



*Icon of The Holy Prophet Jonah carved in steatite by Jonathan Pageau*

Congregation of Mark the Evangelist  
 Sunday 21 January 2024  
 Epiphany 3B

## *Preparing for Worship Today*

- Welcome to this service of worship at Mark the Evangelist!
- Congregational responses are printed in ***bold italics***.
- Pray for those who will be leading us in our worship today!



## **A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

**Prelude** N Strogers, *Fantasia*

## *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!***

For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
***for my hope is from him.***

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress;  
***I shall not be shaken.***

On God rests my deliverance and my honour;  
***my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.***

Psalms 63: 5-7

### **Prayer of invocation**

**Hymn 598** *Dear Father, Lord of humankind*

### **Greeting and Welcome**

## *The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching*

### The Testimony of Scripture

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

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62: 5-12      **Hymn 33** *Rest in God alone*  
*The congregation sings the first response after the cantor. The cantor sings the verses.*

1 Corinthians 7: 29-31

Mark 1:14-20

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.  
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



### The Peace

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

## Affirmation of Faith

### The Apostles' Creed

***I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.***

***I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.***

***On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.***

***I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.***

### Prayers of the People

#### *The Visible Word: Eucharist*

**Hymn 136**      *There's a wideness in God's mercy*

*(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.***

*(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:



***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 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.*

## 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.*

*Offering prayer*

### Notices

## ***The Sending Forth of the People of God***

**Hymn 530**     *Now let us from this table rise*

### Word of Mission and Blessing

**Postlude** M Peerson, *Alman*

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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

### **Jonah 3:1 – 5, 10**

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup> So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. <sup>4</sup> Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" <sup>5</sup> And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

<sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

### **Psalms 62:5-12**

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. <sup>6</sup> He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. <sup>7</sup> On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. <sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. [Selah] <sup>9</sup> Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. <sup>10</sup> Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. <sup>11</sup> Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, <sup>12</sup> and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

### **1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, <sup>30</sup> and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, <sup>31</sup> and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

### **Mark 1:14-20**

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." <sup>16</sup> As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-- for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." <sup>18</sup> And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup> As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup> Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

## The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

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

### Cyprus

Cyprus is an independent republic since 1960. The constitution divided the population into two ethnic communities, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. In 1963 tensions began to develop which resulted in a rebellion led by the Turkish Cypriot leaders. A United Nations peacekeeping force was established in 1964. In 1974, after a coup d'état staged by the ruling military junta of Greece, Turkey invaded the northern part of the island. As a result, 142,000 Greek Cypriots and 55,000 Turkish Cypriots were displaced, and another 20,000 Greek Cypriots enclaved in the area were gradually forced to leave. In 1983 the Turkish occupied area was unilaterally declared an independent "state", recognized by Turkey only. UN-led direct talks between the two sides resumed in 1999. In 2002 the UN presented a plan for a comprehensive settlement. After further negotiations it was submitted to the people of Cyprus in two simultaneous referenda in 2005. The Greek Cypriots rejected it, the Turkish Cypriots voted in favour. Cyprus was admitted as a member of the European Union in 2005, but without achieving the goal of unity. In the event of a solution, which is still hoped for by all Greek and Turkish Cypriots, there is a provision for the admission of the Turkish-occupied part of the island. The Church of Cyprus is the majority church. There is an Armenian Apostolic Church which is part of the Holy See of Cilicia. The Anglican community belongs to the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East. Latin and Maronite Catholic churches, and several small Protestant and Pentecostal churches are also present in Cyprus.

### Greece

Greece was the centre of ancient civilization, which influenced greatly the later European civilizations, both East and West. When the apostles Paul and Timothy brought the gospel to Greece, it was part of the Roman empire, which became the Byzantine empire from where Orthodox Christianity spread to Central and Eastern Europe. Greece was occupied by the Ottoman empire in the 16th century. It won its independence from the Ottomans in 1821, and became a monarchy. The history of Greece in the 19th and the first part of the 20th century was dominated by the national question, i.e. to extend the territory so as to include all Greeks. This policy succeeded before and during World War I in parts of the Balkans, but in Turkey the Greeks were defeated in 1922 and more than a million were expelled. In turn, 500,000 Turks were sent back from Greece

to Turkey. This history explains the still persisting tensions between Greece and Turkey, although relationships have greatly improved. After a period of military dictatorship, democratic elections and a referendum created a parliamentary republic in 1974, and the monarchy was abolished. Greece joined the then European Community (now European Union) in 1981. Its economy has benefitted from the regional aid programmes of the EU. The Greek Orthodox Church is inextricably bound up with the Greek people, nation, state, culture and history. Catholics, Protestants, and Pentecostals represent about 1.5 percent. The largest independent group are the Orthodox Old Calendarists. In recent years, the Greek society has become more and more pluralistic.

### Türkiye

Türkiye consists of a small territory in south-east Europe (Eastern Thrace), with the larger part of the country in the Middle East (Asia Minor). The Turks, who were Muslims, arrived in the area in the 11th century and gradually conquered the Byzantine empire, until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Turkish Ottoman empire at its height covered the Middle East, south-east Europe and North Africa. It lost most of its territories in the 19th century. Its end was marked by the 1915 genocide of the Armenians, who had been living in Asia Minor for centuries. The empire was dismantled after World War I. The nationalist leader Kemal Atatürk founded in 1923 the Republic of Türkiye within its present boundaries. Türkiye is a secular state, with Islam as the majority religion. It has applied for membership with the European Union. Negotiations began in 2005. The Christians, mainly Orthodox, who were several million at the beginning of the 20th century, are today only a small minority. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, the primary spiritual leader of the Eastern Orthodox churches, has its see in Istanbul. The Armenians and the Syrian Orthodox, who used to live in the east and southeast of Türkiye, are now mostly concentrated in Istanbul, or have emigrated. Most of the Protestants are expatriates. There are some Turkish Evangelical churches, and Koreans are doing mission in Antakya, the former Antioch. Although religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, the churches experience restrictions. The theological faculty of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on the island of Halki, has been closed by the authorities since 1971.

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Agnes of Rome, martyr



A calendar of martyrs that dates from the mid-4th century includes Agnes's name and the location of her grave near Via Nomentana, in Rome. A church built on this site in 350 commemorates her. She is thought to have been killed in the persecution under Diocletian (304), but other traditions bring the date forward to the time of Decian. All the sources agree that she was young, barely thirteen years old, and was already determined not to marry but to dedicate her life to Christ and the work of the church, when persecution broke out. She left home and offered herself for martyrdom. Resisting all threats (and various sources include various elaborations of fire, brothel, public shaming) she was put to death by the Roman practice of being stabbed in the throat. Brutal and horrifying as all martyrdom stories are, Agnes's death reminded the Christian community that the faith and autonomy of young women were not to be underestimated.

Agnes's choices were constrained, of course, compared, for example, to her brothers if she had any. Thirteen was not only part of childhood but also the age at which most Roman girls of good family were married. Christian resistance to the civic duty of marriage and children was a serious challenge to the Empire. The whole edifice of Imperial power, was built on slavery, the trade of people whose bodies were not their own. As Peter Brown commenting on the most recent scholarship affirms, Christianity argued for 'freedom' from the sexual assumptions of the Roman world. Agnes was part of that argument, and was understood by her community to be claiming freedom.

Ambrose of Milan reflected on Agnes as a model in a series of letters for his sister Manellia and other Christians who were thinking of dedicating their lives in community. The letters, collected as the treatise *On Virgins*, date from 377:

Saint Agnes... is said to have borne witness at the age of twelve. Detestable cruelty, indeed, that did not spare such tender years! Yet all the greater the faith that found a witness in so young a child!

Was her little body really large enough to receive the sword's thrust? She was hardly big enough to be struck, yet was great enough to overcome – and that at an age when little girls cannot bear a mother's stern look and think a needle's jab a mortal wound!

[contd ...]

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Agnes of Rome, martyr [contd ...]

...Others wept, but not she. Many marvelled that she should be so spendthrift with a life hardly begun. All were amazed that one too young to manage her own life could be a witness to God. She would prove that God could give what people cannot – for what transcends nature must be from nature's Author!

A hymn in her honour, *Agnes beatae virginis*, is also attributed to Ambrose of Milan. It praised her courage and purity, making the ancient link between virginity and purity of commitment to Christ, between idolatry and adultery. All the martyrs carried this link between faith and chastity for the community, but it is especially prominent in the way the women have been remembered.

Agnes is one of seven women and girls, all martyrs, whose names are remembered alongside Mary the mother of Jesus in the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving of the Roman rite. The others are Cecilia, Felicity, Perpetua, Lucy, and Agatha. Her connection to Rome is underlined in the blessing of two lambs on her feastday 21 January. When they are shorn at Easter time, the wool is used to weave the narrow shoulder bands of the pallium that is given by the Pope and worn by Catholic metropolitan archbishops as a symbol of their unity.

*Dr Katharine Massam*

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Church Council

February 18, after morning tea

Quarterly Essay Conversation

Feb 14, 1:30pm at CTM

### People to commemorate this week

Agnes of Rome, martyr

### Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Cyprus, Greece, Türkiye

## **LECTIONARY READINGS 28 JANUARY 2024**

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

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As a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia,

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