



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

‘Dare to question and to act!’

<https://woden-valley.uca.org.au/>

Pentecost 26 – 17th November 2024

Hope in an Age of Anxiety

Leader: Roger Mauldon

Music: Helen Swan

Readings and prayers: Libby Coates and Willa Mauldon



"Hope is the thing with feathers" – Emily Dickinson

The gong sounds to settle us for worship

Prelude

Lighting the community candle

As light comes from this candle, may the blessing of Jesus Christ come to us and brighten our way. May the word of Christ bring life into the darkness of this world, and also to us as we gather in worship today and await his coming to make all things new. Amen

Acknowledgement of first peoples

For this Land in which we live, we give thanks! For the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples, who first cared for this site upon which we worship, we give thanks! We honour their sacred stories, their dreamings and their connections with the earth, rivers, lakes and oceans. May we work together for the restoration of the land and for reconciliation among all her peoples.

Call to worship

"You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy" (*Psalm 16:11- psalm for the day*)

We gather in anticipation
with the words of the psalmist
on our lips and in our hearts

Show us the path of life

When our heart is glad
and when it is not

Show us the path of life

When our soul rejoices
or when it does not

Show us the path of life

When our body rests secure
or when it is restless with insecurity

Show us the path of life.

Gather us all into Your presence
fill us with Your joy.

Show us the path of life. Amen

Hymn: Sing Praise and Thanksgiving, TiS 107, by Paul Gerhardt (1607-76), translated from German by Margaret Barclay and adapted by Colin Gibson

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| <p>1 Sing praise and thanksgiving,
let all creatures living
now worship their maker
with gladness and song;
all glory and honour
we come to him bringing:
<i>O praise to the Almighty
Sing praise to our God!</i></p> | <p>3 Lord, frame our desiring
to do your requiring,
that unto your glory
be all that we do;
and where we have faltered,
give strength and give healing:
<i>O praise to the Almighty
Sing praise to our God!</i></p> |
| <p>2 Our lives of his making
he brings to their waking;
in darkness he held us
in his gracious care,
now into the light
we are called from our sleeping:
<i>O praise to the Almighty
Sing praise to our God!</i></p> | |

Welcome and introduction

An opening prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for bringing us together today and surrounding us in the fellowship of song, prayer and reflection on your word. Where there is anxiety,

grant us your calm.

Where there is doubt,

grant us your assurance.

Where there is worry,

grant us your peace.

Remove the shackles so that we may hear you, follow you, and go out into the world rejoicing, knowing that you are always with us and will travel with us through all the difficulties and joys of life. **Amen**

We pass the peace

In Christ we are reconciled to God, our parent, to each other, our sisters and brothers, and to the whole creation that nourishes and sustains us.

We meet in Christ's name and share God's peace.

The peace of Christ be always with you,
and also with you.

Mark 13:1-8 (NRSV)

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Some verses on 'hope' in Romans and Hebrews

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:24-25)

[So,] let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. We are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and thus are saved. (Hebrews 10:23 and 39)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction (or evidence) of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

[And] may the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with each other [and] may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:5 and 13)

Reading: "Hope" is the thing with feathers, by Emily Dickinson (1830-86)

"Hope is the thing with feathers" (written around 1861) is a popular poem by the American poet Emily Dickinson. In the poem, "Hope" is metaphorically transformed into a strong-willed bird that lives within the human soul - and sings its song no matter what. Essentially, the poem seeks to remind readers of the power of hope and how little it requires of people. The speaker makes it clear that hope has been helpful in times of difficulty and has never asked for anything in return. "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" is one of a number of poems by Dickinson that breathes new life into an abstract concept by using surprising imagery and figurative language. (litcharts.com)

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
 That perches in the soul -
 And sings the tune without the words -
 And never stops - at all -
 And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
 And sore must be the storm -
 That could abash the little Bird
 That kept so many warm -
 I've heard it in the chillest land -
 And on the strangest Sea -
 Yet - never - in Extremity,
 It asked a crumb - of me.



Reflection on the readings`

Music for reflection

Hymn: All my hope in God is founded, TiS 560, by Robert Bridges
(1844-1930) after Joachim Nerander (1650-80), v 5 altered

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| <p>1 All my hope in God is founded;
all my trust he will renew,
through all change and chance
 he guides me,
Only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
Calls my heart to be his own.</p> | <p>3 Daily the almighty giver
will his boundless gifts bestow;
in his will our souls find
 pleasure,
leading us where'er we go.
Love will stand, at his hand,
joy shall wait for his command.</p> |
| <p>2 God's great goodness lasts forever
deep his wisdom passing thought;
splendour, light and life attend him,
beauty springing out of naught.
Evermore, from his store,
New-born worlds rise and adore.</p> | <p>4 Daily the almighty giver
will his boundless gifts bestow;
in his will our souls find pleasure,
leading us where'er we go.
Love will stand, at his hand,
joy shall wait for his command.</p> |
- 5 As God's will is done in heaven
 may God's will on earth be done,
 high above all praises praising
 for the gift of Christ his Son.
Hear Christ's call, one and all,
 those who follow will not fall.

Offering

God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth.

With all creation, we thank our Creator. Amen

Lighting the care candle

As we light this candle, we ask God to set our hearts on fire with love for our neighbours and the world, so that all may experience the wonder of God's care. Amen

Prayers of the people, followed by the contemporary version of the traditional 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 forever. Amen**

Hymn: Touch the earth lightly, TiS 668, by Shirley Murray (1951-2017)

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| <p>1 Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in
our care:
gift of great wonder,
ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow
will bear.</p> | <p>3 Let there be greening
birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air
that is sweet,
health in God's garden,
hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace
will complete.</p> |
| <p>2 We who endanger,
who create hunger
agents of death for all creatures
that live,
we who would foster
clouds of disaster —
God of our planet, forestall
and forgive.</p> | <p>4 God of all living
God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow
and the sun,
teach us, deflect us,
Christ reconnect us,
using us gently, and making
us one.</p> |

Closing prayer

May we hold fast to all we hope for, without wavering.

May we know God's promise of faithfulness in all things.

May we continually encourage one another to love and act justly,

and may the boundary lines between anxiety and hope fall in good places for us all.

And may the grace, peace and hope of God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

abide with us this day and evermore. **Amen**

Extinguishing the candles

And as we extinguish our candles, we know that the light of the risen Christ continues to glow through the living of our lives.

Postlude

This week at Woden Valley Uniting Church

Notices; celebrations; tea and coffee

Acknowledgement: Many ideas expressed in the reflection on the readings were drawn from Miroslav Volf, 'Theologies of Hope', <https://reflections.yale.edu/article/seeking-light-notes-hope/theologies-hope>.