

# **Sunday Worship Service**

**Easter 5, Sunday 15 May 2022, 9:30AM**

**Boronia Park Uniting Church**

**Sermon: Ms. Tanya Pualilo**

**(Spiritual Care Coordinator, Ashburn House)**

## **Announcement**

## **Acknowledgement of the First Peoples**

We acknowledge the Walloomattagal people,  
the first inhabitants of this place.

**We honour them for their custodianship of the land,  
on which we gather today.**

## **Call to Worship**

Lead: Come, people of God!

Take refuge in the Lord,  
who listens when we cry out,

who rescues us when we call,

and who leads and guides us according to his unfailing love.

**All: You are our God;  
our lives are in your hands.**

Let's worship God together!

**Hymn     Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  
(Together in Song 217(i))**

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
never more thy temples leave.  
thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be,  
let us see thy great salvation,  
perfectly restored in thee:  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love and praise.

## **Prayer of the Day**

Christ, you are risen with the sun;  
you are light in darkness, warmth in our cold.  
You are peace and hope and joy,  
for you went willingly to death.  
You turned defeat and failure to victory for all.  
You live eternally  
and with you all the living and the dead  
who trust in you.

May we who in baptism die to sin,  
rise again to new life  
and find our true place in your living body.  
May the covenant sealed in your blood  
through us bring healing and reconciliation  
to this wounded world.

Alleluia!

You are risen.

We are risen with you.

Praise and glory to the living God!

We pray in the name of the risen Lord. Amen.

**Scripture Reading      Jean Boyd**

Acts 11:1-18 (New International Version)

## **Peter Explains His Actions**

**11** The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. <sup>2</sup> So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him <sup>3</sup> and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

<sup>4</sup> Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story:<sup>5</sup> “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. <sup>6</sup> I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. <sup>7</sup> Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

<sup>8</sup> “I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

<sup>9</sup> “The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ <sup>10</sup> This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

<sup>11</sup> “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. <sup>12</sup> The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. <sup>13</sup> He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. <sup>14</sup> He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

<sup>15</sup> “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.<sup>16</sup> Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’<sup>17</sup> So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

<sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Children Young People Talk      Jenny Keast**

*Seungjae has asked me to give a “brief” description of how I came to have faith in Jesus Christ. I hope I can be brief enough! My story to faith in Jesus has been a journey with a series of steps drawing me closer.*

I begin by saying that from an early age I always wanted to go to Sunday School and Church. Although my Mum and Dad didn’t attend church regularly, they were keen for us to belong to a church. My mum didn’t go to church regularly till after my dad passed away, however she participated in many church-based activities. Both my grandmothers were Christians. I think I have five bibles my Mum’s mum gave me. We could walk to the nearby Denistone East Methodist Church, so that is where we went. Even when my sisters opted out of Sunday School I was happy to go by myself. When I was young my school friends went there too.

I was fortunate to have three close school friends who were very committed Christians. I know at High School I was reluctant to take the step of “giving my life to Christ” because I had a fear of what that would entail. My friends went to ISCF (Inter School Christian Fellowship, a program run in schools by Scripture Union) but I didn’t. I didn’t go to Confirmation Classes at an early age but waited until I was sure I was ready to make that commitment. At this stage I was attending the St Andrew’s Fellowship group at Eastwood, where Dr Bill Ives was the minister. I recall one night at about age 15 lying in bed thinking for a long time about God and how real was He really. I had been taught that praying was what to do if you wanted to communicate with God. I remember saying to God to please show me if He was real.

I believe from that time (and earlier, I believe) circumstances and people came into my life to show me the reality of God’s existence and the personal nature of a relationship with Jesus. I was confirmed at that church when I was in year 12.

While at Teachers’ College I had a friend who went regularly to Christian camps run by the Anglican Youth Department. She invited me to go along to help cook. I did this and was really drawn to the camping ministry. I was invited to be a counsellor or group leader at subsequent camps.

At one of these camps, I realised listening to our leader talking in one of the studies about sitting on the fence with God and was challenged to decide whether I was totally “for” Jesus or not.

I believe this was my final decision for Christ. I made the commitment to wholeheartedly follow the Christian life.

When I was appointed to my first teaching position in Picton, New South Wales, I sought out the local Uniting Church and became a member there. I was encouraged and supported by many of the church members and tried to serve as best I could in that church.

Often, it is only in hindsight, that we can see God's leading in our Christian journey. Each of us will have a different story. Ultimately, following Christ is a decision we must make for ourselves. It is a commitment that means making choices every day but I have found God has been ever faithful along sometimes bumpy roads and still I continue to learn new things about my faith journey.

### **Hymn     Great Is Your Faithfulness (Together in Song 154)**

Great is your faithfulness,  
O God my Father,  
in you no shadow of turning we see;  
you never fail and your love is unchanging:  
as you have been you for ever will be.

*Great is your faithfulness.*  
*Great is your faithfulness,*  
*morning by morning new mercies we see;*  
*all we have needed your hand has provided:*  
*great is your faithfulness,*  
*Lord God, to me.*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,

join with all nature in unspoken witness  
to your great faithfulness, mercy and love.

*Great is your faithfulness ...*

Pardon for sin and a peace that's enduring,  
your living presence to cheer and to guide,  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow –  
these are the blessings your love will provide.

*Great is your faithfulness ...*

Thomas O. Chisholm

## **Sermon**

## **Tanya Pualilo**

### **“Unity in the Spirit”**

As a spiritual care coordinator, I have to write a report every month regarding the residents' spiritual and cultural progress, and also about the work of the pastoral carers and all the volunteers working onsite. In our text this morning there is also someone that made a report and that person's name was Peter. Now you may be asking yourself, “Why did Peter gave that report?” Well, in our reading this morning, it says that the apostles and believers in Judea heard, that the Gentiles had accepted the word of God. So when Peter went to Jerusalem to visit the Apostles, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying “Why did you go and eat together with the uncircumcised?” The reason why they ask Peter this question is because the Judean believers (Jews) did not associate at all with the Gentiles, reason being they had always regarded the Gentiles as unclean people. They were looked upon as a lower class of people. Peter's response was a step by step report of what took place. Peter explains that while he was in Joppa praying,



he saw a vision of a large sheet coming down from heaven being lowered by its four corners as it came close to him. When Peter looked closely he saws four footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. And then he hears a voice saying to him, “Get up Peter, kill and eat.” But Peter replied, Oh no Lord, I had never put anything profane and unclean in my mouth. But a second time the voice came from heaven saying, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” Now, all this happened three times, then everything was pulled up again to heaven. (I just want to stop here for a minute to share some thoughts about Peter’s vision.)

Through this vision God was revealing to Peter, about the sheet with four corners, lowered from heaven, which represents the four corners of the world, that the gospel must be preached in every corner of the world as the apostles were commissioned by Jesus in Mathew 28:19, to go and make disciples of all nations baptising them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was talking about all nations, all people, not just a particular nation or a particular group. Now the apostles were commencing their mission but the circumcised believers posed a problem and challenge because they were still heavily influenced by the law and its traditions, especially when it comes to segregation between the circumcised believers and the Gentiles (clean and unclean). Peter reports that straight after this vision, three men approached him who sent from Caesarea. Lead by the Spirit, Peter was told not to hesitate, but to go with them. As they entered a man’s house whose name was not mentioned, they were told that an angel appeared in his house, and told him to send for Peter who was at Joppa, for Peter has a message that will save him and his household. When Peter began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon this man and his household just as it had done at the beginning on the day of Pentecost (Acts 10:44-45). In Acts 11:16, says, Peter remembered what the Lord had said concerning baptism,

that, “John baptise with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.” Baptism in the Holy Spirit is made available to all who believe in Jesus and have repented of their sins. The important message here is not so much of the act of baptism in the water, but it’s significance of true repentance. The Holy Spirit is God’s free gift that is for those who have fully repented of their sins and have accepted Christ in their lives. One of the main problems in the church is that there are too many man-made rules, that tie down people from becoming Christians. For example, circumcision is no longer required because it was all part of the law, but what really required is the heart, a heart that is fully repented, it’s not physical but it’s the heart, the heart has to be clean not the body. Well, I’m not saying not to clean your body because it is important to keep your hygiene and look after your body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

We can’t continue on God’s work if we continue to add more laws and rules that will prevent people from coming to Christ. If we continue on holding on to the laws and rules that were made by man, is that mean that what Jesus had already done for us was not sufficient to made everything clean for us? Is that mean that God’s plan for salvation in which his son died for was incomplete? But, That’s what sets Christianity apart from other religion, is that the work of Christ for all of mankind was completed. The price has already been paid my Jesus’ when he died and victoriously rose again, and our part is to repent and accept Jesus to be our Lord and saviour. Even Jesus was criticised for eating with Zacchaeus, Jewish were saying, “Look, he said he is the son of God, but he is dining together with the unclean people.” In the Jewish tradition, the Jewish do not eat together or even enter the house of a gentile, because they believe that its unacceptable, and unclean. But, that is the mission, the Christian mission, to take the gospel to the sinners. For example, if you go to a village or a place where there is no water for

baptism, do you wait until there is water in order for that person to be saved and receive their salvation? It's all about the Holy Spirit of God, we can be baptised without water, but we cannot be baptised without the Holy Spirit. The importance of the Holy Spirit, that even in ministry and proclaiming the Gospel you cannot do it by your own strength or knowledge, Only by the Holy Spirit are you able to carry out your calling. The Holy Spirit equips you, enables you, teaches you and provides you with the strength that you need to do the work of God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you are able to do all things. Don't depend or rely on your tradition or law to help you. The peace of God you will receive when you rely on the Holy Spirit. There is only one unforgiving sin, and that is to sin against the Holy Spirit. Because when you think about it, "Who is the Holy Spirit?" Holy Spirit is God! So sinning against the Holy Spirit is sinning against God. No matter what kind of sin you commit it can be forgiven, except sinning against the Holy Spirit. There are Christians who don't want others to be saved or to receive the gift of salvation, it is sad, but it's true, and it is still happening nowadays. The Holy Spirit is available to all who repent and call on the name of Jesus. The text in Acts 11:9 speaks of what God has cleansed you cannot call impure or profane. The saving act of Jesus on the cross at Calvary was done so that forgiveness is made available for everyone who decided to give their life to Christ and asks to be forgiven. At the conclusion of Peter's report in verse 17, Peter makes it quite clear for all that the events which took place at Joppa, was all part of God's divine plan with the Holy Spirit connecting the two, the Gentiles and the circumcised believers or the Jews, as one. No more segregation or separation within the family of God for we are all united as one body of the church in our faith and in our love for the Lord. This is what Jesus was talking about in John 13:34 "A new command I give you, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." There is to be no more division within the body of Christ, whether you're

a Jewish or a Gentile, whether you're black or white, male or female, we are all one family united in our faith and in our love, not just for one another, but in Christ alone. In Jesus' powerful name, Amen.

## **Prayers of the People**

**Isabella Lee**

My prayer today draws from a prayer by Rev Denise Liersch, Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

*Let us pray:*

Gracious and loving God,

“Be with us in these times of uncertainty.  
Break into our lives,  
rekindle our hope  
and breathe love into our communities,  
that we might find new ways  
of supporting and upholding one another,  
bearing witness to your inclusive love  
of family, friend, neighbour and stranger alike.  
May our love for those most vulnerable in our community  
become a beacon of hope for all.”

Thank you for the endless love that you provide us with that knows no bounds. For guiding us through our challenges with unwavering support.

In the world cycle of prayer, we pray for Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Please surround the people in these countries with your hope and love.

Closer to us, we pray for GladesHill Presbyterian Church and Kalos Korean Church. Please fill the lives of the congregation and it's leaders with inspiration and guidance.

Please remind us all that in times of uncertainty, when our lives seem to be in a state of change or when our plans fall through, that you are and always will be a constant in our lives and with us every step of the way.

In faith, hope and love, in the name of Jesus, we pray. **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.

**Offering and Dedication**

On my own  
what I have to give  
doesn't amount to much  
in the light of all you have given to me  
and in the face of so much need.

Put together as a congregation,  
what we offer you here in love  
becomes more,  
not simply added together,  
but somehow multiplied in its usefulness.

We ask you to bless our gifts  
and with the addition of your blessing,  
just as it was with the loaves and fishes,  
there is enough for all.

Amen.

*from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand website*

## **Song      A New Commandment (Together in Song 699)**

A new commandment I give unto you  
that you love one another as I have loved you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.

By this will others know that you are my disciples  
if you have love one for another;  
by this will others know that you are my disciples  
if you have love one for another.

## Benediction

Don't let your hearts be troubled.  
Trust in God, and in God's son, Jesus Christ,  
who is the way, the truth and the life,  
and through whom we come to know the Father.

*Based on John 14:1-4*

And may the blessing of God,  
the grace of Jesus Christ,  
and the presence of the Holy Spirit  
go with you as you leave this place.  
Amen.

## Sung Blessing

## Jesus You are Lord

Rising from the grave  
Died to set us free  
full of grace and love  
shining above all  
Jesus You are Lord

Peter Rowe

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