

Sending out

It's good news, this Gospel,
the message of God's reign among us;
the reality of God's presence with us;
the challenge of God's justice calling us.
It's good news – a call to celebration,
a reason to bring out our best,
and offer it to God in extravagant thanksgiving
and reckless devotion.

Whatever we may face, whatever evil we might fight,
whatever injustice we might resist,
we refuse to forget the life, the celebration,
that this Good News offers;
because it is truly good and liberating news
when cynicism and hatred
are incapable of stealing our joy.

(John van de Laar)

God's peace be with you.
And also with you!

A sign of peace is exchanged

*The musicians were led by Norm Inglis, and Colin Telfer led us in our singing.
Thank you to those who helped give voice to the words in the service,
and to Allan Forbes on the sound desk.*

Please join us for morning tea in the Pilgrim Hall after the service.



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Pilgrim
Uniting Church

9.30am Community Worship

Sunday 7th April 2019

Lent 5
COCU23C

The church is fitted with a hearing loop which covers the body of the church. To receive most benefit, hearing aid wearers are advised to switch their hearing aid to T-setting.

The community candles are lit

Where there is no extravagance there is no love,
and where there is no love there is no understanding. *(Oscar Wilde 1854-1900)*

Opening prayer

Bestower of blessings,
fling wide the portals of your love as we draw near to you this day.
Bless those keeping watch over the tender moments of letting go,
and those waiting with eagerness to cradle new life.
Bless the studious child, the wandering thought,
the imagination stretched out beyond what the horizon can hold.
Bless those seeking the light of truth,
and the courage to give voice to it.
Bless those who gather community to them,
and those who hunger for a place to call home.
Bless the cooks and bottle-washers,
the ravenous appetites and the empty stomachs sheltered from our view.
Bless the questions, the mysteries, and the epiphanies
that dance among our thoughts and beckon us toward what can be.
Receive our thanks for all that you hold before us and beneath us,
for the sake of your mercy and love.
Anoint us, Holy One and fill us with your peace, joy and love. **Amen.**

(Anne Fraley)

Song: Come and fill our hearts with your peace

Come and fill our hearts with your peace
You alone, O Lord, are holy
Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia
(repeat, with the word 'love', then 'joy')

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Gathering

In hope, in longing
In trust, in community
In many moods, in many shapes and sizes
We're glad to come together.

In peace, in joy
In solidarity with those who struggle
In resistance to those who dominate
We're glad to come together.

In memory of Jesus, who lived with compassion
We're glad to come together in this Lenten season. (Nelson-Pallmeyer, adapted)

Welcome and acknowledgement of land

Song: HaND 66 Thresholds *Words: Helen Wiltshire Music: Norm Inglis*

*Kairos: the opportune, crucial or special time; the appointed time in the purpose of God; the fleeting moment to be grasped.

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|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | As we stand upon the threshold,
of a new and gifted day,
we are people, stirred to journey,
called by love to walk this way. | 3 | As we step beyond the threshold,
by a river or the sea,
we may hear love's gentle blessing:
'you are loved, and called to be'. |
| 2 | As we stand upon the threshold,
with our hearts and minds afire,
we are people touched by beauty,
knowing fear and deep desire. | 4 | As we meet beyond the threshold,
filled with joy and peace sublime,
we may taste the wine of friendship,
as a sign of kairos* time. |
| | 5 | | |

As we stand upon a threshold,
seeing paths as yet untrod,
we may stir to share the wonder
of a love we name as God.

Introduction to the reading

There are plotters, betrayers, and bystanders in this story. The Gospel places this reading between the plotting of Jesus' enemies to kill him and Judas leaving the dinner to go to the chief priests to betray Jesus. At the centre of this story is Mary, the sister of Lazarus who Jesus had raised from the dead. Mary had sat at Jesus' feet during a previous visit, and now anointed his feet. She knew exactly who he was and the kind of honour he was due. Mary had come to know the "surpassing value of knowing Christ who has made me his own" (Philippians 3:12). Jesus deserved an act of extravagant holiness. The smell of perfume amid the stench of betrayal, jealousy, and looming violence. A sweet moment of stillness amid a gathering storm. An outpouring of homage amid the onslaught of hatred.

Reading: John 12: 1-8

By her actions, Mary says, "I would like to cherish Jesus for one bright, fragrant moment, before the sewage of hatred and violence washes over him and carries him away." Judas was uncomfortable with Mary's display of

*We pray together the 'Abba' Prayer
(You are invited to pray in the spirit of the Lord's Prayer, or in your original language, as appropriate)*

**Eternal Spirit, Source of all that is and ever shall be,
Loving Parent in whom we discern heaven,
May knowledge of your holiness inspire all peoples.
And may your commonwealth of peace and freedom
flourish on earth, until all of humankind
heed your call to justice and compassion.
May we find the bread that we need for today.
And for the hurts we cause one another
may we be forgiven in the same measure
that we forgive.**

**In times of trial and temptation,
help us to be strong;
When life seems overwhelming,
Help us to endure;
And thus from the yoke of sin deliver us.
May you reign in the power of human love,
Now and forever. Amen.**

(Tom Hall)

Song: HaND 28 Love is making all things new
Words: Helen Wiltshire Music: Norm Inglis
The offering will be collected during the song.

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|----|--|----|---|
| 1. | Who will dream a new tomorrow;
who will spread their wings and fly;
who will cradle joy and sorrow;
who will pause to feel earth sigh?
We will wake our souls from sleeping;
we will seek a vision true;
ours the hearts where joy is leaping:
love is making all things new. | 2. | Who will weave a web of caring;
who will share their daily bread;
who will work with faith and daring;
who will tread where Christ has led?
We will touch life's deepest yearning;
we will stir the flames anew;
ours the hearts where hope is burning:
love is making all things new. |
| 3. | Who will sing the songs of gladness;
who will chant each gentle prayer;
who will share the times of sadness;
who will offer hands of care?
We will birth love's promised dawning;
as we trust in grace anew;
ours the gift of God's new morning:
love is making all things new. | | |

Offering prayer

Giver of all good things, let your grace flow through us;
a generous stream, unstoppable, refreshing, abundant.
We release these gifts into your river of love,
flowing out to all the world. **Amen.**

(Carol Penner)

Witness Olly Ponsonby

Song: SfP 38 Source of our call

Prayers for others

We remember those who are facing tough choices and hard situations;
those enduring physical or mental pain;
those striving to come to terms with painful loss
- of a loved one, of employment, of cherished hopes;
those facing challenges for which they feel hopelessly inadequate.

**May they know the embrace of God's divine love,
the comfort of God's peace**

**and the sufficient strength of God's grace,
which is able to turn even calamity into a blessing.**

We pray for all who find themselves wrestling with powerful temptation:
those who struggle with things that are destructive,
those tempted to give up on God in light of life's harsh realities;
those who wonder whether life is worth living at all
in the face of the bleakness of their prospects.

**Hear our prayers, Source of Life,
and may we take our part in the answers we seek.**

A silence is kept

We pray for ourselves, for those we love and those whose stories we know.

A silence is kept

In all our joys and in all our concerns:
may we be ever mindful

of the presence of the sacred among us.
In the midst of grief we choose to celebrate:

**because it reminds us of hope,
and brings comfort to our broken hearts;**

In the midst of poverty we choose to celebrate:
**because it speaks of wealth beyond material things,
and gives dignity to our humbled hearts;**

In the midst of conflict we choose to celebrate:

**because it turns us to peace,
and restores humanity to our angry hearts;**

In the midst of suffering we choose to celebrate:

**because it lightens our darkness,
and inspires strength in our fragile hearts;**

In the midst of injustice we choose to celebrate:

**because it defies evil,
and renews determination in our compassionate hearts;**

Though crosses may loom, and opponents gather,
though cynics may scoff at the extravagance
of our devotion to you, Jesus:

**we still choose to embrace and enjoy
for our own sake, and that of the least,
the healing power of celebration.**

(John van de Laar)

devotion, her extravagant actions that lacked in moderation, balance, or restraint. What Judas critiques as waste was, in fact, the greatest gift that Mary could give. Not expensive perfume or money but the offering of her very life, stripped of all masks, given in service to Christ. What greater gift can any of us give - to offer our lives to follow the way of Christ, to strip our souls bare of self-protection, to pour out our very lives in dedication to the One who poured out his life for us?

A time for personal reflection

Song: Grace

Geoff Boyce (March 2019)

"Referencing Bono's song of the same title. In memory of John Smith, God's Squad (7.4.42 - 6.3.19), and in honour of the reformed man who befriended me at John's funeral".

Grace

Beautiful Grace

Offers a place

A nurturing space...

Grace

Beautiful Grace

Overcomes hate

Life-changing Grace...

When our lives get tough

When we've had enough

When we've come to the end of our strength

When our life's a mess

When we long for rest

In your mercy, turn us to face...

Grace

Turn us to Grace

Forgiven disgrace

Worshipping space...

Grace

Beautiful Grace

The gratitude place

Self-giving Grace...

In our love for you

Help us offer you

All our mind, all our strength, all our soul

Grant us strength to give

From our weakness, live

Lives of joy for what you've begun...

Grace

Beautiful Grace

All-giving Grace

Life-changing Grace...

Grace

Wonderful Grace

Self-giving Grace

Thank you for Grace