



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

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church

EPIPHANY 5A



**Purifying
Persevering
Self-giving**

BEING
SALT OF THE EARTH

5 FEBRUARY 2023

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE EPIPHANY CANDLE

As we light this candle, let us pause
and become enlightened and empowered
in this period of Epiphany:

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 SENTENCES

Creator God
who flavours life
and whose favour
shines on the poor,
***water our parched,
hungry hearts
with the joy of grace!***

People of God raise voices
in indignation
for all whose lives are suffering
in this world.

***May we raise our voices
when our leaders betray us
and invite meanness
and discrimination,
for we are those
who seek to truly care.***

Then let us stand humbly
before the Holy God,

as those who always
know our humanness.

***Through Christ,
may we dare to challenge
all that violates love,
justice and good.***

Come, sisters and brothers,
let us be salt and light
for all the people around us.

***For we are those who seek
to be true to our calling
in Jesus Christ.***

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

HYMN

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

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.*

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A PRAYER THAT GOODNESS SHAPES OUR UN-GOODNESS

Goodness isn't always popular, Jesus;
There are those who doubt that it has value,
that fear that goodness only leaves us vulnerable
and unable to navigate the complexities of the real world.

***But, we believe that the opposite is true,
that goodness must ultimately prevail,
and that holds the key to the wholeness and happiness we
seek.***

And so we pray for goodness to infiltrate every un-good place,
where callous self-interest humiliates and impoverishes others,
where casual disregard for the common good
undermines security and neighbourliness,
where unexamined or overstated fear addicts us to control,
where our obsession with the immediate
blinds us to the consequences of our actions.

***Teach us the power of the good,
the healing of the noble,
the life of the praiseworthy,
and capture our hearts that we may give ourselves to know
your goodness
so your love shapes all our un-good spaces!
Amen.***

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 5. 13-20

¹³“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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

SONG *Hole in the world, The Eagles*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-nwi0lpo1w>

There's a hole in the world tonight
There's a cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight
Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow

They say that anger is just love disappointed
They say that love is just a state of mind
But all this fighting over who is anointed
Oh, how can people be so blind?

There's a hole in the world tonight
There's a cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight

Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow

Oh, they tell me there's a place over yonder
Cool water running through the burning sand
Until we learn to love one another
We will never reach the promised land

There's a hole in the world tonight
There's a cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight
Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow

(There's a hole in the world tonight)
They say that anger is just love disappointed
(There's a cloud of fear and sorrow)
They say that love is just a state of mind
(There's a hole in the world tonight)
But all this fighting over who will be anointed
(Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow)
Oh, how can people be so blind?

There's a hole in the world tonight
Hole in the world
There's a cloud of fear and sorrow
Fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight
Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow

There's a hole in the world tonight
There's a hole in the world
(There's a cloud of fear and sorrow)
A cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight
(Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow)
Don't let there be a hole in the world

There's a hole in the world tonight
(There's a cloud of fear and sorrow)
Oh there's a cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight
(There's a hole in the world tonight)
Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow

There's a hole in the world tonight
There's a cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight
Don't let there be a hole in the world tomorrow

There's a hole in the world tonight
There's a cloud of fear and sorrow
There's a hole in the world tonight

REFLECTION

HYMN *I am the light of the world* (ATA 128)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2raH2XxEqU>

CHORUS:

*I am the Light of the World
You people come and follow me.
If you follow and love, You'll learn the mystery
Of what you were meant to do and be.*

1. When the song of the angels is stilled.
When the star in the sky is gone.
When the kings and the shepherds have found their way home.
The work of Christmas is begun!
2. To find the lost and lonely one,
To heal that broken soul with love,
To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
To feel the earth below the sky above!

CHORUS:

*I am the Light of the World
You people come and follow me.
If you follow and love, You'll learn the mystery
Of what you were meant to do and be.*

3. To free the prisoner from his chains,

To make the powerful care,
To rebuild the nations with strength and goodwill,
To call a man your brother everywhere.

4. To bring hope to every task you do,
To dance at a baby's new birth,
To make music in an old man's heart,
And sing to the colors of the earth!

CHORUS:

I am the Light of the World

You people come and follow me.

If you follow and love, You'll learn the mystery

Of what you were meant to do and be.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING

Let us remember the gifts which others brought to the Christchild!

O God, we bring you what we have to give this day.

Show us those who long for our help,

so that we may truly be their friends.

Guide us now, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PRAYING TOGETHER FOR PLACES AND PEOPLE

O Christ, the one who had the care for all people in your heart
and on your lips,

show us where

our voices and lives

are needed today.

Then give to us

the courage and wisdom

to speak out bravely

with our concerns

for those who are powerless

to call for their rights

and who weep

for justice and compassion.

Grant that we are faithful
in staying the course
when there is little response
and that we stand firmly
and look into the faces of those
who could make the changes.

We grieve for the lives and situations of these people now:

The people pray

Hear our prayers, loving Jesus.

***May your church be known
as the source of prophetic leadership,
daring to challenge all
that is not loving.***

May our prayers be turned
into action,
as we try to respond
to your hopes for us,
and our being together
bring us closer to you
and energise us
to stand for good.

***For you are the God
who never gives up,
... even when it seems
that little changes.
Be with us every day
through your Holy Spirit, we pray.
Amen.***

HYMN *Feed us now, Bread of life* (TiS, 538)

1. Feed us now, Bread of life,
in this holy meal;
let us know your love anew:
we hunger for you.

Feed us now, Bread of life,
come and live within;
let your peace be ours today,
Lord Jesus, we pray.

2. Piece of bread, glass of wine:
Lord, this food is good;
love and mercy come to us —
your promise we trust.
Piece of bread, glass of wine;
who can understand
how his mercy works in these?
Yet, Lord, we believe.

3. God is here, O so near,
nearer than our thoughts.
Stay with us where'er we go;
Lord, help us to grow.
God is here, O so near,
in this heaven's meal.
May we always feed on you —
on the bread that is true

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COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Holy Table of Jesus Christ
waits for its honoured guests:
all of us who come in humble faith.

Here lies the hospitality of God,
the open heart of Christ
and the dancing life of the Holy Spirit.

In eating and drinking

*this life-giving sacrament
we are fed by God's love.*

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

We thank you, O God,
for the wonder of the threads of hope
which you weave through all creation;
for small signs which you give to us each day,
if only we will look:
for fragile flowers in forest and bushland,
for colour in a rock
and a smile on the face of a child.

We thank you, O God.

We thank you for gifts which wait for us
if we will see them:
in a small kindness from one to another,
in a word of insight from an unexpected place.
Thank you for a brave laugh surviving in sadness
and for faithful love which stand the test of every day.

We thank you for your gifts to us, O God.

We give you thanks that as we stay
and go down deep into the heart of Christ
we may go past our own shadow places
and gently stand on the ground of truth.
We thank you that there, in surprising grace,
lies peace and new things waiting to be born in us,
held within our own longings.

And so we praise you
with the faithful

of every time and place,
joining with the whole creation
in the eternal hymn :

***Holy, holy, holy,
God of power and vulnerability,
heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.
Blessed is the One who comes
in the name of our God.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.***

THE INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:

“This is my body, which is for you.
Do this to remember me”

In the same way, after supper,
Jesus took the cup
and again giving thanks, said:

“This cup is the sign of my new covenant with you.
Do this as often as you drink it
to remember me.”

THE INVOCATION

Be present risen Lord Jesus, by your Holy Spirit,
as you were with your disciples
and make yourself known to us
in the breaking of the bread,
for you live and reign with the Creator
and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever. ***Amen.***

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread we break
is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take
is a sharing in the life blood of Christ.

The gifts of God
for the people of God.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

The body of Christ given for us.
The life of Christ poured out for us.

FINAL PRAYER

O God we give you grateful thanks
for all that lies
within this sacred feast.
May we carry into the world
the bread which brings life
and the wine of compassion
for all who wait in longing.
This we pray in the name of Jesus, ***Amen***

SONG

Be thou my vision (TiS 547)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihAJA4ibEs>

1 Be thou my vision, O Christ of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
I ever with thee, and thou with me, God.
Born of thy love, thy child may I be,
thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.

3 Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight.
Be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r.
Raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.

4 Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise;
thou mine inheritance, now and always.
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
Ruler of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5 True Light of heaven, when vict'ry is won
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

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BLESSING

We leave,
our hearts filled with God's love.
We will go
to offer the wonders of laughter
and hope to everyone we will meet.
We leave,
following Jesus into the world.
We will serve alongside him
in the brokenness of our neighbours
and our communities.
We leave,
having heard the whispers of the Spirit.
We will speak justice to those
who would hoard it only for themselves.