

Whitehorse Uniting
Sunday 11 February 2024
Transfiguration Sunday



Introit: TIS 152 Joyful, joyful, we adore you
Hymns of Grace, with introduction to hymn. 2023
<https://youtu.be/bhOha4AcoMY?si=5wrzMVHt6TMSO0xP>

Welcome

Today's theme is:

God revealing God's glory is a welcome into intimacy with God. It comes with the call to listen and respond. We see God's glory in the presence of one another - in community.

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 One We Worship

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You are the pre-dawn glow
 that promises yet another new beginning;

You are the still dusk
that brings rest to a weary world;

You are the prophecy
 of God's life-giving Word inscribed on our hearts;

You are the law
that finds its fulfilment in love;

You are the mountain
 where the presence of God blazes and burns;

You are the valley
where the face of God peeks out from suffering eyes;

You are the glory that we long for,
 the whispered rumour of a different order,
the Shining One who transfigures all things.

You are the One we worship. Amen.



Prayer - Darkness and Light

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The darkness loves to parade itself, God,
 to draw our attention and steal our energy,
 with fearful threats and dire prophecies of doom;
 and we all too easily give it just what it seeks.

But, if we can just drag our gaze away
 we discover that there is another reality;
 that your light shines undimmed,
 that your care is undiminished,
 that your strength and protection are unfailing.

And so, even in the midst of pain, suffering, evil
 even when it seems your light is almost out,
 we choose to remain under the shadow of your wings;
 to trust in your salvation,
 to speak your words,
 and to dispel the darkness
 by lighting the flame of faith again in our hearts. Amen.

TIS 156 Morning has broken.

Md1801 2013

<https://youtu.be/h5D3LEjGF8A?si=rMZQ28pEUoTEWD96>

Confession Prayer - Whole-y God

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Sometimes it feels like it doesn't really matter, God,
 if we ignore the needs of our spouse,
 or shout at the kids unnecessarily,
 or elaborate on the truth just a little, so we look better,
 or waste the resources our world so generously gives;
 sometimes it just feels silly to worry about making things beautiful,
 to keep reaching for the best of the good, and not just the easy,
 to stay true to what is true.
 What difference does it really make, in the big scheme of things,
 if we just take the easy way, the not-bad-but-could-be-better way?

And then we come here, and we remember.
 You do not change to accommodate our good-enoughness, our that'll-do-ness;
 You do not darken the sun just a little, so we won't feel so dull,
 or switch off some of the stars to keep us from feeling small.

Moment of silence

You are holy – whole-y – one and complete and God;
 You are Light and Life and Love and Fullness – you can be no other;
 You are Beauty and Goodness and Truth – brilliant and dazzling;
 And it is we who must change, we who come to this place to worship,
 It is we who must choose to gaze on your holiness & beauty,
 and be changed into glory.
 And, so here we are, God. Please, show us yourself.
 Amen.

Response to prayer of Confession - The Simple Logic of Light

How we long to understand, O God,
 the simple logic of Light;

**The power of a single glow to dispel darkness;
 the capacity of a single spark to create warmth;
 the immense energy in a single drop of sunlight.**

It's a simple logic, this message you speak:
the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness cannot overcome it;

**We praise you for the light,
and for its simple resistance to darkness;
We praise you for the radiance
that never ceases to stream into us and our world,**

And we praise you for the tinder that you have placed within us
that waits patiently and quietly
for us to allow a single ember into our hearts
so that we might be set ablaze with You. Amen.

Readings

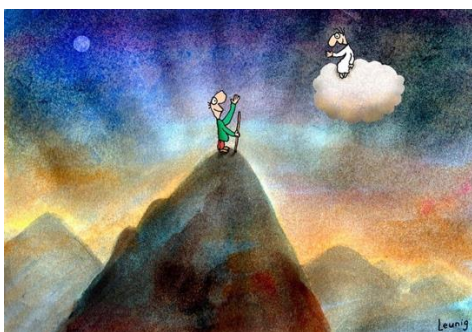
2 Corinthians 4:3-6

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing clearly the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus's sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Mark 9:2-9

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling bright, such as no one^[a] on earth could brighten them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved;^[b] listen to him!" ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
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Sermon – Rev Peter



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Listen to him...

A sermon by Rev Peter

What's the truth? Who do you believe?

The recent decision by Prime Minister Albanese and his government to change the Stage 3 tax cuts has been declared by some sections of the media to demonstrate they lied to the Australian public. On the other hand, it is presented as a government responsive to the needs of a struggling community in the midst of cost-of-living pressures. Paul Barry from the ABC's "Media Watch" program examined the media's response, highlighting the duplicitous attitude of the Murdoch media who when Prime Minister Abbott broke numerous election promises, promoted the change as good and appropriate. Not so more recently when the other side of politics change their policies and approach.

So what's the truth? Who do you believe?

For most of us, we will have formed our view based on our political leanings. Such leaning will have been formed over many years due to our own particular context and circumstances. How were we raised? Were we business

owners or executives? Or were we workers and union members? What media do we read or follow? What do our friends and family think? What groups are we members of? These, alongside our life experiences all inform our perspective.

Does that mean we now live in a post-truth world? Or is there something we can hang on to?

With St Valentine's Day just around the corner, I am reminded of one of the important dimensions of making marriages and relationships work. Psychologists Nan Silver and John Gottman identified 7 key principles at play in positive relationships and the first they called a "love map". A corny title but none the less expressive of what it is.

In positive relationships, the members develop a knowledge of the others in the group (in a marriage, of their partner). They are interested in the stories, experiences, likes and dislikes and various aspects of the lives of the others in their group. It is about understanding the other/s.

I get to know how my friend likes their tea (or coffee or ...). I learn about how they like to spend their free time. Do they like reading or would they rather go to the movies. None of this is sleazy but rather to develop an appreciation and rapport. Such a "love map" takes time and requires a constant updating of that knowledge for the sake of the other.

It is a privilege to be given such knowledge of another. It involves trust and graciousness.

In our reading from Mark's Gospel, a deep intimate knowledge of Jesus is shared with Peter, James and John. Jesus is seen alongside of the greatest heroes of Jewish history. It is also shared with us, the readers. We are also let in on that knowledge. In Mark's Gospel, few understand it. At the time, the disciples didn't either. But in the right context, the revealing takes shape into understanding.

The key is the instruction given after the vision by the voice from the clouds, "listen to him (Jesus)". Listening to him builds our relationship and rapport. It is life-giving for ourselves and others.

Listen.

That is the only way we really learn about each other and for that matter about Jesus, about God, and about where we fit into it all. We start to get an image of intimacy. A cherishing, a connection with God and Christ that is about learning and following.

When we think we have it solved or the answers, we become like Peter. We impose our solutions and attitudes on what we think should happen. But if we take time to listen, to observe, we begin to notice the nudging of the Spirit of God in ways we may not have expected.

Quiet time after sermon



Hymn Christ be our light (by Bernadette Farrell)

OCP Music 2021

<https://youtu.be/qibAAo0JiEQ?si=SCNrLliN7u-a77H0>

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 – Anne Smith

We come to prayer: let us be still and acknowledge God with us.

Gracious and compassionate God,
 We view with horror the results of conflict in many areas of the world
 the devastation caused by the use of massive amounts of weapons,
 leaving whole nations without shelter or food,
 the refusal to negotiate, compromise, or listen to adversaries,
 the strategy of seeking wealth and gain under cover of grievance.
 Yet we need understanding of the basic inequalities and fears which can fuel and feed these activities.
 May you bring your understandings to all, especially leaders,
 with wisdom and conciliatory speech which reaches out to others.
 May all, in homes, in workplaces, in governments,
 use gentleness, truthfulness, and reasoning in their approach to difficulties.

Gracious and compassionate God,
 We bring our prayers for all the circles of community in which we live.
 May the government consider a broad cohort and make just laws for all.
 May wealth and power not unduly influence decision makers,
 nor individuals be led to consider the accumulation of wealth a viable goal in life.
 May we see an end to selfishness and violence, be it theft or road rage,
 or selfish living refusing to take action to reduce climate change.
 Within our community,
 we give thanks for the work and leadership of the Church Council,
 and ask for their continuing strength and vision in the days to come.
 we give thanks for our ministry team and all who provide pastoral care,
 and are thankful for the comfort they bring.

Gracious and compassionate God,
 Relying on your care, we bring to you the difficulties of our lives,
 some have illness, ongoing issues, continuing pain,
 some have difficulties with changes which become necessary in life,
 some have past differences affecting present relationships,
 Bring us insights and understanding to deal with whatever is necessary each day.
 Yet we bring thankfulness, too, for so much good we have in our lives,
 sufficient food, shelter, warmth, and pursuits to interest us,
 the comfort of a caring community, loving families, and medical assistance to improve our lives,
 for beauty in many areas of the world near and far, shared in travel and photographs.
 Accept our thanks and praise,
 as we join together in the Lord's Prayer -

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 always Amen.

TIS 687 God gives us a future.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64IXkcwZ06M&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=16>

tMt video



Blessing

Kathy Galloway, *Acorns, and Archangels* (Edit. Ruth Burgess) Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. www.ionabooks.com Used with permission.

T: Peace between nations.

P: *Peace between neighbours.*

T: Peace between person and person.

P: *In love of the God of life*

T & P: The peace of Christ above all peace

All: Let us go in Peace.

TIS 779 May the feet of God walk with you.

Robyn and Dorothy Mann 2015

https://youtu.be/WfOFIWxGaP8?si=Oe_aXGzCHtisYITr

Pastoral Care Tips – Rev Tina



Around Christmas, during my first placement, I was invited each year to bless the fleet. Dozens of fire trucks from the Nillumbik council area would line up on the council offices' lawns to have their crews and trucks blessed. The mayor, the person in charge of the CFA for that district and myself, would address the crews. Police would also attend. Then I'd do the blessing and say the firefighter's prayer, and afterwards we would have a meal and each of the crews would receive a grant of money from the council. Most crews came from towns in the area, such as Kangaroo Ground.

While we were eating, I'd listen to the volunteers' stories about fires heading straight for them and their truck or fire tower, and the wind changing at the last minute. Often, after traumatic fires they'd have get-togethers for everyone and their families to share stories and offer support to each other. They'd often say: *When your number's up, it's up.* They were brave men and women and often families volunteered. They'd put their life on the line for communities.

What they do is inspiring. Their way of offering and receiving support and their attitudes can teach us a lot about self-care and living well, contributing, and going that extra mile for others.

I invite you to say a prayer for them, for all firefighters, in this country and throughout the world.