

Introduction To Worship

Sunday 21st February 2021



Lockdown number three was short this time,
but gave me enough time to appreciate the simple things in life, things that give me joy.

Such as music.

I looked at one of my meals, the colours and textures made it a work of art.

I noticed a painting in my kitchen and appreciated it with fresh eyes.

The roads were deserted. I enjoyed being able to cross them without the threat of being run over.

The parks were filled with people, walking.

I had time to do some cleaning and gardening.

I phoned up people and we took our time with our conversations.

I missed some things though. A coffee at my nearest café and the boathouses.

Above is a picture of a man feeding the birds with bird food from the kiosk.

The simple joys of life make all the difference.

Now we are hopefully going back to weekly live worship (lockdowns permitting). We will have some written resources from time to time, but not weekly. I've kept everything I've written and the photos that go with it.

I'll see if anyone's willing to publish it and I'll share the resource around.

Everyone's worked so hard and been so supportive of one another.

It's been a long journey over the past twelve months and now we are slowly emerging;
and it's good to reflect on lessons learned and what we appreciate and want to hang onto.

We have been tenderly cared for like Jesus was during his wilderness experience.

May the worship bless you.

Rev Tina



Mountview
Uniting
Church

Ed: As in-person worship and the associated workloads resume, new virtual resources have to be greatly curtailed. We hope in future to share, at approximately fortnightly intervals, the current worship liturgy and sermon. Our sing-along hymn videos will continue to be available on our YouTube Channel; and other resources on our website. This week's resource is compiled from this week's *in-person worship* and is therefore unable to include the usual music video links.

Mountview Worship @ Home

Sunday 21st February 2021

Lent 1



Christ in the Wilderness, Ivan Kramskoi, Moscow, Russia

Hymn: God Is Love: His The Care

Music: circa 1360; Harmony Arrangement: Gustav Theodore Holst 1874-1934;

Lyrics: Percy Dearmer 1867-1936; Song: Public Domain

God is love: his the care,
tending each, ev'rywhere,
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him!

Refrain:

*Sing aloud, loud, loud!
sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him!*

None can see God above;
we can share life and love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in creation,
holding ev'ry nation.

[Refrain]

Jesus lived on the earth,
hope and life brought to birth
and affirmed human worth,
for he came to save us
by the truth he gave us.

[Refrain]

To our Lord praise we sing,
light and life, friend and King,
coming down, love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty.

[Refrain]

Welcome To Our Service

This is the first Sunday in lent and I welcome you to the Lenten journey and hope you discover many insights over the next five weeks and are blessed.

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.



Call To Worship

To you O Lord we lift our hearts
Lord, we trust in you

Help us to know your ways
Teach us your paths and lead us to your truth

For all your paths are steadfast love and faithfulness
Lord, we trust in you

Prayers Of Adoration, Invocation And Confession

Loving God, your grace abounds. You bless us and bring us closer to you. There is no limit to your love for us.
We give you our thanks and praise

Jesus our Lord, you stand with us and go down into the waters of the Jordan in solidarity with us. You were prepared for ministry in the wilderness as we are prepared.
We give you our thanks and praise

Lord our God, pour out your love upon us, send your Holy Spirit upon us and renew our hearts, so we may love one another as God loves us. Lord, let love be our Lenten calling.
We give you our thanks and praise

Send your Holy Spirit upon us Lord.
Come Holy Spirit. Come upon us and bless us. ...

This lent Lord, speak into our heart, transform us and open our eyes to your truth. Help us come to know the times we haven't responded to what you require of us. Have mercy on us as we pray in this moment of silence and bring our troubles to you.

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven."
Thanks be to God

An Invitation To Begin The Lenten Journey

*From the 'Soft Petals of Grace' by Thom M Shuman' Wild Goose Publications (Adapted Slightly)
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Beloved in Christ, at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our deliverance from sin and death through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lent is the season of Preparation for this great celebration, the means by which we renew our life in the pascal mystery.

We begin our Lenten Journey by acknowledging our need for a change of heart and by silently naming those things which damage us and others.

Change our heart O Lord

Silence

We open ourselves to the One whose love knows no boundaries and whose mercy is demonstrated to us in the life of Jesus Christ.

Change our heart O Lord

Silence

During Lent we let go of those things which harm us by taking on works of love for others and by reading and feasting on God's Word, as we prepare ourselves for the passion of Holy Week and joy of Easter.

Change our heart O Lord

Silence

This Easter we are invited to embrace Love as our Lenten Calling.

Hymn: Love Will Be Our Lenten Calling

Music: French traditional carol melody, 17th-18th cent.; Public Domain. Lyricist: Elizabeth J. Smith; © E. J. Smith; Permission to Reproduce Lyrics (below) obtained from ONE LICENSE #A-620587 [MUC]

Love will be our Lenten calling,
love to shake and shatter sin,
waking every closed, cold spirit,
stirring new life deep within,
till the quickened heart remembers
what our Easter birth can mean.

Peace will be our Lenten living
as we turn for home again,
longing for the words of pardon,
stripping off old grief and pain,
till we stand, restored and joyful,
with the Church on Easter day.

Truth will be our Lenten learning:
hear the Crucified One call!
Shadowed by the Saviour's passion,
images and idols fall,
and, in Easter's holy splendour,
God alone is all in all.

Scripture Readings

*NRSV. © National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide
Sometimes an alternate text source (a paraphrase) is used to aid with study and reflection.*

Genesis 9: 8-17

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.

¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹² God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Psalms 25

¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.

³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

⁸ Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Mark 1: 9-15

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

The Temptation of Jesus

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

For The Young At Heart



Rainbow Covenant, John August Swanson

During Lent the Hebrew scriptures offer reminders of God's promises of life and relationship made to Noah and his family, Abraham and Sarah, and Moses and God's people. We experience God's covenant faithfulness continuing in Jesus – God-with-us – who shares our life and death.

In Genesis 9: 11-13, God said: "I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said: "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

The story of Noah and his ark and the rainbow was one of the first stories I learnt about in Sunday School. Children get to play with Noah's Arks and rainbows, as I did, and they are even given books about Noah's Ark. It's a story that stays with us. God destroys part of creation and out of that destruction comes a new beginning where God makes a covenant with all of creation and his creatures, including us. A promise to us, which God has steadfastly kept. Whenever we look at a rainbow, we remember God's covenant with us.

Rainbows give us hope for the future.

Later on in life, we learn about Jesus Christ, God's new covenant with us. Luke 22: 17-20 says: ¹⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸ for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying,

"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Every time we celebrate Holy Communion, we remember this covenant.

Hymn: Crown Him With Many Crowns

Composer: George Job Elvey 1816-93; Lyrics: Matthew Bridges 1800-94 and Godfrey Thring 1823-1903 alt. Public Domain

Sermon

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



Christ in the Wilderness, Ivan Kramskoi, Moscow, Russia

I've been reading a book called 'Mark for Everyone' by Tom Wright, an English theologian. He wrote about relationships. This is one of his stories: *"A famous movie maker had a huge legal wrangle with his long-time mentor and guide. The younger man simply couldn't handle criticism and ended up rejecting the person who had helped him so much. When it was all over, a close friend summed up the real problem.*

'It was all about an ungenerous father, he explained, and a son looking for affirmation and love.'"

Tom considers that, *"the whole Christian gospel could be summed up in this point: that when the living God looks at us, at every baptized and believing Christian, he sees us, not as we see ourselves, but as we are in Jesus Christ. This may seem impossible to people who have never had this kind of support from their parents, but it is true: God looks at us and says, "You are my dear, dear child; I'm delighted in you."*

What he said made me think about the power of parents to bless their children. If we as parents tell our children, in our own words what God tells us, *"You are my beloved child, my son or daughter, in you I am well pleased,* while we can, while we are alive, we bless them, so they don't think it's impossible for God to say to them: *"You are my beloved child, in you I am well pleased."* So, they love themselves.

In today's gospel Jesus is baptised in solidarity with all of us. As he rises up out of the water after full immersion, he sees the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descend upon him like a dove. Then a voice comes from heaven, saying; *"You are my Son, the Beloved: with you I am well pleased."*

It is a wonderful moment where God affirms His love for his Son and Jesus identity.

We may ask: What kind of Father sends the Spirit to drive his Son out into the desert where there is no food and wild beasts and silence and heat and scary devil's? just after he declared his love for him.

We get to be tested too. If God loves us, how come we suffer and are tested?

Paul has something to say about being tested in Romans 5: 3-5: *"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

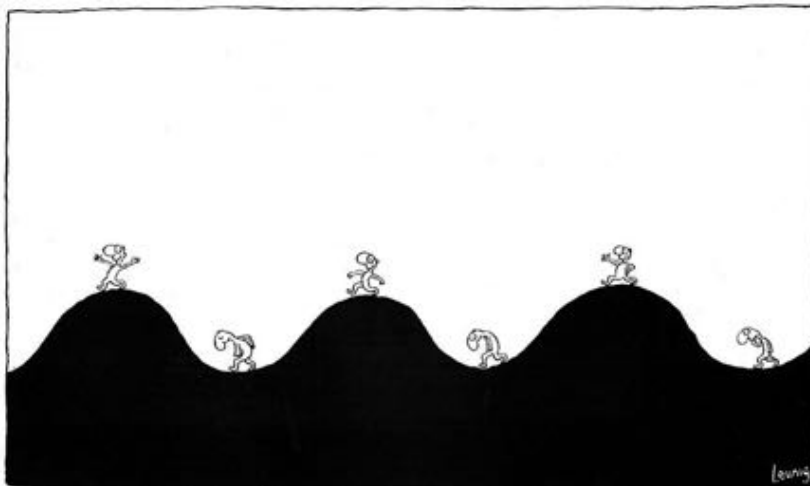
And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Jesus struggled against hostile powers during the forty days he was in the desert. Hungry beasts such as lions and bears roamed the desert, especially at night. Forty days is a long time. Satan also tested Jesus during this time when he was weak from lack of food and water. At times we get the impression some kind of cosmic battle is going on. This testing happens between the time God says: You are my beloved Son and the time Jesus triumphantly declares, *'The kingdom of God is at hand.'* Clearly this testing time is more about preparation and transformation so that Jesus is ready for his ministry.

We are children of God and like Jesus, we experience times in our life when we are tested.

The wild beasts could symbolise anything that threatens our wellbeing such as COVID-19 and lockdowns and negative voices within us, or fears and anxieties. Angels could be those who God sends to care for us – loved ones, friends, and our church family who support us throughout our struggles and love us through the pain and suffering we experience and who pray for us.

Here is a picture by Leunig which offers an insight into what life has been like over the past twelve months, with all its ups and downs. Life hasn't been easy. We have not been alone though because angels have ministered to us, like they cared for Jesus in the wilderness. Except that our angels are flesh and blood, like us.



Leunig. Used by permission.

I wonder whether time in the wilderness is more about finding renewal and a change of heart. Lockdown has been like a wilderness experience. I wonder what experiences have shaped us that we can give thanks for and what lessons we have learnt. Where is God leading us to now?

There may be some changes in our life we may want to keep and hold fast to as we move on into the future. Positive and life-giving changes in our relationships or the way we are now living our life.

The wilderness is considered a place of revelation. It was the place where Jesus in a short period of time experienced being baptised by his cousin John, having a cosmic encounter with heaven and God's Spirit, having his identity affirmed by God and being told he is loved by God, being driven out into the wilderness for forty days without food and perhaps water and finding out his cousin had been arrested. The wilderness was a place where Jesus experienced revelation and dramatic transformation.

Our life can be dramatically changed in a short period of time by a series of events, whether they be a spiritual encounter, some kind of loss or illness or relationship breakdown; and over time we will feel tested as we adapt to changed circumstances or inner change.

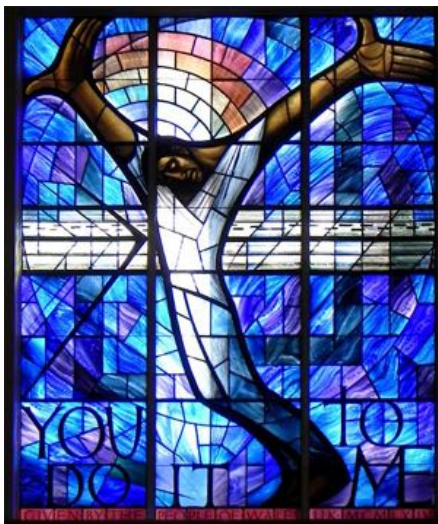
After being tested Jesus emerged from the wilderness, ready to begin his ministry and proclaiming the gospel of God. We may also find ourselves emerging from a time of testing as a stronger person, more reliant on prayer and God or more aware of our identity in Christ or our purpose in life or call to ministry.

What we encounter in life, the ways we are tested by life, shape us and can make us stronger and deepen our faith.

Jesus' experiences in the wilderness shaped him and made him stronger and prepared him for the ministry that was ahead of him and for the challenges and hardship he encountered.

Tom Wright wrote: 'Angels accompanied Jesus in the wilderness and reassured him his beloved Father was watching over him, was with him, was loving him, acting through him, pouring out His Spirit all the time, in and through him.' Jesus went the way that all his people must go and he could do it because he had heard the words of love and the words of life: "You are my Son, the Beloved: with you I am well pleased."

Let us reassure one another of God's words of love to us and offer one another words of love and encouragement, so we may embrace God's call on our life and face any challenges in life, that may come our way.



Christ Crucified, John Petts, 16th Street Baptis

Hymn: In Christ Alone

Music & Lyrics: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend; © K. Getty & S. Townend / Thankyou Music

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 And The Lord's Prayer

Derek Moore has prepared the Prayers of the people for you today

Let us come before God in prayer.

Today we pray for the nations of France, Germany and Monaco – countries with long and sometimes troubled histories. We pray for the wellbeing of their populations during the current pandemic, and for religious tolerance between their peoples.

In the Ecumenical prayer cycle, we pray for the Anglican Church of the Ascension in Burwood East and in our Presbytery for the Boronia Road congregation. Lord, please bless these faith communities and be with them in their worship and restricted outreach.

We uphold to you the staff of the Uniting AgeWell Head Office. We pray for their wellbeing and that you guide them in their decision-making in relation to the many residents, staff and volunteers at the various Uniting AgeWell facilities.

We give you thanks for the ongoing resilience of our Mountview community, including the leadership of our minister, Rev. Tina and the contributions of various members who are all helping to both serve you and sustain us.

We pray for those amongst us who are undergoing treatment for cancer or for other health conditions. Please strengthen all of these members and their families during these often arduous times.

You are all invited to join me in 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 for ever. Amen

Blessing

May God the Father sort out what is behind us

May God the Son make clear what is before us

May God the Spirit touch our here and now

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

Hymn: Shalom To You Now

Music: Traditional Spanish melody; Public Domain. Lyricist: Elise Shoemaker Eslinger; © E. S. Eslinger / United Methodist Publishing; Lyrics Reproduced (below) by permission. CCLI Licence No. 122303 [MUC]

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.

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

Extra Worship Resources

Being Human

John Williams informed me of this video. I'd like to share it with you...

Aleluya – Barcelona Ars Nova; Orquestra Barroca Catalana [4:01]

<https://youtu.be/NXFhkmyVRgM>

by G. F. Handel; Posted to YouTube by Fundación la Caixa

Lenten Study

The Lenten Study for this Lent is Christ and the Chocolaterie.

I know some people give up chocolate for Lent, but the study is not about chocolate. It's about ordinary peoples struggles in life and with relationships. And how love can transform us and communities.

The film 'Chocolat' is a starting point for exploring issues about God, the world and what it means to be human.

Hilary brand designed five sessions on the themes of:

Giving up – the prelude to change

Giving out – the power of the gift

Getting wise – the possibility of change

Getting real – the power of acceptance

Growing up – the process of change

We will have one weekly group and numbers will be limited. The study will begin on Wednesday March 10th at 2 PM and will be held over four weeks. Further details will appear in the newsletters. Please register to attend the study with Margaret Cosstick (notices email).



Lent

This week is the beginning of Lent. I've included the devotion for you below. It was offered to Church Council on Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday



58 Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³ "Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
 a day to humble oneself?
 Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
 and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
 Will you call this a fast,
 a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
 to loose the bonds of injustice,
 to undo the thongs of the yoke,
 to let the oppressed go free,
 and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
 and bring the homeless poor into your house;
 when you see the naked, to cover them,
 and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
 and your healing shall spring up quickly;
 your vindicator^[a] shall go before you,
 the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
 you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
 the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
 and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
 then your light shall rise in the darkness
 and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually,
 and satisfy your needs in parched places,
 and make your bones strong;
 and you shall be like a watered garden,
 like a spring of water,
 whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
 you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
 you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
 the restorer of streets to live in.

Prayer

God of holiness, your day comes near,
 And we tremble, not out of fear,
 but from awe and gratitude.
 For on your day, we are fully known,
 Completely restored,
 Reconciled to you forever.

Jesus Christ, grace bearer,
 As we come to your fast,
 May we be filled with your hope,
 as we receive your gifts,
 may our hearts be open to others
 as we begin our journey with you,
 may we put no roadblocks
 on the path to Jerusalem.

Holy Spirit, creator of clean hearts,
Like water rushes into an empty hole,
May your sacramental silence
Fill the emptiness of our souls.

God in community, Holy and One,
Our treasure, our hope, our joy.

This lent we are invited to ponder on our wilderness experience over the past twelve months, during lockdown. As the wilderness prepared Jesus for ministry how has our wilderness experience prepared us for future ministry? We are also invited to contemplate and pray about the verses of Isaiah 58: 1-12 and how they relate to the hymn: 'Love Will Be Our Lenten Calling'. And to pray about: Where is God calling each one of us?

Prayer

From Dad and Daughter, Ron and Jenni Gordon

Lord Jesus Christ, you have shared life with us,
and you knew the weakness of our nature,
yet you became identified with us
to bring us strength.
May you live in our hearts by faith,
now and always. Amen



May God the Father sort out what is behind me
May God the Son make clear what is before me,
May God the Spirit touch my here and now.

Contemplative Monk

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

Saying the Lord's Prayer is a good way of giving thanks and trusting in God

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

<https://www.mountviewuca.org/worship.html>

Final collation by Mountview Multimedia team.

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