and above. Must not be intoxicated/substance affected while at the shelter. <https://stableone.org/find-a-shelter/>

Yarra Ranges referrals via Stable One - 1800 431 244 (Male and female)

Uniting in Ringwood

8870 4000

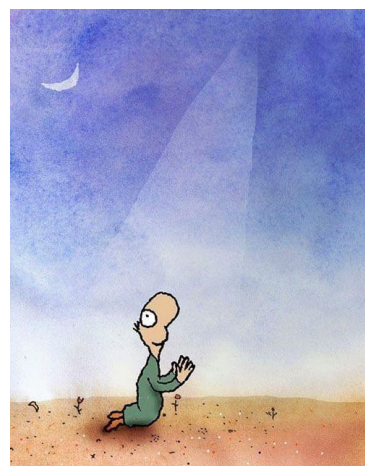
Office

291a Maroondah Highway, Ringwood

Between 9:30am-3:00 pm weekdays

They can organise an assessment.

Elderly women seeking housing need to try this number.



*One of Leunig's cartoons to inspire us
(used with permission)*

I've attached a copy of the card that can be handed out to homeless people and will hand some out during this Sunday's Service

Eastern Metropolitan Region Homelessness Assistance

Experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis?

Free call from landline **1800 825 955**

Access services at the following local entry points
Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm
(Calls outside these hours are diverted to Salvation Army Crisis Service)

Anchor Inc. (03) 9760 6400

Box Hill Institute Lakeside Campus Building LA Level 2 Lilydale 3140

Community Housing (Vic) Ltd (03) 9856 0098

Ground Floor 19-23 Prospect St, Box Hill 3128

SalvoCare Eastern (03) 9853 5680

317 High Street, Kew 3101

Uniting Harrison (03) 9051 3000

321 Ferntree Gully Rd, Mount Waverley 3149

Uniting Wesley (03) 8870 4020

291a Maroondah Highway, Ringwood 3134

Useful contacts

Alcohol and Other Drugs	Intake & Assessment	Inner	1800 778 278
		Outer	1300 007 873
	Directline - counselling and referral		1800 888 236
Children & Young People	Kids Helpline		1800 551 800
	Frontyard Youth Services		1800 800 531
	EACH Youth Clinic		(03) 9871 1802
Family Violence	Safe Steps		1800 015 188
	Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (ECASA)		(03) 9870 7330
	Sexual Assault Crisis Line (24hr)		1800 806 292
	Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS)		(03) 9259 4200
	Men's Referral Service		1300 766 451
	Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service		(03) 9212 0200
Hospitals and Medical	Emergency		000
	Hospitals - Angliss / Box Hill /Maroondah		1300 342 255
	Monash Medical Centre		(03) 9594 6666
Legal	Eastern Community Legal Centre	Box Hill	(03) 9285 4822
		Boronia	(03) 9762 6235
Mental Health	Lifeline		13 11 14
	Crisis - Eastern Mental Health Triage		1300 721 927
	Suicide Helpline		1300 651 251
Other	Centrelink		www.humanservices.gov.au
	Gamblers Help Eastern		1300 131 973
	LGBTIQ - QLife		1800 184 527
	Ngwala Aboriginal Housing and Support		(03) 9510 3233

Emergency contact numbers (24hrs 7 days a week)

People experiencing homelessness

Free call from landline **1800 825 955**

Local response Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

(Calls outside these hours are diverted to Salvation Army Crisis Services)

Women and children experiencing family violence

Free call Safe Steps **1800 015 188**

Emotional support 24 hrs a day

Free call Lifeline **13 11 14**

(Lifeline is an independent not-for-profit organisation)

- Homeless or worried you might be soon?
- Feeling unsafe or experiencing violence where you live?
- Nowhere to sleep tonight?
- Need some support to help you stay housed?
- Need information about your housing options?

To speak with a homelessness entry point worker

Free call from landline **1800 825 955**

Or call your local entry point listed on the back of this card.

The worker will discuss with you services and supports that may help.

Experiencing homelessness?

Free call from landline **1800 825 955**

to speak with a homelessness entry point worker

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