

**Whitehorse Uniting
Sunday 4th February 2024
Epiphany 5_B**



RCL



**Introit 768 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow
MD 1801**

<https://youtu.be/RBz7vuJ2b1A?si=ELtjL2Xf3fH-qwe1>

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 (From Isaiah 40:31)

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary.

They shall walk and not grow faint.

Prayers of adoration

Loving God, everlasting and faithful
You give power to the faint and anxious, hope to the forsaken,
and strengthen the weak and powerless.

Lord, you never grow weary from loving us.

Lord, you make the stars with your fingers and are greater than the cosmos,
You are more powerful than we can ever know.

We praise you Lord, we give you thanks.

Lord, we trust you with our lives, we find hope in you,
for you take away our fears and anxiety and fill us with strength and courage.
Lord, we trust you with our lives.

We give you our thanks and praise.

Prayers of Invocation

Lord, you send your holy Spirit upon us.

Come Holy Spirit, come.

Come Holy Spirit, come.

Prayers of Confession

Lord, you forgive us and give us grace to forgive others.
You shape us, you save us, you redeem us.

Have we not known you?

Have we not heard you?
 You Lord are here with us,
 Even when we don't know it.
 Lord, you are faithful and steadfast,
 We trust in you.

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

Silence

Here then Christ's words of grace to us

"Your sins are forgiven."

Thanks be to God.

Hymn 123 Be still my soul.

Mount Royal Kantorei 2022

<https://youtu.be/CmNXeReZqAg?si=dRUmng4EDf9m0EK->

Readings

Isaiah 40:21-31

²¹ Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²² It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to live in, ²³ who brings princes to naught and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

²⁴ Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. ²⁵ To whom, then, will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted, ³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

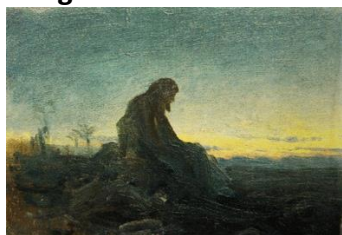
Mark 1:29-39

²⁹ As soon as they^[a] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹ He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. ³² That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴ And he cured many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵ In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸ He answered, "Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

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



RCL

Jesus set an example for us of what grounds us in God and sustains us in the busyness of life.

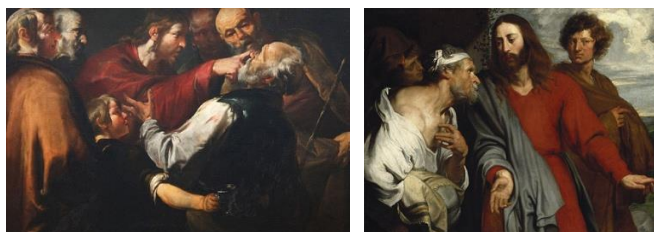
He teaches us how to stay focused and care for ourselves and others, by seeking solitude to be with God and pray.

YouTube music from Wild Goose: Don't be afraid.

<https://youtu.be/LXCMv5IF-TM?si=IUlnIgO6RI4SEPI0>

Sermon Rev Tina - The power of God's love

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



RCL

Jesus' ministry began in Galilee, in the synagogues, the places where the community gathered and in homes, where friends and family offered hospitality and cared for one another. The context and worldview promoted a climate of anxiety, with beliefs in bad spirits and fear of war and Romans due to political and spiritual unrest. It was just before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, the Temple, and a way of life.

Jesus' disciples bring him home and Simon Peter's mother-in-law is in bed with a fever and cannot offer hospitality. Jesus goes to her, risks ritual impurity by touching her that would have excluded him from synagogues and takes her hand and raises her up and she is healed. Immediately she offers him hospitality. Then the entire village turns up on the doorstep expecting him to heal everyone and cast out spirits. Perhaps this ministry left him feeling exhausted, and he goes out to pray on the mountain at dawn and finds strength to continue his journey to other villages where he teaches in synagogues and casts out demons. This mindset, spirituality and healing is alien to us. Yet, we live in a society where anxiety, fear and oppression are a problem. We live with many worries and anxieties.



RCL

Isaiah the prophet and the people he ministered to also lived with anxiety and fear. They were refugees and exiles and were feeling a sense of failure, fear, humiliation, and grief.

The people feel lost and need hope. Hope that will give them courage to keep on trying, questing, striving, and seeking to find a new way forward and meaning in their lives, where they find hope in a world dominated by emperors, armies, and wars. Where doubts are holding them back from embracing God's message of hope.

The world and cosmos are complex, and the people find it difficult to believe that one God controls their destiny. Isaiah invites them into the mystery of God and calls them to stop focusing on death all around them and idols such as wealth, status, and false gods. He says wake up. Have you not heard? Stop forgetting the fundamental teachings of your tradition.

He does his best to encourage them to turn to God as their source of strength. He encourages them in words that are expressed a lovely piece of poetry, which most of us know well from a popular hymn.

Isaiah 40:31 *Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

Wait for the Lord who unites life in a way that brings hope and joy. Open your minds and hearts to the majesty of God and find your place of belonging in a vast universe. God loves you and will set you free from whatever burdens you. The Lord will deliver you. Hope for the future.

He may well have been speaking to us. Isaiah's message is timeless and eternal.

We must wait on the Lord. We need to trust and surrender our lives to God. God never grows weary. God gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. God calls us to make God central in our lives. Making God central in our lives gives us courage and strength where we are no longer helpless and at the mercy of fear, anxiety, and despair.

We need to be open to God's great power over our lives.

Kierkegaard, a theologian, said: *"As long as we harbour other ultimate loyalties besides God, we are lost in a sea of chaos."*



Old Master painting

Augustine shared from personal experience: *"You Lord have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."*

God dispels our fears and takes away our anxieties, sorrows and worries and fills us with love, peace, and light, and invites us to be bearers of the gospel's message of hope. We look to Jesus who has taught us how to lift others out of misery and sadness, because that is what he does for us when we turn to him as our source of life and hope.

All that chains our hearts, falls away.

We find our rest in God and are filled with awe, as the Spirit fills us.

Today's gospel is for us.

It calls us to trust God and know we are loved.

God lifts us up from all that drags us down and gives us life.



RCL

The power of your love by Geoff Bullock

<https://youtu.be/p6yQzQc0lnA?si=qKPXsHIUoNgfiOtB>

Offering prayer



RCL

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 Savior, amen.

Prayers of the People – Tim Joyce

God of passion and power,
insistent, immediate,
challenging, compelling us with your story's breathless beginning.
Walk us into the wilderness to hear your voice where silence reigns.

Give us insight, the vision beyond all seeing, so we may look upon heavens torn open and know that the time of good news for all creation is always now.

God of passion and power,

When money becomes a prison:

When income determines worth:

When economies deepen injustice:

where consumption replaces compassion:

free us to choose life.

That our responses and our actions will be guided by love.

Almighty God

We pray for the Church both here and throughout Your world, that we may demonstrate to the world a living, vibrant, compelling faith.

Responsive to the context and demands of the day.

And to the needs of the Your world

God of Justice – we pray for your World.

We pray for these people and all who suffer, are mistreated, are neglected, or forgotten – wherever they may be.

We pray for the marginalised, forgotten, suffering or lonely.

For the mentally ill, those without meaningful work, for those struggling to put food on the table, for those who live without hope.

We pray for the displaced that they will be treated with the respect and dignity, as brothers and sisters in need.

For victims of flood and natural disaster– that their lives and their communities may be rebuilt.

We pray for those without a roof over their heads, clean water to drink or food to eat, without friends or family – that you will provide comfort and support.

We pray for victims of war.

For the people of Ukraine.

For the people of Gaza and of Israel.

We pray that compassion and humanity will prevail. We pray that the guns might stop. We pray for peace with justice. We pray that relief might flow. That people will have food to eat, access to the medical care that they need and a roof over their heads.

We pray that children will be allowed to be children and that they will know more than the horrors of war.

Lord - hear their cries.

We pray for peace.

We pray for justice.

We pray that leaders, governments, churches, communities, will be responsive to those in need.

And we pray that through our choices, actions, and words we will live out our faith in our everyday lives, growing more compassionate and generous each day.

Merciful Lord - We pray for those in special need at this time.

For the sick

the lonely

the grieving

We entrust these people to your care.

And we pray that our decisions, our responses, and our actions will be guided by love.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Who taught us to pray



RCL

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 always Amen

HOLY 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 right to give our thanks and praise.

In Jesus of Nazareth,
in compassion for the outcast,
forgiveness for the fallen,
hope for the poor and hungry;
in his life poured out for others
and broken in rejection and disdain
you have made yourself known.

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.**

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.

The bread of life

Keep us in eternal life

The blood of Christ

Keep us in eternal life

During Communion - Hymn 714 Eat this bread, Drink this cup.

St Mary of the Angels 2022

<https://youtu.be/WHh81CBJ8cU?si=8O9wfx5PLuCGDOUh>

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.**

Communion Hymn 531 Sent forth by God's blessing.

<https://youtu.be/PLp85eLlAlM?si=NHAp87MaorE3PxVg>

Omer Westendorf 2016

Dismissal

Ruth Burgess, Acorns, and Archangels (Edit. Ruth Burgess) Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. www.ionabooks.com Used with permission.

Send us out.
Send us out to seek wisdom.
Send us out in peace.

Send us out.
Send us out to do justice.
Send us out in hope.

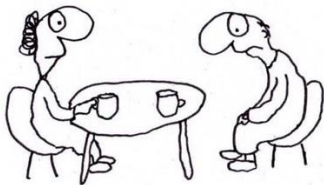
Send us out.
Send us out to be loving.
Send us out in joy.

Hymn 778 Shalom to you now

Whitehorse Uniting

https://youtu.be/liH_HdkWs74?si=bUv7FUEEtHvkGFDe

Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina



Leunig – used with permission.



T. Lyndon

Our congregation is known for its care of one another.
This week I've included the song by The Hollies. Hope you enjoy the YouTube clip.

He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

https://youtu.be/JI5vi9ir49g?si=ir2DICvJeP_ILC0r

May we lift one another up in hope and love.