**Pilgrim Uniting Church**

**12 Flinders Street, Adelaide**

**10.00am COMBINED WORSHIP SERVICE**

**Sunday 29th March 2020**

**Lent 5A**

[COCU23A]

*This Service streamed live on Facebook at 10am and available on Youtube.*
*Go to the Pilgrim website for the links: www.pilgrim.org.au*

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**THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE**

INSTRUMENTAL PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day:
**though separated by distance and the threat of disease**

We gather this day:

**drawn together by God’s Spirit who grants us peace.**

Wherever we are:
**God is with us.**

We gather this day:
**To be transformed by Holy Love**
**To renew hope and affirm faith.**
We gather this day:
**To listen to the words of our spiritual ancestors**

**To listen to fresh words of faith**

**To listen for deep wisdom**.
We gather in the name of the Triune God
**The God who shaped us**
**The Christ who transforms us**
**The Spirit who inspires us**.

And so we pray:
**God above us, God beside us, God within us**
**May we be open to see and hear**
**Your grace revealed as we worship you this day**.
*(Source: Craig Mitchell, posted on Prayers that Unite Facebook page, May 2018 - adapted)*

HYMN 534 O for a thousand tongues to sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing

my dear Redeemer’s praise,

the glories of my God and King

the triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,

that bids our sorrows cease;

’tis music in the sinner’s ears,

’tis life and health and peace.

He speaks; and listening to his voice,

new life the dead receive,

the mournful broken hearts rejoice,

the humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,

your loosened tongues employ;

ye blind, behold your Saviour come;

and leap, ye lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,

assist me to proclaim

and spread through all the earth abroad

the honours of thy name. (Charles Wesley)

WELCOME AND GREETING

ACKNOWLEGEMENT OF LAND

We acknowledge that we are on the land of the Kaurna people and that the Spirit was in the land revealing God to them through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the Kaurna people and gave them particular insights into God's ways. Therefore, we honour the wisdom of the Kaurna Elders, past, present and emerging, and their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of all blessings,
source of all life,
giver of all grace:

**We thank you for the gift of life:**
for the breath that sustains life,
for the food of this earth that nurtures life,
for the love of family and friends
without which there would be no life.

**We thank you for the mystery of creation:**
for the beauty that the eye can see,
for the joy that the ear may hear,
for the unknown that we cannot behold filling the universe with wonder,
for the expanse of space that draws us beyond the definitions of our selves.

**We thank you for setting us in communities:**
for families who nurture our becoming,
for friends who love us by choice,
for companions at work who share our burdens and daily tasks,
for strangers who welcome us into their midst,
for people from other lands who call us to grow in understanding,
for children who lighten our moments with delight,
for the unborn who offer us hope for the future.
**We thank you for this day:**

for life and one more day to love,
for opportunity and one more day to work for justice and peace,
for neighbours and one more person to love and by whom be loved,
for your grace and one more experience of your presence,
for your promise:
to be with us,
to be our God,
and to give salvation.

**For these, and all blessings,**
**we give you thanks, eternal, loving God,**
**through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

*[Source: Adapted from “Prayers of Our Hearts” © 1991 Vienna Cobb Anderson. Reprinted with the permission of the author.]*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of love, may we think and speak
in harmony with your graciousness.
**May we speak only what is truthful and loving,**
**what is born of your grace in us.**
May we speak with compassion and humility
in blessing, not cursing, in reverence, not pride.
**Give us wisdom to see ourselves honestly,**
**to know our own faults,**
**to see your light in us and all that hides it,**
**and the same in others as well.**
Keep us from blaming born of a fearful ego,
but let us speak your encouragement and truth.
**May the words we speak and the thoughts we harbor**
**reflect your tender compassion,**
**your forgiveness of us and all people,**
**O God, our truth and our love. Amen**
*[Steve Garnaas-Holmes – adapted]*

*some time for prayerful silence*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God has opened our ears and our hearts to know God’s love and forgiveness.
There is nothing we need to do other than love one another and love God,
for all things come from God’s love.
**We will live our lives knowing we have been forgiven and we are restored to God.**
**We will live in the way of Christ. Amen.**
*[Rev Mindi Welton-Mitchell – adapted]*

PSALM FOR THE DAY: Psalm 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
2   Lord, hear my voice!
**Let your ears be attentive**
**to the voice of my supplications!**
3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
   Lord, who could stand?
**4 But there is forgiveness with you,**
**so that you may be revered.**
5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
   and in God’s word I hope;
**6 my soul waits for the Lord**
**more than those who watch for the morning,**
**more than those who watch for the morning.**
7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!
   For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
   and with God is great power to redeem.
**8 It is God who will redeem Israel**
**from all its iniquities.**

In this is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

37 1The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. 3He said to me, ‘Mortal, can these bones live?’ I answered, ‘O Lord God, you know.’ 4Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.’ 7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. 9Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.’ 10I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. 11 Then he said to me, ‘Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.” 12Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. 14I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.’

In this is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

SONG: HaND 40 Weave our lives
Weave our lives together,

sinew, blood and bone;

shape us in completeness,

secret and yet known.

Knit our souls together,

spirit, mind and heart;

weave us in the darkness;

craft our ev’ry part.

Hold us in enchantment;

nurture us in grace;

search us in our being;

carve for us a place.

Draw us to your presene,

gather us in your care;

call us to your beauty;

nourish each one there.

Woven, shaped and living;

held within love’s womb;

may we spring and flourish,

grow and come to bloom.
*(Words: Helen Wiltshire; Music: Glenfinlas)*

A reading from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,

according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL READING: John 11: 1-45

11 1Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 3So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, ‘Lord, he whom you love is ill.’ 4But when Jesus heard it, he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’ 5Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, ‘Let us go to Judea again.’ 8The disciples said to him, ‘Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?’ 9Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.’ 11After saying this, he told them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.’ 12The disciples said to him, ‘Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.’ 13Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14Then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. 15For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’ 16Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’ 17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’ 23Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ 24Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ 25Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ 27She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.’ 28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, ‘The Teacher is here and is calling for you.’ 29And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ 33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ 35Jesus began to weep. 36So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’ 37But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’ 38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, ‘Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.’ 40Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ 41So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, ‘Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’ 43When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ 44The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’ 45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

SERMON: ‘Our life-affirming God’ (Rev Dr Greg Elsdon)

SONG: SMS 11  Christ be our light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness

Longing for truth, we turn to You.

Make us Your own, your holy people

Light for the world to see.

*Chorus: Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in our hearts.*

*Shine through the darkness.*

*Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in Your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone, has pow'r to save us,

Make us your living voice.

*Chorus: Christ, be our light!…*

Longing for food, many are hungry;

Longing for water, many still thirst;

Make us your bread, broken for others

Shared until all are fed.

*Chorus: Christ, be our light!…*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless;

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others

Walls made of living stone.

*Chorus: Christ, be our light!…*

Many the gift, many the people

Many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another

Making Your kingdom come.

*Chorus: Christ, be our light!…(Words and music: Bernadette Farrell)*

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Loving and compassionate God, you call us to love our neighbours
and to be bearers of your hope and grace in our world.

Expand our hearts and vision to respond with compassion to those around us,
who are struggling in this time of uncertainty, anxiety, grief and suffering.

Give wisdom and strength to our health workers, and government officials,
as they provide leadership in bringing our country through this crisis.

We bring before you and into our hearts and minds:

* Those whose work and income are uncertain
* Those who are isolated
* Those who are fearful of an unknown future
* Those who live in situations of domestic violence,
and whose isolation increases the control of their violent partners
* Those who are homeless, and all those who offer them support and care
* Those who are involved in aged care – our agency leaders,
staff and residents and their loved ones
* Businesses whose futures are uncertain – their leaders and staff
* School staff and students
* Those with health conditions that put them at greater risk

Give wisdom and care-filled discernment to all our Church leaders – our Councils, and local congregations, as we seek to creatively live out our worship, witness and service in ways that offer Christ’s life-giving love and presence.

Strengthen and sustain us to be your people – shaped by your abundant grace, bearers of your generosity and overflowing love.

Through Christ our Light and Hope, we pray,

**Amen**.

*[A prayer by Dr Deidre Palmer, President of the Uniting Church in Australia]*

THE LORD’S PRAYER
*[expanded– inspired by* *Matthew 6: 9-13, Luke 11: 2-4*]

Our creator God, Ancient of Days,
mother of all worlds and living beings:
Your arms, that once flung galaxies of stars
like grains of sand, are open wide,
and close enough to carry each of us
like a father cradles his child next to his heart.
May your sacred name be praised!
May your realm extend,
a commonwealth of mercy, peace and justice.
Your love knits all created nature into one whole.
Your will for us always is love; and so we pray:

**May your love be done on earth,**
**in time, as it is in eternity.**
**Give all of us each day the bread we need,**
**and hope to all who hunger for your life.**
**And as we share our bread along the way,**
**pardon us the times we’ve broken faith.**
**Forgive our lack of loyalty and love;**
**and move us quickly to forgiveness**
**when wrongs are done to us.**
**Do not abandon us in the time of hard testing.**
**Save us from evil’s every incarnation,**
**From the powers that possess our spirits and our structures.**
**Forever bind us to your liberating joy!**
**For you alone are God of grace and glory,**
**and Rock of our Redemption.**
**Let it be so, God, let it be so.** **Amen**.

*[New Zealand Prayer Book – adapted]*

HYMN 175 Come down, O Love divine

1 Come down, O Love divine,

Seek thou this soul of mine,

And visit it with thine own ardour glowing;

O Comforter, draw near,

Within my heart appear,

And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

2 O let it freely burn,

Till earthly passions turn

To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;

And let thy glorious light

Shine ever on my sight,

And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3. Let holy charity

Mine outward vesture be,

and lowliness become mine inner clothing:

true lowliness of heart,

which takes the humbler part,

and o’er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

4 And so the yearning strong,

With which the soul will long,

Shall far outpass the power of human telling;

For none can guess its grace,

Till Love create a place

Wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling

*(Ralph Vaughan Williams)*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION
*We recognise the offering gifts which have been set aside for the ministry and mission in and through Pilgrim Uniting Church, and those which will wing their way electronically from our banks to the church’s account.*

We make our offerings, small and large,

with the hope and confidence

that all we do, all we offer, all we say, all we think,

and all we hope, will take root in this world

and be the source of new expressions

of God’s love, of God’s justice,

of God’s character, of God’s mission,

and of God’s reign.

**May God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven**

**through us, alongside us, despite us, and for us. Amen.**

*(adapted from a prayer on Mustard Seed)*

WORDS OF MISSION AND BLESSING
Go forth into a world of dis-ease.
Yet know that God dwells even there, in all places, in this time.
Know that we are one in God’s oneness.
Be aware of that sacred presence.
Let it strengthen you.
Let it transform you.
Build shalom. Love with abandon. Abide in peace.
*[Diana Butler Bass, adapted]*

POSTLUDE: De profundis (Out of the depths I cry unto thee, O Lord)

Jean Langlais 1907-1991

Thank you to the people involved in the

preparation and leadership and recording of this Combined Service,

streamed live at 10am on Sunday 29 March 2020.

 Presiding Ministers: Rev Dr Greg Elsdon and Rev Sandy Boyce

 Bible Readers: Di Russell and Jenny Ward

 Prayer of Thanksgiving : Emily Kelsall

 Organist: Peter Kelsall

 Pianist: Norm Inglis

 Singers: Alison McDougall and Colin Telfer

 Technical Support: Peter Russell, Allan Forbes and Sandy Boyce