

PENTECOST 22



Be aware of the
dance of power

1 NOV 2020

Become
slaves of love

Scribes, Pharisees, & Romans.

Matthew 23:1-13

**Scribes & Pharisees love to sit in seats of power;
... do whatever they teach ... not what they do,
they do not practice what they teach.
They create heavy burdens,
*The greatest among you will be your servant.***

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/5450786355>

WELCOME

A warm welcome to Leigh Memorial Uniting Church as we gather together in this virtual reality in Pentecost 22.

THEME

Hear the words of Jesus about the love of power, and critically reflect:
why do our human institutions and cultures,
why do we allow and enable such power:

**Scribes & Pharisees love to sit in seats of power; ... do whatever they teach ... not what they do, they do not practice what they teach. They create heavy burdens, and lay them on the shoulders of others ... They do all their deeds to be seen by others;
They love places of honor at banquets, in synagogues ...
The greatest among you will be your servant.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which the church stands. We acknowledge that Parramatta Mission - congregants, staff and volunteers - is proudly part of the pilgrim people of the Uniting Church in Australia. We are part of a culturally and linguistically diverse community.

We acknowledge our stakeholders; other churches and community groups; local, state and federal governments; the business community; not-for-profits, individuals; and clients/ consumers/ residents/ guests/ visitors/ callers/members /students and patients. We will treat all people with respect.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Creator God you gave us life (*Song on youtube*)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9ZOmMQeYmU>

Creator God you gave us life
Your image formed within our souls,
Yet through the midst of time and space,
We search for that which makes us whole.

Chorus
Through hands that paint,
Majestic skies
And voices chanting melody,
With words that reach beyond the page,
We comprehend your mystery.

In ev'ry flow'r and ev'ry tree,
We see your great diversity,
Yet greater still we see your love,
Expressed in our humanity.

Chorus
When with our hearts
Our hands our minds,
We share our gifts with all the world,
Our spirits soar beyond the veil,
To touch the very face of God. ... *Chorus*

HYMN *God of justice, God of mercy. Tune, Hyfrydol*

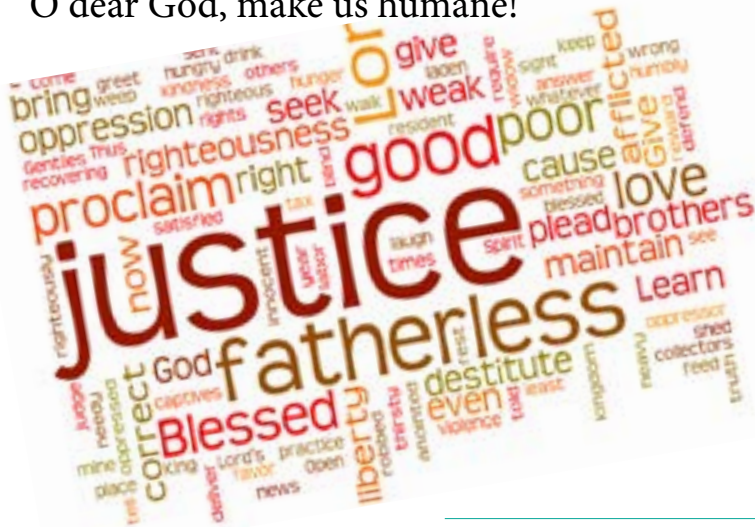
<https://soundcloud.com/richardirwinmusic/alleluia-sing-to-jesus-hyfrydol-4-verses-organ-and-descant>

1. God of Justice, God of mercy,
make us merciful and just!
Help us see all your creation
As from you a sacred trust.
And when people cry in anguish
For their own or other's pain,
Show us ways to make a difference,
O dear God, make us humane!

2. You have formed us, God of rainbows,
In your image for your will,
Seeing our diverse reflections,
Trusting you, we marvel still;
For our colours, strengths and talents
Show what one alone would lack,
Calling us to work together -
Brown, red, golden, white and black.

3. Grant all people work with meaning,
Strength to care for those they love.
Food for table, truth for telling,
Challenges to rise above.
But remind us, God of justice,
This is now our work, our call!
Changing life's oppressive systems
Into ones empowering all.

Jane Parker Huber, 1983



PRAYER

Though you are God,
with all the influence and status
that the name implies,
*you refused to pull rank,
and parade your power among us.*

Instead, you chose to step down
into our experience,
living among us, as one of us,
*with all the struggle and suffering
that goes with being human.*

PRAYER OF ADMISSION & TRANSFORMATION

Teach us the courage, O God,
to turn
from what seems so natural, so safe:
*the way of grasping power,
and befriending the powerful,
in the hope of protection and security.*

More than that, you adopted the role of slave,
washing feet,
*serving people of no reputation or social
standing,
and giving of yourself completely.*

As incredible as it sounds,
you are the God who serves,
*and we can respond in no other way
than to give ourselves to you in praise.*
Amen.

<https://sacredise.com/the-god-who-serves/>



Teach us the humility, O God,
to turn from what is so enticing,
so persuasive:

***the way of accumulating things,
and trusting in wealth,
in the hope of comfort and life.***

Lead us, O God, in another way,
the way of true security, true wealth,
***the way of Christ, the servant,
the way of weakness and simplicity.***

Lead us, O God, in another way,
the way of caring for the neglected,
***feeding the hungry,
housing the homeless,
protecting the threatened,***
and challenging the powerful,
the foolish way of the Gospel,
that brings salvation to all.

Amen.

<https://sacredise.com/proper-26a/>



HYMN "Kneels at the feet of his friends"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWSxiNERzn8>

Refrain:

*Jesu, Jesu, Fill us with Your love,
Show us how to serve the neighbors
we have from You.*

1 Kneels at the feet of his friends,
Silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them.
(Refrain)

2 Neighbors are rich and poor,
Varied in color and race,
Neighbors are near and far away.
(Refrain)

3 These are the ones we should serve,
These are the ones we should love;
All are neighbors to us and You.
(Refrain)

4 Loving puts us on our knees,
Serving as though we are slaves,
This is the way we should live with You.
(Refrain)

5 Kneel at the feet of our friends,
Silently washing their feet,
This is the way we should live with You.
(Refrain)

MUSIC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjAuweTGa0s>

*“When the prophet speaks,
no one listens”*

Van Morrison

THE PROPHET
SPEAKS



GOSPEL

Matthew 23.1-13,
Mark: 12: 38b, Mark 9: 34-36

Matthew 23.1-13

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; 3 therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. 6 They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, 7 and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have people call them rabbi. 8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. 9 And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

REFLECTION

*Be aware of the dance of power
Become slaves of love*

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the realm of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.

Mark 12: 38b Watch out for the scribes
(and their dance of power)

Mark 9: 34-36

On the way (discipleship) the disciples argued about which of them was the greatest. Jesus sat down and said to them: Whoever want to be first must be last of all and servant of all.

Then taking a little child and set the child among them saying, whoever welcomes one such child ... welcomes me...

O God our nurturer,
may your word live in us.
And colour our living. Amen!



*No space
on the king's planet*

OFFERING An offering of our lives and the gifts of creation.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

O God, in Christ Jesus,
may all our life resound with your love.
Take our resources
and our energies for compassion
and point us towards those who weep.
***Open our hearts to the rejected and lost
and help us to make a home of care
for the ones who wander around us in pain.***

We bring before you now our prayers
for the church and the world:

The people pray

Add your love to ours, O God.
***And keep challenging us
to love more fully, we pray.***

Make our church your home, Jesus Christ.
Help us to build a community of faith here
which spreads your Gospel of love
for those who are different
at a greater depth than we have done before.
***Give us hearts
which are moved by those we meet
and which reach out to hold each other in love.***

Then turn our faces to the wider world
and give us the wisdom
which brings creative change
and the commitment which stays the course.
***Be with us now, Jesus Christ,
For we pray in your name.
Amen.***

HOLY COMMUNION



INVITATION TO THE TABLE

At this table we give thanks
for justice, love, peace and freedom.
***At this table we give thanks
for friends and strangers.***

At this table all are we welcome!

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be always with you.
And also with you.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Christ be with you
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts!
We lift them up to God.
Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God is the heart of life.
And we are the heartbeat.

We give thanks for all that is good in the world.
For that mystery we name God
and call the creator of heaven and earth and all that is.
For the person we name Jesus
and his message of peace, justice and inclusiveness
that is the realm of God.

For the renewing strength and freedom of the Spirit
always present on the breath of life.

***We give thanks for the love, peace and justice,
for prosperity, strength and freedom,
and for the presentness of God in the midst of life.***

And so we praise you
with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with the whole creation
in the eternal hymn :

***Holy, holy, holy,
God of power and vulnerability,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.
Blessed is the One
who comes in the name of our God.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.***

THE BREAKING OF BREAD/POURING OF WINE

Long ago, Jesus came
of humble birth,
expressing amazing and divine love,
a child of our humanity.

Long ago, Jesus took bread,
gave thanks, broke it and said:
‘This bread is broken,
as my body will be.’
And he handed it to his friends,
and invited them to eat, saying:
‘Remember all that I have been to you.’

Long ago, Jesus poured a cup of wine,
offered thanks for it,
gave it to his friends and said,
‘This wine is poured out
as my life will be poured out.
As you drink give thanks
for all I have given.’

Loving God, it is through your unceasing love
we have this bread and wine to offer.

May this gathering of your community of faith, O God,
be fed, comforted and empowered.

*May we as your people express the courage
and the generosity that characterised Jesus' life.*

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take is a sharing in the life blood of Christ.
The gifts of God for the people of God.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

The body of Christ given for us.
The life of Christ poured out for us.
We eat the bread and drink the wine!

FINAL PRAYER

God of mercy and amazing grace,
We are grateful for your presence, enlivening us.
*We pray your presence will feed and sustain us
to follow in the way of Jesus,
Amen.*

HYMN

Brother, sister, let me serve you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07FBSrx5Oq4>

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ light for you
in the night time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

BLESSING

May God the Loving Parent
hold you in a gentle hand,
Christ the Human One
walk with you in each moment,
and the Holy Spirit
hover over you as a dove of peace.
Amen.