

Introduction to Worship

14th June 2020 – Pentecost 2



A friend sent me this photo of hot air balloons over Melbourne.

We know it's getting colder when we see them.

It's time for hot soup, heaters or fireplaces, rugs and winter woollies.

Another friend said she likes winter. She said, '*Everything is revealed.*'

Without their leaves, we see the shape of branches on many trees and nests.

In the morning we may see dew on spider webs and frost on the grass.

We may even take a trip to the snow (I think we're allowed) and have a snowball fight or build a snowman. Adults are allowed to play.

I hope you're keeping well and seeking sanctuary in good company, music, prayer, admiring nature's beauty and phoning friends. You may even be ready to visit, as long as you exercise caution.

You may decide to watch *Songs of Praise* with a friend on a Sunday morning.

Lockdown hasn't had any effects on our hearts.

I've heard so many of us have been keeping in touch, over the phone and praying for one another.

This Sunday's gospel focuses on the love of God for us and desire to bring us blessings and healing and our response of love. I hope you find the worship resources a blessing.

Blessings
Rev Tina

Mountview Worship @ Home

Sunday 14th June 2020



A New Commandment I Give Unto You

A new commandment I give unto you
 that you love one another as I have loved you,
 that you love one another as I have loved you.
 By this will others know that you are my disciples
 if you have love one for another;
 by this will others know that you are my disciples
 if you have love one for another.

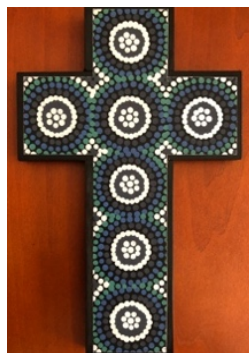
Anon.; based on John 13: 34-35

Welcome to our Service

Today's theme will be love. We will ponder about the story of Sarah and Abraham and how they had a child when they were elderly and began a new journey with God; the psalmist who loved God for hearing his prayers; and Jesus sending out his disciples to bring his love and healing to his people and how God, through the Holy Spirit, pours his love into our hearts. It will be a feast.

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

I love the Lord
 Because he heard my voice

Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession

Lord, you hear our voice and are with us at all times,
 especially now in this season of unknowns.
 You help us lift up our hearts and rejoice.
 You help us praise you and give us hope for the journey,
 even when things seem impossible,
 you bless us, so we can laugh.
 You hold and comfort us through all ages.
We give you thanks and praise.

Jesus Christ our Lord,
 you call us to bring healing to others.
 You send us out into the world and guide us, telling us not to worry,
 but to hand over all to you.
 You give us courage for the journey and are with us at all times,
 guiding us and loving us.
 You help us reach out with love.
We give you thanks and praise.

Holy Spirit, you fill our heart with God's love.
 You inspire us to keep on with the journey,
 to run the race with courage and faith,
 so that when we face tough times, we become stronger in our faith,
 and stand in God's grace.
 We can boast of God's love for us and our love for God.
 We can find hope for the journey and this hope never disappoints us.
We give you thanks and praise.

Come Holy Spirit,
 breathe into our lives
 and lead us closer to God.
 And Lord, if we need forgiveness or to forgive,
 give us your grace.
 Help us come before you now with all that's on our hearts,
 in this moment of silence transform our heart's and pour your love into them.

Silence

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

"Abide With Me" – Audrey Assad

https://youtu.be/84YASWe3_2Q

from *Inheritance*: http://smarturl.it/AA_Inheritance

TuneCore (on behalf of Fortunate Fall Records); BMG Rights Management (US), LLC, LatinAutor, Hexacorp (music publishing), BMI - Broadcast Music Inc., Music Services, Inc. (Publishing), UMPG Publishing, EMI Music Publishing, Sony ATV Publishing, and 7 Music Rights Societies

Scripture Readings

Genesis 18: 1-15, 21: 1-7

NRSV © National Council of the Churches
 of Christ in the USA. Used by permission.
 All rights reserved worldwide

18:1 The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 18:2 He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. 18:3 He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. 18:4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

18:5 Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on – since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." 18:6 And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes."

18:7 Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 18:8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

18:9 They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

18:10 Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?"

18:13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 18:14 Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son."

18:15 But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

21:1 The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised.

21:2 Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him.

21:3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

21:5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

21:6 Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

21:7 And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?

Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19

116:1 I love the LORD,

because he has heard my voice and my supplications. 116:2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. 116:3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. 116:4 Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I pray, save my life!"

116:12 What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me? 116:13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, 116:14 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones. 116:16 O LORD, I am your servant;

I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds. 116:17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD. 116:18 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, 116:19 in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

Romans 5: 1-8

5:1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

5:2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 5:3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

5:4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5:5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. 5:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

5:7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 5:8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Matthew 9:35 – 10:23

9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 9:38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." 10:1 Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. 10:2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 10:3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 10:4 Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 10:6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

10:7 As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near. 10:8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 10:9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, 10:10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. 10:11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 10:12 As you enter the house, greet it. 10:13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 10:15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. 10:16 "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 10:17 Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; 10:18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. 10:19 When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; 10:20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 10:21 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; 10:22 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 10:23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

For The Young At Heart



These are two groups of children I met in Nepal in 2006. The first group lived in the remote mountains. At that time their school was a stone building with wooden benches and a blackboard, with an outdoor loo and no heating. Children in remote areas don't seem to have toys like western children. They make their own out of bits and pieces of discarded metal and rope and have fun with them. They help their parents cart water in large metal containers. The older girls carry their younger siblings around in slings. The other group is a group of orphans from an Orphanage in Kathmandu, during the political uprising during 2006. They were traumatized. I wonder how things are now for these two groups of children. When I visited in 2017, things had improved with some schools, but there were still villages in Nepal where there is a lot of poverty and schools are still being rebuilt after the earthquake in 2015. Life is tough. Yet, the people are joyful and value what they have and are resilient. Their lives are far away from us. Please pray for them. In the past month COVID-19 cases have gone from 60 to over 4,000.

There aren't medical services in remote villages, only hospitals in large villages and the ambulance is a basket on a family member's back, with several days walk to a hospital, sometimes a week.



Sermon

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



We choose to love, without strings or expectations, the kind of love Paul speaks of that's poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, God's love. If we have love in our hearts, we have God in us, if we have God in us, we have love in us, for God is love. Romans 5:5, one of my favourite verses in the bible, speaks of this love and so does 1 John 4. We love in all circumstances and boast of our hope in God.

It has been a long haul for some of us, due to Covid-19 restrictions. Some of us may be finding things a little gloomy due to isolation or fear or restrictions. We need some sunshine and laughter, otherwise we're going to end up grumpy. What we've got in today's gospel is a series of stories of hope.

The story about Sarah's laughter is inspiring. Abraham and Sarah are living in tents. Three strangers come and Abraham knows they're God and offers them hospitality. As they are eating under the Oaks of Mamre, one of the strangers says, *'next time I visit you your wife Sarah will have a son.'* Sarah overhears and laughs. She asks, *'How can this be? We're both old and I'm way past menopause.'*

The stranger says, *'Is anything too wonderful for God? Next time I pass by here you will have a son.'* Sarah denies laughing, saying, *'I did not laugh.'* The stranger said, *'Oh yes, you did laugh.'*

Why did Sarah laugh? Perhaps because she had lived a life of barrenness for too long and had lost hope. This promise was left field and shattered her life of barrenness. It is a new possibility, outside her expectations and is totally unexpected. She is unable to believe in this promise. It's a scandal.

She lived life in their society where she was an object of pity and shame. Not having a son to carry on Abrahams name where they had descendants and someone to care for them in old age. Now, Sarah was being offered fruitfulness and joy. But it's impossible at her age. She is resigned to her fate and hopelessness is normal. The promise of God questions common sense and what elderly people are supposed to do. She refuses to consider it, the possibility to begin a new life, that involves family, new lands, places, possibilities, hopes, dreams, expectations fulfilled and love, because of a child.

My grandmother was a role model and taught me a lot about life and what we can and cannot do. She came from Yackandandah and married a local from a nearby country town. She was an accomplished pianist. But, after my grandfather returned from fighting in WWI, from Gallipoli and the trenches in France, he asked her not to play the piano. It moved his heart and reminded him of the misery of war, and she respected this. They had five children, ran a pig farm in the Mallee after being given land and guesthouses in South Yarra and Lorne. She took me to her church in Gardiner and Lorne. She cared for my grandfather when he had heart attacks and after he died, she felt lost and didn't know what to do without him. Several years later at 70, she began studying music at the conservatorium and bought a baby grand piano and played for her church. When she died, she gave her piano to her church. I also grew up with stories about great aunts who went to be missionaries in India. I'm sure you have inspiring family stories where someone seized the day and just did it, whatever it was, and it changed their lives and gave them a new future filled with hope and love.

So, what about Sarah's laughter? Sarah had a son, just as God promised and Abraham and Sarah called him Isaac, which means laughter. Now Sarah said, *'God has brought laughter for me and everyone who hears will laugh with me.'* This is amazing. God did the impossible and Sarah and Abraham became the mother and father of many nations, as many descendants as stars in the sky. Sarah's laugh was no longer the laugh of disbelief, but the laugh of rejoicing and wanting others to rejoice with her.

Sometimes we may laugh at the impossibility of discipleship and a new call and possibilities God is calling us to embrace. We may perceive a series of barriers, closed doors and limitations. Expectations are that only the young begin new journeys. In the west elderly are not valued enough for their wisdom and ability to contribute. But, dreams can be fulfilled and it's never too late to begin.

There are other stories in today's readings that offer us hope. The psalmist was in a dark place, perhaps very ill and God heard his prayer. He was raised out of the gloomy darkness and given a second chance at life. His response was to declare, *'I love the Lord.'* Out of gratitude he loved God and made the resolution to always trust God and call on God for as long as he lived.



The gospel from Matthew is the story of Jesus giving his disciples authority to heal and sending them out asking them to take nothing for the journey but to simply trust in God and in others to provide and not worry when things don't go to plan, but to hand it over to God and move on. We are invited on that journey too.

The theme that runs through today's story is the love of God for us. God's desire to bless and heal our lives and our response of love to God. I wonder sometimes what it would be like to look back over my own life and consider the things I've done that God would delight in. I'm sure it would be the times I loved God and others as myself. Sometimes I ask, 'What will I do with the rest of my life.'

There seems to be stages in life, from birth to thirty, with childhood, teenage years, getting married, children and a career; then thirty to sixty, with family growing older, career and vocation and many journey's; and now I ask, 'What will I do from sixty onwards?' God willing there are many years ahead. What can I do with my life that God will delight?

One way to know is to ask questions, such as: What moves our hearts most? What are the lenses we see through, when we choose how to live? And to ponder about the stories from today's gospel and readings, that challenge us to see life differently, through God's eyes and the eyes of our hearts.

Rev Tina

"Oh The Deep, Deep Love Of Jesus" – Audrey Assad and feat. Fernando Ortega

<https://youtu.be/1vUhwjydk8A>

from INHERITANCE, http://smarturl.it/AA_Inheritance
TuneCore (on behalf of Fortunate Fall Records); ASCAP, Sony ATV Publishing, LatinAutor,
Music Services, Inc. (Publishing), UMPI, BMI - Broadcast Music Inc., CMRRA, UMPG Publishing, and 6 Music Rights Societies

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

Tim Joyce has prepared the Prayers of the people for you today

Loving God

We offer ourselves to you.

May our minds think of you,
and our eyes see the needs of others.

May our ears hear the cries of the world
and our voices speak of you.

May our hands work for your reign
and our feet walk on your path.

May our lives be used in your service
and our hearts love you more than anything else.

May the joy of the Lord be our strength to serve him
all the days of our life.

Almighty God – we pray for your Church.

For our congregation here at Mountview, as we confront the challenges of the current environment.

We pray for Tina and thank you for her ministry to us.

And that you will guide her and us in the way ahead.

We pray also Lord for other churches and agencies.

As part of the ecumenical prayer cycle we pray for Crossway Baptist Church, Burwood East.

For their vibrant worship, their many members and participants, their online ministries and outreach programs.

For the Diamond Creek and the Hurstbridge congregations of the Diamond Valley Parish.

For their minister Rev Dr Fiona Hill, for their ministry in these difficult times as they experiment with delivering meaningful worship opportunities to their people.

For Uniting AgeWell's Community Respite Services.

For their staff and their residents – as they deliver a range of respite and care services across Victoria and Tasmania – especially during this challenging period.

We pray that they will all serve you and be responsive to the context and demands of the day, and to the needs of the people they serve. We pray that you will bless their work, their witness and their ministry.

Loving God – we pray for the world.

We pray this morning for Malawi and Zambia.

We pray for:

- greater food security for those most vulnerable, especially in times of climate change
- an end to political and economic corruption
- rising standards of living, particularly for the poorest of the poor
- an end to exploitation of resources and of the people, especially those who are young and/or female.

Merciful Lord – we pray for the poor, neglected and marginalised.

For indigenous people – that opportunities for justice, reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect will not be lost.

For people of colour who have suffered injustice at the hands of the law, who do not share equally in the wealth of their society and who are discriminated against.

For victims of the current pandemic – whether it be from contracting the virus, losing their job or suffering mental health challenges.

For refugees and asylum seekers.

For those who are lonely or vulnerable

Surround them with your love, O Lord

We pray that governments and individuals will respond with compassion, generosity and a determination to right wrongs, and enable us to be agents of Your love in the world.

Merciful Lord – we pray for those in special need at this time.

For the sick the lonely and the grieving.

Lord – we entrust them to your care.

We pray all these things

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who taught us to pray ...

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

And 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

“Guide Me, Oh Thou Great Jehovah” – Tabernacle Welsh Baptist Church, Cardiff

<https://youtu.be/wT4n1hGjDDg>

William Williams 1717-91;

tr. Peter Williams 1722-96 and William Williams alt.;

Tune: 'Bread of Heaven'; Public Domain

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**

Shalom To You Now

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.**

Elise Shoemaker Eslinger, 1942- ; Used by permission. CCLI 122303

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

Extra Worship Resources

Most of us may be missing getting together and singing. I'm looking forward to getting back together again and having a good sing. I found this cartoon by Leunig and a prayer, giving thanks to musicians. Music is good for the soul and lifts our spirits.



We give thanks for the life and work of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
Let us celebrate and praise all those musicians and composers
who give their hands and hearts and voices to the expression of life's mystery and joy.
Who nourish our heart in its yearning.
Who dignify our soul in its struggling.
Who harmonise our grief and gladness.
Who make melody from the fragments of chaos.
Who align our spirit with creation.
Who reveal to us the grace of God.
Who calm us and delight us and set us free to love and forgive.
Let us give thanks and rejoice.

Amen

You may recognise this:

Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.

John Wesley; Public Domain

For a quiet moment

*Be silent
 Be still
 Alone
 Empty
 Before your God
 Say nothing
 Ask nothing
 Be silent
 Be still
 Let your God
 Look upon you
 That is all
 God knows
 Understands
 Loves you with
 An enormous love
 God only wants to
 Look upon you
 With love
 Quiet
 Still
 Be
 Let your God –
 Love you*

*Edwina Gately, 1943– ; © E. Gately;
 CAL Licence No. W4032. Unauthorised Copying Prohibited*



Spend a moment pondering on all the places you've journeyed with God over the past few months.

How has this extra time alone with God blessed you?

What will you take from this time when life returns to normal, whatever the new normal is?

How has God changed you?

Write down your reflections in your journal if you have one and give thanks to God.



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

Please join them:

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.

All protected content is reproduced with accreditation, by permission and or under the relevant church / worship / podcast / streaming licenses held by Mountview Uniting Church, and is done so in good faith.

© 2020 Mountview Uniting Church. All Rights Reserved.

All internet links in this file are confirmed to be working at the time of production. They continue to work after the file is emailed to members.

They are unable to work however on the copy that resides on our website.

People wishing to follow a link using the website version of this file will need to copy the link displayed and paste it into your usual internet browser.

