



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH



‘Dare to question and to act!’

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

Pentecost 15 – 21st September 2025



Garden of Peace
Isaiah 32:14-18

PEACE WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2025

For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks; until a spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

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 light 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! In this Season of Creation we honour their sacred stories, their dreamings and their connections with 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

Peoples from every corner of creation,
join to celebrate with all creatures upon the Earth!
 Young and old across the planet,
rejoice in this day that God has made!
 Indigenous peoples of every land,
help us to sense the Spirit who dwells deep within every land!
 Black and white, and brown and grey,
celebrate with us the colours of creation!
 All humanity on Planet Earth,
praise God for all the gifts of our planet home.
 Let all creation sing and dance!
Sing, creation, sing and dance!

Welcome and introduction

Hymn: All creatures of our God and King, TiS 100, verses 1, 4 and 7

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| <p>1 All creatures of our God and King lift up your voice and with us sing alleluia, alleluia; O burning sun with golden beam, and silver moon with softer gleam, O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!</p> | <p>4 Dear mother earth, who day by day unfolds rich blessings on our way, O praise him, alleluia! All flowers and fruits that in you grow, let them his glory also show; O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!</p> |
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- 7 Let all things their Creator bless
 and worship him in humbleness;
 O praise him, alleluia!
 Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
 and praise the Spirit, Three in One:
 O praise him, O praise him,
 alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Prayer for Peace Between Humanity and Creation

Creator of all that is,
 You breathed life into the seas and skies,
 the mountains and the meadows,
 the smallest seed and the greatest star.

May our hands plant abundantly,
 our minds imagine the possible without limit,
 and our hearts act with hope —
 restoring forests, cleansing waters,
 and building communities where all life can thrive.



May we walk gently
 so the ground beneath our feet rejoices, speaks softly,
 so the winds carry songs of blessing.
 May we take only what we need
 so that all beings flourish.

May our hearts unite with the heart of creation,
 so that we live as kin, not conquerors —
 protectors, not plunderers.

Let peace flow like water between us and all that lives,
 until every creature knows safety,
 and the whole earth sings again in harmony. **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.

Psalms 8, TiS 3, verses 1, 3, 4 and 6

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| <p>1 Lord, our Lord, your glorious name all your wondrous works proclaim; in the heavens with radiant signs evermore your glory shines.</p> | <p>4 What is humankind that we should be cared for lovingly, raised by you to angels' height, crowned with honour in your sight?</p> |
| <p>3 Moon and stars in shining height nightly tell their Maker's might; when we see you're your heavens afar then we know how weak we are.</p> | <p>6 Lord, our Lord, your glorious name all your wondrous works proclaim; yours the name of matchless worth, excellent in all the earth.</p> |

Luke 16:1-13 (NRSV)

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager (vv 1-8a)

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.' Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' Then he asked another,

‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly;

Four reflections by Jesus on the parable

- 1 (v 8b) for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.
- 2 (v 9) And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.
- 3 (vv 10-12) Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?
- 4 (v 13) No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Reflection on the word

Music for reflection

Reading: A further reflection on Luke 16:1-13, by Jon Humphries, UC Minister of the Word, Baulkham Hills

Christ, what are we to do with your teaching?

What can you mean with stories like the parable of the dishonest manager?

Why is dishonesty seemed to be praised?

Why does it seem to make it praiseworthy to induce others to be culpable in cheating?

How do you seem to be calling us to self-interest at the cost of others?

We obviously cannot take it literally.

We comprehend the exhortation to reject greed for wealth, even if we too often fail to live it and love it.

Your Kingdom and communion is amongst and within us.

The world can and should be different and better.

Wealth should have no meaning for us other than to be a tool for righting injustice and a power to dismantle the systems which result in people being poor.

But let us not dodge the reality that we don't fully comprehend your way.

Let us continue to struggle to work at what you mean for us,

Not settling for easy answers or convenient and comforting interpretation.

Let us not be surprised that your teaching is shocking and jarring, unsettling us from our status quo.

Keep making it hard for us, Christ,

So that we might grow in faith

And be found in your way of the cross

As true disciples of difference

Being agents of your compassion and communion.

So, may it be. Amen.

Hymn: For the fruits of all creation, TiS 168

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| <p>1 For the fruits of all creation, thanks be to God; for his gifts to every nation, thanks be to God; for the ploughing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping, future needs in earth's safe keeping, thanks be to God.</p> | <p>2 In the just reward of labour, God's will be done; in the help we give our neighbour, God's will be done; in our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are sharing, thanks be to God.</p> |
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- 3 For the harvest of the Spirit,
thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God;
for all the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God!

Offering

God, our Creator, through your love you have given us the fruits of creation 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

Abba Prayer (abbreviated and adapted from '*The (Ecological) Lord's Prayer*', by Jane Irwin, and shared as part of Common Grace's 2022 Season of Creation Evening of Prayer and Praise.)

Parent God, who originates, sustains, redeems and completes the whole of life, we acknowledge you as the Spirit of holiness and wholeness within all of creation.

We pray for the fulfillment of your kingdom where all life is valued, preserved, and nourished, and where there is peace, harmony and equity among humans and all other creatures.

Help us to care for our earth garden, so that all living beings will have food, water and shelter for their day-to-day needs and for a chance to develop their full potential.

Forgive our human centredness, our blindness to the inter-connectedness of all living things, and our apathy and unwillingness to make changes to restore your world.

Save us from falling victim to the trials that come from climate change, fears of pandemics, threats of war, and rising family violence. Enable us to shine through these and other threats by carrying the light of Christ in what so often seems to be a darkening world.

For you, O God, are our hope for living within the kingdom of your grace, both now and forever. And we relish the hope of feasting at the table within your kingdom, which is surely is both here now and also yet to come. Amen

Song: We shall go out with joy, TiS 755 (sung twice)

We shall go out with joy
and be led forth in peace,
and the mountains and the hills shall
break forth in singing.

There'll be shouts of joy,
and the trees of the fields
shall clap, shall clap their hands.

And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and we'll all go out with joy!

Closing prayer

As we end this time of worship, let us go out to serve our neighbour.

Those who share their bread themselves are blessed.

Let us sow what we would like to reap;

to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Let us trust in God;

whose faithfulness is more steadfast than the mountains;

who shapes sky, soil and sea;
and who gives all of life a home. Amen

Extinguishing the candles

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

Postlude

This week at Woden Valley Uniting Church

Notices; celebrations; tea and coffee

This Sunday: Leader: Roger Mauldon
 Reader: Janet Kay
 Prayers: Willa Mauldon
 Music: Helen Swan