



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

Westmead
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/3958336709>

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 *Seek ye first the kingdom of God (TiS 745)*
1. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
And God's righteousness

And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu Alleluia
Allelu Alleluia
Allelu Alleluia

2. Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you
Allelu Alleluia
Allelu Alleluia
Allelu Alleluia

3. We shall not live by bread alone
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God
Allelu Alleluia
Allelu Alleluia
Allelu Alleluia

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND CONFESSON

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)

HYMN *Brother sister let me serve you (TiS 650)*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JahFRDrSCs>

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 Christlight for you
in the nighttime 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.

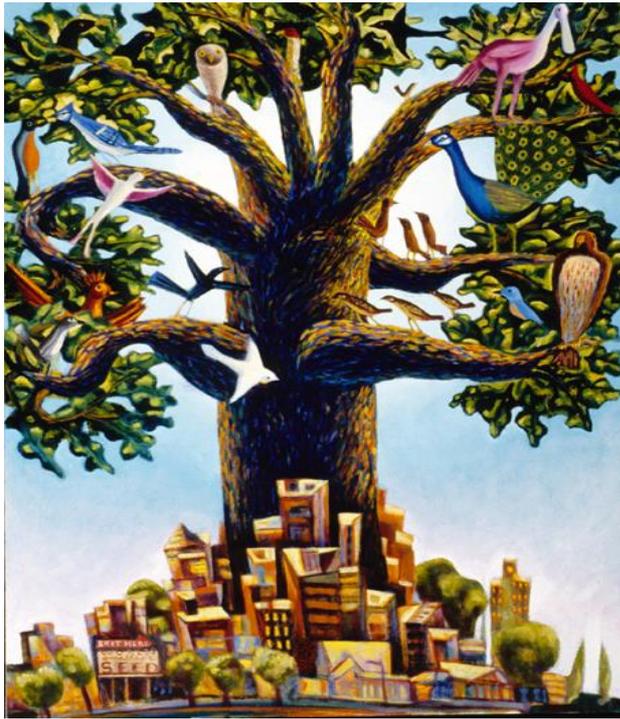
6. Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

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!*

REFLECTION

SONG *now the greenblade rises* (TiS 382)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B70ihepyl6g>

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.

OFFERING PRAYER

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, however necessary,
no program, no matter how carefully conceived,
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 *Lord Of Creation, To You Be All Praise (TIS 626)*

Lord of cre-ation, to you be all praise
Most mighty your wor-king, most wondrous your ways

Your glory and might are be-yond us to tell
And yet in the heart of the humble you dwell

Lord of all power, I give you my will
In joyful o - bed-i-ence your tasks to ful-fil
Your bondage is freedom, your service is song
And, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong

Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind
Rich truth that sur-pas-ses our knowledge to find
What eye has not seen and what ear has not heard
Is taught by your Spirit and shines from your word

Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart
I praise and a - dore you for all you im-part
Your love to in-spire me, your counsel to guide
Your presence to shield me, wha-ever be-tide

Lord of all being, I give you my all
If ever I leave you I stumble and fall
But led in your service your word to o-bey
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way

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.