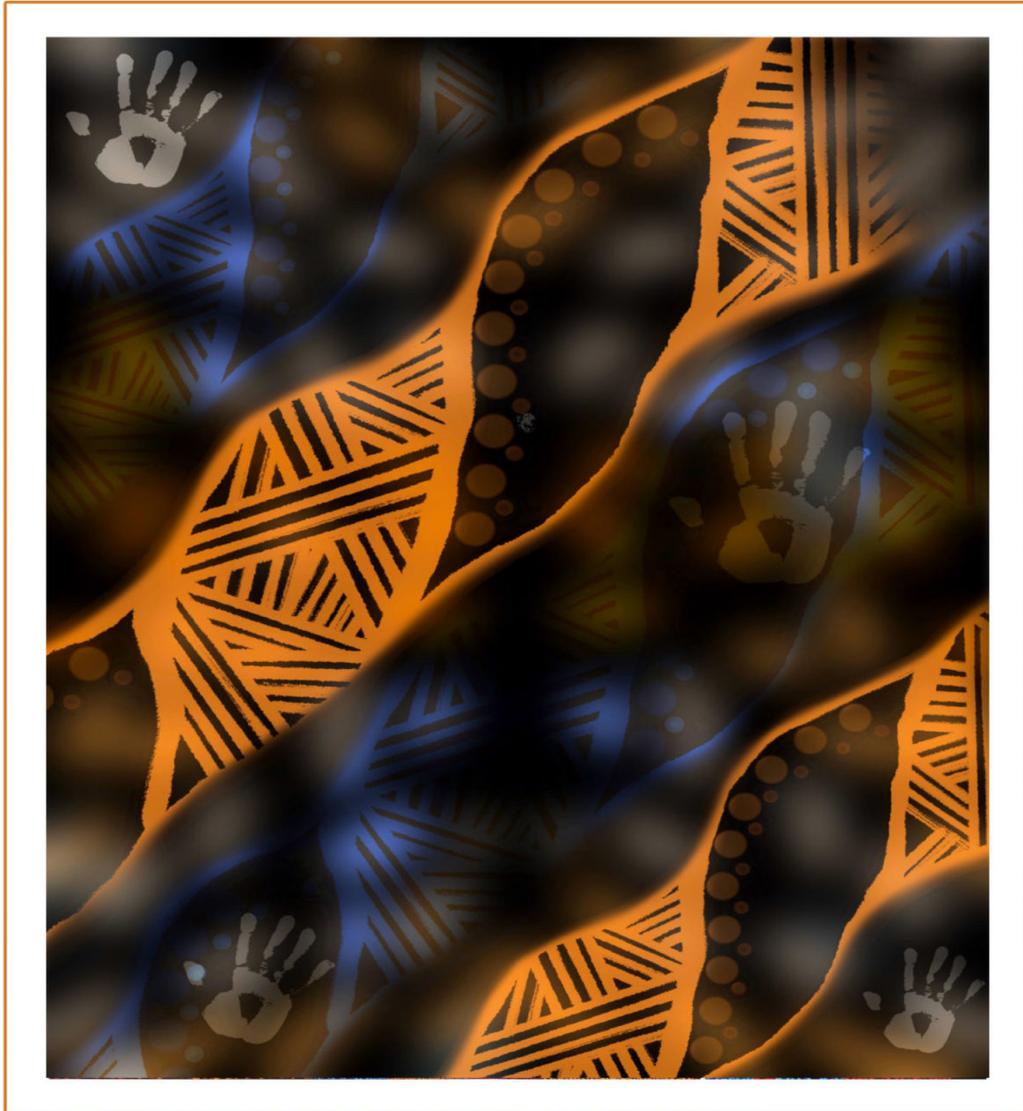




Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church



## EPIPHANY 3B



### **LIFE CALLS US INTO THE WISDOM OF BEING**

Wisdom is not just special knowledge about something. Wisdom is a way of being, a way of inhabiting the world. The beauty of wisdom is harmony, belonging and illumination of thought, action, heart and mind. (John O'Donohue)

**24 JANUARY 2021**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736>

## WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together in this virtual reality.

**THEME** Hear “the call” inviting us out of ourselves and into the lives of others.

## 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.

On this Sunday before Australia Day, Uniting Church congregations across the country hold worship services to reflect upon and lament the effect of the invasion and colonisation of this nation upon First Peoples.

The observance of a Day of Mourning was endorsed by the 15th Assembly arising from a request of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). All Uniting Church in Australia congregations are invited to hold worship services that reflect on the effects of invasion and colonisation on Australia’s First Peoples and our identity as a nation.

**MUSIC** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMg-AAo2qN8>

Joe Geia Yil Lull, 15 Apr 2009

## CALL TO WORSHIP

This is the place  
and this is the time;  
here and now God passes close to our lives  
and calls us and waits for us to follow.  
*To change our minds, to change our lives,  
To enable us to see the world and the whole of life  
in a new light;*

God calls us to 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 call us out of ourselves  
to be a place of welcome,  
a Church without walls,  
offering your love, care and compassion  
to those who need it most ...  
and on this day, we remember the lament and aspirations  
of our Indigenous sisters and brothers.*

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** “I Am That Great and Fiery Force” (Tune: ‘Duke St.’ 88.88)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyJu1Bfxw9I>

I am that great and fiery force  
sparkling in every thing that lives;  
in shining of the river’s course,  
in greening grass that glory gives.

I shine in glitter on the seas,  
in burning sun, in moon and stars.  
In unseen wind, in verdant trees  
I breathe within, both near and far.

And where I breathe there is no death,  
and meadows glow with beauties rife.  
I am in all, the spirit’s breath,  
the thundered word, for I am Life.

*Hildegard of Bingen, 12th Cent.*

## LITANY ON AUSTRALIA DAY

Come to us, Creating God,  
as the One who walks the way of ordinary people.  
*Come to us,  
as the One who weeps over the city.*

Come to us,  
as the One who deeply understands  
the paradox of life which rises from death.  
*Come to us, in a language of grace  
that we may approach you  
in vulnerable hope.*

Give us new life  
if the old has been destroyed in us.  
*Give us openness  
if we have closed our hearts to your future.*

Give us courage, if we tread this land  
in fear of bringing our gifts.  
*Give us wisdom, when we forget to listen  
to the learnings of our history.*

Give us joy  
when we see the breadth of your imagination  
expressed in the differences between us.

***Differences of race and culture,  
differences of history and journey,  
differences in our experience of you.***

Bind us together as those  
who feel your love under our feet  
in the warmth of this, our holy ground.  
***Dance within our life, O Spirit of God,  
that we may be transformed by your eternal passion  
for making all things new.***

*(Dorothy McRae-McMahon)*

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

**G**od 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** "Where Wide Sky Rolls Down" (Tune: 'Hanover') 188 TiS  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFX7VBH\\_2ZQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFX7VBH_2ZQ)

Where wide sky rolls down and touches red sand,  
where sun turns to gold the grass of the land,  
let spinifex, mulga and waterhole tell  
their joy in the One who made everything well.

Where rain-forest calm meets reef, tide and storm,  
where green things grow lush and oceans are warm,  
let every sea-creature and tropical bird  
exult in the light of the life-giving Word.

Where red gum and creek cross hillside and plain,  
where cool tree-ferns rise to welcome the rain,  
let bushland, farm, mountain-top, all of their days  
delight in the Spirit who formed them for praise.

Now, people of faith, come gather around  
with songs to be shared, for blessings abound!  
Australians, whatever your culture or race,  
come, lift up your hearts to the Giver of grace. *Elizabeth J Smith*

## SCRIPTURE READING Mark 1:14-20 (Inclusive Text)

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There Jesus proclaimed the good news from God, saying, 'The time has come and the reign of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the good news.'

Walking along by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and Simon's brother Andrew casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen.

And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men and women.' And at once they left their nets and followed.

Going a little further, Jesus saw James son of Zebedee and James's brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets.

Jesus called them at once, and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the workers, they went after Jesus.

## SERMON

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

<https://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=0B020JNU>

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**

**G**od 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

*Jesus Christ is waiting*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRATR6qep5U>

Jesus Christ is waiting,  
Waiting in the streets;  
No one is his neighbour,  
All alone he eats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus,  
I am lonely too.  
Make me, friend or stranger,  
Fit to wait on you

Jesus Christ is raging,  
Raging in the streets,  
Where injustice spirals  
And real hope retreats.

Listen, Lord Jesus,  
I am angry too.  
In the Kingdom's causes  
Let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing,  
Healing in the streets;  
Curing those who suffer,  
Touching those he greets.  
Listen, Lord Jesus,  
I have pity too.  
Let my care be active,  
Healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing,  
Dancing in the streets,  
Where each sign of hatred  
He, with love, defeats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus,  
I should triumph too.  
On suspicion's graveyard  
Let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling,  
Calling in the streets,  
"Who will join my journey?  
I will guide their feet."  
Listen, Lord Jesus,  
Let my fears be few.  
Walk one step before me;  
I will follow you.

## 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)