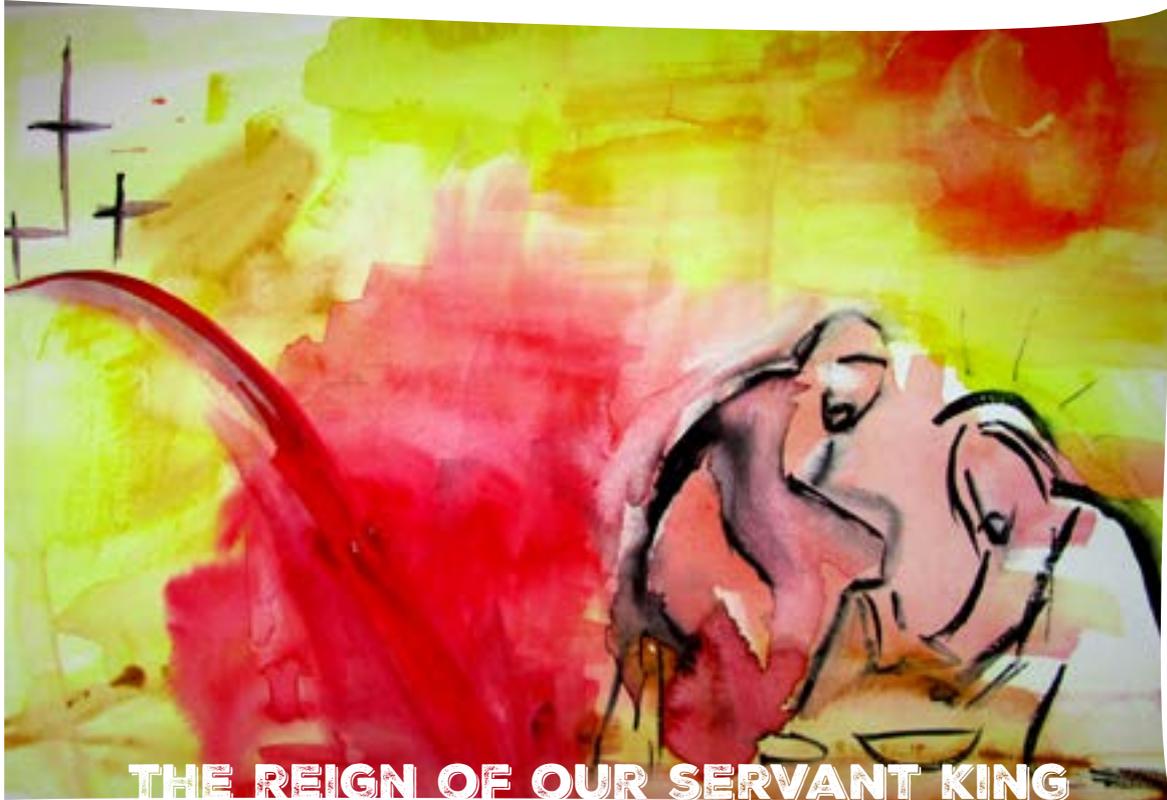




Leigh Uniting
church



22 NOVEMBER 2020

“In the kingdom, the mark of God is on the face of the stranger, the ‘other,’ not the ‘same.’ In the biblical tradition, God is ... the one who comes knocking at our door dressed in rags in search of bread and a cup of cold water.” “The one who receives the stranger receives God, ‘the God who loves the stranger’.

John Caputo,

The Weakness of God: A Theology of Event, pp 262-263

9:30am Zoom Worship Service

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

Meeting ID: 395 833 6709

Or Dial in by phone +61 2 8015 6011 Australia

WELCOME

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

THEME The reign of our servant Christ!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burramattagal 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 we gather today.

CALL TO WORSHIP

This is the place
and this is the time;
here and now God waits

*To change our minds, to change our lives,
To make us see the world and the whole of life
in a new light;*

Clear away the cobwebs of complex histories
Tangled thoughts, and messy motives,
And help us all to flourish, living your love in our daily lives.

*Loving God, you challenge us to be a place of welcome,
a Church without walls,
offering your love, care and compassion
to those who need it most.*

Loving Christ, empower us to be people of courage,
That our Church may be a witness to your vision
of how we should live together.

Amen.

(Source: World Mission Council)

HYMN *The Servant King*

Graham Kendrick

https://www.smule.com/recording/arrangement-by-alan-oreilly-the-servant-king/2431482977_3813532354

From heaven you came,
helpless babe,
entered our world,
your glory veiled,
not to be served, but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King;
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear.
His heart with sorrow was torn;
“Yet not my will, but yours”, he said.

*This is our God, the Servant King;
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space,
to cruel nails surrendered.

*This is our God, the Servant King;
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
or it is Christ we're serving.

*This is our God, the Servant King;
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King,
of worship to the Servant King.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION/PRAYERS OF WHO WE ARE

The word of Love is perfect, reviving the soul
the wisdom of God is solid, enlightening those who are open. ...
But who can see themselves clearly enough?
Save us from our own hidden faults.

Don't let us be insulting; don't let nastiness come over us. ...

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 harbour reflect your tender compassion,
your forgiveness of us and all people,
O God, our truth and our love.
Amen.*

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.

Let us live our lives knowing we have been forgiven
and we are restored to God.

Live in the way of Christ.

Amen.

HYMN “Here Stands a Stranger, Who is She?” (Tune: ‘Saffron Walden’, TiS584 (i))
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jb6p85fKIcc>

Here stands a stranger, who is she?
We do not know. What do we see,
someone who threatens you and me?
Is she a foe, or friend?

Here stands a person, young or old,
seeking asylum, so we're told.
How does he fit your frame or mould?
Is he your foe or friend?

Here stands a child: assess her need.
What should we offer so we heed
her cry of hunger, so we feed
this child? This foe? This friend?

Here stands a person, this time, you.
The choice is yours. What will you do
to ask this stranger in, or sue
this foe, who could be friend?

Here is a mirror, see your face.
What do you offer; hatred, grace,
now in this very time and place,
to Christ you call your friend.
(Andrew Pratt/ssb)

GOSPEL READING *Matthew 25: 31-46 (Inclusive Text)*

Jesus said to the disciples:

When the Promised One comes in glory, with all the angels,
then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

All the nations will be gathered before him,
and he will separate people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,
and he will put the sheep at his right hand
and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand,
Come, you that are blessed of God,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me,
I was in prison and you visited me.

Then the righteous will answer him,
When was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food,
or thirsty and gave you something to drink?

And when was it that we saw you a stranger
and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?

And when was it that we saw you sick
or in prison and visited you?

And the king will answer them,
Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these
who are members of my family, you did it to me.

SERMON

HYMN *The lord of the dance, (TiS, 242)*

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

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
I dance in the moon and the stars and the sun,
I came down from Heaven and I danced on earth,
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

*“Dance then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,” said he,
“And I’ll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I’ll lead you all in the dance,” said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
They would not dance, they wouldn’t follow me.
So I danced for the fishermen,
James and John came with me and the dance went on.

*“Dance then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,” said he,
“And I’ll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I’ll lead you all in the dance,” said he.*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame,
The Holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
Left me there on a cross to die.

*“Dance then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,” said he,
“And I’ll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I’ll lead you all in the dance,” said he.*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black,
It’s hard who dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body, they thought I’d gone,
But I am the dance, and I still go on.

*“Dance then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,” said he,
“And I’ll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I’ll lead you all in the dance,” said he.*

They cut me down, but I lept up high.
“I am the life that’ll never never die
And I’ll live in you if you’ll live in me.
I am the Lord of the dance,” said he.

*“Dance then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,” said he,
“And I’ll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I’ll lead you all in the dance,” said he.*

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

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

God of all places,
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 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 to 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,
God of all people and nations,
God who loves all without distinction of colour or feature.

Hear our prayers for the people and churches of the world
who stand firm in the face of injustice and,
with imagination and determination,
share a spirit of adventure which can lead to miracles.

time for silent prayer and reflection

Generous God,
we give thanks for the life of faith,
and being able to share it freely.

We pray for your people,
who face persecution,
and help them to offer love freely
to one and to all, no matter their faith or religion.

***Loving Christ, born in simplicity,
may your Living Stones be salt to all,
that both hope and justice may be real;
that prejudice and bigotry be banished.***

Awaken all people from complacency
and give us courage to invest in peace,
through Jesus Christ we pray. ***Amen.***

[Source: Adapted from "Prayers of Our Hearts" © 1991 Vienna Cobb Anderson.]

HYMN *When I needed a neighbour*

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

When I needed a neighbour were you there were you there?
When I needed a neighbor were you there?

Chorus

*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
Were you there?*

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
Chorus

I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?

Chorus

When I needed a shelter were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter were you there?

Chorus

When I needed a healer were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer were you there?

Chorus

Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there,
Wherever you travel I'll be there.
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, I'll be there.

BLESSING

May God,
who comes to us
in the things of this world,
bless your eyes
and be in your seeing.

May Christ,
who looks upon you
with deepest love,
bless your eyes
and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit,
who perceives what is
and what may yet be,
bless your eyes
and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three
bless your eyes
and cause you to see.

Amen.

(Source: Jan L Richardson, The Painted Prayerbook)

Liturgy
Parramatta Mission Interim Lead Minister,
Rev Vladimir Korotkov