

# How long, O Lord?

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist  
Trinity B  
May 26, 2024

## *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 usually have a brief time of conversation about the readings before 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** L Couperin, *Fantaisie [OL67]*

## *The Gathering of the People of God*

### **Sung Processional**

*This round can be sung in numerous parts; feel free to join in wherever you like!*

Part 1  
All cre - a - tion un - der hea - ven, lift your heart, lift your voice!

Part 2  
God comes bring - ing health and whole - ness; lift your heart, lift your voice!

Part 3  
Listen for repetition of this bar to finish

Part 4  
Listen for repetition of this bar to finish

***All creation under heaven,  
lift your heart, lift your voice!  
God come bringing health and wholeness,  
lift your heart, lift your voice! (repeat...)***

### Call to Worship

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,  
**ascribe to the Lord  
glory and strength.**

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name;  
**worship the Lord  
in the beauty of holiness.**

*Psalm 29.1f*

### Prayer of invocation

**Hymn 125** The God of Abraham praise vv.1, 4-6

### 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.**

Isaiah 6:1-8 *The commissioning of Isaiah*

Psalm 29 The Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

*REFRAIN: Organ, then cantor, then all together (sung also at the end).  
The psalm text is then sung responsively to the TONE*

REFRAIN Hal H. Hopson

Praise the Lord. Praise the  
Lord. Praise the name of the Lord.

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### TONE

- <sup>1</sup> Ascribe to the Lord, you powers of heaven,  
**ascribe to the Lord glor -|- y and strength.**
- <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name;  
**worship the Lord in the beaut -|- y of holiness.**
- <sup>3</sup> The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;  
**the Lord is upon the | mighty waters.**
- <sup>4</sup> The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation;  
**the voice of the Lord is a | glori -|- ous voice.**
- <sup>5</sup> The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;  
**the Lord breaks the | cedars of Lebanon;**
- <sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf  
**and Sirion like a | young wild ox.**
- <sup>7</sup> The voice of the Lord splits the flash of lightning; the voice of the Lord  
shakes the wilderness;  
**the Lord shakes the wilderness | of Kadesh.**
- <sup>8</sup> The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests  
bare;  
**in his temple | all cry, 'Glory!'**
- <sup>9</sup> The Lord sits enthroned above the water flood;  
**the Lord sits enthroned as king for | evermore.**
- <sup>10</sup> The Lord shall give strength to his people;  
**the Lord shall give his people the bless -|- ing of peace.**

### REFRAIN

John 3:1-17 *How can these things be?*

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!**

## Doxology via hymn 588 In heavenly love abiding

### 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 497 Let all mortal flesh keep silence

*(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-er and might, hea-ven and earth are  
full of your glor-y, ho - san-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 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 in the highest!**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

*(The prayer continues...)*



**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

*(The prayer continues...)*



**Blessing and honour, glory and power  
are yours forever more.**

*(The prayer continues...)*

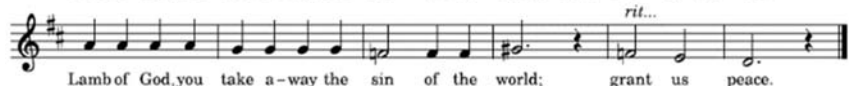
### The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

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

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin 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.*

### 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 416 Great God your Spirit

### Word of Mission and Blessing

### Postlude V Lübeck, *Prelude & Fugue*

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

Our email address is:

[enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto: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 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 you see any connection between these two texts?*

### ***Isaiah 6***

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.’

<sup>4</sup>The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup>The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ <sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’

### ***John 3.1-17***

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having

grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’

<sup>11</sup> ‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup>Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.’

## The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

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

### Angola

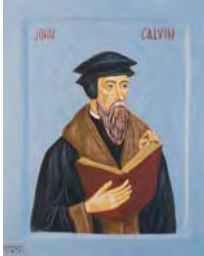
Two Bantu kingdoms, the Kongo and the Mbundu, existed in the area now known as Angola, when the Portuguese arrived there at the end of the 15th century. The name Angola is derived from the name of the Mbundu king Ngola. The Portuguese colonial domination was marked by wars, the slave trade and oppression of the African people. Angola achieved its independence from Portugal in 1975, after a long liberation war which caused immense suffering. A protracted civil war followed, between the MPLA supported by the former Soviet Union, and UNITA supported by the USA and South Africa, that led to hundreds of thousands of displaced people, millions of refugees, and an estimated 1.5 million deaths between 1975 and 2000. The country continues to face huge problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction, aggravated by the problem of landmines and the incidence of HIV/AIDS. Angola is a major oil producer but the revenues hardly benefit the population because of corruption and greed of the elite. The churches have been deeply involved in peace and reconciliation, cooperating across denominational barriers of Protestant, Evangelical and Catholic. Two large churches, the United Methodist and the Anglican Diocese, are indirect members of the WCC, respectively through the United Methodist Church and the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. The Evangelical Alliance of Angola groups the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Together with the Charismatics, they represent about 10 percent of the Christians in Angola (2000).

### Mozambique

Bantu people migrated into the area of today's Mozambique in the 4th century. Arab trade posts were established along the coast several centuries before the Portuguese began to colonize the territory in the 16th century, seeking slaves and gold. Portuguese colonial influence was mainly exercised through private companies until after World War II, when thousands of Portuguese settled in Mozambique, officially a province of Portugal. In 1964, the liberation struggle began, and in 1975 Mozambique achieved its independence under the socialist regime of FRELIMO, the liberation front. A resistance movement, RENAMO, backed by South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, began a civil war which lasted until 1990, when a new constitution was enacted. One million Mozambicans died, 1.5 million fled to neighbouring countries, and 4 million were displaced. A peace agreement was reached in 1992 with the help of the UN. Since then, Mozambique has consolidated political stability and put in place conditions for economic recovery. The majority of the population live from subsistence farming. Export products are cash crops, aluminium and electricity. The Catholic Church is the largest church. It played an important role in bringing the civil war to an end. The Pentecostals make up about 40 percent of the Protestant and Independent churches. The Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, and African independent churches are also large. The Methodists belong to the WCC through the United Methodist Church, and the Anglicans through the Province of Southern Africa. The Christian Council of Mozambique is the ecumenical body. The Evangelical Association is affiliated with the WEA.

#### PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

##### John Calvin, Reformer of the Church



In May 2009, the 500th anniversary of the birth of the French Reformer Jean (John) Calvin 1509-1564 was acknowledged in Geneva and around the world. Calvin helped consolidate the Reformation movement. He was “second generation” to Martin Luther’s initial protest against Catholic indulgences in 1517. John Knox of Scotland (1514–1572) was another contemporary. Calvin was educated for the Catholic priesthood at the University of Paris and later in law at Orleans.

Calvin’s influence as a Reformed theologian was significant in Europe during his years in Geneva. His theology particularly emphasized two central themes: salvation by grace alone, and the Kingdom of God. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, first written in Latin in 1536 following his break with Catholicism, are still regarded as a clear authority in some Protestant churches today. In his many confessional documents and other writings, Calvin tried to meld together gospel and practical Christian living.

For Calvin, the Bible was the focal point of church life. All members were to be lifelong students of the Scriptures, which “should be read with a view to finding Christ in them.” He wanted to inject conviction and the presence of the Holy Spirit into liturgy and divine worship. Calvin believed that while the Lord’s Supper should be central to each worship service, its mystery required protection from profaning sinners. This “godly discipline” led to a tightened access to Holy Communion within the Genevan church.

Calvin also attempted to transform the civil society of his time. He (and other Reformed leaders who lived in Geneva) cooperated with the town council to define the civil codes of the day. Some historians have pointed to this period between the mid-1550s and Calvin’s death as one of moral austerity and political control.

Calvin remains controversial. For some, the principal concern is with the emphasis of Calvin’s successors on an expanded doctrine of predestination, which led to a fear of hell. Other adherents have seen material prosperity as a sign of God’s blessing and its recipients as predestined for salvation. Later, Max Weber named Calvin the “father” of capitalism.

[contd...]

#### PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

##### John Calvin, Reformer of the Church [..contd]

To mark Calvin’s 500th anniversary, the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Dr. Setri Nyomi, reminded WARC’s member churches (Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed, and Uniting/United), of their origins in the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. Dr. Nyomi invited us to reflect on three themes from Calvin’s life and ministry.

First, Calvin professed a strong call to compassion and social justice. This may have been engrained in him through his flight from persecution, or from his ministry with expelled French refugees in Geneva. He believed that “Where God is taken seriously, humanity is cared for as well.”

Second, Calvin wrestled with “the question of whether, and how, the law of God revealed in the Bible . . . was to be obeyed in the political and social order.” For him, reconciliation involved justice in society and “the rejection of war [between nations] as a means to serve the Gospel.” Calvin believed that “we must live together in a family of brothers and sisters, which Christ has founded with his blood.” To Calvin, this family included “barbarians and Moors”—an unpopular view in his day.

Third, despite the realities of the period of the Reformation, Calvin was committed to visible unity through the “one Lord of the one church”. He was willing to mediate matters of division to minimize “scandalous” schisms. Historically, however, Reformed churches do not have a good record on visible unity, and commitment to ecumenism is often undermined by internal division. For Calvin, such circumstances were a poor witness to the gospel and inhibited the church’s mission in the world as well as the lives of its members. Visible unity remains a challenge for churches to demonstrate the one body of Christ.

*Contributed by Judi Fisher*

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Online discussion groups	TBA – Mid-late May
Quarterly Essay Conversation	June 26, 1:30pm at CTM

## NOTICES

### The Wesley Centre: Theology, Ethics, and Public Policy

About the Wesley Centre

In partnership with key agencies of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania, Wesley Church Melbourne is excited to be launching a new Centre to enhance understanding and debate on vital issues in Australian society. Grounded in the history, theology and traditions of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Centre will focus on broad, deep, and substantial explorations of the values and ethics that underlie public policy. It will draw together people with diverse views and create a space for honest, thoughtful conversations about what is at stake and how the Gospel of Jesus Christ could help shape a more just society.

The Centre will be a key forum for public conversation about ethics and public policy through the lens of theology.

If you would like further information, or to join our email list for news of a launch and other events please email: [contact@thewesleycentre.org](mailto:contact@thewesleycentre.org)

*(From the web site of [Wesley Church](#), Lonsdale Street)*

### Mark the Word

Vicki and Rosemary are seeking contributions for the 2024 Winter edition of Mark the Word. We are again not proposing a theme for this edition and are open to any topic.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could send these via email to us ([vicki.radcliffe@gmail.com](mailto:vicki.radcliffe@gmail.com) or [rosemarywearing@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarywearing@gmail.com)) **no later than Sunday, 26th May 2024.**

### People to commemorate this week

John Calvin, Reformer of the Church

### Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Angola, Mozambique

### LECTIONARY READINGS 02 JUNE 2024

1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-6,13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

Congregation of Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne

**Website:** [marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au](http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au)

Minister: Rev Dr Craig Thompson

Ph: 9329 0018 Mob: 0408 389 751

or **email:** [minister@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto:minister@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au)

As a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia,

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

Office ph.: (03) 9326 8245

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

[enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto:enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au)

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