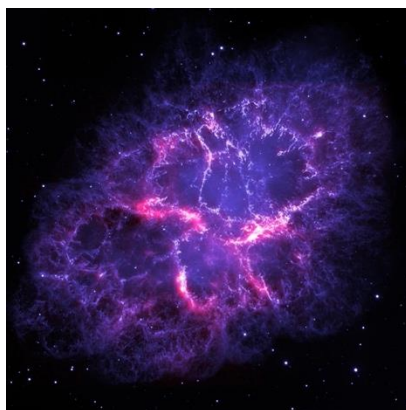


Whitehorse Uniting Church
Written Worship
Sunday 14 May 2023



Nebular – NASA, Hubble Telescope

Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

Northern Baptist Assoc 2012

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here;
come bow before Him now with reverence and fear:
in Him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

Words and music: David J Evans

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

The Lord has asked us to love, as he loves us.

We love the Lord.

We love one another.

We will do our best,

**to live out the Lord's command
to love one another as he loves us.**

Prayers of Adoration and Invocation

Loving God, in you we live and have our being,
 For you are not far from all of us.
 You are all around us and within us.
 You are our safe haven, our living God,
 Our creator who made galaxies and are mindful of us.
 We give you our thanks and praise.

Jesus our Lord, our redeemer,
 Calling us forward.
 Making us one people of God.
 Uniting us in your love,
 We give you our thanks and praise.

Holy Spirit, life giver and love bearer,
 Knitting us together
 As the community of God,
 Leading us on, calling us forward,
 pouring God's love into our hearts,
 bringing tears of joy,
 and healing our souls,
 we give you our thanks and praise.

Come Holy Spirit,
 Come today upon us all,
 and pour God's love into our hearts,
 so, we may know God's abundant grace, and blessings.



T. Lyndon

Prayer of 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.

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 396 Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire.

Anon 9th Century

<https://youtu.be/WjKcc8lcxlo>



Revised Common Lectionary

Readings – Rhonda Goodall *NRSV Updated Version*

Acts 17:16-32

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and also in the marketplace^[a] every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this pretentious babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) ¹⁹ So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. ²³ For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor^[b] he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God^[c] and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

²⁹ “Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰ While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

³² When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, “We will hear you again about this.”

1 Peter 3:12-22

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

¹³ Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you do suffer for doing what is right,^[a] you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear,^[b] and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵ but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, ¹⁶ yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned,^[c] those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered^[d] for sins once for all, the righteous for

the unrighteous, in order to bring you^[e] to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for^[f] a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

John 14:15-21

¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep^[a] my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,^[b] to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be^[c] in^[d] you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them. New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Young at Heart

Families and Mother’s Day

Spend some time pondering about your happiness moments.
Then give thanks to God.



T. Lyndon

Hymn 153 - God is Love, let heaven adore him.

Timothy Rees 1874-1939 words. Cyril Taylor 1907-1991 music.
Sung by choir St Michael & All Angels Bassett (6th Sunday Easter 2021)
North Stoneham & Bassett Parish
<https://youtu.be/GFwnnIAjnAE>

Reflection 14th May 2023 -Rev Tina

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



When I walked the Camino, I often walked into little cafes in little villages in the mountains where families gathered together for tapas and dancing. Families of all ages. There was so much joy.

Today is Mother's Day, the day we gather together to give thanks for our mothers. All of us have or have had a mother, and they have had a profound effect on our lives. They may have been an inspiring role model, or kept the home fires burning with wonderful meals, or not been a good cook, or been a mum with a career, or kind and loving, or not maternal, or a loving presence for all, or died when we were very young. Mums are unique and different.

Some of us may have thought our mums didn't know anything when we were young adults, until we had children ourselves and made mistakes and found out we were not perfect and realised our mums were actually human beings, like us, flawed and imperfect, just doing the best they can with us and life. The world has changed since we were children. Families have changed. Now there are blended families, single parent families, or families where parents are the same gender. Whatever the shape of the family, families are foundational for societies' wellbeing. We are made for family and community.

I often hear people say our congregation is a caring community and that's what I like best, belonging to a caring community. A congregation is a very large family. The family of God. Family is also foundational to our faith. Jesus offers us lots of images and stories in the bible about families, about Jesus as the Son of God and how we are children of God. We are God's family, in our homes and church.

Jesus promises the gift of the Spirit, who knits us together as family and community and shapes our hearts, so we can love as Jesus loves. Jesus promises us that very same Spirit will bring about his promise of union with God, with him and one another as his body, the church.

Our hope is wherever we gather today, we experience a sense of God's blessings. Family is so important for our sense of wellbeing. Belonging and relationships with God, with others and ourselves are central to who we are as a people of God in the way. We are born into a family, community and society and it shapes who we are and how we live our lives. Jesus knew this when he gave us the Love command to love others as he loves us.

The kind of love Jesus speaks of is agape love. Unconditional, accepting, of the will, and not just about feelings. A love that is life giving to others. A love that rises above the brokenness of the world and is more about God's abundant generosity. There is no room for unforgiveness, guile and mean-spiritedness with agape love. It is a love that is as wide as the ocean and stronger than death. It is a love that comes about through the Holy Spirit who pours God's love into our hearts and expands them so we may be a blessing to others and leave a legacy of love.

May you be blessed this Mother's Day.

May you find love and joy today. May the Lord be with you.

Hymn 179 Praise with Joy the Worlds Creator

John Goss music, John Bell & Graham Maule Words

Organ Scholar. 2018

<https://youtu.be/IQnFlu8HcOg>

Prayers



Spend some time contemplating these images and praying for those who are suffering due to the effects of climate change and the loss of their homes through natural disasters, the changing church throughout the world, aboriginal and indigenous people throughout the world who have lost their land and identity, those who have had their lives destroyed by wars and the homeless who have no home this winter.

Prayers of the People from Tim Joyce

O Saviour Christ,

in whose way of life lies the secret of all 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 to 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.

(Bangladesh. *A Procession of Prayers: Meditations and Prayers from around the World*, comp. John Carden, WCC, and Cassell, London, UK, 1998, p.179)

Almighty God, we pray for Your Church, for our Whitehorse congregation.
We thank you for the gifts that each person brings. We pray for our ministers and our leaders.
Uphold them. Grant them energy, wisdom and clarity. Grant us a vision that has You at the centre.

We pray also Lord for other churches and agencies. We pray for the Anglican Church of the Ascension, Burwood East; and for the Uniting Church congregation of Christ Church Kensington. We pray for their worship communities, their members their participants, their special ministries and their outreach programs

Loving God - We pray for the world. We pray this morning for Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal

We **pray** for:

- efforts of governments and others to build up these nations' economies
- those who have lost families and homes in earthquakes and other disasters as they struggle to rebuild their lives, homes and infrastructure
- those who contribute to religious harmony and advocate for the minority voice of Christians, especially amid religious and ethnic tensions
- religious and government leaders that they will make it possible for all peoples to live in justice with peace and harmony
- these small nations which depend on other countries and are often threatened by interests of their bigger neighbours.

Merciful Lord - We pray for the poor, neglected and marginalised. For indigenous people – that opportunities for justice, reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect will not be wasted. For displaced people – that they will be welcomed as they flee unimaginable circumstances. For victims of war. For perpetrators of war and for the international community as they struggle with how to respond. Lord - We pray for peace.

For people of colour who have suffered injustice at the hands of the law, who do not share equally in the wealth of their society and who are discriminated against. We pray for our governments - local, state and federal. That they will govern for all. That they will govern with compassion. That the most vulnerable will be at the front. That none will be left behind. Lord - Enable us to be agents of Your love in the world.

And we pray today for mothers. For the care, the love and the devotion of mothers. For the joys of parenthood and for the challenges it brings. And for those for whom today is a day of difficult memories.

Merciful Lord - we pray for those in special need at this time. For the sick, the lonely and the grieving. We pray for those in our own community - family, loved ones and friends who are suffering hardship, loss or ill health. Lord - we entrust them to your care and pray that you will surround them with your love.

We pray all these things through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray ...

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.

Candle Prayers



Hymn 156 Morning has Broken.

Gaelic Melody

Elinor Farjeon 1881-1965

<https://youtu.be/h5D3LEjGF8A>

Blessing

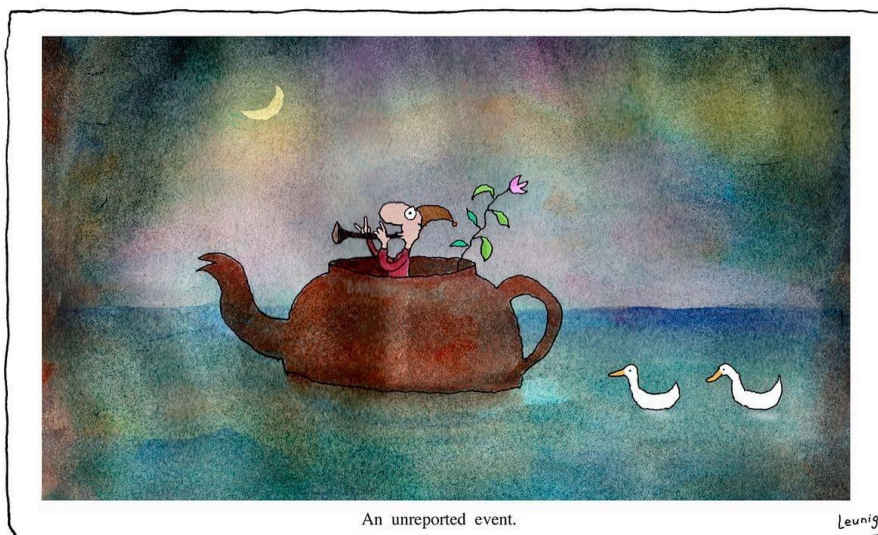
We go in Peace in the love of God in the Power of the Spirit
 May the Lord Bless and Guard us
 May the Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us
 As we bring Christ's love and peace to the world. Amen

778 Shalom to you Now – tMt video

Traditional Spanish Melody Elise Elinger 1942-

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

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



Leunig, used with permission.

Forgiveness – Rev Tina

For some forgiveness involves years of grieving until they are ready to let go of deep hurt and pick up the pieces of their lives and begin again. For others, forgiveness involves justice and truth telling. Forgiveness means many things. The person it benefits the most is often the person who forgives. It can be restorative of relationships where unforgiveness has broken the relationship, often for many years. Forgiveness is powerful. It brings transformation. It is Jesus Christ's gift to us.

If you walk around Carlton and to the University of Melbourne, you may see this sign on a post near a crossing. It has been there for five years now, and thousands of young students have seen it. I wonder if they have embraced forgiveness. I wonder if the sign has changed lives or brought healing. No one has taken it down or put graffiti on it. It's got a life of its own.



Shine Jesus Shine, Bog sing at Royal Albert Hall London 2012

Graham Kendrick 1950

(HLMaachen)

<https://youtu.be/D4hXJ9ax2FY>