

## Sunday Worship Service

20 March 2022 (Lent 3)



As we gather around the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are here and now with a promise from God's Word: "Come to the life, you who are thirsty and hungry. Come to me, and I will abide in you as who you are." We, a people of God in Wallumetta Country Boronia Park Uniting

Church give honour and praise at worship which we feel loved and sense called by God for his purpose and will in universe. We believe. So we come. This moment we seek to find God's mercy and ever-living hope from Jesus Christ who may give us all one more chance to come and join in his fellowship. This is a Lenten calling for us and many.

### **Acknowledgement for the First Peoples:**

We acknowledge the Wallumettagal people of the Eora Nation, and their elders past, present and emerging, on which we celebrate Jesus Christ our Lord. We recognize their special custodianship and relationship with the land and all creation. And thank them.

### **Call to Worship**                      **inspired by Isaiah 55:1-3**

Come to the water, all you who thirst—  
come drink deeply from the river of life.

Come to the water, all you who are weary—  
come rest in the quiet pools of God's love.

Come to the water, all you who long for a justice—  
come be renewed in God's ever-flowing stream.

For God is here among us,  
washing away the dust and grime of our lives,  
and pouring out the Spirit on all who thirst.  
Let's worship God together.

*Attributed to Christine Longhurst*

**Song: He is able**

He is able more than able  
To accomplish what concerns me today  
He is able more than able  
To handle anything that comes my way  
He is able more than able  
To do much more than I could ever dream  
He is able more than able  
To make me what He wants me to be

*Greg Ferguson | Rory Noland*

**Scripture Reading Isaiah 55:1-9 and Luke 13:1-9**

**The Compassion of the Lord**

- 55 “Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.
- <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.
- <sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me;  
hear, that your soul may live;  
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.

4 Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.  
5 Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,  
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

6 “Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near;  
7 let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.  
9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **The Parable of the Fig Tree**

13 At that moment some people came up and told them the news. Some Galileans had been in the Temple, and Pilate had mixed their blood with that of the sacrifices.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Do you suppose’, said Jesus, ‘that those Galileans suffered such things because they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?’ <sup>3</sup> No, let me tell you! Unless you repent, you will all be destroyed in the same way.

<sup>4</sup> ‘And what about those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam collapsed on top of them? Do you imagine they were more blameworthy than everyone else who lives in Jerusalem?’ <sup>5</sup> No, let me tell you! Unless you repent, you will all be destroyed in the same way.’

<sup>6</sup> He told them this parable. ‘Once upon a time there was a man who had a fig tree in his vineyard. He came to it looking for fruit, and didn’t find any. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the gardener, “Look here! I’ve been coming to this fig tree for three years hoping to find some fruit, and I haven’t found any! Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?”

<sup>8</sup> “I tell you what, Master,” replied the gardener; “let it alone for just this one year more. I’ll dig all round it and put on some manure. <sup>9</sup> Then, if it fruits next year, well and good; and if not, you can cut it down.”

Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Habits of Prayer: Praying with words and the Word**

*You may take a moment to read/sing the words three times and then find a word, phrase that you are struck. Then take another moment to reflect on the word or phrase.*

Let all who are thirsty come,  
let all who wish receive the water of life freely.  
Amen, come Lord Jesus, amen come Lord Jesus.

Let all who are thirsty come,  
let all who wish receive the water of life freely.  
Amen, come Lord Jesus, amen come Lord Jesus.

### **Song: Lamb of God**

Lamb of God Holy One  
Jesus Christ Son of God  
Lifted up willingly to die  
That I the guilty one may know  
The blood once shed  
Still freely flowing  
Still cleansing  
Still healing

*I exalt You Jesus my sacrifice  
I exalt You My Redeemer and my Lord  
I exalt You Worthy Lamb of God  
And in honour I bow down before Your throne*

*Chris Bowater*

## **Sermon**

During the past week, I had such a wonderful opportunity to join a retreat with some other minister friends of the Presbytery. It's called 'Sydney Central Coast Presbytery Ministers Retreat' which is designed for ministry agents to have their own gathering out of area or region of work and family. Since I arrived in Boronia Park in 2014, I have joined the retreat every year except the past three years due to Covid-19. I missed it so much because the retreat gives me always meaningful moments with friends and tranquillity where I can deepen my personal relationship with God, seeking where God's purpose leads my journey. From the Monday afternoon till the Wednesday lunchtime, I was learning, discerning, singing, talking, putting in silence, walking, eating, and giving God my own self. I was able to be fully 'me', 'I', and 'Seung Jae' during the retreat. Then I came home with hopes and findings from the space where God prepare me his presence lending me his hand and saying, "Seung Jae, let us go another mile together. I go with you as you go with me." I said to myself, "Hallelujah!" (Whoops! We don't say this during Lent, do we?) I would like to express my genuine gratitude to the church council and the congregation who willingly give this opportunity every year. Thank you.

During the retreat, I could refine my own definition of how to pray. I am a writer of prayers, leader of prayers and minister who offers prayers if needed. I would say this retreat I had a moment to immerse myself into prayers that would have been prepared for my soul. As we briefly practised in the beginning of the service, I drew my soul to a deeper level of dwelling in prayers with words and the Word of God. The retreat leader Rev. Penny Jones, who is one of UCA ministers transferred from the Church of England, introduced her findings that we might go another way or different direction to see and feel God's presence in the moment of personal devotion, silent

time, meditation and contemplation. For instance, she used a practice called *Lectio Divina* which is a Latin for “Divine Reading”. We read one passage a couple of times, with different voices and even translations including Korean. I was told to choose a word or phrase each time I heard someone read the passage. Then I was asked to write any form of writing and develop the writing to a form of poetry – French pantoum, Japanese haiku or any. As a big fan of sonnet, I wrote one by using my findings. This sonnet-like poetry writing is my first one that I use my own words.

You grow up well last nineteen years  
Growing will never be ceasing until an end  
I grow old as a father with two wise ears  
Becoming my son and my good friend

You and I thankfully have faith in Christ not in a beast  
When our journey needs to say goodbye to each other  
For us and for many let us have a priceless feast  
Promising the table is big enough for all together

I will hold you tight in the most sacred part of my heart  
I will bear all suffer and rejoice  
You and I create most days wonderful till the universe sets us apart  
Choosing all the time for us better choice

There used be the most precious love dwelling  
Remember there used to be for us like a flash

I felt that God invited me to another chance this season of my life. I would say not ‘second chance’ because God has given to us and will continuously give us a series of ‘another chance’ to me and to all of us when we believe and where we seek to find it. Our God is a God of another chance who knows us way better than us and encourages us to continue our journey forward. Let us go another mile or turn around the corner of hardship, challenges, frustrations, or difficult relationship with someone who we know and love, and then see God willing waits for us with his purposeful

and fruitful outcomes. While I was practising new habits of prayer with words and the Word, I could meditate on the presence of God who always provides me a better choice and taps on my shoulder to comfort me. I could confess that my God is a God of another chance who makes me never give up and waits patiently. He is always giving and forgiving without any cost but only the deepest love that we can find from Jesus Christ who gave himself up for us without any cost or honourable responses but his faithful response to God's call upon him. We can find the character of God that gives all human beings another chance today and the days to come.

In his ministry, Jesus kept knocking the door of Judaism that was the centre piece of religion of the early followers, believers and hearers of Jesus' 'kingdom-of-God-among-you' message. All the values, no matter they were well received or not by Jesus' contemporaries, were like a safe that could never be opened or dealt with other values. Particularly Jesus' message, which proclaims the kingdom is here and when you believe the kingdom is yours and it's you, was unlikely welcomed by Judaism and its religious leaders and power holders. But Jesus cried out for Jerusalem (we learnt this last week) which is the centre and the most important symbol of Judaism and continued his journey of giving another chance to those who lived in the closed circle as well as people who were displaced and then placed at the margin of the religion. Thus, Jesus wanted his hearers to hear the voice of repentance as God's another chance not see any concept of karma. He strongly rejected it. He defined that Pilate's mass killing was as Pilate's mass killing, and not something Pilate did under God's authority. Brothers and sisters in Christ, once again, a God we believe and worship this moment hates violence but loves justice and peace in understanding each other. Please remember this.

Jesus' plea for repentance is not showing any form of violence, injustice or disrespect. He didn't want his hearers to act out of fear but out of understanding and good will. For us, he keeps knocking the door of heart until all hear the Word of God and then turn away fully with our own decision and commitment. In responding to God' Word and call, what we should remind each other is that it is easier to turn away than to hold it.

Simply remind each other that we are a people of another chance given by God in our faith journey. So giving another chance to each other is one thing that the church shall keep practising while we are called church. There is no one like Jesus who always gives another chance for us. As a Christ follower, I believe that we are called to become another chance for those who needs it but don't know where and how to get it. Let's find where Jesus is from the parable of the fig tree.

The consequence is that the fig tree planted in the vineyard is given another chance according to the advice of the gardener. I don't say "It is a happy ending or good ending." This ending doesn't end here. The gardener might want to sit down with the owner of the vineyard and suggest better care for the fig tree. There might be times when firm action is required such as adding fertilisers which means investing funds and assets or pruning branches which might need more skills and experiences to cut it down, because the fig tree no longer bears the fruit which is intended. All this action begins by another chance of the owner who loves and wants more fruit from it. And there is the gardener who stands in the middle for the fig tree, mediating and reconciling the relationship. We might find Jesus from the image of the gardener. He chose to go for his people another mile with patience and compassion in order to bear the fruit that they find the kingdom of God in and among them. The parable here may give more voice to the heart of Jesus' teaching on his love and compassion than surfaces in this passage. I give thanks to Jesus who gives us all another chance to turn and then continue each other's journey instead of giving up when we face challenges in life.

I would say that I am a person who has received a lot of 'another chance' in life especially my 21 years living in Australia. There have been so many times for me to have excuses, saying sorry, please, asking, "Can you give me one more chance?" Most of those times, people around me have given me another chance. Everyday all of you may give me another chance to serve and work with you. What I am trying to say here is that giving another chance has mighty power and receiving another chance forms people's character into humble ones. Can you see that the dynamic between giving



and receiving another chance is how God may work and transform all human beings into God's people? Think about who God is in the life of Abraham and Sarah, Joseph with coat of many colours, Moses, the Israelite in the wilderness, Prophet Elijah, King David, fisherman Peter and the Twelve, and Apostle Paul. They had all another chance in life and their ministry. God rejected any concept of karma but reminded them who God is for them by giving another chance. So they turned away and held it tight for their entire life. What they achieved in the history of God's people has its beginning of another chance. From there, they were converted, prepared, moulded and sent in order to tell many people that God is alive in and among the people. We are the recipients of those who have had another chance.

This Lenten season, I would like to encourage all of us to make a space of giving and receiving another chance to each other, family members and neighbourhood. What if people might turn away from where they used be because of your giving another chance? What if you might live fully who you are by receiving another chance from others? Let your people know God gives everything without cost by your giving and receiving another chance. The passage from Isaiah 55 affirms that God is so giving but never asking any price. This is what God only wants us to do.

“Incline your ear, and come to me;  
hear, that your soul may live;  
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant ... (v.3)

“Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near ... ” (v. 6)

God is near and nearer than ever before. He proved this when he sent one and only Son for us, and when Jesus Christ died for us all to give life everlasting in God. He proved this when the Church was born on the day of Pentecost, and when we have become part of this church here at Boronia Park. Each passing day adds more stories that we Boronia Park Uniting People are all God's people of not only giving another chance in our past but becoming a Christ's community that bears the fruit to share with

generations to come. I believe that we are producing fruits day by day because we are all giving another chance in our everyday living and ministry. Let us cast ourselves in the role of the gardener.

Amen.

[Note: I don't apply at all today Jesus' teaching of repentance into any situation of those who are in hardship. And I reject expressly any concept of karma in regard to the suffering of all Ukrainian citizens. Any form of violence including war must not gain another chance. I urge the Russian government to stop their invasion of Ukraine right now. This kills young soldiers both Ukraine and Russian troops. This causes innocent Ukraine mothers with their young ones displaced from home and Russian mothers who sent their young ones in war broken-hearted. I also urge the Australia Government to speak up our voices of peace and zero tolerance against this senseless war in the soil of Ukraine. The Government can dare to demonstrate our strong opposition to any form of war criminal activities. Again, no 'another chance' and may God judge of this war on behalf of all human beings.]

## Prayers of the People: Robyn Harvey

### Prayer from the President of Uniting Church in Australia

God of peace, God of mercy  
We pray for the people of Ukraine,  
We lament the violence that has come  
to their country  
We ask for comfort for those who  
mourn, hope for those who despair and  
compassion for all who suffer.  
We plead for an end to violence and  
aggression in their land  
We pray for the people of Russia,  
We give thanks for those who protest



for peace and pray for ongoing courage

We ask for a change of heart in those who commit acts of aggression and war against their fellow citizens and neighbours

We pray for Russians who will suffer because of sanctions and war

We pray for leaders around the world

We pray that world leaders might work for an end to war and for establishing of peace

We seek wisdom for those who are making life and death decisions about how to respond to violence and threats of violence

We ask for courage for those who campaign for peace.

We pray for aid workers and journalists

We give thanks for the willingness of aid workers to work in situations of war and unrest in order to meet the needs of others

We ask for safety, wisdom and compassion for all working to alleviate suffering and heal the wounded

We pray for journalist and media organisations reporting the situation in Ukraine and Russia, may they report truthfully and compassionately.

We pray for peace

We lament violence around the world

We plead for the ceasing of violence and the establishment of peace

We pray that you might give us a desire for peace and a willingness to work and hope and pray for peace each day. **Amen**

*Let us pray for our friends affected by the recent flooding – both here and in the Northern Rivers area.*

Father God, we give thanks that you are our shepherd in these difficult times. Look after those in our communities affected by the floods and rain in the many different areas of our state. Help them feel the love and support of their communities. Help them know your protection, your power and your presence, always with them. Keep them safe. We especially pray for the many Uniting Disaster Relief Chaplains who are working in these areas and providing so much care, support and compassion as well as looking after their own people. We rejoice that

Lismore UC whose church has been flooded are now able to worship in the local theatre.

We give thanks for all the donations people throughout the country have given to these areas, but we know much more will be needed.

Gracious Father in our World cycle of prayer we remember the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We pray for the faithful witness of all Christians in these countries. We pray for peaceful relations with Russia and among the ethnic groups in these countries. We pray they will be able to help any refugees from Ukraine with love and support.

We pray for our church here in Boronia Park and all our people. We especially pray for Judy Robinson who was admitted to Ryde Hospital this week. We pray for healing in her body and strength in her legs so she will be able to return home and able to mobilise.

We pray for Marie Luise and ask that you be with the staff at Gladesville Gardens as they look after our friend.

We pray for all our children attending school again. Keep them well and safe and open their minds to learn.

**Prayer from Rev Simon Hansford Moderator of NSWACT Synod for all flood victims in our state of NSW.**

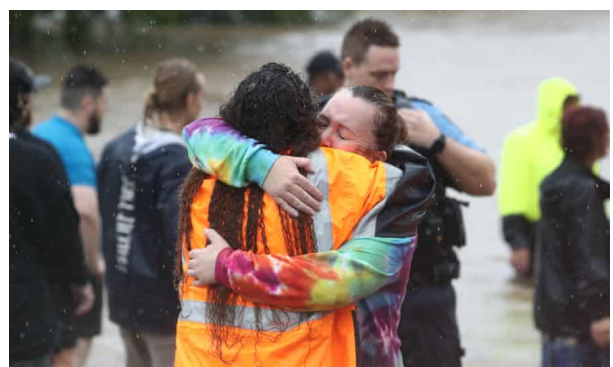
O God, Our God,

Where shall we find the words, the hope, to speak in these days?

Hear us in our silence, in our cries and confusion, in our groaning in our need. Our lives have been washed away, jobs and lounge rooms, treasures and forgetables, the roads and paths we know.

We begin, our God, with you, your promises, your love.

We choose to trust you, even when everything we know has shifted, including the ground we stand on.



Even in this paddock, shadowed by death and brokenness, we choose to believe your promises: that you love us, that you are with us, that you will never leave us.

In this most fragile of moments, you are with us for every step and stumble.

We see the face of Christ in each and every neighbour; in the couple who rescued us, in that woman offering us food in the evac centre, in that bloke sitting, unsure, outside the home he has lost.

Each time we turn, your presence is clear.

We will be angry later, and impatient.

We will need you then.

But now, O God, our God bring us healing, bring us comfort, bring us courage, bring us strength, and, we implore you, bring us the occasional moment of joy, the snort, or shout, of laughter, the stuff of life.

As these days move on, as we clean up, and rebuild and wait, help us to measure out these days in mercy, in forgiveness, in community.

O God, our God for our friends and congregations of hope, we thank you.

Through Christ, the Crucified and Risen One.

**Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

我們在天上的父，  
願人都尊祢的名為聖，  
하늘에 계신 우리 아버지，  
아버지의 이름을 거룩하게 하시며，

your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

願祢的國降臨，  
願祢的旨意行在地上，  
如同行在天上。

아버지의 나라가 오게 하시며,  
아버지의 뜻이 하늘에서와 같이  
땅에서도 이루어지게 하소서.

Give us today our daily bread.

我們日用的飲食 今日賜給我們，  
오늘 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주시고，

Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

免我們的債  
如同我們免了人的債  
우리가 우리에게 잘못한 사람을  
용서하여 준 것같이 우리 죄를 용서하여 주시고，

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

不叫我們遇見試探，  
救我們脫離兇惡，  
우리를 시험에 빠지지 않게 하시고  
악에서 구하소서.

For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever.

因為國度，權柄，榮耀，  
全是祢的，直到永遠。  
나라와 권능과 영광이  
영원히 아버지의 것입니다.

Amen.

## 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 *OR Moderator's Flood Appeal***

**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](mailto:robyn.49@bigpond.net.au) for more information about how to make Direct Debit.

## Song: **My Jesus my Saviour (TIS 738)**

My Jesus, my Saviour,  
Lord, there is none like you;  
all of my days I want to praise  
the wonders of your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter,  
tower of refuge and strength,  
let every breath, all that I am,  
never cease to worship you.

*Shout to the Lord, all the earth; let us sing  
power and majesty, praise the King.  
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar  
at the sound of your name.  
I sing for joy at the work of your hands;  
for ever I'll love you, for ever I'll stand.  
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you!*

## **Benediction**      **based on Romans 8:10-11**

As you go from here, remember this:  
the same Spirit of God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead,  
also lives in you,  
breathing new life and freedom into your hearts and minds.  
So go from here with joy and confidence,  
knowing that God Is at work within you.

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

## **Sung Blessing**      **May the feet of God walk with you (TIS 779)**

May the feet of God walk with you,  
and his hand hold you tight.  
May the eye of God rest on you,  
and his ear hear your cry.  
May the smile of God be for you,  
and his breath give you life.  
May the Child of God grow in you,  
and his love bring you home.

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