

Whitehorse Uniting Church
Sunday 5 November 2023
Pentecost 23 A
All Saints/Souls Sunday



Welcome, acknowledgment and introduction

The peace of the lord be with you!

And also with you!

Welcome to worship this Sunday, All Saints/Souls Day as we gather for worship on the lands of the Wurundjeri people, cared for by elders past, present and future.

We welcome those who are visiting with us today and those who are worshipping with us at home.

All Saints/Souls Day. A day of reflection and of listening to the past but also of what is happening in the here and now. Saints also lived in their time and the honorific was given to some later. The term Saint was used by Paul to refer to all believers, not just a special group. So, who are the saints that live among us today? I have also asked members of our congregation for a hymn that reflects the faith of their loved ones. So let us worship God together with our call to worship.

Call to Worship:

We come on this day of All Saints and Souls to hear the stories of the past and the present.

Open our hearts O lord to hear your voice.

We come to hear the teachings of Christ, to open our minds to what is being said.

Open our hearts O lord to hear your voice.

We come to pause, to reflect, to try and understand what you ask of us.

Open our hearts O lord to hear your voice.

On this day may we open ourselves to your teachings, to understand what it is you ask of us and the strength to do what you ask of us.

Open our hearts O lord to hear your voice.

Hymn: *And can it be TIS 209.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu2uA6U4Fxa>

Tim Menger says of this hymn: "My Grandfather's favourite hymn and one of mine. A hymn of about the realisation of knowing God's love and as a staunch Baptist the freedom of living in the knowledge that Christ has set you free. Granddad for me was a role model in living the word of God through actions and prayer."

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness

Jesus, lover and friend, you showed us holiness in action through the way you lived your life. You gave away your power in the service of others and turned our understanding of blessedness on its head.

We confess the difficulties we experience in living as you lived and loving as you loved

We confess how easy it is to concentrate on our own pleasures – taking note of the plight of many in the world only as the news momentarily grabs our attention.

We confess our capacity to be so consumed by our own agendas that our concern for the needs of others shrinks all too rapidly.

We confess our failure to act when we see around us weakness, pain, suffering and powerlessness.

A time of silent confession

We confess our reluctance to love our enemies and to do good to those who dislike or even hate us.

We confess the ease with which we become conformed to the world's standards rather than facing the challenge of conforming to those of Christ.

Stir up your Spirit in us, Lord, that we may experience the happiness and blessing of being your disciples in more than name only.

Strengthen us to be people who sing and live your song of love; who willingly serve our neighbours—even those we don't especially like; who seek justice and mercy for all and who truly repent of what is past and look with anticipation for what is yet to come. This we pray in your name and for your sake. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

"In Christ... when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, you also were marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people." (Ephesians 1: 13, 14)

Hear again the word of truth: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

(Copyright Moira Laidlaw, from the UCA website pilgrim: <https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/?p=313>)

Readings:

1 John 3:1 – 3

¹ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he^[a] is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³ And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Matthew 5:1 – 12

The Beatitudes

⁵ When Jesus^[a] saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

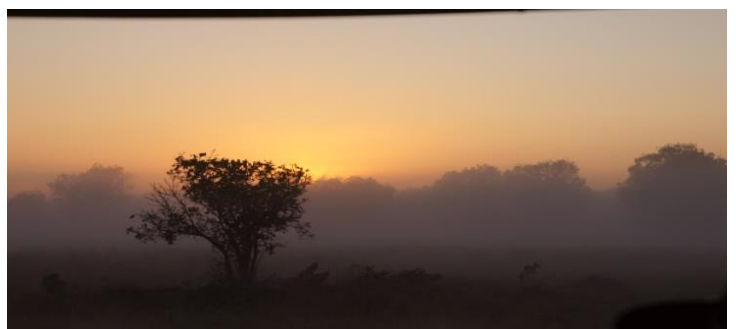
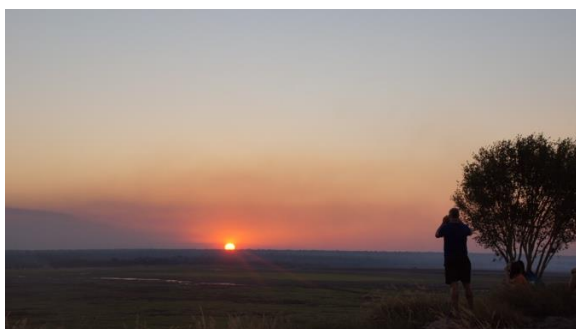
¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely^[b] on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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Quiet moment of reflection.

All age/ability: Reflection on images



These are two images I took on our trip through the middle of Australia in Kakadu before the pandemic. A 6 week trip across to Adelaide, up the middle to Darwin, detour to Uluru, Darwin then back down to Kakadu and across to Townsville then down to the east coast to Sydney. Finally onto Melbourne.

One is on top of Ubirr as the sun was setting and the other on the Alligator River 12 hours later as the sun was rising. Each moment I was struck at how, if you could just sit, stop and watch/ listen just how quickly an inner calm could be found. Even surrounded by crowds.

What have these photos got to do with the readings we've just heard?

You learn a lot living near your loved ones for a long period of time. The trip gave us, as a family, time together and time to get to know each other in a different way. It gave us at times a reason to stop, pause and reflect.

When have you stopped and reflected?

Do the beatitudes make you stop, pause and reflect?

How do the beatitudes speak to you or see them in someone?

How do we live them or see others live them?

Hymn: When I survey the Wondrous Cross Tis 342

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=when+i+survey+the+wondrous+cross+youtube#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:f79a8ab2,vid:mDkuxElcpdl,st:0>

REFLECTION FOR ALL SAINTS' DAY

Matthew 5:1-12

In this passage, commonly known as the Beatitudes, Jesus tells us what it means to be blessed.

He does not mention winning the lottery, being elected to high office, or buying a new model car each year. Blessing comes to those who are poor, humble, merciful, hungry, working for peace, and accepting persecution.

So who wants to sign up?

Jesus speaks these words to the disciples apart from the crowds with whom he is popular and by whom they, by association, might be respected.

Jesus seems to be asking his followers, "Do you really want to be a disciple?

Then here is what to expect!"

In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul reminds his readers that they are "called to be saints"—those who strive to follow the teaching of Jesus and to live like him.

The Greek word *hagios* refers to those who are sanctified or set apart by or for God.

Saints look like ordinary people; they are known not by holy clothes or a halo but by their faithfulness to the Christian gospel.

Over the course of time, the Roman Catholic Church begins to name persons of exceptional holiness as "saints."

November 1 was established as All Saints' Day, when all Christians come together to remember those who have gone before us on the journey.

Most of us can recall saint-like people we have known: persons of patience, love, and service who were also great listeners and encouragers.

On All Saints' Day, we can include them in our thanksgiving.

Their memories remind us that we are "called to be saints" each day.

Even when we stumble, maybe even fall, the grace of God is always there to lift us up.

Loving God, thank you for the cloud of witnesses who encourage and strengthen us to follow Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

Upper Room. The Upper Room Disciplines 2020: A Book of Daily Devotions (p. 366). Upper Room Books. Kindle Edition.

Hymn: This, this is the God we adore 220 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXjE9-Tu1Jk>

Prayers of the People

Pause to give thanks for those who have gone before us. Entrust them and all who grieve into God's compassion and love.

A Prayer of Remembrance for those recently departed.

For all the saints, who from their labours rest,
The saints gone too soon before the fullness of their grace was truly known by human minds.
The saints who were not lauded, but whose faithfulness bore generations of fruit.
The saints whose witness spoke truth to power and brought forth new creations.
The saints who died with doubts, questions, and hope in mystery.
The saints whose pained ends brought out words that God received, knowing their truth.
The saints whose legacies are the history from which we learn how to do and be better.
The saints who are only remembered by God and who rest in light perpetual.
For these and so many others,
we give thanks to God. Amen.

(Source: Copyright Rev Julia Seymour, posted on [RevGalBlogPals](#))

We remember and give thanks for:

Ray Kemke 24 August 1932 – 29 May 2022
Jean Millist 1 April 1933 – 9 June 2022
Ian Richmond 17 January 1934 – 22 October 2022
Heather Barnes 28 December 1944 – 21 December 2022
Fran Long 26 June 1928 – 11 June 2023
Margaret Williams 15 March 1930 – 17 September 2023
Lois Dunn 23 August 1925 – 2 October 2023
Arthur Watson died in April 2023
George Clarke died in May. 2023
Betty Stevens died 2023
Ruby Selvaratnam died 21 August 2023.
Ossie Martinus died July/August(?) 2023
Margaret Spence died 2023
Maureen Thompson died 2023
Shirley Barker died 2023
Eileen Briggs died Jan 2023
Val Galagher died 2023
Doug Hall died Dec 2022
Trevor Allan died Nov 2022
Jan Dempster died Nov 2022

There are many we also remember but some I have been requested I name from previous years:

Elaine Hopkins, died in June 2022
David LaFontaine, died in Sept2022
Jonathan Hawkey, died in Sept 2022
Kathleen Blair, died in October2022
Margaret Commons, died in October 2022
Joyce Suto died 2022
Ailsa Vian died March 2022
Alan O'Rourke died July 2022
Brian Cresswell died Sept 2021
Judy Ralston died 2021

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.*

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.

Hymn: Rock of Ages TIS 222 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUU5MSTyoBA>

Hymn: TiS 530 "Now let us from this table rise" Author: Frederik Herman Kaan 1929-

Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and live again,
his selfless love has made us whole.

With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the Word in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.

To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

Then give us grace, Companion God,
to choose again the pilgrim way,
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

Blessing: For Those Who Walked With Us (Copyright Jan Richardson)

"For those who walked with us, this is a prayer. For those who have gone ahead, this is a blessing. For those who touched and tended us, who lingered with us while they lived, this is a thanksgiving. For those who journey still with us in the shadows of awareness, in the crevices of memory, in the landscape of our dreams, this is a benediction."

May we go in the grace and peace of the Lord. Amen

You shall go out with joy 755 Tis tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsxetUob-bs&list=PL5dbbdzyKBAq-mEd9qTqdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=24>

This worship was prepared by Tim Menger