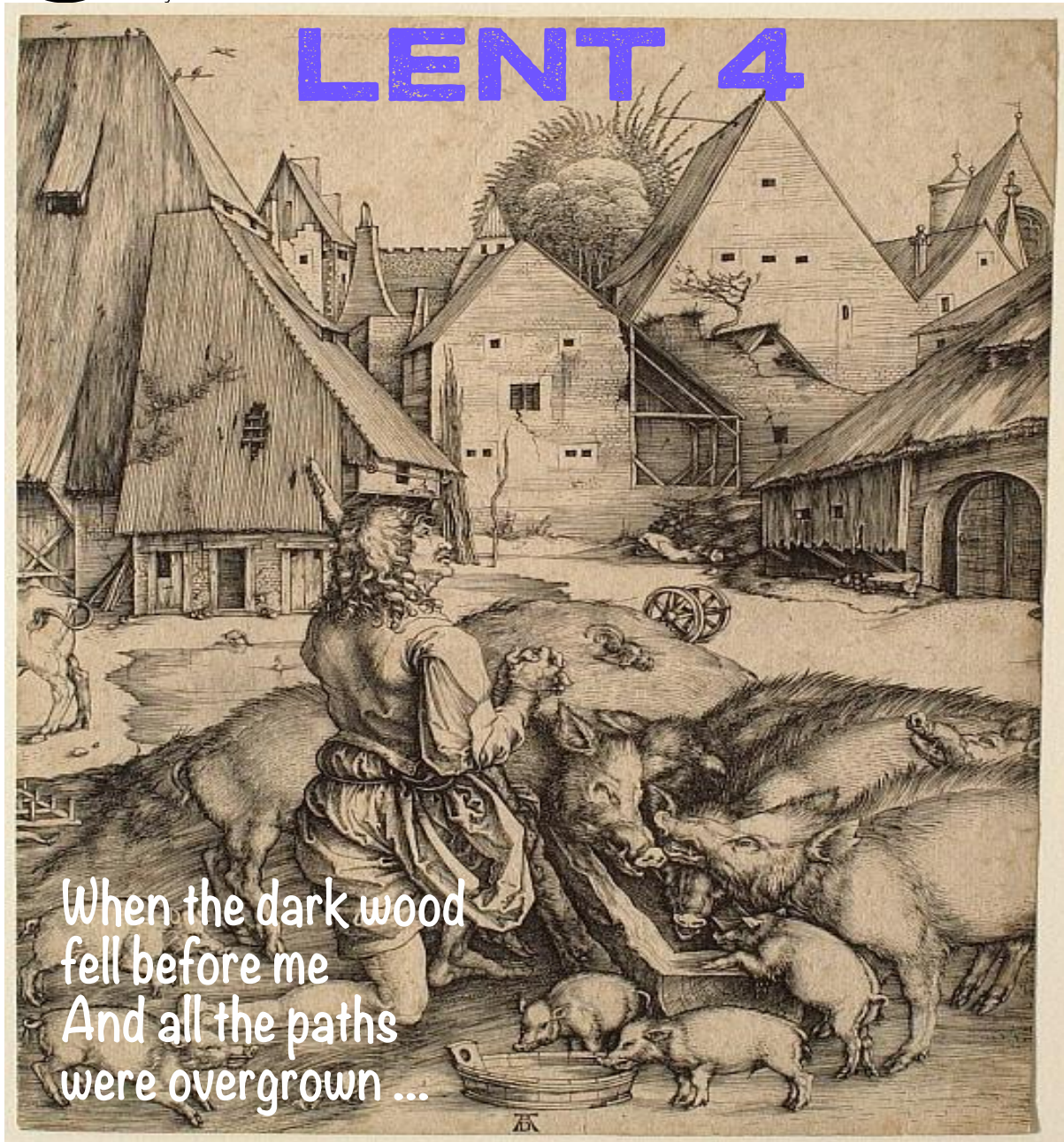




**uniting  
church**  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church



**27 March 2022**

Leigh Memorial 9.30am

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

Meeting ID: 519 908 9657

## WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together in this space and on zoom.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

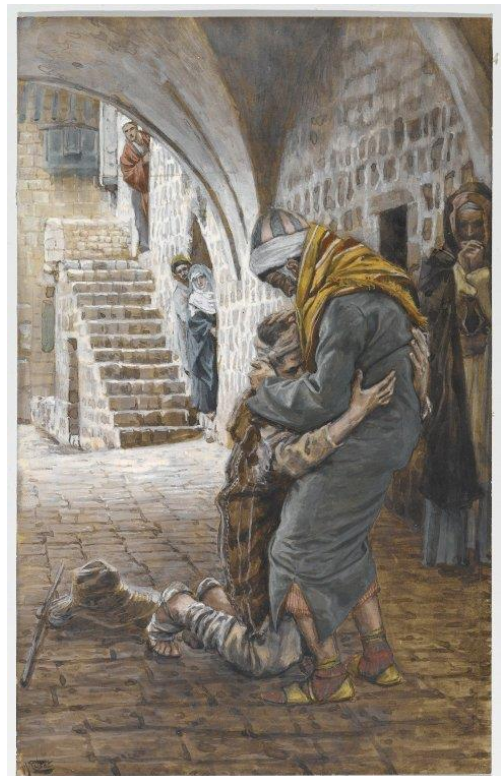
We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

## OPENING SENTENCES

O God, the shelter of the Great Belonging,  
when the dark wood fell  
before the family in our parable,  
the father, the younger and older sons,  
... each found themselves  
in a distant country,  
controlling, judging  
or squandering human potential  
for new ways of being,  
as individuals, family, church or community  
***Your love shelters us***  
***Seeking our journey of release and recovery***

O God, the shelter of the Great Belonging,  
when the dark wood fell before us ...  
... we can all find ourselves  
in a distant country,  
controlling, judging or squandering our potential  
for new ways of being,  
as individuals, family, church or community,  
***Your love shelters us***  
***Seeking our journey of release and recovery.***

We enter the light of Christ  
... to see where we are distant,  
to discern our stuck ways, being prodigal in life,  
... to lift the veil of the dark wood





in which we may be lost,  
without awareness!

***You showed us your love  
in the light of Jesus Christ.***

In every moment  
celebration and reconciliation waits  
as we become the passionate subjects  
of our own individual and collective life.  
The arms of the Loving Parent  
are opened wide in welcome

***Your love shelters us  
Seeking our journey of release and recovery.***

### **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 time

*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.***

HYMN *Amazing Grace*, Gurrumul & Paul Kelly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVORrx9jliE&list=RDMM&index=6>

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved.  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

**SCRIPTURE READING** Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (NRSV)

1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” 3 So he told them this parable: ...

11 Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in wasterful living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. 25 “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and

approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

## RESPONSE

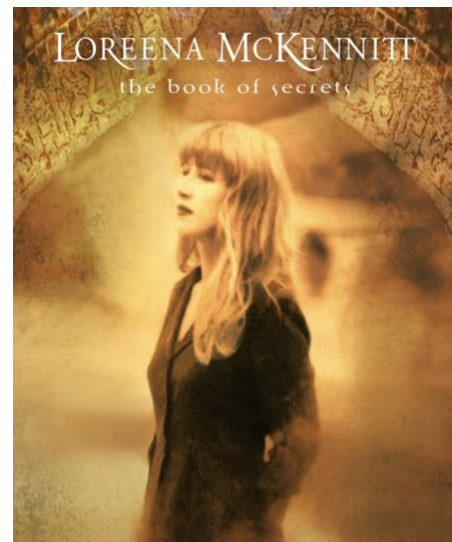
*O God our nurturer,  
may your word live in us.  
**And colour our living. Amen!***

## SONG

*Dante's prayer*  
Loreena Mckennitt

When the dark wood fell before me  
And all the paths were overgrown  
When the priests of pride say  
there is no other way  
I tilled the sorrows of stone

I did not believe because I could not see  
Though you came to me in the night  
When the dawn seemed forever lost  
You showed me your love  
in the light of the stars



## REFLECTION

## HYMN

*One in love, we meet together* (Tune: 'Hyfrydol' 217(i) TiS)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uwz03saiqKc>

1. One in love, we meet together,  
one in time, and never apart.  
We in flesh as brother, sister,  
makes us one in mind and heart.  
All incarnate, we would offer,  
all we most sincerely prize,  
Learning though traditions differ  
how they join to make us wise.

2. One in outlook, always searching,  
not to bind in common creed,  
As a people, be more ready  
to respond to other's need.  
Here we are so finely fashioned,  
understanding, here to serve,  
Never narrow in compassion,  
empathy without reserve.

3. As in Christ, may we discover  
that to give is to receive,  
That in God the good is present,  
ever, always we perceive.  
Not by chance the world's creation,  
not by chance was life begun,  
God is love and our vocation  
is to love 'til love has won.

*(Adapted by Betty Van Till/3C/CCC)  
With permission OneLicense A6044575  
All rights reserved*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **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 sustainable support  
to those who struggle in this life.

***In Jesus' name, we pray.***

***Amen.***

## **PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD**

Some of the best known words...

Some of the most comforting words...

We have heard stories of individuals, families, communities,  
nations,

being lost and being found.

***We have rejoiced at stories  
of being lost and being welcomed safely home.***

We have reflected upon stories

of being those who were lost

individuals, families, churches, communities, nations,  
as well as being those who were left behind.

As we think of these familiar parables once more,

***We take time to think about ourselves  
and all across our world who need to know  
of your generous mercy  
and unconditional love  
and the call into the journey of release and recovery.***

God of love,

You never cease to extend your divine embrace to us  
when we turn to you.

Give us grace and understanding

to recognise the distress of others.

We pray for all who are in dark places

be it through their own choices,  
the misguidance of others, or by force.

***May all know that nothing can separate us  
from your love.***

*We pray for the world and our congregations*

O Jesus Christ, hear our prayer.

***Amen***

(Adapted: Source: Jonathan Fleming, Church of Scotland Starters for Sunday)

**HYMN**      *Brother sister let me serve you, TiS 650*

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

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.

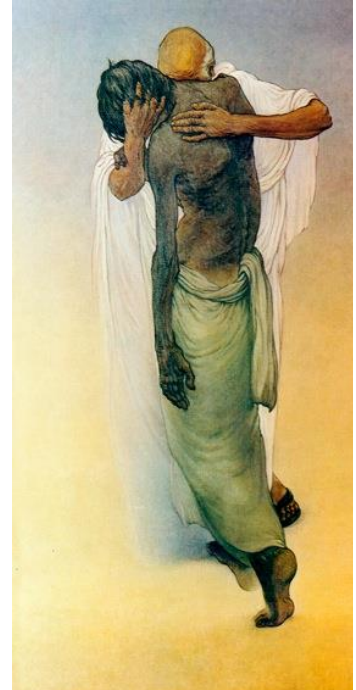
3. I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the nighttime of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

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 One License A6044575  
All rights reserved*



**BLESSING**

And may all that is lost within us,  
be found in God,



may all that waits to return for grace  
be called by the loving voice of Christ  
and may all that cannot find the way  
be led home by the Holy Spirit.  
***Amen.***