

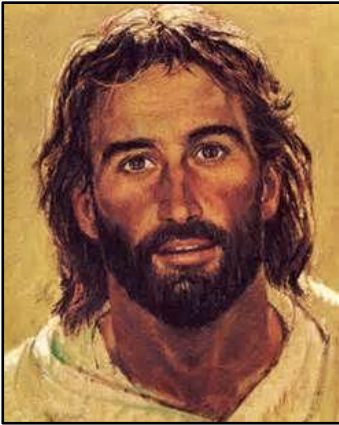
**Whitehorse Uniting Church**  
**Sunday 29 October 2023**  
**Pentecost 22<sup>A</sup>**



**Hymn 398 Come down O love Divine**

Choir, Kings College, Cambridge (ryanpostlethwaite 2009)

<https://youtu.be/6HPKL1wOVXk?si=hqUnohi-TK0F1thu>



*Jesus - RCL*

**Welcome**

May the worship bless you.

**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**

We grow in God.

**Grounded in God's love.**

We grow in God.

**Who makes us strong.**

We grow in God.

**And find peace in our hearts.**

**Prayers of Adoration - Through our mutual love sow freedom**

*Elizabeth Baxter, Acorns, and Archangels, (Edit. Ruth Burgess), Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. (in italics)*

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God of grace

You call us to live by grace.

Teach us how to do so

In our personal lives

In our community

In the wider world

**Through our mutual love sow freedom**

God of peace

You call us to be peacemakers.

Teach us how to do so,

In our personal lives

In our community

In the wider word

**Through our mutual love sow freedom**

God of gentleness  
 You call us to be gentle.  
 Teach us how to be so,  
 In our personal lives  
 In our community living  
 In the wider world

**Through our mutual love sow freedom**

God of generosity  
 You call us to be generous.  
 Teach us how to be so,  
 In our personal lives  
 In our community living  
 In the wider world

**Through our mutual love sow freedom**

God of love  
 You call us to be loving.  
 Teach us how to be so.  
 In our personal lives  
 In our community living  
 In the wider world

**Through our mutual love sow freedom**

**Invocation**

Come upon us today Holy Spirit  
**Come Holy Spirit Come**



**Confession**

I invite you to spend a moment in silence and bring to God whatever is troubling your heart.  
 Ask for forgiveness or the grace to forgive.

*Silence*

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

**THANKS BE TO GOD**

## Hymn 211 Jesus lover of my soul

Fernando Ortega 2012

<https://youtu.be/NsXcCdWjmsg?si=sYVkrRq6lpgYxewBK>

### Readings

#### Psalm 90: 1-2, 14,16-17

<sup>1</sup> Lord, you have been our dwelling place<sup>[a]</sup> in all generations. <sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

<sup>14</sup> Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

<sup>16</sup> Let your work be manifest to your servants and your glorious power to their children.

<sup>17</sup> Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us and prosper for us the work of our hands—O prosper the work of our hands!

#### Matthew 22:34-40

<sup>34</sup> When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup> and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” <sup>37</sup>

He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

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#### The Khesed of God – Rev Tina

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

*‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’*



The Hebrew word for love is Khesed.

My husband and I met a long time ago and we felt this strong bond, a bond that has endured through all the ups and downs of life and our relationship, the good and the bad. We have loved each other with Khesed.

I’m well aware that marriage isn’t an easy road. There are ups and downs, renegotiations, often when change and growth happens, there are shared joys and sorrows, and sometimes heartbreak. For some couples, they may have a better relationship when they are not together.

When I pray, I’m reminded of something someone said to me in a chance encounter. Brother Angelo was sitting next to me on a flight from Rome to Israel. He was a monk from a closed religious order, the Little Family of the resurrection, who have a monastery on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem.

He shared a lot of wisdom with me on the flight, including wisdom about marriage.

*“The man has the will of the woman, and the woman has the will of the husband and together they discover the love of Christ in one another.”*

Often a great deal of peacemaking and forgiveness takes place and permission giving, healing, and selfless generosity, where Christ is found in one another. Perhaps the will the monk spoke of was more about Khesed.

Khesed is unconditional love and acceptance of others and self, it is generosity towards others and self, and it is an enduring commitment towards one another. You may have experienced Khesed from your parents, siblings, friends and brothers or sisters in Christ, from your church community.

There are many examples of Khesed and you may have stories to share. These are a few of my stories.



Three times now I've experienced men making holding crosses for me to give to people for prayer and comfort. Ian had a workshop at the back of Brighton Uniting and made one hundred crosses, and his mate Brian varnished them and then took them across the road to the Monsignor at the Catholic church who would bless them. Then Ian gave them to me, and I'd find homes for them. They ended up all over the country and overseas and some people held them as they died and were buried with them. When they ran out, Perce Box aged in his late nineties from Eltham Montmorency made another hundred and they too found homes. Recently Lorraine at our Mitcham site arranged for her nephew to make another hundred and they are finding homes.

Women have made lace for the tablecloths for the Lord's table, banners and stoles, casseroles for people doing it tough and cakes for special occasions. Such love and generosity and commitment to their church community is Khesed.



This is a photo of a group of people from Templestowe Uniting, now Manningham Uniting. They went on regular retreats to Pallotti College to deepen their relationship with God and one another. This too is Khesed.

Wesley didn't have an easy time preaching in the fields. Sometimes people opposed his ministry. He was said to have written this hymn during a difficult time to remind himself of how much God loves him. So Wesley wrote a hymn called O love that wilt not let me go:

*O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee:  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
that in thine ocean depths its flow  
may richer, fuller be.*

Sometimes when we are having a difficult time we need to pray or sing hymns or read the bible to remind us of God's faithfulness to us. This is Khesed.

Today's Psalm 90 speaks of God being our dwelling place, of God's steadfast love for us, God's power over all, and God's favour with us. The Psalm invites us to be glad and happy in the Lord where we bless others through the works of our hands and in what we do for God, others, and ourselves. It's a reminder of God's Khesed for us.

We are invited to love God with all our being and to accept the tapestry of life with all its ups and downs. We are to be generous towards God with our time and resources and be committed to God and living God's ways to show our Khesed.

If you've ever had a pet, you may have experienced Khesed. Our pets love and accept us, warts, and all, as we experience their generosity and love. These are a few photos of animals.

Misty was our cat and loved us for 23 years. She faithfully stuck by us as we stuck by her. Towards the end I'd take her to the vet to be put on saline drips because she had kidney problems. She depended on me.

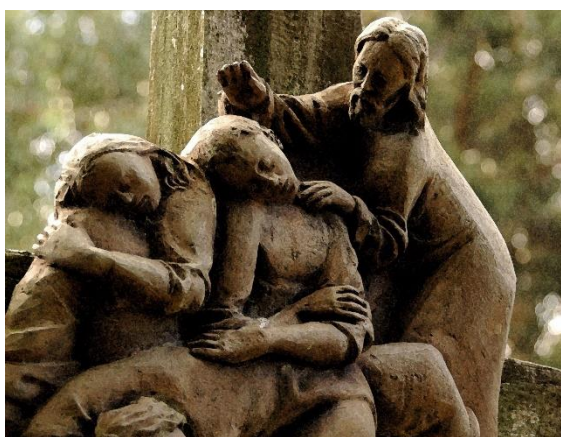
Moses my dog greets us when we come home and every morning. He sits on our lap and is totally dependent on our generosity, love, and commitment to care for him. Our Khesed.



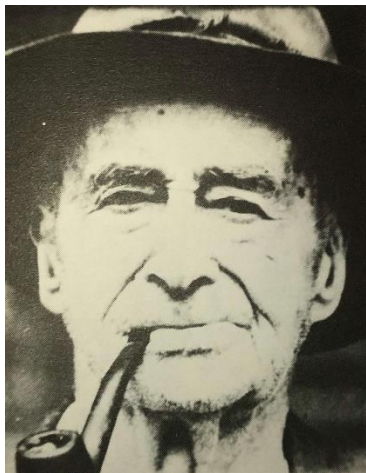
Then there is Mabel the chook. I was walking Moses in the park and saw someone with something wrapped up in a white towel and got the impression they were dumping an animal. Next day Moses and I are walking past the spot and there was Mable. She'd obviously survived the night sheltering in the toilet block, where foxes didn't find her. I enlisted the help of a man and his two sons. We tried to corner her and catch her. You can imagine what that was like. As soon as we got close and thought we had her she ran between us. The two boys were laughing non-stop. We decided to change our strategy and chased her into the toilet block and threw a towel on her. When I asked them: Do you want to take her home the dad said: No way. So, I was stuck with a chook. I put her in our cubby house for the night and fed her food scraps. Next day I popped her in a box and drove to a property along the Yarra to see if they had lost her and they had a chook pen full of chooks. We had a cuppa and negotiated Mable's future while we waited for the lady's mum to come home, and she offered Mable a home. When she put Mable in the chook pen the box chook pecked at her, while Mable didn't care less. She was too busy stuffing herself full of chook food. It was a happy ending for her. Animals need our care and commitment, our Khesed.



This is a picture of one of the silos in the Mallee region. You may be familiar with sheep dogs, who are faithful to their owner and listen for their voice and watch for their commands. If you've ever watched a shepherd and sheep dog work together to round up sheep, it's like they are of one mind, united together for one purpose, rounding up the sheep.



If you look at the sculpture of Jesus, praying for his disciples, it's the Mount of Olives where they were praying and fell asleep. Instead of being there for Jesus in his hour of need, Jesus understood they were exhausted after all the things that had happened as they followed him through all the challenges of their ministry and knew more challenging times were ahead. He let them sleep, prayed for them, accepted them, understood them. This is Khesed.



Many of us have family stories about our descendants. This is my great-great grandfather James McIntosh from Yackandandah. He is remembered for liking his tea to be hot, like I do. We all have relatives who have funny little habits they are remembered for long after they die. We also remember acts of kindness that have inspired us.



This lady is pushing another lady along the beach at Wilsons Prom. She did it for hours, up and down the beach. It looked difficult at times. It was a long walk through the soft sand from the car park to the beach, to the firmer sand near the shoreline. But the look of joy on the elderly woman's face as she was being pushed along the beach was worth it for the woman who pushed her wheelchair. She made her day a joyful one. She'd blessed her. They'd blessed each other. This is Khesed.

Love, acceptance, generosity, and commitment in action. God's Khesed in us.

### **Hymn 650 Brother Sister let me serve you**

St Botolph's Church, Mkariobangi 2013

<https://youtu.be/ttW9oQ-yiuU?si=Dfqvncidw-9aboYg>

### **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 Saviour, amen.

### **Prayers of the people**

Loving God we come before you with our prayers.

We pray for peace, especially in the Middle East, Ukraine  
Lord in your mercy/**hear our prayers.**

We pray for a resolution for climate change and the destruction that's come upon our beautiful planet. Help us find a better way to live.  
Lord in your mercy/**hear our prayers.**

We pray for our churches and for those being persecuted because of their faith. We pray for Whitehorse Uniting.  
Lord in your mercy/**hear our prayers.**

We come before you Lord with all those on our hearts, all those suffering, who are lonely, grieving, facing operations or recovering from them, with cancer or mental health issues.  
Lord in your mercy/**hear our prayers.**

We come before you with our needs, pain, sorrow, joys, celebrations and hopes.  
Lord in your mercy/**hear our prayers.**

### **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 640 Kneels at the feet of his friends – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tyNO9QVVK4&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=21>

#### Blessing

*Ruth Burgess, Acorns, and Archangels, (Edit. Ruth Burgess), Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. (in italics)*  
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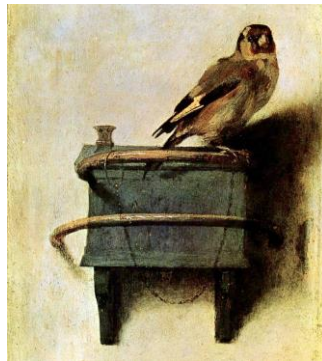
We go now.  
 We go with God's blessing.  
 We go to love our neighbour  
 We go to make peace.  
 We go now.  
 To walk with God.

### Hymn 779 May the feet of God

Robin and Dorothy Mann 2015

<https://youtu.be/WfOFIWxGaP8?si=Z3qYFLtnqBZKEj7j>

### Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



RCL

Joan Chittister wrote of the Twilight time, in her book: *The gift of the years: Growing Older gracefully*. (Used with permission)

*The twilight time, like all the time before it, is not for nothing. It has its own tasks, its burdens, its subtle gifts to give us. The twilight time is a time for trust. It's all out of our hands now. We have used our last year's well. We have lived with all the energy we had. And now we must trust the time of no energy at all to make us open in a different way to those around us. We must trust our doctors and our caregivers and our situation and our passage. We must allow ourselves to be cared for and trust the people doing it are receiving something from us, as we receive from them.*

*It is time now to surrender to acceptance. Perhaps for the first time in our adult lives we will go into a period of total dependence.*

*This is a time for melting into God.*