



**uniting  
church**  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church



## **PENTECOST 3**



13 June, 2021

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

The tiny, seemingly powerless, vulnerable seed mysteriously matures into a towering tree, a shelter for many birds of the air.

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/5199089657>

Or Dial in by phone +61 2 8015 6011 Australia  
Meeting ID: 395 833 6709

## WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Sunday.

## LIGHTING OF THE PENTECOST CANDLE

Today we light this candle  
proclaiming the transforming power of God.  
Today we celebrate the richness and diversity of life.  
Christ is alive and living among us!

*The candle is lit*

## 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 we gather today.

## OPENING MEDITATION

I Find You, O God, In All Things And In All  
I find you, O God, in all Things and in all  
my fellow creatures, pulsing with your life;  
as a tiny seed you sleep in what is small  
and in the vast you vastly yield yourself.

The wondrous game that power plays with Things  
is to move in such submission through the world:  
groping in roots and growing thick in trunks  
and in treetops like a rising from the dead.

*A Silence is kept*

*Rainer Maria Rilke (trans. Stephen Mitchell) (adapted)*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

We don't see it,  
but it's everywhere we look;  
We don't hear it,  
but its message is constantly whispered  
throughout the world;

We can't touch it,  
but its energy flows through every interaction,  
every connection.

This Kingdom of Yours, God,  
is hidden in the ordinary stuff  
that makes up our everyday lives;  
It's like yeast in a loaf of bread,  
like a tiny seed  
that imperceptibly sprouts  
and grows in the secret,  
unseen place;  
And while we may miss it,  
or doubt it,  
or wonder why it appears weak  
in the face of evil.

This Kingdom of Yours  
exerts an relentless influence on us  
calling us to be more than our selfishness and pride  
would lead us to believe we are leading us to love  
and serve and connect in ways  
that leave us and our world different,  
more alive, more real, more whole.

And so, God, we celebrate this hidden Kingdom  
giving thanks for its gentle power,  
and we open ourselves, once again,  
to its life-giving influence.

***Amen.***

*(Adapted: John van de Laar, Sacredise)*

**HYMN**     *Small things count*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5WLiQHTINc>

1 Small things count, so Jesus said:  
cups of water, crumbs of bread,  
small things done because we're kind  
count as big things in God's mind.

2 Small things make the big things grow:  
yeast that bubbles in the dough,  
puffs that fill a big balloon,  
notes that make a happy tune.

3 Every hair that's on our head,  
every sparrow, Jesus said,  
God takes care of, counts and knows,  
God loves us from top to toes!

*Shirley Erena Murray*

### PRAYER OF APPROACH AND CONFESSION

Nurturing God, like seeds,  
though we are different,  
we grow in the same field  
and together we are nourished  
and nurtured by the sun.

We sway in the wind  
and are refreshed by the rain.  
In our hearts we know  
that we are a mystery  
and that we grow towards  
what you call us to be.

When we deprive others  
of that same opportunity,  
***forgive us, merciful God.***

When we want to uproot  
those whom we believe  
do not belong in our part of the field,  
***forgive us, merciful God.***

When we label others as good or bad  
rather than accept them  
for who they are,  
***forgive us, merciful God.***

When we deny that we ourselves  
are a mixture of weeds and wheat,  
***forgive us, merciful God.***

When we are afraid to look  
into the fields of our own lives  
to see what is growing there,  
***forgive us, merciful God.***

Nuturing God, enable us to empower  
the uprooted and rejected,  
the lonely and the outcast,  
and to develop and grow  
the good in ourselves,  
in others and in the world.

***Amen!***

*Adapted: Moira Laidlaw*

## **WORDS OF GRACE & CHANGE**

BE ASSURED brothers and sisters in Christ,  
God sent the Son into the world, not to judge but to save,  
and the Spirit is promised as our comforter and guide;  
be assured that there is nothing that can come between us  
and the forgiving, healing and renewing power  
of the love of God, three in one,  
Source, Son & Spirit.

Know and live as children who are free!

We are forgiven –

***thanks be to God, Amen!***

*(Rev. Jennie Gordon, UCA minister)*

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Mark 4:26-34 (NRSV)

He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come." He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?"

It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

## RESPONSE

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

## SONG

*now the greenblade rises* (TiS 382)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7Oihepyl6g>

1 Now the green blade rises, from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

2 In the grave they laid Him, Love who had been slain,  
Thinking that He never would awake again,  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

3 Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
Jesus who for three days in the grave had lain;  
Quick from the dead the risen One is seen:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

4 When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

## SONG

*mystery* Bruce Cockburn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=at5ktno9I-0>

You can't tell me there is no mystery  
Mystery  
Mystery  
You can't tell me there is no mystery  
It's everywhere i turn

Moon over junk yard where the snow lies bright  
Snow lies bright  
Snow lies bright  
Moon over junk yard where the snow lies bright  
Can set my heart to burn

Stood before the shaman, i saw star-strewn space  
Star-strewn space  
Star-strewn space  
Stood before the shaman, i saw star strewn space  
Behind the eye holes in his face

Infinity always gives me vertigo  
Vertigo  
Vertigo  
Infinity always gives me vertigo  
And fills me up with grace

I was built on a friday and you can't fix me  
You can't fix me  
You can't fix me  
I was built on a friday and you can't fix me  
Even so i've done okay

So grab that last bottle full of gasoline  
Gasoline  
Gasoline  
Grab that last bottle full of gasoline  
Light a toast to yesterday  
And don't tell me there is no mystery  
Mystery  
Mystery  
And don't tell me there is no mystery

It overflows my cup

This feast of beauty can intoxicate

Intoxicate

Intoxicate

This feast of beauty can intoxicate

Just like the finest wine

So all you stumblers who believe love rules

Believe love rules

Believe love rules

Come all you stumblers who believe love rules

Stand up and let it shine

Stand up and let it shine

## REFLECTION

**OFFERING** Receive and bless these gifts and our lives, O God, which we offer in response to your love revealed so clearly in Jesus. As he planted the seeds of love and life in our lives, strengthen us to nourish others with the fruits of our faith made visible through these gifts, our love and our witness.

*In Jesus' name we pray.*

*Amen*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRAYER FOR ALL PLACES & PEOPLE

We pray for the world, the church and for ourselves:

Eternal and ever- loving God,

we believe our worship draws us near to you, and towards our neighbours on earth.

*May we all learn before it is too late  
to respect the uniqueness, fragility, interrelatedness, and  
sacredness of our earth and all creation.*

We pray for peace in our torn and troubled world and for countries that discriminate against and marginalise our brothers and sisters. May weapons and prejudice be discarded instead of people, guns silenced instead of the voices of the poor, and, in a world facing pandemic and fear,  
***may all Peoples learn to respect the integrity, diversity, and unity of all, and that love is not a luxury.***

We pray for the our First Nations sisters and brothers:  
We acknowledge the grace and gift they have offered to us, despite the discrimination and marginalisation they face every day.  
We pray especially:

***That the Uluru Statement from the Heart may not fall on deaf ears,  
that it may be seen and heard as a cry from the heart for real truth telling;***

that its gracious invitation to walk together into a new future might be grasped by all and that true recognition in the constitution becomes a reality so that our nation will be healed.

***May we grow in faith, love and hope, and our commitment to walk in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.***

***We pray for the witness of our church community:***

Help us to understand  
that no planning for the future,  
can relieve us of the necessity of going forward  
into a future that cannot be fully planned —  
of risk, of danger, of hope  
in your incalculable grace.

We pray for ourselves:

Not one of us has ever found or given enough tenderness  
or love in his or her life, enough truth, freedom,  
beauty, goodness, and joy.

***We are always travelling to a new tomorrow.***

***We pray because you have put within us an unquenchable hope.***

***Amen!***

*(Source: Dr Marelle Harisun, with acknowledgement of an original prayer in Terry C Falla*

(ed.) 1994 *Be Our freedom Lord: Responsive prayers for contemporary worship* (2nd ed.),  
*Open Book*, p. 187. *contemporary worship* (2nd edition) *Open Book* 1994, page 187)

**HYMN**      *Spirit of God*      (Tune, *Passion Chorale*, TiS 339)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ohVkVZg70A>

1. Spirit of God pervading  
the earth as swirling mist,  
enveloping creation,  
her presence shall persist;  
she rests on men and women,  
she shares her gifts with all,  
and we respond in freedom,  
rejoicing at her call.
  
2. Her wisdom keeps creating  
new wonders to behold,  
through her creation's story  
is constantly retold.  
Mountain and river valley  
acclaim her name with praise,  
the glacier and the desert  
as one their voices raise.
  
3. Midst folk she freely mingles  
to challenge and inspire,  
dream dreams, and share visions,  
rekindle sparks of fire,  
a passion for God's mission  
we all are called to share  
'til heaven and earth both mirror  
koinonia and care.
  
4. Spirit of God empowering  
each of us as we sing,  
our faith-skills and whole being  
before you now we bring.  
Embrace us with your blessing,  
transform us through your word,  
so we may live confessing,

the love and grace of God.  
*(L Sanderson/sco)*

**BLESSING**

Walk well your journey in peace and in justice.  
May you be wrapped in the shawl of God's loving.  
May you be cherished.  
May you be blessed.  
***Amen.***