



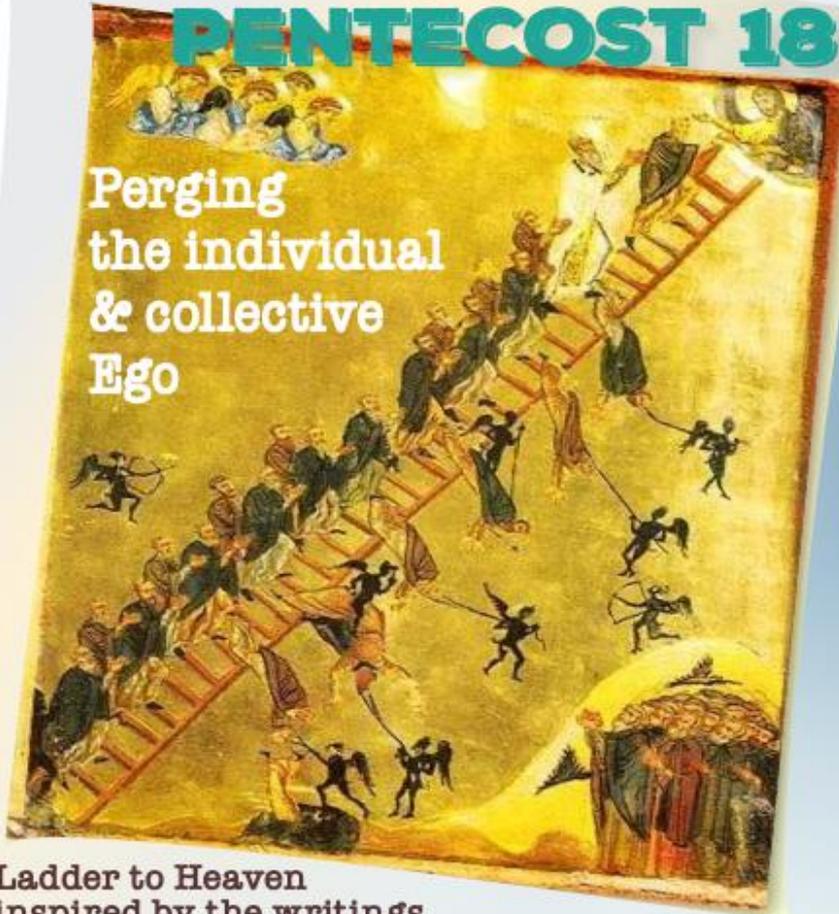
**uniting  
church**  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

Parramatta  
Mission  
Congregations



## **PENTECOST 18**

**Purging  
the individual  
& collective  
Ego**



**Ladder to Heaven**  
inspired by the writings  
of John Climacus, Icon 13th C

**Combined Worship**  
**Parramatta City Uniting Church**  
**Sunday 26 September 2021**  
**9:30 am**

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/95778738282>

## WELCOME

Nathan Tyson

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Sunday.

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

Nathan Tyson

Today on this Social Justice Sunday, when we also remember the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, we light this candle of Reconciliation, which announces that the crucified risen Christ breathes love into reconciliation, inspiring transformed relationships, cultural respect and structural changes.

*The candle is lit*

## NOTES TOWARD A THEME

Suzanne Guthrie suggests that we interpret Mark's story through the image of the Ladder to Heaven inspired by the writings of John Climacus (570-649), a purging of the ego.

A much more fanciful and detailed rendering of the idea of the ladder of the soul's ascent to heaven. You might interpret the painting as a map of the psyche. Like interpreting a dream, all the parts of the picture are parts of us. Imagine the demons as negative parts of yourself: character defects, weaknesses, inappropriate or unhealthy aspects of the ego.

I would add our individual and collective ego-constructions, all require ongoing perging, refining and transforming.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Nathan Tyson

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.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

"JESU" Gurrumul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4LiJiiSlf8>

Gurrumul (Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu), former member of Yothu Yindi - 'The Gospel Album'.

Gospel songs were the first western music Gurrumul heard as a very young child when his family took him to the local Methodist church on Elcho Island. Sung in Yolŋu Matha!

### OPENING SENTENCES

Rev Rhonda White

You O God are the love  
of every living creature  
You are the warmth  
of the rising sun  
You are the whiteness  
of the moon at night  
You are the life  
of the growing earth  
You are the strength  
of the waves of the sea.

***Speak to us this day O God  
Feed us with the bread of truth  
Dwell with us as we live each day  
Feed us with love that nourishes love!***

*(Adaped: J. Philip Newell, Celtic Prayers from Iona)*

### HYMN

*Here in this place (Gather us in) (TiS 474)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar0BXa82F9M>

1. Here in this place, new light is streaming,  
now is the darkness vanished away.  
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,  
brought here to you in the light of this day.  
*Gather us in - the lost and forsaken,  
gather us in - the blind and the lame.  
Call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.*

2. We are the young - our lives are a mystery,  
we are the old - who yearn for your face.  
We have been sung throughout all of history,  
called to be light to the whole human race.  
*Gather us in - the rich and the haughty,  
gather us in - the proud and the strong.*

*Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,  
give us the courage to enter the song.*

3. Here we will take the wine and the water,  
here we will take the bread of new birth.  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
call us anew to be salt for the earth.  
*Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
give us to eat the bread that is you.  
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion  
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.*

4. Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
not in some heaven, light years away,  
but here in this place, the new light is shining;  
now is the Kingdom, now is the day.  
*Gather us in - and hold us forever,  
gather us in - and make us your own.  
Gather us in - all peoples together,  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

*Marty Haugen 1950-  
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**ALL AGE MESSAGE**     *Rose meets Mr Wintergarten,*  
By Bob Graham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNIIzQ7cz1M>

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** **Mark 9: 38-50**     *Rev Suzanne Stanton*

38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

42 “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

49 “For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

## RESPONSE

Rev Suzanne Stanton

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

## REFLECTION

Rev Vladimir Korotkov

## HYMN

*Brother sister let me serve you (TiS 650)*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mKLU-8\\_mWo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mKLU-8_mWo)

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.

*Richard Gillard 1953-  
With permission CCLI 70307*

### OFFERING PRAYER

Rev Niall Reid

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 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY Nathan Tyson

God, you created us all equal, with the capacity for free will.  
You created us with the ability to love  
and the ability to care for all of your creation.

You created us with the expectation  
that we would care for each other and for the world we live in.  
As our Creator,  
you formed us in your image,  
but also gave us our humanity:  
we are fallible, we can and do make mistakes.  
Sometimes we forget to care for each other,  
and we need to be reminded  
of the two greatest commandments Jesus gave us:  
Love your God with all your heart and all your mind, and  
Love your neighbour as yourself.

Through the Gospels we see Jesus teaching  
that our neighbours include the poor and the lame,  
the weak and the oppressed, the homeless and the marginalised.

Jesus also taught us that in terms of the invitation  
to share in God's kingdom,  
the last shall be first, and the first last,  
and that whatever we do to the least,  
we do to Him and to the one that sent Him.

God, we hear your commandment to love our neighbour  
and your call to care for the oppressed and marginalised in our community.  
We recognise that our faith in you  
means that we need to act in ways that promote social justice  
and advocate for the needs of those whose voices most need to be heard.  
We recognise that standing against oppression  
and advocating for justice for the marginalised  
will not always be easy, that it will take courage and resilience.

God we pray that you will give us the strength  
to always stand for what best demonstrates our love for you  
and our love for our neighbour, to always stand for justice.

We recognise that our First Peoples were oppressed  
as a result of the colonisation of their ancestral lands,  
and as a result of a paternalistic application  
of a colonial theology by the Church.

We recognise that as a Church,

we often failed and made mistakes,  
and at times we failed to love our neighbour as ourselves.  
We also recognise that our First Peoples remain marginalised  
and disadvantaged as a legacy of colonisation.

God, in the 30th Anniversary year  
of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody,  
where we continue to see Aboriginal people die in custody f  
rom preventable causes,  
and we continue to see Aboriginal people  
significantly over-represented in gaols and juvenile detention centres,  
we humbly pray for your intervention and guidance.

We pray for all Aboriginal people and communities,  
including those people currently in custody,  
that the Holy Spirit may guide them and protect them,  
give them strength to face each new day,  
and give them hope for a better tomorrow.

Knowing that your love can overcome all things,  
God we pray for the families who have lost loved ones in custody,  
that they may see justice done,  
and eventually be able to heal  
and find some form of peace.

Through your mercy, our God,  
we pray that you enfold these families in your love  
and empower them to find a way through  
what must seem like unsurmountable grief.

God, we pray for those in power,  
for our Government and those in positions of leadership,  
that they may make wise and compassionate decisions.  
We pray that those responsible, who have the power,  
will act quickly to ensure the full and effective implementation  
of all of the 339 Recommendations  
of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

***Amen.***

Nathan Tyson  
*Manager, First Peoples Strategy and Engagement*  
*Uniting Church Synod of NSW-ACT*

## THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TAUGHT US

Rev Niall Reid

Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:  
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples  
of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.  
With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and for ever.  
***Amen.***

*A modern version of the prayer of Jesus from the Anglican Church of New Zealand, which both honors and reflects indigenous Maori culture.*

**HYMN**     *For you (Deep stillness)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpRWWnZa6Ro>

For you deep stillness of the silent inland  
for you deep blue of the desert skies  
for you flame red of the rocks and stones .  
for you sweet water  
from hidden springs

From the edges seek the heartlands  
and when you're burnt by the journey  
may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit  
soothe and replenish you  
in the name of Christ  
in the name of Christ.  
**Repeat all**  
in the name of Christ.

*Julie Perrin 1996*  
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**BLESSING**

Rev Niall Reid

May the God of creation  
warm your heart  
like the campfires of old.  
Bring wisdom and peace  
as shown to the first peoples of this land.  
Shake off the dust from the desert plains  
by the refreshing rains  
followed by the glow and warmth of the sun.  
Let the light of God  
show us the right path  
and stand tall like the big river gums  
drawing life from the ever flowing waters.

*(Source: Uncle Vince Ross,  
Victorian Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress)*