

Treading the verge of the Jordan

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
November 5 2023
Sunday 31A

Preparing for Worship Today

- Welcome to this service of worship at Mark the Evangelist!
- **We welcome back Rev Rob Gotch as our liturgist and preacher today.**
- Congregational responses are printed in ***bold italics***.
- If you get here early enough, **please read through the text of today's readings prior to our hearing them.** The text can be found at the end of the order of service. We will have brief conversation/response time to the readings after hearing them, and before the sermon – all to make our hearing a little sharper!
- Pray for those who will be leading us in our worship today!



A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude J-F Dandrieu, *Basse de Cromorne, Basse de Trompète, Plein Jeu*

The Gathering of the People of God

Processional

If you are able, please stand as the Scriptures are brought into the worship space.

Call to Worship

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures for ever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,

***those he redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,***

from the east and from the west,

from the north and from the south.

(based on Psalm 107)

Let us worship the Lord.

Prayer of invocation

Hungry and thirsty, our souls faint within us,
we cry out to you.
Deliver us from our distress,
lead us on the true path.
As springs of water flowing over a parched land,
breathe justice and peace into all chaos.
Let the hungry live,
that we may be fruitful in your service.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be present to receive our praise.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

(based on Psalm 107)

Hymn 98 We praise, we worship you, O God

With the Children

The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching

The Testimony of Scripture

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.

Alan Wilkinson

Joshua 3:7-17

Matthew 23:1-12

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Preaching of the Word

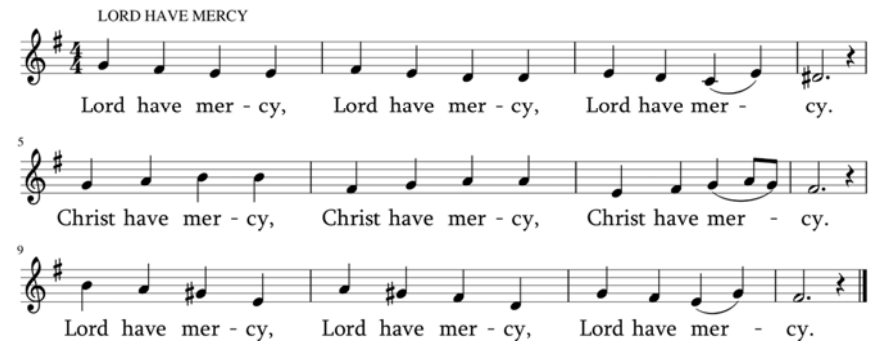
*The sermon text will normally be available
after worship and online*

A 'sermon of stillness' – a moment for quiet reflection – usually follows the preaching

Prayer of Confession

We are blind to the glory of your living presence;
We are deaf to the teachings of your gospel;
We resist the transforming power of your Spirit: ...
... just so, gracious God, have mercy on us ...

LORD HAVE MERCY



Lord have mer - cy, Lord have mer - cy, Lord have mer - cy.
Christ have mer - cy, Christ have mer - cy, Christ have mer - cy.
Lord have mer - cy, Lord have mer - cy, Lord have mer - cy.

Lord, have mercy; (3x)

Christ, have mercy; (3x)

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

(Please stand if you are able)

... 'Your sins are forgiven.'

Thanks be to God!

Doxology



Gl - ory to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

Lord God, hea - ven - ly king, al - migh - ty God and Fa - ther, we

wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Lord Jes - us Christ on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us; you are

seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our

prayer. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the

Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Jes - us Christ with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of

God the Fa - ther. A - - men.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Affirmation of Faith: We are a pilgrim people

Adapted from the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia

***We believe in one God,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
We proclaim Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One,
confessing him as Lord
to the glory of God the Father.***

***In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the Church,
the Head over all things,
the beginning of a new creation.***

***We acknowledge that we live and work
between the time of Christ's death and resurrection
and the final consummation of all things
which he will bring.***

***We are a pilgrim people,
always on the way towards a promised goal;
on the way Christ feeds us with word and sacraments,
and we have the gift of the Spirit
in order that we may not lose the way.***

***We will live and work within the faith and unity
of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church,
bearing witness to that unity
which is both Christ's gift and his will.***

***We affirm that every member of the Church
is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified.
Together with all the people of God,
we will serve the world for which Christ died.
And we await with hope the day of the Lord Jesus.***

Prayers of the People

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn 569 Guide me, O thou great redeemer
(If you are able, please remain standing until after the Lord's Prayer)

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.
(The prayer continues...)

...And so we praise you
with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation
in the eternal hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
hea - ven and earth are full of your glor - y, ho - san - na in the high - est!

BENEDICTUS

Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!***
(The prayer continues...)

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.***
(The people sit)

The Breaking of the Bread

...The gifts of God for the people of God....

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.
Je - sus bear - er of our sin have mer - cy on us.
Je - sus, re - deem - er of the world, grant us peace.

***Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sin, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.***

... Let us receive what we are,
let us become what we receive:
The body of Christ.

The Communion

The Uniting Church recognises this Table as the Lord's and, so, open to all who would normally commune in their home congregations.

GATHERING: *We'll gather in a circle around the table for the distribution of the elements; please wait until all have received and the prayer is said before returning to your seats.*

If you can't stand or walk to the front but would like to receive communion, please raise your hand if the celebrant has not already noticed you.

Post Communion Prayer

Father of all, we give thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.

May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Anchor us in this hope that we have grasped; so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to proclaim your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Many members now make their offering by electronic transfer; the plate will be passed for those who prefer to make cash/envelope offerings. The prayer dedicating the offerings 'captures' the full range of gifts.

Notices

The Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn 634 (tune 101) All who love and serve your city

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude J Pachelbel, *Ein' feste Burg*

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We'd love to hear your feedback on the service.

Our email address is:

enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

Our website is:

<http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/>

TODAY'S READINGS

Read the following texts-for-the-day before the service and consider:

- *What makes this text strange?*
- *How might this text "strange" us?*

Joshua 3: 7-17

⁷ The LORD said to Joshua, 'This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. ⁸You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, "When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan." ' ⁹Joshua then said to the Israelites, 'Draw near and hear the words of the LORD your God.' ¹⁰Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: ¹¹the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. ¹²So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.'

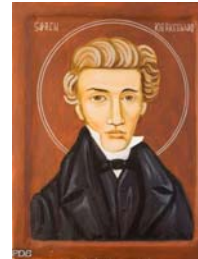
¹⁴When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. ¹⁵Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, ¹⁶the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing towards the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

Matthew 23: 1-12

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; ³therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practise what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,⁵ and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They love to have the place of honour at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have people call them rabbi. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students.⁹ ⁹And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.¹¹ ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Soren Kierkegaard, Christian thinker



Kierkegaard was at once a devastating critic and a passionate advocate of Christianity. He was a 19th century Danish thinker, who wrote many books – often with very strange titles – in his own distinctive style and who continues to pose challenging questions to Christians today. Because of his intense focus on the individual person, he is often regarded as the ‘father’ of modern existentialism.

Born in 1813, he felt deeply the death of his mother, three siblings and his father within a short span of years. He felt that there was a curse on his family on account of a great ‘sin’ committed by his father. He felt a misfit in the society of his day and is often called ‘the melancholy Dane’. He broke off an engagement because he would not involve his fiancée in his unusual life and on his death-bed he would not receive holy Communion from a (Lutheran) pastor, ‘the king’s official’.

Kierkegaard was fiercely critical of the way Christianity was practised in Denmark, where the Lutheran church was the state church. ‘Even the cows in Denmark are Christian!’ He could not bear to think that people might live in the illusion of being Christian when they merely ‘played’ at Christianity. What matters is actually to be a Christian; it is not a system of thought simply to be given intellectual assent.

Kierkegaard attacked the very idea of explaining Christianity. He vigorously opposed the philosophical system of Hegel, both for its grand metaphysical systematising and for offering an explanation of Christianity at a higher level. Kierkegaard’s writing was a loud protest against this in the name of concrete existence; this made him one of the fore-runners of existentialism. Being based on the ‘Absolute Paradox’ (that God became human), Christianity is not to be explained. A person responds to it in faith and trust, staking one’s whole life on it, like ‘swimming in 20,000 fathoms of water’; not by intellectualising it and trying to prove its truth.

Kierkegaard never fails to challenge, even if he is sometimes shockingly overstated. His style is deeply ironic, often caustic. If he were writing today, he might have said that faith is like bungy-jumping. This doesn’t say everything to be said about faith, but it does identify something essential to it.

Christiaan Mostert

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Quarterly Discussion Groups	Wed's and Fri's till Nov 24
Hymn singing after worship	November 12 New
Hotham Mission Board (VicTas Synod Meeting)	November 28, 745pm (Nov 18-21)
(Yarra Yarra Presbytery Meeting)	(Dec 2)
Congregational Meeting (2024 Budget)	December 10 New

NOTICES

AKBAR OUR NEIGHBOUR

Akbar, the Iranian asylum seeker supported by this congregation since his release from (illegal) detention in 2013, continues to live in Australia with no visa, no work rights and no legal status. Thanks to his generously/privately funded North Melbourne gardening 'work', and the regular financial contributions of some of our congregation members he enjoys some financial independence. Continued thanks to all who continue to support him, and other asylum seekers without status. Akbar is included in our prayers of intercession on the first Sunday in each month.

Rosalie Hudson

People to commemorate this week

Soren Kierkegaard, Christian thinker

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Oceania: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia (Maohi Nui), Kanaky, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

LECTIONARY READINGS 12 NOVEMBER 2023

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25; Psalm 78:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

Congregation of Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne

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As a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia,

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist is responsible for Hotham Mission.

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Please advise all notices and roster changes to **email:**

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