



Mountview
Uniting
Church

Mountview Worship

Sunday 21st March 2021 – Lent 5 B



Hymn 703: As The Deer Pants

Welcome To Our Service

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

From Jeremiah 31:31-34

God has written His law of Love within us
God has written his law of Love within our Hearts

God is our God
We are God's People

Prayers Of Adoration, Invocation And Confession

Loving God, you call us forth to be one in Christ
To grow, to love, to follow Jesus
Your steadfast love sustains us
You teach us how to live
Where we live to your glory

You reveal to us, to all people,
 Your purpose for our life
 You plant wisdom in our hearts
 Which grows and bears much fruit
 In our lives
 In other's lives

We give you thanks and praise

Jesus Christ our Lord
 You knew your purpose and call
 You were faithful to the point of death
 You taught us how to live for God's glory as you did
 Your death on the cross was to God's glory
 Your raising from the dead has brought life to all people who follow you

We give you thanks and praise

Holy Spirit, within our willing hearts
 Sustaining us
 Teaching us wisdom
 Showing us the way

We give you our thanks and praise

Come Holy Spirit, speak into our hearts

Come Holy Spirit

Break into our lives
 Reveal God's purpose for us
 Teach us how to live for God's glory
 Fill our hearts with a passion for God's mission and Jesus Christ's church

Confession

Loving God we come before you with all that's on our hearts
 If we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, forgive us
 If we have not loved you with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves

Forgive us

We are sorry

Strengthen our hearts so we can love you and obey you more

We ask this in Jesus' name

We come before you now with all that's on our hearts
 Asking for forgiveness and a fresh start, a new beginning

Moment of silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us

"Your sins are forgiven."

Thanks be to God

Hymn 246: Christ is the World's Light

Readings

Your Word O God is a lamp to our feet
A light to our path

Psalm 51

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your steadfast love;
 according to your abundant mercy
 blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
 and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
 and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are justified in your sentence
 and blameless when you pass judgment.
- ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
 a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being;
 therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
 let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
 and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 and put a new and right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
 and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
 and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Hebrews 5: 5-10

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";

⁶ as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever,
 according to the order of Melchizedek."

⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

⁸ Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹ and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰ having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

John 12: 20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.

²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

²³ Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’?

No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Lord, may your Word live in us
And bear much fruit to your glory
For The Young At Heart

Being Sorry



Brother's

This children’s book tells a similar story to King David’s story. It’s called “Sorry”. It’s about two friends who fight over something they both want. They are unable to share it. After they fight their relationship breaks down and they come to know how much of a hole in their lives has been created without one another.

King David was sorry for what he had done. He wanted Bathsheba for himself and arranged for her husband, a soldier, to be sent into a battle to fight, where his life would be at risk and he died. Bathsheba was pregnant to him at the time, and he wanted to hide this. He thought he could hide what he did from God, but God sees all, and nothing can be hidden from God. The prophet Nathan confronted him, and King David realised he had done something dishonourable that affected his relationship with God and his people. He was deeply sorry and wrote psalm 51 to express his sorrow.

The psalm expressed the depth of his repentance and desire for forgiveness and to restore his relationship with God. David realised, like the two friends in the story “Sorry” that doing something that went against his values resulted in the breakdown of an important relationship for him, his relationship with God. David was truly sorry. By being sorry and forgiven like the two friends in the children’s story, he was able to restore his relationship with God. It’s like that for us too.

When we are truly sorry and forgiven by someone we have hurt or had a fight with or if we have gone against our values and it’s affecting our relationship with God, being sorry and expressing it and being forgiven offers us a fresh start, a new beginning, and a deeper relationship with the other and greater appreciation of one another.

Hymn 602: O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

Sermon

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



Andrew and Phillip

I've mentioned I had a close call with death when I fell off a mountain at 5,000m above sea level. I was walking along a path and admiring the view when I fell off the path onto a ledge below it, onto a bed of boulders. As the boulders began rolling down the ledge and carrying me along, towards its edge, I sat up and took a quick look. It was a sheer drop into darkness. I was terrified! I could hear the boulders hitting the sides of the mountain below as they went over the edge. I lay down and prepared to die and surrendered to God. Immediately I was overwhelmed by this deep sense of comforting peace, as I was being carried along towards my death. All this was happening in seconds and as I was being carried along, I sensed people praying for me and something deep within me made me put my right foot out and it hit a rock sticking up at the edge of the ledge. By some miracle the rock stopped me going over the ledge and my body came to an abrupt halt. The boulders kept on going over the edge and I could hear them crashing against the side of the mountain below, but I was still alive – lying on my back. I don't remember how long I lay there and lost all sense of time. I felt this deep sense of awe.

I went looking for God in the mountains and God found me and by some miracle I wasn't dead.
It felt like I was being held by God.

Looking back, I've realised my close encounter with death has been a conversion experience. I've lost all fear of death and I've lost all fear of living. I have a second chance at life. God is keeping me here for a reason, for a purpose.

On top of that earlier on the trip when I was praying by a sacred lake I felt called again, at my age! I've come to realise that being called doesn't just happen once in life for us all. It can happen several times, where God calls us forward at different times in our life, as we expand and grow. It can happen at any age. Look at Sarah and Abraham.

After all I encountered on the mountain, I've gained some insights and understanding of what Jesus meant when he said:

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will be my servant also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

As Christians we do our best to live out our lives and purpose, to the glory of God. It's not an easy journey at times, but that is how life is and has always been. There will be challenges.

Jesus asks his disciples to die to their need to hang onto everything in this life and instead, invites them to hold fast to living their lives to the glory of God and he is about to set an example as to what this means, by living out his purpose, even if it includes death.

I believe that before my conversion experience on the mountain near Everest I was living my life as a half-life. I'd felt called to live my life for God since I was six years old, from the time I was praying and felt God's love for me. But I didn't fully understand or comprehend what it meant to die to self and live for Christ. I only knew a small part of the glorious whole, which is what Jesus is trying to show his disciples. He's telling them about what God is about to do through him for the sake of world, for all people, and the life that awaits them, that will come from his death. He's trying to open their eyes to the glorious whole, to all that God desires for us.

Jesus tells his disciples: *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*

Greeks came to Phillip and Andrew, who had Greek names and asked them: *Sir we wish to see Jesus.* The world has arrived symbolised in the group of Greeks who have come to Jesus and it was time for the gospel to go to the ends of the earth.

Jesus made it clear he would die on a cross and invited his disciples to see beyond the cross. John's gospel sees the death of Jesus as a moment that glorifies God, where life burst into the world and all was transformed for all time and since that time the cross, a symbol of death, has become a symbol of life and has drawn people to God. It has become the symbol of Christianity and billions look to the cross when they worship God in Jesus Christ.



Jesus would die like grains of wheat die in a field before they spring forth with abundant life. You may have seen a wheat field, golden and glorious in the sunlight, forming waves as the breeze blows through the wheat. Once harvested the wheat is made into bread and feeds thousands. Jesus would be raised, and we remember him in the bread of communion, symbolising the body of Christ, broken for us. The bread of life has become the spiritual food of billions throughout history.

It's amazing how change, conversion, repentance and growth and the cracking open of a seed happen in darkness or during times of challenge and suffering and then wheat emerges from the earth, we emerge from the darkness and Christ emerges from the tomb to resurrection life, to the glory of God in creation.

When Jesus died on the cross, he revealed God's glory to us and opened our eyes to the life and love God brings to us.

In today's gospel Jesus is teaching us to focus on God first and allow God to shape our lives as we journey in faith and follow Jesus. We do not know where the journey will take us. We try to live our life with to do lists, plans and goals but in reality, we do not know what is going to happen tomorrow.

We have a purpose in this life, all of us. Jesus is inviting us to live out this purpose to the glory of God, not for ourselves and our own glory, but God's. We still have the same life and purpose, but the outcome is controlled by God, not us. I think that is a little of what dying to ourselves means and hating whatever in this life, takes us away from God's purpose and call.

Jesus was troubled for his disciples and knew the challenges they would face in the days, months and years ahead. He loved them and was concerned about them. When a voice spoke from heaven it was for the disciple's sake, not Jesus' sake.

It's like that for us too. We face challenges. We encounter hardship and suffering. Yet, God loves us as we persist on our journey and run the race with perseverance and faith. God sends people to us at the right moment to help us and we need our companions and those who love us, encourage us and support us and say: All will be well. We can't do it alone. We need relationships with God and others. We do not journey alone.

So, how do we live out our purpose for the glory of God? Several people in our congregation are living through challenging times. They have taught me about looking for signs of hope in the midst of challenges and giving thanks for them. They are praying for all of us. They are an inspiration and embody Christ's call to live out their faith for the glory of God by being loving and steadfast in their faith, amidst life with all its ups and downs. The people who encourage and love others are the signs of hope. They may bring a gift or visit or phone or text or meal or pray for them. They are the bearers of life and hope. We are all are the body of Christ in God's world. We are all one in Christ. We all have a purpose, and that is to live out our faith and lives to the glory of God.

The Lord be with you

Rev Tina

Time Of Silent Reflection

With short video of relaxing sounds

Hymn 155: O Lord My God, When I In Awesome Wonder

Because we face such a challenge singing with masks, you are invited to hum this hymn prayerfully as Geoffrey plays the music for us

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**

Notices

Prayers Of The People And The Lord's Prayer

John Gerrand has prepared the Prayers of the people for you today

Loving and caring God, we bring to you our prayers for others.

All people of the world need your care and guidance Lord, and today we particularly bring before you our prayers for the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

We give thanks for:

- preservation of the distinct cultural practices, literature, music and natural resources in these countries.
- the faithful witness of Christians during times of persecution and for those who survived times of occupation.
- how these countries peacefully became independent after 1918 and 1991.
- new-found freedoms that the people here have experienced, that they might be used for the good of all.

We pray for:

- peaceful relations with Russia and among all the ethnic groups in these lands.
- the healing of old wounds remaining from 20th century struggles.
- just economic development that benefits all citizens in these countries, and for those who live and work abroad.
- government leaders and all people, that they might together strive for justice, peace and the well-being of all.

In our **ecumenical** prayer cycle we remember today your people worshipping and serving at Crossway Baptist, Burwood East. May they know that you are with them as they worship and work in their community. Be with those who take special responsibility in their church, we pray, be it in worship, teaching, outreach or service. Crossway reaches out through several non-English language programs, and we ask that you will bless this part of the church's Mission.

Within our own **Presbytery** we pray today for your people in the congregations at Canterbury (Balwyn Road) and Canterbury (Highfield Road). We pray for the outreach activities of the Balwyn Road congregation, including their youth program, meals and worship services for the elderly and the work of the choir at community events. The Highfield Road congregation reaches out through a wide range of women's, men's, youth and children's groups, and we ask your continued guidance and encouragement of those who lead and those who participate in these activities. May they show the wider community the love of God in action.

We remember in prayer, too, the Box Hill Uniting AgeWell community. We ask your blessing on both residents and staff, that residents may experience a sense of fulfilment and worth in the later years of their lives. As funding, regulations and practices change in the aged care sector we pray for wisdom and good management so that this initiative of the Uniting Church can best meet the needs of the community.

Here at **Mountview** we seek your blessing on our people, on our worship and our work together. Encourage and guide those who have accepted responsibilities within our congregation, we pray, and refresh those who continue to work quietly on a host of activities that support our community and enhance our relationship with you, O Lord. Guide us, we pray, as we work to establish an effective cluster operation which includes the three local congregations.

We pray especially today for.....

We bring these prayers in our Saviour's name, praying the words that he taught us:

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 129: Amazing Grace

Blessing

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. 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

Hymn 778: Shalom to you Now

Rev Tina, for Mountview Uniting Church

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

Final collation by Mountview Multimedia team.

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