



Sunday Worship Service

23 January 2022 (Epiphany 3 – Day of Mourning)

Welcome all of you to this worship service! We, Boronia Park Uniting Church gather to give thanks and praises to God almighty who created this universe with the Word and sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ for us to fulfil *Immanuel*, God be with us. Yes, God be with you and all who are made in his image – love, grace, truth, justice and life. This is a call from God for us which reminds us of our identity, God's people. No matter where we come from, we are all God's people. This foundation brings us to gather and worship the holy and gracious name of God.

Every year we mark several special Sundays to reflect on the covenantal relationship between the First Peoples and the Second Peoples. This Sunday, as an expression of the Uniting Church's commitment to justice and truth-telling, we declare the Sunday before Australia Day as a Day of Mourning. The observance of a Day of Mourning was endorsed by the 15th Assembly in 2018. Thus, we are invited to hold worship service that reflects on the effects of invasion and colonisation on First Peoples.

Call to Worship

Our land is alive with the glory of God;
desert sands hum and gum trees dance.
Brown grasses sing
and mountains breathe their stillness.
All created things add their rhythms of delight
and even stones rap out their praise.

Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;
may our hearts join the beat of her joy,
for our triune God is with us:
the Source of all being surrounds and upholds us.

Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.
The Spirit moves within and between us.
Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Today, as we gather to worship,
we acknowledge the Wallumettagal peoples,
the first inhabitants of this place
from time beyond remembering.

We acknowledge that through this land,
God nurtured and sustained
the First Peoples of this country,
the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.
**We honour them for their custodianship
of the land on which we gather today.**

We acknowledge that the First Peoples
had already encountered the Creator God

before the arrival of the colonisers;
the Spirit was already in the land,
revealing God to the people
through law, custom and ceremony.

We acknowledge that the same love and grace
that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ
sustained the First Peoples
and gave them particular insights into God's ways;
and so we rejoice
in the reconciling purposes of God
found in the good news about Jesus Christ.

Song: Great Is The Lord (Steve McEwan)

Great is the Lord
And most worthy of praise
In the city of our God the holy place
The joy of the whole earth
Great is the Lord
In whom we have the victory
He aids us against the enemy
We bow down on our knees

*And Lord we want to lift
Your name on high
And Lord we want to thank You
For the works You've done in our lives
And Lord we trust in Your unfailing love
For You alone are God eternal
Throughout earth and heaven above*

Prayers of the Day

INVOCATION

Abba, Father,
Bäpa God,
source of all life,
answer our call,
as a mother responds
to the cry of a child in the night.

Jesus Christ,
teacher and friend, Liberator,
stand beside us
as bearer of our humanity,
and sharer of God's grace.

Creator Spirit,
giver of new life,
purposeful guest,
prod us to praise,
calling us to be a people
of hope and faith in Christ Jesus.
Amen.

LAMENT AND CONFESSION

Merciful God,
we, the Second Peoples of this land, lament the injustice and abuse that has
so often marked the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.

**We lament
the way in which their land was taken from them and their
language, culture, law and spirituality despised and
suppressed.
We acknowledge and lament**

the way in which the Christian church was so often not only complicit in this process but actively involved in it.

We lament that in our own time the injustice and abuse has continued. We have been indifferent.

**Gracious God, hear our confession —
We have not loved you with our whole heart,
nor have we loved First Peoples and other neighbours as ourselves. God of mercy, forgive us for our failures, past and present and give us the grace today to make a fresh start.**

**By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts so that we may love as you have loved us, that we may boldly speak your truth and courageously do your will.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

This is the best of all:

**When we are empty, God fills us;
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate; when we are wounded,
God brings healing; when we confess our sin, God forgives.**

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

You refill the cup of life, O God.

In Christ, we find refuge, strength and hope.

Amen.

Bible Reading Nehemiah 8:8-10 and Luke 4:14-21

First reading: Nehemiah 8:8-10 (English Standard Version)

⁸ They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

This Day Is Holy

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law.¹⁰ Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading: Luke 4:14-21

Jesus Begins His Ministry

¹⁴ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.
And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to
say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon Seung Jae Yeon

Lieutenant Ralph Clark (picture) kept his journal, as usual, on Saturday 26 January 1788 about his very first sighting of the Sydney Harbour*. He wrote that he offered his sincere prayers for God's kindness and gave thanks to God that all the ships, which meant the First Fleets, safely were arriving in the Sydney Cove. Then he witnessed the First Peoples make fires as Friendship approached the Cove. He didn't forget to praise the beauty of the Harbour, comparing to Thames River.



Later, according to several historical evidence, he participated in creating stories in order to communicate with the First Peoples of the Eora nation. And at his tent, the first communion service of the colony was kept on Sunday 17 February 1788. He seemed to be touched by the first communion table set in his own space. We may know Clark Island, one of islands in the Harbour is named after him and what he marked in early period of colony.

* “I return him my most Sincer prayers for his Kindness to use - thank god we have got clear out as hav all the Ships and hope to be in the course of a few hours at Port Jackson as it is a fine fair Breeze - as we run along the Shore Saw a great number of firess and a few Natives – blessed be to God that we have got Save to ane Anchor in one of the finest harbours in the world - I never Saw any like it - the River Thames is not to be mentioned to it and that I thought was the finest in the world - this Said port Jackson is the most beautiful place ...” Ralph Clark's journal, p. 119. Note that his journal has less formality but is so revealing of how the First Fleets sailed to Australia and its people – officials and convicts struggled during their voyage.

Unfortunately, since then, First Peoples have suffered under the colonisation or invasion of the Western world.

I believe that today's Gospel passage would seem to be very relevant to the theme this service. The title is "Jesus begins his ministry and he is rejected at Nazareth." After the temptations in the wilderness, Jesus returns not as a limping survivor, but "in the power of the Spirit", as the righteous one vindicated by God. The Holy Spirit, who led and now is leading Jesus, was active through many lives – Zechariah, John the Baptist, his mother Elizabeth, Jesus' mother Mary and Simeon. And the Holy Spirit was also active in Jesus the Son of God in his conception, baptism, temptation, and public ministry. Here, as Jesus begins his ministry, the power and righteousness of the Holy Spirit is again active in him. The Holy Spirit returns Jesus from the wilderness to Galilee and beyond – to this continent before the arrival of the First Fleets, to Gladesville and to wherever you are. The Holy Spirit is there for us, leading the way that we should walk on and live for. God in the power of the Holy Spirit always goes first in Jesus' ministry. Likewise, God is first in our life and all our ministries even though this time being with Covid-19 is challenging. The following verses tell us how Jesus proclaimed that he put God first in his entire life and ministry. No matter whether he was rejected at Nazareth or not, nothing stopped him fulfilling God's kingdom amongst those who experienced rejection and injustice everyday. Because he put God first every moment.

Jesus was returning to Nazareth as a native son who knew the town very well including the synagogue and its custom in there. Then he personally chose the reading from the prophet Isaiah. We, Christians widely read this text from Isaiah 61, as the text of the Servant of the Lord. But in Jesus' time and as now, in Judaism the text was infrequent and unremarkable. Jesus selected the text about the Servant called and chosen by God's Spirit in order to enlighten the ears of hearers who didn't know they were in presence with God in Jesus' ministry. Then Jesus immediately applied this text to himself in a one-line sermon, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled

in your hearing.” The very first word of Jesus’ public ministry is not his own word, but a prophetic word from Scripture proclaiming the Holy Spirit returns the Saviour. The Holy Spirit is active in the Synagogue and among the people seated there with the presence of God.

Jesus acknowledges God who is first in his ministry: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” Then Jesus summarises God’s salvation history and the nature of his mission in this world. Because he is anointed and sent as the Spirit-led Servant, his ministry is not a moral obligation to work harder or do more, but a proclamation of what God in grace has done for the world in him. The one new thing in Jesus’ message is this: *Today, we put God first in our lives. No matter what.* Here and now, where God’s Spirit leads us, we are called to put God first and have listening ears and responsive hearts every moment and every topic that we deal with. Can we put God first in our lives?

In my first encounter with First Peoples in Australia, I shared my stories about how I welcome Jesus Christ as my Saviour. We also sang along our favourite hymns and songs, danced together and had fellowship over lunch or dinner time. What I did was always to put God first before our missional activities. I didn’t try to convert them into Christianity or church goers. Whenever I met people, I said, “God loves you as he loves me. The love of God has changed me. I do want you to find the love that I have in my heart.” Then we sang songs, danced with each other and in the power of the Spirit built our relationship in Christ. I still remember that one little boy came to me and said, “I will go to church this Sunday like you.” It was the happiest moment during my mission trip to Australia in 1999. I wish I could find him to say this: “Please put God first always.”



Wellington NSW (June 1999)

On Saturday 26 January 1788, the First Peoples at the Sydney Harbour began their encounter with new visitors and then all have been rejected at their mother land. The fires the Natives made were to keep their family warm and safer for the day. But those fires were the last fires for them at the Cove made by their own determination. Since then, First Peoples have been rejected and forcibly converted so that most of them have lost their cultures, languages, customs and laws inherited from their ancestors. Sometimes the role of churches and Christianity in the early history of Australia was not well played. Under the cloak of civilisation, colonisers deprived the First Peoples of their land and their spirituality which are not separated. In marking a day of mourning, 26 January 2022, let us hear the call of Jesus to put God first if we watch or read any topic relating First Peoples. Let the Spirit of the Lord be upon all of us – First Peoples and Second Peoples.

We, Boronia Park Uniting Church have done so well in regard to our covenant relationship with First Peoples. We acknowledge the First Peoples – the Wallumettagal people of the Eora nation at each communion Sunday. We pay our respect and honour their culture and their connection to country. We include wisdom of First Peoples listening to their struggle for justice. In the Preamble of the Church's Constitution, we affirm the sovereignty of First Peoples and reaffirm our understanding that First Peoples encountered the Creator God long before colonisation. I may ask you this coming week to seek God's Spirit-filled Servant over your own interests in celebrating Australia Day. And pray that Jesus is life for all – First Peoples and Second Peoples.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, putting God first before other things is a call from God to strengthen our lives and hand our control back to him. Let us live the way we are made. And let us be a servant for our neighbour as Jesus, the Spirit-filled Servant lived, died and rose again for us all.

Amen.

Prayers of the People Jenny Keast

Dear Heavenly Father,

Once again we come to you to acknowledge who you are and to bring our thoughts and needs to you.

We are again in the midst of the ongoing COVID health crisis with so many prayers needed for so many. At this time, there are so many known to us, even in our own Congregation who are sick, or recovering from this virus. Please keep your healing hand on all of these people so that their recovery is quick and complete. Help us to respond to the needs around us in whatever way we can.

Please give wisdom to our leaders to make the best decisions to ensure our communities can function.

Thank you that many have been able to see families over this period.

We pray that Seungjae and his family will have found some refreshment during their holiday times and we appreciate their support to bring our online services to us.

We bring before you the island of Tonga and the after effects of the Tsunami. We pray that aid will be forthcoming and recovery can begin. We pray for all the families who have lost loved ones and who have been devastated by this event.

As we approach another Australia Day, give us sensitivity to reflect on this celebration through the eye of indigenous Australians. We mourn mistakes that have been made in our history and pray that there will be healing and forgiveness so that all Australians can move forward together.

As the new school year approaches, we appreciate there will be many fears and difficulties to be overcome. We pray that teachers and students will be safe and sensible and that schools can provide education and security for all.

We have several young members of our congregation who are making the transition to secondary school this year: Michelle Lam, Emily Han, Naomi Williams and Heather Yeon. Give them enthusiasm for this new step in their Education Process. We pray for all those venturing into new beginnings – that you will be with them and guide them.

During this summer break we uphold all the Christian churches in Boronia Park and Hunters Hill, that they will be faithful in Ministry and Service.

Lord, we pray in our hearts for all those known to us in many circumstances of which we are aware.

Thank you for your Grace to each of us, may we show this same Grace to others.

**We pray in Jesus' name
Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer Retranslated by Denise Champion (2006)

The Lord is Speaking

Our Father who lives in heaven
Your name is big
Your name is good
Your Holy Land is coming
That's the way God does things
On earth and in heaven.

Give us today our special bread
Make things right for humankind
When we do the wrong thing by God.

We make things right for others
who do the wrong thing against us
Do not take us on the bad road
Give us your helping hand
Do not follow the footprints that make bad tracks along the way

The Holy Nation belongs to the Most High
The Most High holds us in his hands
The shining greatness of the Most High
Today, yesterday and forever
That's the way it is.

Dedication of the Offering

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry in these changing times. Please make your offering through a Bank Deposit or a personal cheque whichever is convenient to you.

Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church

BSB: 634-634

Account: 100023784

Reference: Offering

Mail to: Mrs. Robyn Harvey

96a Champion Rd. Gladesville NSW 2111

Please contact Robyn Harvey, Treasurer on 0418 783 290 or robyn.49@bigpond.net.au for more information about how to make Direct Debit.

Song: How Shall We Sing? (Craig Mitchell)

How shall we sing the Lord's song in this strange land?
How shall we sing the Lord's song in this strange land?
This endless desert
These golden sands
This blue horizon
These green islands
How can we sing the song?
How can we sing the song?

How shall we hear God's story of this strange land?
How shall we hear God's story of this strange land?
This timeless dreaming
These rocks and bones
This wisdom people
Their ancient home
How can we sing the song?
How can we sing the song?

*Come hear a new song
Come hear a new song
Come sing it loud
Come sing it strong*

How shall we cry God's weeping for this strange land?
How shall we cry God's weeping for this strange land?
This broken homeland
These stolen years
Their hidden history
This trail of tears
How can we cry the song?
How can we cry the song?

How shall we live God's story in this strange land?
How shall we live God's story in this strange land?
With eyes wide open and gaping hearts
With truthful longing and stumbling start
How can we live the song?
How can we live the song?
Come sing a new song ...

How can we bring the Lord's peace in this strange land?
How can we bring the Lord's peace in this strange land?
With justice raining
When poor are blessed
With love outpouring
From east to west
How can we bring the song?
How can we bring the song?
Come sing a new song ...

lyrics: Craig Mitchell © 2018
music: David MacGregor © 2018

Word of Mission

People of God,
go from here to live out the covenant into which we,
the First and Second Peoples of this land,
have entered with one another.
Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.
Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.
Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them.
Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord.
Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God,
Until God's promised reconciliation of all creation is complete.

Blessing

Bless us therefore, as we depart this place:
give us a generous spirit, a kind heart,
and the grace to walk alongside our First Peoples,
as brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in the power of God's good Spirit:
with the gentle fire of God's zeal, with the breath of life,
ready to work for justice and peace.
We go in Christ's name. Amen.

The Boronia Park Uniting Church communications team who recorded and edited the videos, ensured all the videos ran as they should and designed the invitation and order of service.

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