

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist

Lent 5A | 22 March 2026

Stop.
Being.
Dead.

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

A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude CPE Bach, *Aus der tiefe*

The Gathering of the People of God

Sung Processional (TIS 715)

*We stand to sing as the Scriptures are brought into the worship space. This can be sung as a round, repeating at **; you're welcome to chime in there if you'd like!*

Everything that has breath

****Praise the Lord of hosts forever, praise the Lord!**

Call to Worship

Come, wait for the LORD;

in God's word is our hope.

Come, wait for the LORD;

with the LORD there is mercy. (Psalm 130.4,6)

Come, wait, worship...

Prayer of invocation

Hymn 375 Come, let us with our Lord arise

With the Children

The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching

ForeWord

Word: The Testimony of Scripture

Cantor

Congregation

John 11.1-44 *I am the resurrection and the life*

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Word: In Preaching

*The sermon text will normally be available
after worship and online*

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

AfterWord: Confession

Psalm 130 *Out of the depths*

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 for life

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.
We set the offering at the foot of the cross, with the whole of ourselves.*

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn 506 Author of life divine

(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!

(The prayer continues...)

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

(The prayer continues...)

Bles-sing and hon - our, glor - y and pow'r are yours, for-ev - er 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...

...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.

Notices

The Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn 569 Guide me, O my great Redeemer

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude JS Bach, *Wer nur den lieben Gott laesst walten*

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People to Commemorate

Oscar Romero, martyr

When Oscar Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador in February 1977, the priests who were socially involved were unenthusiastic. Born in 1917 in Ciudad Barrios he had five brothers and two sisters. He was ordained in Rome in 1942 and began doctoral studies in ascetical theology but was called home from Fascist Italy. On route he made stops with another priest in Spain and Cuba. In Cuba they were placed in an internment camp for a time. He worked as a parish priest for 20 years in San Miguel. Romero rose gradually from parish priest, to secretary to a bishop, to auxiliary bishop, to finally an archbishop.

He was said to be a man of prayer but conventional in his outlook. His very installation was used by the authorities to step up their reign of terror in El Salvador. However, when a massacre took place, Romero indicated that he agreed with the sentiment of a message, which had been distributed among the crowd, which said: "The church is where it always should have been; with the people, surrounded by wolves."

The martyrdom of Rutilio Grande, a Jesuit priest who had been totally identified with the peasant poor of the countryside, along with two friends, moved Romero deeply when he went to the scene. He urged the government to investigate the deaths but they ignored his request. He began to come in conflict with the repressive government. He spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture. On a visit to Europe he met Pope John Paul II and expressed his concerns at what was happening in his country. He criticised the US government for giving military aid to the El Salvadoran government. He encouraged the development of new liturgies and more meaningful modes of worship.

Ministering in a revolutionary situation, he was criticised for his innovations and his call for the church to become the voice of those who had no voice. His broadcast sermon on a Sunday began to attract a large audience. Romero became known as a champion of the poor. He knew he was courting death. He hoped that through his death he would contribute to the transformation of El Salvador. In a sermon the day before his death he called on Salvadoran soldiers as Christians to obey God's higher order and to stop carrying out the government's repression and violations of basic human rights.

On 24 March, 1980 this small gentle man was saying the Mass. As he reached the words of the consecration: "This is my body given for you....this is my blood shed for you" a shot rang out and the archbishop fell to the ground, killed instantly by a bullet through the heart. A friend of the people, one who desired peace and justice, he had become an enemy of those in power. Oscar Romero is remembered as a champion of the poor, a person who lived and died for Christ, a martyr for God and the people. His voice and witness is heard today especially in contexts of oppression. He is an inspiration to all who would follow Christ and accept the cost of discipleship.

Contributed by Chris Walker

Paul Couturier, reformer of the Church

With the Uniting Church's commitment to ecumenism, the story of Paul Couturier and his commitment to seeking the unity of the church, is a welcome story and we are the richer for knowing it.

Fr. Paul Couturier was one of the great pioneers of the ecumenical movement. His vision and understanding of Christian unity were echoed in the documents on ecumenism in the second Vatican Council, and paved the way for the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1947.

He was born in 1881 in Lyon and ordained in the Society of St. Irenaeus in 1906, a company of mission and teaching priests. A graduate in physical sciences he became a teacher at the Society's school where he remained until 1946.

As a result of an Ignatian retreat in his early twenties he was encouraged to take up some relief work among Lyon's many Russian refugees, which in turn, introduced him to Orthodoxy and a hitherto unknown world of spirituality and Church life.

Metropolitan Platon Gorodetsky (1803-1891) of Kiev had a saying, that 'the walls of separation do not rise as far as heaven', which became a principle of Couturier's ecumenical outlook. Strongly influenced also by the teaching of Dom Lambert Beauduin, he placed the prayerful celebration of the Church's liturgy at the heart of his spiritual life.

Couturier believed that all Christians could unite in regular prayer and devotion, each according to their own tradition and insight, for the sanctification of the world and the unity of Christ's people. So was born the idea of 'the Invisible Monastery', a spiritual community, beyond the earth's 'walls of separation', where God's vision of his Church's unity could be realized.

Couturier was strongly influenced by Jesus' prayer on the night before he died. He believed Jesus' concern was not simply for his disciples' unity, but so that the world might believe. He realized that the unity of Christians was therefore a reality in heaven and that overcoming worldly divisions through penitence and charity would be to offer a renewed faith to the whole world. Merely human efforts would not prevail.

Couturier believed that as people increasingly embody their different traditions, they will grow closer to Christ. If Christians could be aware of each others' spirituality and traditions, they could grow closer to each other.

In January 1933, during the Church Unity Octave, Couturier held three days of study and prayer. The Octave had been founded in 1906 by the Reverend Spencer Jones and Fr. Paul Watson of the Friars of the Atonement (when still Anglicans) to pray for the reunion of Christians with the See of Rome. After the Friars became Roman Catholic, the observance was extended to the whole Church in 1916.

But Couturier wanted to build on the Octave something that could embrace in prayer those who were unlikely ever to become Roman Catholics but who nevertheless desired the end to separation and the achievement of visible unity.

In 1934, Couturier's new form was extended to a whole week, and the modern Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was born. The annual celebrations in Lyon, with their important speakers and high level ecumenical participation, became famous, attracting attention throughout Europe.

In 1936, the Abbé Couturier organized at Erlenbach in Switzerland the first inter-confessional spiritual meeting, mainly of Catholic clergy and Reformed pastors, which was to meet in fellowship for many years and directly contributed to the foundations of the World Council. Two visits to England in 1937 and 1938 completed his initiation into ecumenism with the discovery of Anglicanism.

During the Second World War, largely on account of his extensive international contacts, Couturier was imprisoned by the Gestapo. This broke his health, but he identified his suffering as a cross which he was being called to take up in the service of the unity of Christians. He continued to pray the liturgy of the Church, to make arrangements for the Week of Prayer and to sustain friendships around the world.

He lived to rejoice in the foundation of the World Council of Churches in the aftermath of the Second World War. Although his own Church did not join the new body at that time, his hope that Rome could lead an appeal for convergence was heard by Pope Pius and doubtless informed the forthcoming Council. He died in Lyon on 24 March 1953.

Peter Gador-Whyte

NOTICES



The Wesley Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Policy
MtE provides significant financial support for the Centre

Responding to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Racism

SUNDAY 22nd March, 7.30-9pm, free online webinar

If you've ever wondered how to stand up against racism in a practical way, join us for this webinar led by Aboriginal Christian Leader Brooke Prentis in conversation with Robyn Whitaker, Director of The Wesley Centre. We'll explore why there is an inquiry into racism and how to make an impactful submission if you are interested in doing so.

<https://events.humanitix.com/from-silence-to-solidarity-raise-your-voice-for-the-parliamentary-inquiry-into-racism>

FAITH AFTER FAITH

Craig publishes weekly on *Faith after Faith*, a Substack site. You can subscribe to receive email updates of recent posts (avoid the paid subscription invitations!). Use the QR image here to check in, or see faithafterfaith.substack.com for more info. Recent posts include:



- Recent Sermons
- "Consider the lilies" (sermon preached at Ormond College's Commencement Service)

Holy Week and Easter Services

Sunday March 29 *The Passion according to St Matthew*

Holy Week: Daily (Mon-Thur) prayer services in the CTM Chapel, 12.30-12.50pm

Maundy Thursday Evening: 7.30pm, in the CTM chapel (Tenebrae Service around St John's Passion)

Good Friday: Combined Service with CAN and Northcote UCA, 9.30am at Church of All Nations, 180 Palmerston Street, Carlton

Easter Vigil Saturday April 4, 8pm in the Yuma Auditorium

Easter Day Sunday April 5, 10.00am as usual!

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

See above for more details on these events

Holy Week / Easter Services	As detailed above
Church Council	Tue Apr 7, 7.30pm Online
Hotham Mission Board	Fri Apr 17, 3pm hybrid NEW
Quarterly Conversation on the Quarterly Essay	Fri April 24, 1100am in the Library
Hymn-learning session	May 3, after morning tea NEW

People to commemorate this week

Oscar Romero, martyr; Paul Couturier, reformer of the Church

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Lectionary Readings | March 29 2026

Isiah 50:4-9a; Psalms 118:1-2,19-29; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 21:1-11

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

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