

Woden Valley Uniting Church



8 February 2026
(5th Sunday after Epiphany)

Jesus practised radical inclusion! All are welcome here.

WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD

The Gong is struck three times. *The gong calls us to gather, to be present in this time of worship.*

Prelude *(a time for quiet preparation).*

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Lighting the Community Candle

The Community Candle is lit.

Call to Worship

We are God's people, the community of Christ,
living compassion and hope.
In this moment and in this place we gather to worship God,
to uphold one another in prayer
and be bound to each other in friendship and concern.
We come as a community,
bound by the Spirit who calls us to be vital, vibrant people
living out our spirituality,
forward looking, alert,
and ready to bring healing and wholeness to the world.

We have heard the call to live compassion's way,
to welcome the stranger and break down barriers of exclusion,
to embrace our diversity

and know the blessing and harmony that is found
when we open our hearts and minds.

Responsive prayer

God of life, whose love enfolds us, and spirit fills us,
we celebrate your presence.

God of joy, whose sunrise wakes us, and sunset amazes us,
we celebrate your goodness.

God of hope, whose promise sustains us,
and power upholds us,
we celebrate your grace.

God of love, whose patience humbles us,
and touch can heal us,
we celebrate your compassion.

God of peace, who breaks down barriers,
and walls that divide us,
we celebrate your justice.

God of Jesus, who loved with courage, and even now calls us,
we celebrate his Way.

Song – 10 000 Reasons (Matt Redman)

(Please stand as you are able)

Refrain:

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
O my soul, worship His holy Name.
Sing like never before, O my soul.
I'll worship Your holy Name.**

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning;
It's time to sing Your song again.
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes. *Refrain*

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger,
Your Name is great and Your heart is kind;
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing,
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. *Refrain*

And on that day when my strength is failing,
The end draws near and my time has come;
Still my soul sings Your praise unending,
Ten thousand years and then forevermore. *Refrain*

I'll worship Your holy Name. .
Lord, I'll worship Your holy Name.

Welcome and Introduction

Meditation: A Morning Offering (*John O'Donohue*)

All that is eternal in me
welcomes the wonder of this day,
The field of brightness it creates
Offering time for each thing
to arise and illuminate.

I place on the altar of dawn:
The quiet loyalty of breath,
The tent of thought where I shelter
And all the beauty drawn to the eye.

May my mind come alive today to the invisible geography
that invites me to new frontiers,
To break the dead shell of yeaterdays,
To risk being disurbed and changed.

May I have the courage today
To live the life that I would love,
To postpone my dream no longer,
But do at last what I came here for
And waste my heart on fear no more.

Prayer of confession

If God is a painter,
let us be the brush.

If God is a musician,
let us be the song.

If God is an architect,
let us be the tools.

Let us be the hands.

Let us be the builders.

But if God is a shepherd,
who never stops seeking,
let us be willing to be found,
no matter how lost we feel.
Our God is never far away.
Forgive us for forgetting this good news. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Family of faith, we are all a little bit lost and a little bit found.
We grumble. We push back. We doubt God. We doubt ourselves.
We leave the flock and lose our way.
But fortunately for us, our God is a shepherding God who is always by our side.
So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:
No matter how far we wander,
we can never wander from the bounds of God's grace.
We are loved. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Passing the Peace

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.
The peace of God be always with you.
And also with you.
You are invited to share the peace of God with your neighbours

Song: Lord let me see, see more and more TiS 681 (Ross Langmead)
(Please stand as you are able)

WE REFLECT ON WORDS FOR OUR TIME

Ps 112:1-9 *to be read responsively*

Hallelujah!
Blessed man, blessed woman, who fear God,
Who cherish and relish his commandments,
Their children robust on the earth,
And the homes of the upright—how blessed!
Their houses brim with wealth
And a generosity that never runs dry.

Sunrise breaks through the darkness for good people—

God's grace and mercy and justice!

The good person is generous and lends lavishly;

Nothing will ever rattle them

They conduct their affairs with sound judgement.

Heart ready, trusting in God,

Spirit firm, unperturbed,

Ever blessed, relaxed among enemies,

They lavish gifts on the poor—

A generosity that goes on, and on, and on.

An honored life! A beautiful life!

1 Corinthians 2: 1-12

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.^[a] ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.⁹ However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived”¹—
the things God has prepared for those who love him—
¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

Matthew 5:13-20

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is

accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Prayer after readings:

For the word of God in Scripture, For the word of God among us, For the word of God within us....**Thanks be to God.**

Reflection

Music for Reflection

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

Song: A Little Bit of Salt Tune: Leoni (TiS 473 Community of Christ)

A little bit of salt will quickly show its worth;
A little bit of faithfulness will change the earth.
God, make us worth our salt — a church that's glad to be
The change that you desire in each community.

A lamp that's in a house gives safety, warmth and light;
It's set upon a table where it shines so bright.
God, make your church a light that bravely takes a stand
To bring your love and justice into all the land.

A garden is a place where so much beauty grows,
Where flowers bloom and food is raised and water flows.
When worship leads us out to care for the oppressed,
O God, you say we're like a garden at its best.

When worship leads us out to love and serve the poor,
To welcome in the immigrant* at our own door,
O God, then we'll be called "repairers of the breach,"
And we your church will be "restorers of the streets."

It's tempting to remain well-hidden, quiet, bland —
Yet, God, you make us salt and light to change this land.
You send us out to love, to build and to repair,
Till peace and justice flourish here and everywhere.
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Offerings

We acknowledge that in addition to this collection, many give elsewhere through direct debit or any other means, and in addition, so many of our community contribute in many other ways to our shared mission. We give thanks for the gifts of faith and trust and patience, which we bring with our offering today. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People (with sung response – **Lover of All – TiS 737**)¹
(*Please remain seated*)

The Care Candle is lit

Sung: **Lord Jesus Christ,
lover of All,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace**

Creator God,
We pray for this world you have given us –
For the land and sea, for the fruit of the harvest.
May we care for your creation, nurturing and protecting it, as it protects and nurtures us.
Where there is conflict, bring your peace.
Where there is narrow-mindedness, grant us compassion and empathy.
May we be peacemakers,
And always remembering our world in prayer.

**Lord Jesus Christ,
lover of All,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace**

Loving God,
we pray for those in our community -
particularly for those who are struggling with ill health, family, work or financial strains.
Please help us to be good neighbours to each other,
May we be ready to listen, willing to help as needed,
and always uplifting one another in prayer.

**Lord Jesus Christ,
lover of All,
trail wide the hem of your garment
Bring healing, bring peace**

Merciful God,

¹ From Julie's Service on 27 July 2025.

we pray for those in our neighbourhood -
those who are flourishing and those who are not.
Please help us to be good members of this community,
May we be ready to listen, willing to help as needed,
and always lifting the whole area up in prayer.

**Lord Jesus Christ,
lover of All,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace**

Gracious God,
we pray for those in leadership— in our nation, our community and our church.
Help them to be wise leaders for the good of all the people,
May we be ready to listen, willing to respond as needed,
and may we consistently lift them up in prayer.

**Lord Jesus Christ,
lover of All,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace**

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer²

**Gracious Spirit,
Who loves us like a mother and provides for us like a father,
Whose realm is blooming among and within us now.
We pray that your compassion guide us in every action.
Give us what we need for each day,
and help us to be satisfied with the miracle of that alone.
Forgiver, whose embrace brings us to wholeness without our asking,
May we reconcile ourselves to one another in humility.
And may we cancel the crushing debts that imprison our neighbours
So that communities of joy and health may flourish.
May we neither profit from nor ignore evil.
But ever work to thwart it with non-violence
As we co-create the realm of peace in this world.
Now and each day. Amen.**

² From Julie's Service on 9 Mar 25

Release of Pastoral Ties for Julie Connah

The co-chair of the presbytery, Janet Kay, says:

Sisters and brothers,
the Church is God's covenant people, the Body of Christ
and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

We thank God that the one Spirit
has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts.

**There is no gift
without its corresponding service,
for all ministries have a part
in the ministry of Christ.**

Julie, you responded to God's call to the ministry of pastor, initially at St Margaret's and then additionally at Woden Valley Uniting, being commissioned here on 4 February 2025. In that time you have shared in the joys and sorrows associated with ministering in this congregation.

The co-chair of the presbytery addresses the congregation:

We come today to express gratitude to God for Julie's life and work among us, to recognise the alteration in our relationship, and release her for the next stage of her journey, having been accepted as a candidate for Minister of the Word.

Julie: I thank God for all of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, for the love, kindness, generosity and support shown to me during my time with Woden Valley.

All: **We thank God for the ministry you have faithfully exercised. We accept the necessity of your leaving. We personally, and as a community of God's people, express sincere appreciation for all that you have done for us and for all the ways that your leadership has been reflected in our life together.**

The Congregation stands.

Co-chair of Presbytery: Do you, the members and friends of this church, release Julie from her duties as Pastor with you?

All: **We do so release her, with the help of God, and we pray for God's blessings on us all as our relationship changes.**

Janet: Do you Julie, release the people of Woden Valley Uniting Church from its loyalty to you as their Minister? Do you release its members individually from turning to you and depending upon you to provide the pastoral ministries they seek?

Julie : I do, with the help of God. I pray God's blessings on each member and friend in their personal pilgrimage, and on the Woden Valley congregation in its continuing ministry. As you journey on remember that God loves you abundantly. Your call is to faithfully follow in the way of Jesus, being agents of love, spreading light and hope to those God has placed around you.

SONG TiS 779 May the feet of God walk with you

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

Words of Mission

Let us embrace the wonder of this week
with expectation and imagination,
With faith to face our challenges,
with love that casts out fear,
With hope to trust tomorrow.

Blessing

Go in peace;
May you carry God's wisdom, speak forth God's word,
and embody God's presence
wherever you are. **Amen**

Postlude (a time for quiet reflection – please remain seated)

The community candle is extinguished.

Sharing & Notices

Acknowledgements: Morning Prayer: John O'Donohoe, *Benedictus – A Book of Blessings*; Prayer of Confession & Words of Forgiveness: Rev. Sarah A. Speed | *A Sanctified Art LLC* | sanctifiedart.org; Song: *A Little Bit of Salt*, <http://www.carolynshymns.com>; Psalm 112: *The Message*, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
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