

Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
19 January 2025
Epiphany 2

Welcome to this service of worship of Mark the Evangelist
Today's service is being live-streamed for the participation of those who
cannot join us physically today.

A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude JH Buttstedt, *Praeludium...*

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 (from Psalm 36)

Rod Mummery

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

***Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgements are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.***

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,

and your salvation to the upright of heart!

Let us worship the Lord!

Prayer of invocation

Hymn For the beauty of the earth – Tis 137

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.

Isaiah 62:1-5

Peter Blackwood

John 2:1-11

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Preaching of the Word

A 'sermon of stillness' – a moment for quiet reflection – follows the preaching

Prayer of Confession

Lord Jesus Christ, hear us as we offer our confession:
Your hour has come, but we are late to the party.
Your abundance overflows, but we prefer our own resources.
Your glory is revealed, but we wander in darkness.

... Just so, gracious God, have mercy on us...



God of mercy, forgive us and sent to us your Spirit of truth to lead us
into the hour of Christ, rejoicing that he was lifted in glory to offer
fullness of life to all. Hear us for the sake of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

(Please stand if you are able)

If we confess our sins God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 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: 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

Rod Mummery

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

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn Here we adore you, hidden Saviour Lord - Tis 500 (to tune 87)

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

The Invitation

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin
and seek to live in peace with one another.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

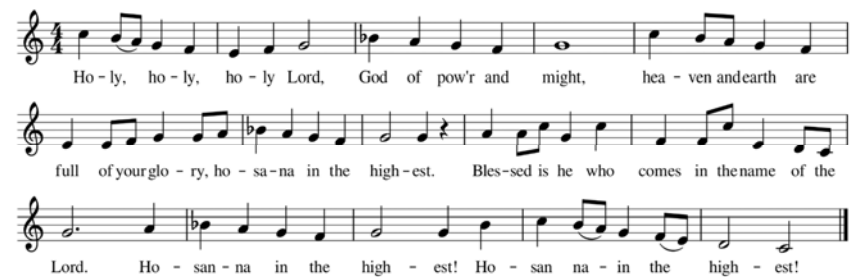
We lift them to the Lord.

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 to sing the eternal
hymn:



(The prayer continues...)

... Great is the mystery of faith ...



(The prayer continues...)

... that all blessing and honour might be yours:



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

Christ is the bread of Resurrection, new life for all.
Christ is the cup of salvation, wounded for our healing.
The gifts of God for the people of God



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. 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

(We remain seated as the offering is brought forward)

*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 As man and woman we were made – Tis 645

Word of Mission and Blessing

Go forth into the abundance of Christ Jesus, that his life may sustain you in faith, hope and love, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Postlude JH Buttstedt, ...& *Capriccio*

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

Our email address is:

enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

Our website is:

<http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/>

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Church Council	Feb 4 (online)
Quarterly Conversation	Feb 7 in DML
Lenten Studies (book details online soon)	Weekly from March 5 / 7

People to commemorate this week

Agnes of Rome, martyr

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Lectionary Readings | 26 January 2025

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

A Parish Mission of the UCA, MtE is responsible for Hotham Mission

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