



## **BORONIA PARK UNITING CHURCH**

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**

#### **Preparing for worship**

Welcome to our online worship service today with the People of Boronia Park Uniting Church! The season of Epiphany ends today as we explore the meaning of Transfiguration of Jesus. God in Jesus be always with His people and creation. God is God unless and until we truly believe in Him. Jesus is Jesus unless and until we truly follow Him in our everyday life. However, Jesus is and dwell among us in all different meanings and reasons. If I am sick or unwell, I may call Him healer. If I face challenging circumstances, I may ask Him to show a sign. If I question my faith this moment, I sincerely invite Him to come reign my life. Whatever I call or invite Him, Jesus is Jesus because I still believe in Him. In this worship, we continue to pursue what it means to be church and to follow Jesus Christ.

## Acknowledgement for the First Peoples

We would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet; the Wallumettagal people of the Eora Nation. It is upon their ancestral lands that the Boronia Park Uniting Church is built. As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning and Christian practice within this congregation may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

## Opening Prayer

Gracious and loving God,  
the God of Creation and all things seen and unseen,  
we give our all honour and praises to your holy and merciful name  
in this gathering called Church.

You sent your one and only Son Jesus Christ for the world,  
in order to show who you really are  
and what you really mean for us.  
Thus by his name and by believing in Him with our all hearts,  
we are saved, rescued and lived this moment.

You, the God of heaven and earth,  
are the same all the time,  
you have never failed to us  
from the beginning till now and beyond.  
Thus we want to trust you more this moment,  
showing our integrity, values, virtues, words and deeds  
towards the world where we are all belonging.

God of grace and love,  
in this worship, please come dwell among us.  
Come search our hearts and our true being moulded by your image.  
Come receive our prayer and praises to glorify your holy name.

And thank you for calling us to be your Church again,  
no matter what form we choose to have today.  
We are yours so please be with us in this time and space of worship.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **Hymn   Praise to the living God**

Praise to the living God,  
all praise be to his name,  
who was, and is, and is to be,  
and still the same:  
the one eternal God  
before what now appears,  
the First, the Last, beyond all thought  
his timeless years!

Formless, all lovely forms  
declare his loveliness;  
holy, no holiness of earth  
can his express.  
Behold the Lord of all:  
creation speaks his praise,  
and everywhere, above, below,  
his will obeys.

God's Spirit freely flows,  
high surging where it will:  
in prophet's word he spoke of old,  
is speaking still.  
Established is God's law  
and changeless it shall stand,  
deep written on the human heart,  
on sea, on land.

God has eternal life  
implanted in the soul;  
his love shall be our strength and stay  
while ages roll.  
Praise to the living God,  
all praise be to his name,  
who was, and is, and is to be,  
and still the same!

*From the Jewish Yigdal*  
*tr. Max Lansberg, Newton Mann and William Channing Gannett*

## Prayer of the Day

### Prayer of Confession

God of Mercy and Grace,  
you come to us in Jesus of Nazareth  
to break down the dividing walls of hostility between us:  
Yet we maintain walls that separate and isolate.

You give us the ministry of reconciliation:  
Yet we nurse our wounds and withhold mercy and forgiveness.

You invite us to join with Peter, James, and John  
on the mountain of Transfiguration:

Yet we deny the wonders you have worked in our own lives.

You ask us to acknowledge and share our wealth:

Yet we refuse to recognize and relieve the poverty around us.

You bless our lives with boundless love:

Yet we fail to witness to that love,  
and so keep others from knowing you.

Forgive our selfishness, we pray.

Transform us by your Spirit and your Word  
into that which pleases you,  
the image of Christ. Amen.

### **Words of Assurance**

Jesus admonished Peter, James, and John  
not to tell of what they witnessed on the mountain  
until he was resurrected.

But we can tell what we have seen and heard of God's glory!

Here is the good news:

**Jesus lives! He is raised! We are forgiven!**

**Go, share the vision!**

**Tell of God's love! In this God is well pleased!**

By Renee C. Jackson

**Kids Talk     Alan Keast**

**GOD   MOSES   TRANSFIGURATION TALK**

MOSES: Hello God, hello, are you there?

GOD: Yes Moses, of course I am here. This is heaven, this is MY HOME.

MOSES: Welllll, I have just been thinking..

GOD: Oh dear, I thought you didn't have to do this anymore, but go ahead.

MOSES: Welllll, Elijah and I were just chatting, he's my friend, you know. Do you know Elijah?

GOD: yes Moses, I know Elijah very well. I sent down a chariot to bring him from earth to be here with me.

MOSES: Wow. (thinking) Welllll, Elijah and I were just chatting and we realised we hadn't seen your son Jesus around heaven for a while. We know it's a big place but we were just going to have a chat with him.

GOD: That's right, he is doing a job for me, for us, and for many.

MOSES: Oh? If you tell us where he is working we might go and catch up with him and say "gooday".

GOD: Well Moses, he is actually on earth doing this job.

MOSES: On earth?

GOD: Yes, Moses. On earth

MOSES: So isn't that interesting. We came from EARTH to HEAVEN BUT Jesus has gone from HEAVEN to EARTH! (thinks) – hey you know what God, you could write a song about that. Maybe something like, "Jesus came from HEAVEN to EARTH..."

GOD: Moses, once again you are a bit behind. I think that's already been done. An artist called Graham Kendrick wrote it and it's called "The Servant King".

*From heaven you came helpless babe  
Entered our world, your glory veiled  
Not to be served but to serve  
And give Your life that we might live*

MOSES: (disappointed) – thought I had a good idea then. ANYWAY,  
(thinks) we wonder just what job Jesus is doing on earth.

GOD: Well I will tell you because I might use your help here a little bit.  
I recall that when you led Exodus Israel, I said to you many years ago, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay there while I give you the stone tablets – the law and the commandments.” Then you camped on the mountain of Sinai for six days then I called you ....

MOSES: I do remember that. It was terrible that I was rejected by my own people but amazingly you changed my face bright like the Sun. I delivered them from slavery to freedom.

GOD: That’s what exactly my Son Jesus is doing on earth. He has been in the journey with many people from slavery of earthly things to freedom in life created by my image. He spent many times to pray to me for delivering his followers to freedom in me.

MOSES: In my experiences, I learnt that that is so hard. I led thousands of Israel people but he leads the whole creation to the Life in You, God.

GOD: Do you think so? You seem to understand me. That is fantastic! I sent Jesus to earth to remind the people about my love for them and how they can come to heaven and join us here. I do love them so much and am sorry when people turn away from me. So that’s the work Jesus has gone to do.

MOSES: Wow! He is doing very well. Perfect!

GOD: Watch out, Moses. Perfect is not good all the times. Peter was trying to build three sacred houses for you, Elijah and my Son in order to be perfect on earth. That's why I said, "This is my beloved son," and "Listen to him." My presence or the Presence of Jesus my son cannot be boxed. Our Presence must be unboxed always for many people.

MOSES: This lesson is true but sooooo deep. But I believe that Jesus will let us know about You, Your kingdom and Your will. I will keep Him in my prayer. Also let my friend Elijah know it too. He will let his fellow prophets join in this prayer. Can I pray now?

GOD: Yes, sure.

MOSES: [Alan leads prayer as Moses]

## **Bible Reading    Mark 9:2-9**

### **The Transfiguration**

<sup>2</sup> After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)



<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

<sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Song    I am the church!**

*I am the church! You are the church!  
We are the church together!  
All who follow Jesus all around the world,  
yes, we're the church together!*

The church is not a building,  
the church is not a steeple,  
the church is not a resting-place,  
the church is a people!  
*I am the church! You are the church!...*

We're many kinds of people  
with many kinds of faces,  
all colours and all ages too,  
from all times and places.  
*I am the church! You are the church!...*

And when people gather  
there's singing and there's praying,  
there's laughing and there's crying sometimes  
all of it saying:  
*I am the church! You are the church!...*

I count if I am ninety,  
or nine or just a baby;  
there's one thing I am sure about, and  
I don't mean maybe:  
*I am the church! You are the church!...*

Richard K. Avery and Donald S. Marsh  
CCLI# 260394

## **Sermon      Seung Jae Yeon**

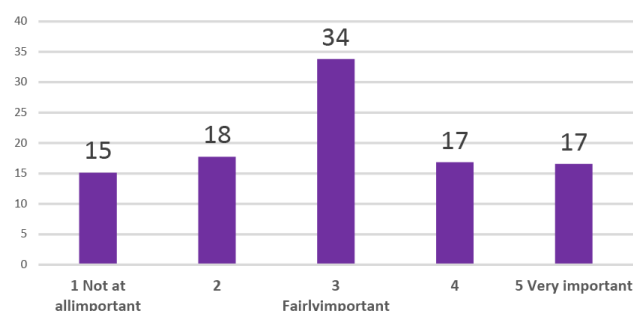
As I begin my sharing of reflection, I would like to introduce interesting survey results about *Spirituality in Australia 2020*. We may all agree that last year it was a challenging year for most of us. No matter what stage in life we live, what belief or faith we practice, or what values and virtues we own. It was and even today is still challenging us and our being. This figure could indicate us where we are going through in living and believing in Jesus Christ.

The survey was conducted by National Church Life Surveys which is a research project taken place every five years since 1991. The research of NCLS studies about Australian spirituality, church health, leadership and connection between church and community. I believe that we, Boronia Park has joined this survey as part of Uniting Church in Australia out of

20 Christians denominations. The survey titled 2020 Australian's Spiritual Practices in a Year of Crises tells as its result that nearly seven in Australians affirm spiritual practices as important during crisis, particularly including bushfires and the global COVID-19 pandemic.

### Importance of spiritual practices in context of crisis

In the context of this year's crises (including bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic), how important do you think spiritual practices are to support people's wellbeing?



Source: 2020 ACS by NCLS Research (n=1,306)

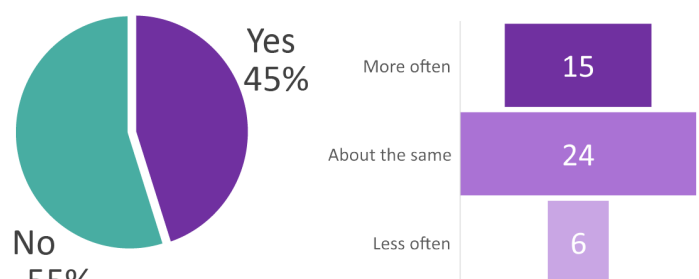


NCLS Research [www.ncls.org.au](http://www.ncls.org.au)

In the same survey, there is another question asking the participants about spiritual practices in 2020 versus 2019. Some 45 per cent of Australians answered yes. Some 24 per cent said it had been at the same rate as in 2019, whereas 15 per cent of those had increased their level of spiritual practice. Thankfully some Australian Christians have been practicing their own spirituality during such a period of stress and crisis.

### Australians' spiritual practices in 2020 vs 2019

In 2020, have you personally drawn on any spiritual practices? If so, have you done this more often, less often or the same as in 2019?



Source: 2020 ACS by NCLS Research (n=1,306)

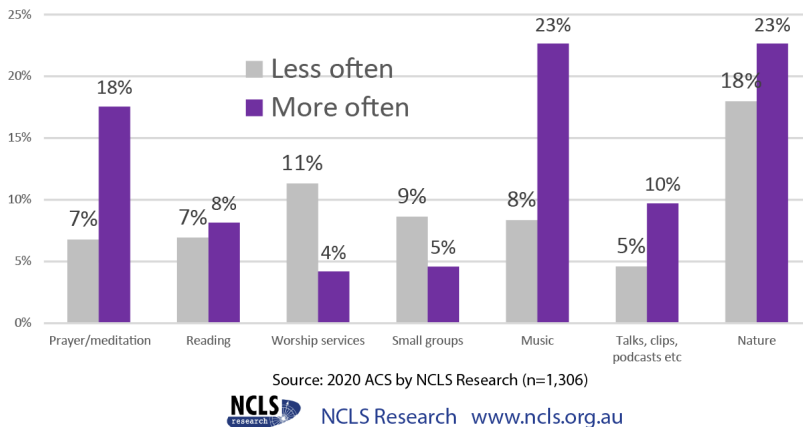


NCLS Research [www.ncls.org.au](http://www.ncls.org.au)

In more detail, the survey studies about the participants' specific spiritual practices in 2020. Spending time outdoors in nature and listening to music were the two most popular spiritual practices that people might lift

### Australians' involvement in prayer, worship, church and other spiritual practices in 2020

Have you drawn on these specific spiritual practices this year.  
If so, have you done this more often, less often or the same as in 2019?



one's spirit. In comparison to that, both church worship services, either in person or online, and small groups show a decrease whereas music, nature, prayer and meditation show its increase.

I totally agree with the result. That is what we have been at and how we have practiced our faith in God, our belief in spirituality and our own way to follow words and deeds of Jesus Christ. I have no doubt that we, Christians have come seek God and His presence more and more in this period of challenges and changes. We have drawn more and more on whatever we practice affirming and reaffirming our connection with God. God is God always there for us. Jesus is Jesus always there waiting for us. The Spirit is the Spirit always around us hovering for protection and care. The ways that we might seek to find them are changed but we still need God and His great help in our daily life. I am sure that you agree with me.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus on the mountain is still Jesus for his disciples, Peter, James and John, and for his all followers. Jesus keeps calling all disciples to join Him. In this call to discipleship, with Jesus'

transfiguration, God shows Himself exactly the same when He be with Moses and Elijah. On the mountain, Jesus with two great heroes represents the Law and the Prophets. Jesus, as He is, is viewed like a holy and sacred figure that his clothes become super, talking with the heroes. But He does not attempt to bring those important heritages of the past Israel's religion on to Himself and His ministry. Jesus, no matter what or how He looks like, is Jesus for those disciples on the mountain and those followers who are waiting for Him down the mountain.

However, meanwhile Peter misunderstands for the call. He misunderstands what it means to be with Jesus who is transfigured before him. He attempts to build three tabernacles as his ancestors attempted and box them in that framework of tradition and show-off his occupation of God. Maybe Peter attempts to change the image of Jesus from a humble and servant king to a victorious and glorious emperor. So Peter is again challenged, this time by the divine voice itself. "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" There are only three disciples with Jesus. "Listen to Him!" They are simply endorsed again by the voice to follow Jesus. This is Jesus' call to discipleship. Listen to me! Peter's attempts to box the Presence of God is dismissed. Jesus again teaches that the Presence of God in Him is available for all whoever believe in and follow Him. Moses and Elijah are gone. The mirage is removed. On the mountain, Jesus with Peter, James and John is there for all presenting God's purpose and will. Jesus is Jesus there for them, for you, for me and for many. This is God's will on Him, I truly believe.

I used to question my faith during the pandemic. I questioned to myself about what it means to be the Church? To be honest, I had more attention and values on the Church as gathered people. This means a gathered people is the Church when in person at a designated place like worship space. One part of my brain worked so hard to prepare all our online worship resources and approaches of pastoral care in various ways. At the same time, on part of my soul wondered whether our identity as the church is valid during a period of time not to gather in person. I was a bit doubtful. So hard to get out of the foolishness and struggles for my own soul and our church health. There was fortunately a critical moment that I had and I was with a number of our church members and it rescued me who wanted to box the Presence of God in physical space or certain time like Peter's attempts. This is my testimony.

Last year, on Sunday 1 November, All Saints Day, a number of young families of our church were invited by Meridith to meet with Heather McDowell who is now in heaven. It was a Sunday afternoon, cold and showered outside. Fifteen people plus two gathered in Heather's lounge. All became aware that her time was not too long with us. So, on Meridith's request, we sang two songs — *Come As You Are* and *May the Feet of God* together for her. It followed a prayer of blessing on her and Rosemary, her elder spoke of words of assurance and blessing. It was a huge privilege for me to be part of Heather's life and her very last moment as Christian friend and church minister. Also she taught me in that gathering and even today that we who were in the lounge formed a church in person, and are still a church in remembrance of who she was for us. That gathering underscores the importance of gathered people as the church. And remembering Heather's life and her giftedness of caring people is also forming a church if I still live it out this moment. I cannot box Heather's presence and her love. And I cannot institutionalise the

Presence of God but only follow it until He comes again. Now I am relieved from the struggle and now free ever before.

The Church is the Church there for us. We are the Church no matter where we gather or what we practice today. What we want is Jesus Christ, who walks with us in this life's journey, always willingly helps us, and silently listens to us and our prayers. Then Jesus is Jesus who let us do His Father's will in our life, though we are now in a period of stress and challenges. Let us hold fast to the Word speaking of Jesus Christ who is always at the same place, our soul and spirit, our mind and body, and our gathering and scattering. Let us welcome Jesus who may transform our lives today. In this year, we will need Jesus more and more.

Thanks be to God.

## **Prayers of the People      Rosemary Brook**

Heavenly Father,

We are so grateful that today we can again worship face to face. This means so much to us.

Thank you for your safekeeping over all these months, and bless those who are unwell or frail and unable to come along to church. Help us to be sensitive and to see ways we can bring friends and neighbours much needed comfort and support.

We pray for all those impacted by the pandemic including families forcibly separated through travel restrictions -and all those working so hard -and often in desperate circumstances – to test and care for the sick

and those dying, and to implement much anticipated vaccination programs.

We pray that governments and those in positions of responsibility will make decisions based on evidence and compassion- and that those in the highest office will take strong, effective and generous actions to address current and emerging issues and the well-being of their fellow citizens.

We pray for our young people and their families as their young ones grow in faith and understanding and develop the wonderful talents you have given them. They are all so very precious. Help us to provide the support and encouragement they need as they start on new learning this year, higher level studies and fresh, exciting pathways.

We thank you and pray for your continuing inspiration of our Minister Seung Jae and Grace and their family; dedicated ministers in our church family, Barnabas and Justin; our wonderful lay preachers, Robyn, and Kevin and Alan; and our loving congregation, many of whom exercise leadership in various ways. We pray also-and with thanks - for the thoughtful leadership of all those in our presbytery and at Synod.

We remember nearby sister churches, and today we pray for the continued presence and impact of Glades Hill Congregational Church and Kalos Korean Presbyterian Church.

In the World Cycle of Prayer, we pray for your churches in Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland which we know also as the home of the World Council of Churches.



We give thanks especially for:

- the commitment of these countries and churches to provide for those in the world who are in so much need.

We pray for:

- the organizations located there that work for justice, reconciliation and peace, and improved economic justice to benefit all;
- and we pray for those reaching out to support migrants and working to counter attitudes and practices that are harmful to migrants seeking only a peaceful and positive future for their families.

We pray for people of faith where it is extremely dangerous to follow you: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan to name a few. We pray earnestly for their safety and perseverance. We pray also for your wisdom and for the safety of local partners working on the ground in often risky situations for Christian organisations like Open Doors and Act For Peace and the Christmas Bowl in 2021.

In closing, we draw on the meditation of Pasteur Vincent Schmid in Genève and a prayer from Austrian churches to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the international treaty at the end of the Second World War. ([http://www.kamillianer.at/archiv/geb\\_oest.htm](http://www.kamillianer.at/archiv/geb_oest.htm))

Dear Father God,

Help us to remember that you are the creative origin of all that is,  
The source of our resources.

In the midst of contradictions, conflicts and absurdity  
Your Son offers us the light of reconciliation

with ourselves, with others, and with God.

Guide us through the immense complexity of this world.  
Help us to remember that You are the foundation of all that endures  
And You are beyond all that is transitory.

As we leave this place today,  
May no blindness destroy the work of your hands.  
May no hardness of heart close our doors in the face of people in need.  
May no discouragement hold us back from responsibly shaping the future.  
May no fears or prejudices separate us from those near and far.  
May your name be hallowed.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## 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.

## Offering

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry in these challenging 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**

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     **Make me a channel of your peace**

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood, as to understand,  
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.  
*O Master, grant that I may never seek ...*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving of ourselves that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Words and music by permission of Oregon Catholic Press  
CCLI #260394

## Benediction

Let us be like water  
which is always water though it is placed in hundreds of different containers,  
unless we have a clean and pure heart, sustaining many lives.

Let us be like Jesus  
who is always Jesus for many no matter what life they might live,  
unless we are faithful and vision-filled, bringing hope to many lives.

Let us go together,  
as the People of God,  
to show the power of the love of God,  
to form and transform the company of Jesus Christ,  
and to be who we are in the image of God the Creator.  
Amen.