

# There is no fear in love

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist  
and Church of All Nations  
Easter 5B  
April 28, 2024

## *Preparing for Worship Today*

- A special welcome today to the people of the Church of All Nations!
- 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 Titelouze, *Magnificat sexti toni: misericordia*

### *The Gathering of the People of God*

**Sung Processional** (TIS 390, selected verse)

*We stand to sing after the cantor introduces the chant and as the Scriptures are carried into the worship space.*

Refrain

*Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,  
alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.*

4. God has proclaimed his gracious gift:  
new life for all! Alleluia!

*Refrain*

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**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** 443 Come dearest Lord, descend and dwell

## 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.**

1 John 4:7-21 *There is no fear in love*

Psalms 32 *Happy are the forgiven* PCS 29

*The organ plays the refrain, then the cantor sings, then the congregation join in...*

David Clark Isele



You are our hiding place, O Lord.

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John 15:1-8 *The true vine*

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

## 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!**

## The Peace

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

## Affirmation of faith: God is with us

**We are not alone,  
we live in God's world.**

**We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.**

## We trust in God.

**We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.**

**In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.  
We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God.**

*The United Church of Canada,  
General Council 1968, alt. 1998*

## Prayers of the People

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

### *The Visible Word: Eucharist*

## Hymn 391 Come, God's people sing for joy

*(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.**

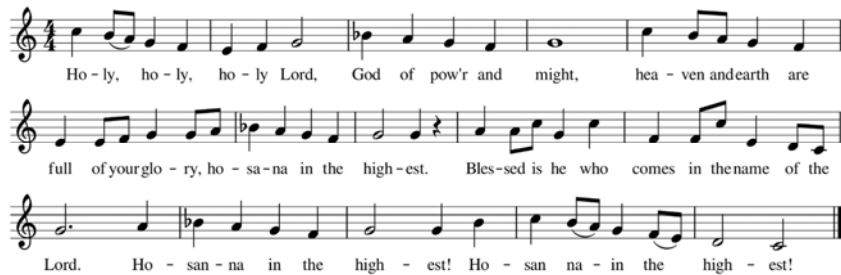
Lift up your hearts.

**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...)*



Christ has died, Christ is ris - en, Christ will come a - gain.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*(The prayer continues...)*



Bless-ing and hon - our, glo - ry and pow'r are yours for - e - ver and ev - er, are yours for - e - ver and ev - er.

**Blessing and honour, glory and pow'r  
are yours forever and ever,  
are yours forever and ever.**

*(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

...Holy things for a people made holy;

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Psalm 34:8

**(Sung:) Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,  
alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name. [TIS 390]**

...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.*

*During the distribution today, you might like to join in with the sung refrain (Hymn 714):*

***Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
come to me and never be hungry***

***Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
trust in me and you will not thirst.***

## 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 217** Love divine all loves excelling

## Word of Mission and Blessing

**Postlude** J Titelouze, *Magnificat sexti toni: suscepi*

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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

*Read the following texts-for-the-day before the service and be ready for a brief conversation about them before we hear them read! When it comes to the texts being read for us, try to avoid the temptation to read them again here along with the lector, and simply listen!*

*Do these texts "go too far", or not far enough?*

### 1 John 4.7-21

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup> We love<sup>2</sup> because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters,<sup>2</sup> are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister<sup>2</sup> whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters<sup>2</sup> also

## John 15

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

### PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

#### Dorothy Soelle, Christian thinker



“God, your Spirit renews the face of the earth.  
Renew our hearts also  
And give us your spirit of lucidity and courage.  
For the law of the Spirit  
Who makes us alive in Christ  
Has set us free from the law of resignation.  
Teach us how to live  
With the power of the wind and of the sun  
And to let other creatures live.” Dorothee Soelle

Dorothee Soelle was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1929. As a child she played no personal role in the rise and fall of the Third Reich; she was fifteen when the war ended. But as revelations unfolded about the full extent of the Nazi crimes she was filled with an “ineradicable shame”: the shame of “belonging to this people, speaking the language of the concentration camp guards, singing the songs that were also sung in the Hitler Youth.” Her young adulthood was spent reflecting on the great question of her generation: How could this have happened? The hollow answer of the older generation, that “we didn’t know what was happening,” impressed on her the duty to question authority, to rebel, and to remember “the lessons of the dead.”

The moral and existential challenge of her times led Soelle to study philosophy and, later, theology. She was one of the principal authors of the so-called “political theology” – an effort to counter the privatized and spiritualized character of “bourgeois” religion through the subversive memory of Jesus and his social message. In light of the Holocaust she was particularly critical of a “superficial understanding of sin” largely confined to personal morality. “Sin,” she wrote, “has to do not just with what we do, but with what we allow to happen.” Her initial challenge was to develop a “post-Auschwitz theology,” an understanding of God who does not float above history and its trauma but who shares intimately in the suffering of the victims. Such an understanding of God defined, in turn, a new meaning of Christian discipleship.

A true prophet, Soelle did not simply denounce the way things were, but looked forward to a “new heaven and a new earth.” Her theology was inflected with poetry and drew on her wide reading of literature and her love of music and art. She bore four children from a first marriage. The experience of motherhood strengthened her hope for the future, while reminding her that pain and joy are inextricably combined in the struggle for new life.

[contd...]

## PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

### Dorothy Soelle, Christian thinker [contd...]

She met her second husband, at the time a Benedictine monk, when they collaborated as organizers of a "Political Evensong" in Cologne. Beginning in 1968, this ecumenical gathering of Christians joined to worship and reflect on scripture in light of the political challenges of the day – whether the Vietnam War, human rights, or the campaign for social justice.

It became a hugely popular event, regularly drawing up to a thousand participants. The gatherings were controversial, however. Their notoriety was among the factors that prevented Soelle – despite her thirty books – from ever receiving a full professorship in a German university.

Nevertheless, from 1975 to 1987 she spent six months each year as a professor of systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York. It was a particularly fruitful time for her, as she broadened her theological perspective in dialogue with feminism, ecological consciousness, and third-world liberation theologies. She also continued to translate her theology into political activism – in solidarity with embattled Christians in Central and South America, in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and in particular in resisting the nuclear arms race.

The decision of NATO in 1979 to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Europe made her decide "to spend the rest of my life in the service of peace." She was arrested several times for civil disobedience and was tireless in challenging the churches to take action against what she saw as preparations for a new global holocaust. In an address to the Geneva Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1983 she began, "Dear sisters and brothers, I speak to you as a woman from one of the richest countries of the earth. A country with a bloody history that reeks of gas, a history some of us Germans have not been able to forget." It was this experience that impelled her to raise a cry of alarm. Never again should a generation of Christians employ the excuse that "we didn't know" about plans and preparations for mass murder.

In her later writings she increasingly spoke of the need to join mysticism and political commitment. She defined mysticism not as a new vision of God, "but a different relationship with the world – one that has borrowed the eyes of God." Soelle died on April 17, 2003, at the age of seventy-three.

*by Robert Ellsberg*

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

MtE Luncheon – Combined at CTM with CAN	<b>TODAY!</b>
Nominations for CC and Eldership	<b>Due today</b>
Quarterly Essay Conversation	May 1, 1:30pm at CTM
Congregational AGM	May 12 <b>NEW!</b>
Online discussion groups	TBA – Mid-late May

## NOTICES

### QUARTERLY ESSAY CONVERSATION, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1



Come and grab some lunch at the café on May 1, and join us at 1:30pm for our next Quarterly Conversation on the Quarterly Conversation!



**People to commemorate this week**

Dorothy Soelle, Christian thinker

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

**LECTIONARY READINGS 05 MAY 2024**

Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

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