

WESLEY UNITING CHURCH GEELONG

BAPTISM OF JESUS (YEAR B)

SUNDAY JANUARY 7 2024



Rev. Lorene Day

A WARM WELCOME to any who are visiting or worshipping with us for the first time today. Please make yourselves known. We trust you will enjoy this time of fellowship with us. You are invited to join us over a cuppa after the service.

ENTRY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that we are gathered on the sacred lands of the Wadawarrung people. The people who have been aware of the Creator Spirit moving in these lands since time immemorial, who have cared for these lands, who have been faithful stewards of this place.

We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and we commit to walking together in reconciliation and truth.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Right at the outset

God the Artist –

God the Earth-and-Heaven-Maker –

had a dream, an irresistible impulse to create.

Divine life buzzed with possibility.

Wind swept over the face of the waters,

before the brilliance suddenly emerged

and spread across the face of the deep.

Come, let's bask in the brilliance,

as we gather for worship today.

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Divine Wind,

sweep over us today, dwell amongst us,

and lead us into a new day.

**Show us all that is good, within and around us,
things which sparkle with your creative life.**

Amen.

HYMN Praise with joy the world's Creator (TiS 179)

1.

Praise with joy the world's Creator,

God of justice, love and peace,

Source and end of human knowledge,

Force of greatness without cease.

Celebrate the Maker's glory –

Power to rescue and release.

2.

Praise the Son who feeds the hungry,

frees the captive, finds the lost,

heals the sick, upsets religion,

fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence –
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.

3.

Praise the Spirit sent among us,
liberating truth from pride,
forging bonds where race or gender,
age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure –
foolishness none dare deride.

4.

Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
One God in community,
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe, when
shown Christ's vibrant unity.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Let's join with the angels in heaven as they sing God's glory song!
They shout out rave reviews and put God's name up in lights.

The God of glory thunders!

The whole earth leaps with joy and wonder!

All of creation stands to attention:

God is spectacular, wonderful, powerful, strong!

Let us speak with the language of gratitude:

God keeps us going, giving us peace like a river.

Yet not all is right within us.

At times we find ourselves far from home,
exiled from ourselves, exiled from each other,
exiled from God.

We come to this wilderness place with desperate and sorry hearts.

Forgive us, God, for the ways we have drifted from faith, hope and love.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jesus meets us in the wilderness of our lives,
offering forgiveness and blessing us with love: love which –
Understands us better than we understand ourselves
Restores us

Brings us home again
And helps us top start again.

We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

FIRST READING Genesis 1: 1-5 (NRSV)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

CONVERSATION

GOSPEL Mark 1: 4-11 (NRSV)

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

After the gospel:

In this is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

SONG God sends us his Spirit (TiS 412)

1.

God sends us his Spirit
to befriend and help us,
recreate and guide us, Spirit friend:
Spirit who enlivens,
sanctifies, enlightens, sets us free,
is now our Spirit friend.

Refrain

*Spirit of our Father, Spirit friend,
Spirit of our Jesus, Spirit friend,
Spirit of God's people, Spirit friend.*

2.

*Darkened roads are clearer,
heavy burdens lighter
when we're walking
with our Spirit friend:
now we need not fear
the powers of the darkness:
none can overcome
our Spirit friend.*

3.

*Now we are God's people,
bonded by his presence,
agents of his purpose, Spirit friend:
lead us forward ever,
slipping backward never,
to your remade world,
our Spirit friend.*

NEWS AND SHARING

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Dream Awakener,
God of newness,
God of fresh starts, you bring life from nothingness: order from chaos.
You say, "let there be ..." and something impossible emerges
from a seed that is placed in the ground.
So, we bring to you now our hopes for a better world.

Let there be peace where now there is bitter conflict.

Let there be hope for those who feel trapped or stuck in their
circumstances. ...

Let us all become more of who you have called us to be –
you who have known us in our most fragile and delicate forms.

Help us to nurture, tease out, cherish and honour
all the good we see in ourselves, in each other and in the world.

Amen.

OFFERING

Gracious God, let there be something good that comes from this giving. Help it to bring more creativity into the world. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

We come now to celebrate the joyful feast of the people of God.

**We come to this table, to eat and drink
with people from all over our world,
sisters and brothers in Christ.**

We come to this table to be nourished and renewed
for the ongoing work of justice and love.

We come to taste and see how good God is.

It is not a huge banquet that we share,
but just enough bread and just enough juice for us to share,
for us to taste and see the abundant goodness of God.

It is this hope that springs from a rock
and this delightful surprise that gathers us again today.

SONG The bread of angels (AT 474)

1.

you're line the sun that warms me,
with wind and clay you formed me,
and yet we touch and taste you here
you are the bread of angels.

*In the desert they defied you,
they protested, they complained
Give us banquets, happy, entertained
Your blood and body feed us all,
you are the bread of angels.*

2.

You are the heart of laughter,
the beauty we're all after,
the perfect joy in every dream
you are the bread of angels.

3.

Can any book contain you?
No system can explain you.

How can a myst'ry be defined?

You are the bread of angels.

4.

But here you are before us

to comfort and restore us.

With heaven's host we praise and sing:

you are the bread of angels.

We are hungry in our desert.

You can give us what we need;

you alone are

satisfaction guaranteed.

5.

Compassion is you nature;

no gift was ever greater.

Your blood and body feed us all -

you are the bread of angels.

(repeat last two lines)

Today we celebrate the space we create around the table,
by the cup and the loaf that we share.

Though we might not be in the same room,
we witness to the power of this amazing story
passed down from generation to generation,
the story that reminds us of God's glorious deeds.

We come together into the ebb and flow of faith
where our quarrels might be louder than our praise,
and our doubts may overshadow our hope.

Here at this table may we know grace, and experience renewal,
to live more and more fully into the goodness of God.

PRAYER

As we drink from the cup and share this bread,
may your Spirit be with us, enlivening us
and increasing our ability to choose your love
over all our fears.

May this meal increase our joy and wonder,
as we remember times when the future was unknown and uncertain,
especially the special meal that Jesus shared with his disciples
long ago, in an upper room.

WE REMEMBER

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up to death,
he took bread, gave you thanks,
broke it and said:
This is my body which is given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

When the meal was ended, he lifted the cup,
and again giving you thanks,
gave it to his friends and said:
This cup is the new covenant
sealed by my blood.
Do this, whenever you drink it,
for the remembrance of me.

And so, in remembrance of all you have done for us,
we take this bread and this cup,
and offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
made worthy by the perfect offering of Christ
our great high priest.

By your Word and Holy Spirit,
bless these gifts that we may truly share
Christ's body and blood,
and become, by grace, his body given
for the sake of the world.

For through your Spirit,
the whole earth makes its prayer
in sighs too deep for words,
longing for the day of freedom:
for in hope and by faith we were saved.

Accept our thanks and praise, good Father,
through your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ,
with whom and in whom,
and by the Spirit who dwells in us,

we worship you in joyful song:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE 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 for ever. Amen.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Christ is the bread of joy,
who shares food with sinners

Christ is the cup of life,
who revives the faint-hearted.

Let us receive what we are;
let us become what we receive.

The body of Christ.

Receive this holy sacrament
of the body and blood of Christ,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

THE COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious and loving God,
you have made us one in the Body of Christ
and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink.

Now send us forth to be your people in the world.

Give us the strength to resist what is evil,
And the courage to embody your life and love in all that we say and do.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

HYMN Sent forth by God's blessing (TiS 530)

1.

Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and live again,
his selfless love has made us whole.

2.

With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the Word in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.

3.

To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

4.

Then give us grace, Companion God,
to choose again the pilgrim way,
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

Today is the beginning of a new week,
and only the seventh day of 2024.

There is new life surging through us,
and the voice of love speaks, sending us out into the world.
May we bless others, celebrate what is good,
and help the world sparkle with hope,
through the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

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.

Acknowledgements: *Words for Worship*, January 7, 2024

L3: Advent, Christmas and the Season after Epiphany

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 10th

Craft Group
10.30 am



January 23rd

Coffee and Chat
10.30 am at the Hub East
Geelong, All Welcome



February 5th

Evening Fellowship
7.30 pm



Daily Diary

Wednesday	10th January	10.30 am	Craft Group
Sunday	14th January	10.00 am	Church Service

Rosters

	Today	Next Sunday
WELCOME	Betty Backwell	Gail Pett
READER	Judy Berridge	Bob Craig
Camera Operator	Lauren Woolnough	Heather Cooney
Data Projection	Patrick Puckett	David Strong
Morning Tea	Shirley Ogle	Gail Pett and Michael Nolan
Offering Counters	Vicki and Ian	Lorene and Judy
Communion	Denis Tomlins, Michael Nolan, Judy Berridge	

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