



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

**Parramatta City
Uniting Churches**

LENT 2



**ABRAHAM
RUSSIAN ICON**

13 March 2022

**COMBINED SERVICE
VENUE: WESTMEAD UCA
9:30 AM**

WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together as combined congregations.

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.

GATHERING

Long before the change of name,
before the first signs of new life
showed the beginnings of promises fulfilled,
You asked Abram to make his home among foreigners,
and share the blessing that was to come.
And now, O God, you ask the same faith of us:
The faith to count ourselves among the least,
to find our place alongside the poor and broken;
The faith to trust in your mercy and your promises,
and to share what we have received;
The faith to wait expectantly for your reign of justice and equity,
together with those who most need its gifts.

Teach us to be children of Abram, sharers of the blessings we
enjoy:

The blessing of plenty shared with those who have need,
The blessing of healing shared with those who are sick and
wounded,

The blessing of joy shared with those who celebrate
and of tears shared with those who grieve,

The blessing of friendship shared with those who are excluded,
and of solidarity with those who fight injustice,

The blessing of peace shared with those in conflict,
and of confrontation shared with those who bring harm;
And in some small way, may our faith and our sharing,

help to bring your promises into being
in our world. **Amen.** *Sacredise*

LIGHTING OF THE LENTEN CANDLE

As light is borne
from a white candle to a violet candle
and the flame remains the same;
so the Spirit of God burns in our lives
through the good times and the testing times.

The Lenten Candle is lit

We do this in remembrance of Jesus.

As an extinguished candle
waits in the darkness to be rekindled;
so the spirit of God
is forever ready to shine with hope and love.

the Lenten candle is extinguished

***As we extinguish this Lenten light,
we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the
world***

***And as the Christ candle remains lit,
we acknowledge **the promise of the presence** of Christ
in every wilderness experience.***

PRAYER

O Christ of the least
and the homeless.

O Christ of the lost
and betrayed

***We give thanks that you meet us
when we are least, lost, betrayed!***

Come close to us this day
That we might come close to you.
As you watched over us with care
at our soul's shaping
Look at us now with grace.

As you blessed us with light

at the sun's shining Shine on us now with love.

Adapted: J Philip Newell, CelticPrayers, Iona

HYMN

Dear Mother God (Tune, Londonderry air)

1 Dear Mother God, your wings are warm around us,
we are enfolded in your love and care;
safe in the dark, your heartbeat's pulse surrounds us,
you call to us, for you are always there.

2 You call to us, for we are in your image.
We wait on you, the nest is cold and bare;
high overhead your wing-beats call us onward.
filled with your power, we ride the empty air.

3 Let not our freedom scorn the needs of others --
we climb the clouds until our strong heart sings;
may we enfold our sisters and our brothers,
till all are strong, till all have eagles' wings.

Janet Wootton

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SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

15 After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

2 But Abram said, "Yahweh, O God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." 4 But the word of Yahweh came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." 5 He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed Yahweh, reckoning it to him as righteousness.

7 Then he said to him, "I am the covenant God who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." 8 But he said, "O God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" 9 He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three

years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” 10 He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. ...

17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 18 On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates ...

Luke 13:31-35 (NRSV/adapted)

31 Some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you’.

32 ‘Go and tell that fox for me’, Jesus said, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. 33 Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem. 34 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 35 See, your house is left to you.

And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say,

‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Holy God.’

RESPONSE

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

REFLECTION

HYMN *Longing for light (Christ be our light)*

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Bernadette Farrell

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OFFERING

As you have blessed us beyond all expectation and need,
we would join in imitating you,
by offering gifts which will bring hope, healing,
and help to those who struggle in this life.
In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

(Source: Thom Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies)

PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

O God,
you know us better than we know ourselves.
You know what we are able to bear,
and you know what would destroy us (1 Corinthians 10:13).
We pray for all who face danger on this day
both in our community and in the communities of our world.
We pray for people standing in lines for food and water,
for people without permanent housing,
and for those who have been tragically bereaved.
We pray for the unemployed,
the underemployed and for those in fear of losing their jobs.
We pray for all who stand bravely for Christ
on this day and for all who wait patiently on your promises.

Remind all who struggle
that they are not forsaken
and that their faith in you is not misplaced.
Open our hearts to respond to the needs of a hurting world.
Make us your hands and feet
and walk us into places where people need you most.
May we follow the path of Jesus,
wherever it needs to take us
so that you might be glorified on this earth.

Amen.

(Source: UMC Discipleship)

HYMN *Shalom* (TiS 778)

Shalom to you now
Shalom my friends
May God's full mercies
Bless you my friends
In all your living
And through your loving
Christ be your Shalom,
Christ be your Shalom

Elise S Eslinger

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BLESSING **For Peace**

As the fever of day calms towards twilight
May all that is strained in us come to ease.

We pray for all who suffered violence today,
May an unexpected serenity surprise them.

For those who risk their lives each day for peace,
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.

That those who make riches from violence and war
Might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.

That we might see through our fear of each other
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.

That those who enjoy the privilege of peace
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.

That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares

And no hurt or harm be done
Anywhere along the holy mountain.

John O'Donohue