

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
 December 31 2023
 (New Year's Day)

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!
- There are a couple of seasonal changes in the order of service today – see the sung processional and the doxology mid-service, in particular.
- Pray for those who will be leading us in our worship today!



A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude D Buxtehude, *In dulci jubilo*

The Gathering of the People of God

Sung Processional

(We stand to sing the introit during the entry of the scriptures)

***O come let us adore him,
 O come let us adore him,
 O come let us adore him,
 Christ the Lord.***

[Hymn 304]

Call to Worship

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Shout with joy to the Lord, all lands,
lift up your voice, rejoice and sing.

Sing a new song to the LORD,
for God has done marvellous things. *Psalm 98.5, 1*

Prayer of invocation

Hymn 290 Of the Father's love begotten

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.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 *Life by season*

Psalm 8 *Lord, what are mortals that you care for them?*

¹ O Lord our governor,
how glorious is your name in all the world!

² Your majesty above the heavens is praised
out of the mouths of babes at the breast.

³ You have founded a stronghold against your foes,
that you might still the enemy and the avenger.

⁴ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have ordained,

⁵ What are mortals, that you should be mindful of them;
mere human beings, that you should seek them out?

⁶ You have made them little lower than the angels
and crown them with glory and honour.

⁷ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands
and put all things under their feet,

⁸ All sheep and oxen,
even the wild beasts of the field,

⁹ The birds of the air, the fish of the sea
and whatsoever moves in the paths of the sea.

¹⁰ O Lord our governor,
how glorious is your name in all the world!

Revelation 21:1-6a *The renewal of all things*

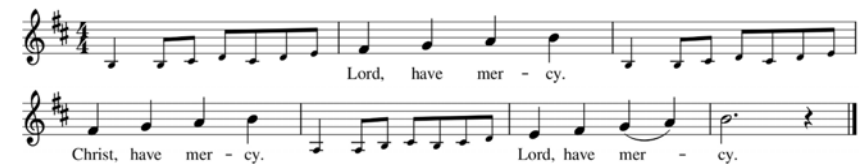
For the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

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 via TIS 313 v.1

*Good Christians all, rejoice,
with heart and soul and voice;
now you need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all,
to gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!*

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

(Names for inclusion in the prayers may be recorded in the book in the narthex)

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn 305 Let earth and heaven combine

(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...)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might, hea - ven and earth are
full of your glo - ry, ho - sa - na in the high - est. Bles - sed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r 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 in the highest!
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....



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on
us, have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world: have mer - cy on us, have mer - cy on us Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world: grant us peace, grant us peace.

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace, 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.

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 617 By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude D Buxtehude, (Excerpt from) *Praludium und Fuga in D major*

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TODAY'S READINGS

Read the following texts-for-the-day before the service and be ready for a brief conversation about them before we hear them read!

Ecclesiastes 3.1-13

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ²a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; ⁵a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; ⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; ⁸a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. ⁹What gain have the workers from their toil? ¹⁰I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with.

¹¹He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; ¹³moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.

Revelation 21:1-6

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." ⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Josephine Butler, renewer of society

Josephine Butler was born on 13 April 1828 in Northumberland. Her father John Grey was a strong advocate of social reform and a campaigner against the slave trade. His cousin was Earl Grey, British prime minister between 1830 and 1834.

John Grey's family were members of the Church of England, and strong supporters of the anti-slavery campaign. The Grey children learned early about the horrors of slavery and Josephine's first feminist instincts were aroused by the terrible stories of female slaves made pregnant by their masters and then forced to give up their babies. The girls were educated at home by their mother, and Josephine had only a few years of formal schooling. Despite that, as an adult she was a prolific writer of books and pamphlets, and became a competent speaker of both French and Italian.

The Grey siblings remained close throughout their lives, even when marriage took two of the sisters to live abroad. Their political and Christian commitments inspired them to become involved in a number of philanthropic campaigns, but Josephine was the most dedicated and the most persistent. Her faith was also an overwhelming motivation for all she did – at 17 she had an experience of conversion which led her to prioritise daily prayer and bible study throughout her life.

Josephine married George Butler in 1852. He was an academic with similar political views to her own. Together they had four children but in 1863, their six-year old daughter died. In an attempt to cope with her grief, Butler threw herself into charity work, particularly related to the rights of women. Amongst the issues on which she campaigned was child prostitution. She was part of a group which forced parliament to raise the age of consent from 13 to 16.

[contd ...]

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Josephine Butler, renewer of society [contd ...]

In 1869, Butler began her campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts. These had been introduced in the 1860s in an attempt to reduce venereal disease in the armed forces. Police were permitted to arrest women living in seaports and military towns who they believed were prostitutes and force them to be examined for venereal disease. Butler toured the country making speeches condemning the acts. Many people were shocked that a woman would speak in public about sexual matters. But in 1883 the acts were suspended and repealed three years later.

Butler also took a great interest in women's education. She pressured the authorities at Cambridge University into providing further education courses for women, which eventually led to the foundation of the all-women college at Newnham. She was appointed president to the North of England Council for the Higher Education of Women in 1867.

Butler's writing - promoting social reform for women as well as education and equality - was widely distributed. Her most famous publication 'Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade' was written in 1896.

Butler died on 30 December 1906.

Peter Gador-Whyte

Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl



Thank you for joining with churches across Australia as we share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

Since 1949, the Christmas Bowl has brought together committed Australian Christians with dedicated local partners around the world to give hope to people uprooted by conflict and disaster. By sharing this tradition, you are helping build a world where all people have a safe place to belong. **Thank you.**



✦ CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au ✦

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

People to commemorate this week

Josephine Butler, renewer of society

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Egypt, Israel and Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon

LECTIONARY READINGS 07 JANUARY 2024

Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

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