

Turn,  
O LORD!  
How long?

Congregation of Mark the Evangelist  
19 November 2023  
Sunday 33A

*Preparing for Worship Today*

- Welcome to this service of worship at Mark the Evangelist!
- 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**

*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!***

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

***From everlasting to everlasting you are God.***

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

***so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*** (Ps 90:1-2,14)

**Prayer of invocation**

**Hymn 47**      **Our God, our help in ages past**      **(Psalm 90)**

**Greeting and Welcome**

***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.**

Readings:      Zephaniah 1:7-16  
                    1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Gospel:          Matthew 25:14-30

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**

LORD HAVE MERCY

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

5    Christ have mer - cy,    Christ have mer - cy,    Christ have mer - cy.

9    Lord have mer - cy,    Lord have mer - cy,    Lord have mer - cy.

**Lord, have mercy; (3x)**  
**Christ, have mercy; (3x)**  
**Lord, have mercy. (3x)**

**Declaration of Forgiveness**

*(Please stand if you are able)*

...hear, then, Christ's word of grace to us:  
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 495      **Father, we give you thanks who planted**

*(If you are able, please remain standing until after the Lord's Prayer)*

#### The Invitation

#### 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.**

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,  
5 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 -  
4 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

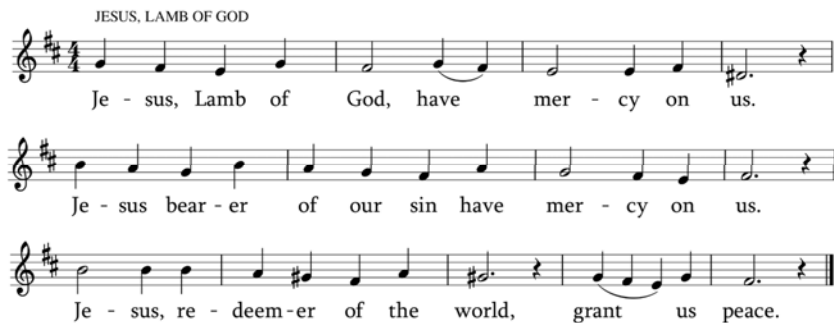
***Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, 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

### 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 657 (tune 497) God of freedom, God of justice**

## Word of Mission and Blessing

## Postlude

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

Our email address is:  
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Our website is:  
<http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/>

## TODAY'S READINGS

### **Zephaniah 1:7-16**

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. <sup>8</sup> And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who dress themselves in foreign attire. <sup>9</sup> On that day I will punish all who leap over the threshold, who fill their master's house with violence and fraud. <sup>10</sup> On that day, says the LORD, a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills. <sup>11</sup> The inhabitants of the Mortar wail, for all the traders have perished; all who weigh out silver are cut off. <sup>12</sup> At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm." <sup>13</sup> Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them. <sup>14</sup> The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. <sup>15</sup> That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, <sup>16</sup> a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup> But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup> for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup> So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup> for those who sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup> For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

### **Matthew 25:14-30**

<sup>14</sup> "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup> to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup> In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup> But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup> And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup> Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Hilda of Whitby, Faithful servant



Whitby Abbey, in England's North Yorkshire, is perched on top of a steep hill, exposed to the cold winds blowing in from the North Sea. Standing here amidst its ruins it is easy to appreciate the tenacity of those who lived out a call to the religious life on this site. In particular we are remembering Hilda of Whitby, who around 657 became the first Abbess of the Monastery. We remember Hilda (or "Hilde" as she was called in her day) for her strong faith and servant leadership.

Born in 614 into a Northumberland royal family, she decided to become a nun at about the age of 33. Under the leadership of St Aidan (another significant figure in Celtic Christianity) she established a number of monasteries before being invited to lead the newly-established one at Whitby in approximately 657. It was a double monastery (then called Streonashalh), housing religious communities for men and for women. Hilda created a community with fine educational and religious formation standards. She encouraged members of the community to develop their gifts and callings, and the monastery produced five bishops. When Caedmon, a humble worker in the monastery stable, was brought before her, after receiving a song in a vision, she designated him poet and songwriter.

These were early years in the formation of Christian England, and Celtic culture and Roman influence sometimes led to disputes. Raised in Celtic Christianity, Hilda must have found it quite confronting when her monastery was chosen as the venue for the Synod of Whitby around 664. A variance in the observance of Easter had begun to emerge and the Synod of Whitby resolved to continue this in the Roman tradition, which Hilda took on board. As the reputation of Hilda and her monastery grew, bishops and kings sought her advice. She was clearly not only a wise and able leader of the daily life of her communities, but also a respected spiritual guide.

For the last seven years of her life Hilda suffered very poor health, but she remained in leadership and was not afraid to oppose church leaders when she was unhappy with decisions or directions being taken!

Hilda died in 680. One of her nuns, Begu, had a vision before she died in which she saw the roof of the monastery opening and the soul of Hilda carried to heaven by angels. The monastery she founded was destroyed by Vikings in 867. In 1078 it was re-built as a Benedictine Monastery, and destroyed in 1540 in Henry V111's dissolution of the monasteries. It is these ruins that stand on the hilltop at Whitby today.

*Contributed by Ann Siddall*

## The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

[www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle](http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle)

### Indonesia

The Indonesian archipelago has been an area of migration for thousands of years. Successive movements of people brought Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam to the region. From the 17th through the mid-20th century the Dutch colonized Indonesia. During World War II it was occupied by Japan. In 1945, Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno declared independence, which was recognized by the Netherlands in 1949, after three years of unavailing military action against the liberation forces. Sukarno unified the country by introducing one language, and Pancasila (the five pillars: belief in one God, humanism, national unity, democracy, and social justice). One of the challenges of Indonesia is the balance between a unitarian state and regional autonomy, e.g. in Aceh, North Sumatra, and Tanah Papua, in the eastern part of the archipelago. Christianity in Indonesia is comprised of two religions: Protestantism and Catholicism. Protestant churches are numerous, because many are ethnic and cover an island or part of it, or an island group. The ecumenical Communion of Churches, which aims at forming one church, has over 80 member churches. The Pentecostals and the Evangelicals have each their own group, and there is overlap, and cooperation, between the three. Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation in the world. It has a tradition of tolerance, but since 1998 there has been an upsurge of Islamic extremism, resulting in violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians that have disrupted communities in Java, the Moluccas and Central Sulawesi. Many people have been killed and properties destroyed. Communal peace has become a high priority for the Christians.

### Timor Lorosa'e (East Timor)

The Catholic Church is the majority church in the country. It has played an important role in the struggle leading up to independence. The Protestant Church of Timor Lorosa'e, although a small minority church, has also been a witness to justice and reconciliation. Another small church is the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal).

## **Philippines**

The Philippines consist of an archipelago of over 7,000 islands, which was inhabited long before it was colonized by the Spanish in the 16th century. In 1898 Spain ceded its colony to the USA after the Spanish-American war. Occupied by Japan during World War II, the Philippines became independent in 1946. For 21 years the country was under the corrupt and authoritarian regime of President Marcos, who was ousted in 1986 by a peaceful popular uprising. Popular resistance to the neo-colonial domination of the ruling elite, and the struggle for democracy, land reform, gender equality and social transformation remain strong. In the southern island of Mindanao, where the Muslim minority is concentrated, a separatist movement fought for independence until 1996, when a treaty was signed. The economy of the Philippines is based on agriculture and the manufacturing industry. Increasing poverty has forced many Filipinos to seek work elsewhere in Asia, Europe and North America. The Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia, with a majority Catholic Church, established under the Spanish rule. Several large independent churches have separated from the Catholic Church. Protestant missions arrived during the early 20th century. The National Council of Churches was formed in 1963 as an ecumenical group of the "mainline" Protestant churches, committed to unity and service, human rights and social justice. There is some cooperation with the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, which is affiliated with the WEA. Several large Pentecostal and Evangelical denominations make up about 50 percent of the Protestants.

### **People to commemorate this week**

Hilda of Whitby, Faithful servant

### **Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

East Timor (Timor Leste), Indonesia, Philippines

### **LECTIONARY READINGS 26 NOVEMBER 2023**

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

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As a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia,

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