

## **Communion Service of the Lord's Day**

**YEAR 'A'**

Palm Sunday

5 April 2020

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR THE FIRST PEOPLE**

Before we begin, we would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet.

As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning and Christian practice within this house may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

## **THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

*Let us pray:*

God of hopes and joys:  
when our hearts ache from brokenness,  
you nourish us with your love;

when the world's pain makes us down,  
you carry us in your arms;  
when the loneliness of our souls  
drains our very being,  
you come and live with us.  
You are our God.

Jesus Christ, God's True Son:  
you did not profit  
from your oneness with God,  
but emptied yourself  
to become servant to all humanity.

You humbled yourself  
to lift us out of sin's grave.  
You are our Lord.

Holy Spirit,  
Our True Healer from God:  
humble us to be obedient,  
even to the point of denying all  
that keeps us from following Jesus;  
please heal us with your word and deed  
so that we live the life for our Lord and Savior.  
You are our Hope, Joy, Love, Healer and Helper.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **ASSEMBLY SONG 1**

Hosanna to the Son of David (Mavis Ford) ([Click/Tap to listen](#))

You are the King of glory,  
You are the Prince of Peace,  
You are the Lord of heav'n and earth,  
You're the Son of righteousness;  
Angels bow down before You,  
worship and adore for  
You have the words of eternal life,  
You are Jesus Christ, the Lord.

Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Hosanna to the King of kings!  
Glory in the highest heaven for  
Jesus, the Messiah reign!

## **BLESSING YOUR CHILDREN/GRANDCHILDREN**

If you are now with your children or grandchildren, please call them by name and offer blessing upon their life and faith journey. Also ask them to pray for you in response to your blessing.

## **THE SERVICE OF THE WORD**

### **BIBLE READING**

Matthew 21:1-11 (NIV) ([Click/Tab to read](#))

### **KID'S TALK**

Alan Keast ([Click/Tab to watch](#))

### **REFLECTION ON THE READING**

Welcoming means giving everything you have

You may picture that in the Matthew's passage on the Passover, Jesus and his disciples would have been surrounded by huge crowd. People came to the city and stayed days and nights to celebrate who they are as Chosen People. Everyone in the old city was squeezed by each one's shoulder, arms and back but so excited because of the feast and the one who was a bit different to other leaders. They were not able to maintain (social) distancing during the period of time.

The ancient city called Jerusalem had nine gates that led its residents, visitors and foreigners into the city. On the eastern side of the city, there were two gates, nowadays, one is called Lion's Gate and the other is called Eastern Gate. Probably the Lion's Gate led people from Jericho via the Mount of Olives, where our Lord Jesus and his followers were entering for the observance of Passover. Most of all, for Jesus, the gate led Him into the Passion, which means His suffering and dying for reason. Jesus brought himself and his message to Jerusalem where a huge population gathered to offer sacrifices as their tradition. Jesus was entering the old city to give himself up as the true sacrifice for the people of God and for all who

believe in Him. And for His disciples and followers, to journey with Jesus was like a procession to end all suffering and frustration and to enter the kingdom that Jesus had taught and demonstrated to them all the time. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus and his followers, the first hearers of the Gospel were reluctant but fully adoring perhaps remembering key events visiting cities and villages to meet people who were marginalized, (self) isolated or vulnerable in community.

For my reading, Jesus, with his disciples, was entering Jerusalem where there were the concentration of people celebrating Passover but there still a great number of people experiencing being marginalised or categorised by those having power. They would have wanted to give whatever they had but in the custom of their Jewish religion, persons who offered sacrifices were only pure and holy. The leprosy, the cursed, the lame and the poor, slaves and foreigners who dwelled in the city were not allowed to give in temple, while majority were celebrating their Passover as usual. Those who lived out of mainstream Passover festival would have given their outer garments in welcoming Jesus the Messiah. The owner of little colt which was given for Jesus' procession gave his sacrifice as offering it to the Messiah. Jesus' entering was like a highlight of His salvation, in response to it, the people at the margin gave all that they possessed. In giving, those who were part of the huge crowd welcomed the Messiah who would give himself up for all humanity.

Thus, Jesus' approach to Jerusalem and entering into the city means for us a symbol of the salvation toward us. He gives his life for those whoever believes in him. No matter how misery we used to be, how good we are, or how perfect we will be, God sends His only Son, giving the ultimate power in salvation. What we could do is to welcome Him with all our heart and with all that we have in life. If you are young and still growing, give your daily life for His purpose at school or home. If you are old and even getting fragile, share your wisdom and faithful words with the next generation near you, over the phone, Skype or Zoom. If you dream a dream of increasing the kingdom of God, please speak it to those near you and humbly toward the community you live. If you are in a position to give, share it with your friends or neighbours who would have less. Recently, we have had donations given

by some members and their friends. They took action to give when they heard about our giving donation for the work of Sydney Community Services. They seemed to welcome Jesus in giving the items for their vulnerable neighbourhood. I believe that any form of way that you share your blessed life in Christ, particularly in response to COVID-19 pandemic, is a symbol of welcoming Jesus as the huge crowd of people cried “Hosanna!” which means, “save now.”

We, as people of God, travel all different roads in Christ that lead to the salvation and to the kingdom of God. We call it a journey of faith, and a journey that we will hold each other in prayer and listen to each other’s story. We have already started our journey with the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of God at Boronia Park Uniting Church. Let’s think about each members of the congregation. We are all different individuals and have different lifestyle, practicing faith in all different ways. I truly believe that we are called to enter the kingdom of God together. The call from God in the difficult times is placed at where many of us may have uncertainty or anxiety. We have no knowledge of how long we would be in uncertainty with the virus disease. But we are for sure that God be with us wherever we are, and Jesus Christ will come again to keep his promise. Remember who we are, we are the ones who have already found Jesus and discovered how a life-giving action can help us re-focus mind and heart on Christ.

This week is called the Holy week, for believers to wait and reflect on the greatest sacrifice of Jesus. This week I want us to live our life like those welcoming Him in giving what they have. This will be our mission in the following week. As they were singing and dancing in welcoming the king, let us be joyful and be glad in giving our prayers, thoughts, affirming words and actions. And let us share a hope in Jesus that will remove all barriers, liberate those who are not welcomed and rule over them as a true king.

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Pray for family, friends, neighbours, church communities including St. Charles Borromeo and Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, the countries who are suffering from COVID-19 pandemic, including Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### COMMUNION

The following Liturgy is designed to deviate only minimally from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as set out in Uniting Worship and other liturgical resources, to allow for the absence of bread and wine/juice – while retaining familiar foundations, in uncertain times.

### THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.

**Also with you.**

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,  
my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,  
and I have promised, promised to be always near.

### INVITATION

This earth is not our earth.

**This is God's earth.**

This time is not my time.

**This is God's time.**

This table is not my table.

**This is God's table.**

God's earth, God's time, God's table...

It is God who provides this feast of place and time and community. Provision is already made for us all to be part of God's story. God longs for us to be at home with God and one another.

Place your hand on the table or the wall, set your feet on the floor, recognise these spaces as being of God and for God for everything we have comes from the One source of all that is.

In this time, we rededicate ourselves and our surroundings for God's good purposes.

## **THANKSGIVING PRAYER**

**The Lord is with us.**

**We lift our hearts to God.**

**We give thanks to God.**

For God not only created the earth and heavens,  
but all things that have lived and will yet live.  
Saints from ages past and those who are yet to come,  
join with us in the here and now,  
linked in miraculous ways.

The stories, described by prophets and saints  
of past, present and future, dance together  
in reflection of God's own glory,  
for all Life has an Author.

The Author became known in the Word,  
the One who came as Emmanuel, God with us,  
born as One with us, living among us,  
teaching, healing, weeping and sharing with us.  
Living the life of Compassion and Justice,  
The Word was rejected by the world and executed...

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Christ's coming again has begun  
 in the unfolding story of the Spirit of God,  
 in the continual seeding of new spiritual life in every age and place.

We see the work of the Spirit in the service and self-sacrifice of so many.  
 We hear the song of the Spirit when people sing on balconies.  
 We breathe the breath of the Spirit, knowing some are breathing  
 through the creativity of digital photocopying and scientific imagination.  
 We wonder at our coming into a spiritual age previously unknown.

Yet, our story, is grounded in the story of Jesus of Nazareth...

### **NARRATIVE OF INSTITUTION**

The Lord Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread,  
 and after giving thanks to God,  
 he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
 Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.  
 Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, saying:  
 This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
 shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
 Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.  
 Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup  
 you proclaim the death of the risen Lord, until he comes.

### **SHARING**

In this empty plate [lift and show],  
 we choose to see the world's hunger.  
 We remember that millions of people, this day,  
 lack bread for Communion, bread for breakfast, bread for life.  
 We acknowledge that we ourselves hunger, this day,  
 in ways that no earthly bread can satisfy.

Hospitable God,  
**meet us in our unmet hungers –  
 and help us to put our abundance  
 at the service of the poor.**

In this empty cup [lift and show],  
 we choose to see the world's thirst.  
 We remember that millions of people, this day,  
 lack wine for Communion, fruit for juicing, water for life.  
 We acknowledge that we ourselves thirst, this day,  
 in ways that no earthly cup can quench.

Hospitable God,  
**meet us in our unmet thirsts –  
 and help us to put our fullness  
 at the service of the empty.**

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
 for they will be filled.' (Matthew 5:6)  
**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

## **INVOCATION**

Pour out the Holy Spirit on this empty plate, this empty cup, that they may be for us – even in their emptiness – the body and blood of Christ. So we may take his Life into our lives, and be taken and blessed, broken and given for the world.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your name,  
 your kingdom come,  
 your will be done,  
 on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

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

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

For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever.

Amen.

#### **PLATE AND CUP**

We hold up the empty plate...  
**It is Christ who is the bread of life,  
who satisfies the hungry heart.**

We hold up the empty cup...  
**It is Christ who is the cup of hope,  
who revives the thirsty.**

The plate and cup are placed on the table...  
**The gifts of God for the people of God.**

In faith and hope, we hold out our empty hands...  
**In these empty vessels and in our empty hands,  
we celebrate the mystery and wonder of the empty tomb.**

In our hands and in our hearts,  
we leave space for resurrection,  
for new life, for new meaning.

We hold the sorrows, prayers and hopes of the world before You, O God.  
May Your Spirit flow among us and beyond us,  
drawing us into loving and caring for Your world.

Jesus Christ is Risen!

**He is Risen indeed!**

## **THE SENDING FORTH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

### **ASSEMBLY SONG 2**

Living Hope ([Click/Tap to listen](#))

#### Verse 1

How great the chasm that lay between us  
How high the mountain I could not climb  
In desperation I turned to heaven  
And spoke Your name into the night

Then through the darkness Your loving-kindness  
Tore through the shadows of my soul  
The work is finished the end is written  
Jesus Christ my living hope

#### Verse 2

Who could imagine so great a mercy  
What heart could fathom such boundless grace  
The God of ages stepped down from glory  
To wear my sin and bear my shame

The cross has spoken I am forgiven  
The King of kings calls me His own  
Beautiful Savior I'm Yours forever  
Jesus Christ my living hope

*Hallelujah praise the One who set me free  
Hallelujah death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ my living hope*

Verse 3

Then came the morning that sealed the promise  
Your buried body began to breathe  
Out of the silence the Roaring Lion  
Declared the grave has no claim on me  
(Repeat)

Jesus Yours is the victory

*Hallelujah praise the One who set me free  
Hallelujah death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ my living hope  
(Repeat)*

Jesus Christ, my living hope.  
O God, You are my living hope.

**WORD OF MISSION AND COMMISSION IN PLACE**

We shall not seek God among the dead.  
 We shall be bearers of hope among the living.  
 We shall carry the stories of our hurts and losses  
 that we may tell the story of healing and resurrection.

Live then, in the promise of Resurrection Life!  
 Live according to the story of the One:  
 Creator, Redeemer and Spirit,  
 knowing that the scattered community of God  
 is placed in the world, for the sake of the world.

**Glory to God  
 and peace to All.  
 Amen.**

**OFFERING**

*Let us pray:*

Blessed are you,  
 O Lord our God,  
 Creator and Redeemer of the whole world;  
 from you we receive the gift of life,  
 and by your grace we have gifts to offer you.

Accept our offerings and our lives  
 in praise and thanksgiving,  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 who brings us again from death to life,  
 and holds forward the promise  
 of your everlasting kingdom.

Amen.

Please make offering through Bank Deposit or personal cheque if you are able.

Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church

BSB: 634-634

Account: 100023784

Reference: Offering

The offering will be used for the congregation's mission and ministry in the changing time. 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.