

Whitehorse Uniting Church
Written Worship
Sunday 26th March 2023
Lent 5



Introit Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

Northern Baptist Assoc 2012

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>



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 will put his Spirit in us.

And we shall live.

The Lord has spoken.

And we shall act.

Prayers

You Lord come to us as your church.

You breathe life into us and cause us to be renewed in spirit.

You Lord knit us together as the body of Christ,
 so, we may grow into a multitude.

Then we grow within and closer to you.

Then we live and act for you.

You Lord put your Spirit into us and bless us.

Lord, we give you our thanks and praise.

Jesus our Lord

You have made us your church.

You called us into being.

We are your body.
 You are the cornerstone, and we are living stones.
 Lord, you call us into life eternal.
 Lord, we believe in you.

Lord, we give you our thanks and praise.

Loving God, you send your Holy Spirit,
 you come upon us, and fill us with life anew.
 So, we may bear fruit and bless others.

Lord, we give you our thanks and praise.

Prayer of Invocation

Come, Holy Spirit, living water.
 Giver of life
 that we may drink in the word.
 And taste the bread of life.
 Help us understand one another.
 And to speak one another's language.
 Keep us in union with Christ in all our worship. Amen

Prayer of Confession

Come before the Lord in reverence and silence
 with all that's on your heart asking for wholeness,
 transformation, and forgiveness.

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
"Your sins are forgiven"

THANKS BE TO GOD

Hymn 407 Breathe on me Breath of God

Northern Baptist Association 2012

Music Trentham, Robert Jackson 1840-1914

Words Edwin Hatch 1835-1889

<https://youtu.be/MmkzSjs9eAw>

Reading – John 11:1-45 NRSV updated

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. **3** So the sisters sent a message to Jesus,^[a] "Lord, he whom you love is ill." **4** But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." **5** Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, **6** after having heard that Lazarus^[b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." **8** The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" **9** Jesus answered, "Are there not

twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.”^[c] ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin,^[d] said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus^[e] had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.^[f] Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah,^[g] the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

Hymn 158 God has spoken by His Prophets

Music T. Williams Words G. Briggs

Alex Channon 2021

<https://youtu.be/-rbR63VCTg4>

Sermon – Rev Tina

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



Many years ago, on a pilgrimage to the Holy lands I was on a flight from Rome to Israel and my seat was next to a monk called Brother Angelo. He came from an Order called the Little Family of the Resurrection whose monastery was on the hills around Jerusalem where olives grow.

He wore a long white robe, was tall and had a long beard and he shared his wisdom with me. One thing he shared was that this life was preparation for the next life, which is more important. I've thought about what

he said. Eternal life is timeless. We have created time and at times it limits us. Later on, I heard a Jesuit who was also a physicist speak about time jumping. How interesting.

Time becomes important when we grow older. It becomes more precious, and we tend not to want to waste it.

Yet, the big picture of God's kingdom is different where all is eternal time and timelessness. Where patience is an attribute of God, a fruit of the Spirit. Where God sees the entire timeline of history, all at once. Sometimes in our life, we get a sense of God's timing.

Today's gospel is about God's time and timing. Jesus delays going to his friend's home after hearing about Lazarus, who is dying. We may wonder why he delays, just like Mary, Martha and members of their extended family wondered, who asked, 'Why didn't he hurry and heal Lazarus'.

Jesus has a calm patience and doesn't hurry. Perhaps we may practise the same calm patience and trust that God has all things in God's hands. Jesus knew God's ways and saw things from a different perspective. He trusted God and knew God had a time for everything.

When it was time to go to Lazarus, Jesus knew going to his friend's home was risky. Thomas knew this too but went with him anyway and the other disciples followed. When Jesus finally arrived at his friend's home he grieved and was troubled in spirit. He saw Mary and Martha grieving and their family. He loved his friends Mary and Martha, and he loved Lazarus.

He knew this would be because a miracle like this would lead to many people believing in him and this would upset the authorities and challenge their authority.

Perhaps Jesus felt torn between going and delaying. Doing things his way and doing them God's way.

His friends Mary and Martha struggle to understand and feel disappointed in him. Then the outcome of the miracle leads to greater glory for God and sets in motion what will bring about his own death. It is all part of God's timing in his life too.

Perhaps the good news for today is about trusting in God's ways and timing. Perhaps it's about us understanding the big picture of history and our part in it and how everything fits together.

Hymn 192 Christ is the World's Redeemer

Words St Columba Trans. Duncan MacGregor, Music Ruth Gregornik, from "We are never alone" College Church in Wheaton Videos 2021

<https://youtu.be/gXYfSOYMW7A>

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 Savior, amen.

Prayers of the People – Geoffrey Willis

In the international prayer cycle we pray for the **Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia**. Dear Lord, we are thankful for the faithful witness of Christians in these countries through the centuries, especially in times of occupation and persecution. We also recognise with gratitude the religious freedom and ecumenical cooperation that is growing. We pray, dear Lord, that greater respect will be provided for those in these lands who are marginalized and who lack adequate livelihoods. Dear Lord, we pray that democratic governance will advance God's justice and peace for all. We pray for the churches in Slovakia and for all churches which are experiencing change – growth or struggle, reconciliation or conflict. Inspire and strengthen them in works of witness and service.

We are conscious of the current troubles in **Türkiye** and the **Middle East** and we pray, dear Lord, that hostilities will quickly cease. May those leaders who wish to dominate territories curb their ambitions so that stability and justice may prevail.

In our ecumenical prayer cycle we pray for the leaders and people of **St Luke's Anglican Church in Vermont**. Lord, we pray for their leadership team: Senior Minister, Rev Peter MacPherson, and Associate Minister, the Rev Dr Mark Simon. St Luke's is in partnership with St Alfred's, Blackburn North. St Luke's offers a number of Life Groups where members meet in small groups during the week for Bible Study, fellowship and support. We pray, dear Lord, for their members as they seek to grow as disciples.

Within our Presbytery, we pray for **Diamond Valley Parish** comprising **Diamond Creek** and **Hurstbridge** Congregations. Their Minister, the Rev Dr Fiona Hill preaches at both churches each Sunday morning. The Parish traces its origins from the 1850s as a Primitive Methodist Parish at the time of the discovery of gold in the Diamond Creek district. We pray for the continued faithfulness of the Parish members as they serve their developing communities.

Dear Lord, please uphold the work at **LifeAssist** in Glen Waverley. This organisation was previously part of Uniting Care but is now with Uniting VicTas. We pray that their nursing, aged care case management, and respite care services will bring comfort and security to their clients.

Finally, Lord, we pray for **ourselves** as a single congregation with the desire to work together. We pray for those planning activities which are under way. We especially pray for our Church Council, for its Chairperson, Julie Hawley, its Secretary, Trevor Thomas, and its Treasurer, Rob Jackson. Dear Lord, please bless these leaders and their fellow Councillors as they plan new initiatives for the development of our new Congregation. We pray too for our ministers, Rev Tina and Rev Peter. We pray for God's blessing and strength for Tina as she undertakes much of the preaching and study group leadership and we pray for Peter's recovery from illness and his return to duty. May our membership be supportive of one another as new friendships develop and as we cooperate in mission.

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.

Hymn 599 Take my Life and Let it be.

Frances Ridley Havergal 1836-79 alt.

Northern Baptist Association 2012

<https://youtu.be/Gf11rReeWIs>

Blessing

May the Lord reveal his glory to us and make us bold in our ministry

Amen



Leunig – used with permission.

Hymn 778 Shalom to You Now

Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942

Loomis Basin UCC 2021

<https://youtu.be/zzDdN-5gmuU>

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



We continue with The Art and Faith Series from Loyola Press. (Catholic Resources)

It takes you on a profound journey through reflection on the arts
and promises to deepen our faith in Christ

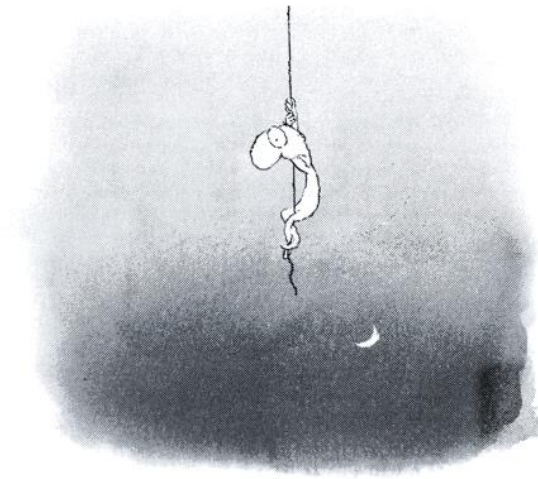
Commentary is by Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, assistant professor of liturgy, catechesis, and evangelization at Loyola University New Orleans. She holds a bachelor's degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame, a master's degree in liturgy from St. John's University in Collegeville, a master's degree in religion and the arts from Yale Divinity School, and a Ph.D. in Theology and Education from Boston College. Her unique background in faith and art brings to life a new way of observing Lent and understanding the season on a more personal level.

Lent 5

<https://youtu.be/tPQvBstr3LA>

God give us strength. Strength to hold on
and strength to let go.

AMEN.



Leunig – used with permission

Wonky Angels

When I was young
I searched for angels,
For perfection in others,
and myself.
I was constantly disappointed.

When I was older, much, much, older
I searched for wonky angels.
I accepted imperfection,
In others, and myself.
I was constantly delighted.

T. Lyndon

That which is Christ-like within us shall be
crucified. It shall suffer and be broken.
And that which is Christ-like within us
shall rise up. It shall love and create.

