



The Uniting Church in Australia
SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR SUNDAY
23RD MAY 2021

Introit: 25 (TiS) 'As pants the hart for cooling streams'. vv. 1, 2, 4.

Call to Worship:

I will sing to the Lord all my life; as long as I live, I will sing praises to my God.

May God be pleased with my song, for my gladness comes from him. (*Psalm 104: 33*)

Hymn: 411 (TiS) 'Filled with the Spirit's power, with one accord'.

Acknowledgement:

I pay my respect to the traditional custodians of the land in which I live, work and worship. To the elders and members of the Yorta Yorta nation past, present and emerging.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

Today on Pentecost Sunday we are reminded that we are one worldwide family in Christ. We give thanks for people in every generation who have spent their lives sharing the good news of Jesus with others.

We remember especially those who were pioneers in missions, who willingly travelled to faraway places, sacrificed their comforts and faced numerous dangers and persecution to fulfil their calling.

Lord, we thank you that we are one family in Christ.

We thank you God for those who spread the gospel in our country, for past leaders of this church and many others who answered God's call to be the voice and hands of Jesus, and to disciple and teach God's Word to others.

Lord, we thank you that we are one family in Christ.

O God, we thank you for those who are stepping out to new mission frontiers today, who are taking the gospel to genuinely unreached people in remote parts of the world, crowded refugee camps and even in our local neighbourhoods.

Lord, we thank you that we are one in Christ.

Lord sometimes you come to us, but we do not recognise you; you call us to serve, but we do not follow; you command us to love strangers and share your gospel with the nations, but we do not obey; you bless us, but we do not thank you.

Please forgive us and help us to change our ways.

Lord you accept us as we are, but we do not accept others; you forgive us, but we do not forgive those who wrong us; you love us, but we fail to love our neighbours.

Please forgive us and help us to change our ways.

Lord you showed us how to carry out your mission; but we still insist on doing things our way. You identified yourself with the poor, the needy and the outcasts; but we tend to focus on ourselves and are indifferent to them. You suffered and died that we could have eternal life; but we do not give up our comfortable lives to share your good news with others.

Please forgive us and help us to change our ways. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

(reachbeyond.org.uk)

Declaration of Forgiveness:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us;

Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

(UiW BK1)

Doxology: 768 (TiS) 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow'.

Young Church:

Readings: Ezekiel 37: 1-14, Romans 8: 16-25, John 15: 26-27, 16: 12-15

Hymn: 447 (TiS) 'Lord, your almighty word'.

Message: 'The promise, the mission, and the witness'.

- The promise: "When the Advocate comes" (26). Jesus in this promise, the promise of the Holy Spirit is trying to comfort his disciples prior to his crucifixion. It is supposed to console the disciple's sense of abandonment and fear, and to remind the disciples of the "abundant life" promised earlier (10:10).
- Jesus promises the coming of the Spirit, the Advocate and the mission of the Spirit are by his authority. Therefore, the Spirit can be trusted for two reasons: it comes from the Father and it will not be bearing witness to itself but testifies to the good news already made known in the resurrection of the Son (15:26 & 16:15)
- Because the Spirit's identity and mission is centred in bearing witness and making present for us the fulfilment of Jesus' promise and mission as the risen Lord, then the Spirit's identity is also centred in modelling and empowering that same witness in the community of Jesus' disciples.
- The unity and the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity is brought to bear in the promise and the essence of the church's mission today: witnessing to the unfolding love of the Father that is fulfilled in the Son witnessed to by the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus' disciples and us are gathered into that essence, called and sent as witnesses to the promise made real in the "word made flesh": "You are witnesses, too, because you have been with me from the beginning" (15:27).
- The witness of the Spirit is twofold: First is the witness of the Spirit on behalf of Jesus. It is a witness that the mission of the Father and Son has indeed been completed. The cross is not a sign of failure in God's intent. From creation nothing has happened apart from the Word (1: 1-2).
- And the Word became flesh and dwelled amongst us (1: 14). It was necessary that the Son "be lifted up" on the cross so as to confirm the depth of the Father's love for the whole of creation (3: 14-17).
- At his being lifted up, Jesus the Son declares the fulfillment of that mission: "It is finished" (19: 30).
- The second, part of this witness is that the Spirit gives power to the community of believers not to identify themselves as abandoned or forsaken, but rather as empowered and sent to bear witness to the world that in the events of the Son, God's love has indeed been made real and present for all creation.
- We see that the witness of the Spirit is not arbitrary or isolated but belongs integrally to the presence and role in mission of the Trinity (16: 13). That witness of the Spirit is characterised by Jesus in our reading as having three specific matters of content: to "convince" all the world about "sin", about "righteousness", and about "judgement" (16: 8).
- Each of those three items is further explained in the subsequent verses (9 – 11). It should be noted that Jesus says "sin" has to do with the matter of belief. The Spirit teaches us that sin at its heart is not a matter of actions or morality but has to do with whether and how we will receive and believe in the Son as the one whom God has sent into the world.
- John the Baptist testifies to the arrival of the Son with the words "Here is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world: (1: 29). Later John says, "This is the judgement, that they did not believe in the one whom God sent (3:18).
- Sin stands exposed precisely at the opportune moment of decision between faith and unbelief. Jesus says that it is always for us the moment of that decision (*Kairos*; see 7:6). The Spirit's role is to bring Christ present for us and so to face us with that point of decision and faith.
- The Spirit also convinces us about "righteousness", which has to do Jesus returning to the Father. Righteousness has to do with Jesus' testimony that all that the Father has given him to do has been accomplished in his death and resurrection. The glory of the Son has been truly seen. God's righteousness has been made known in God's love and sending of the Son.

- Now the Spirit will be present to continue to convince the disciples and us that this is true.

Hymn: 407 (TiS) 'Breathe on me, breath of God'.

Notices:

Joys and Concerns:

Offering:

Prayers of the People:

Spirit of the Living God, come: hear us and intercede for us.

We pray for your world: for a responsible caring for your creation; for a just sharing of the world's resources; for a spirit of peace between nations.

Speak to us in the words of justice and pour out your spirit upon us, that we may be filled with a passion for justice and peace. Holy Spirit come, and, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for your church: for renewal of faith and commitment; for power to proclaim your gospel; for unity between Christians.

Speak to us in the words of salvation and pour out your spirit upon us, that we may bear witness to your mighty deeds. Holy Spirit come, and, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the communities in which we live: for families where love and forgiveness are found; for workplaces where the contribution of all is valued; for a society where the weak and the vulnerable are cared for and cherished.

Speak to us in the words of love, and pour out your spirit upon us, that our hearts may burn with love for you and for each other. Holy Spirit come, and, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all who suffer: for comfort for all who are lonely and sad; for relief for all in pain or distress; for strength for all who care for the sick and the dying.

Speak to us now in the words of hope, and pour out your spirit upon us, that we may know your comfort and bring your healing touch to all in need of consolation. Holy Spirit come, and, in your mercy,

hear our prayer. Amen.

(LUP – Janet Nelson)

Hymn: 413 (TiS) 'Holy Spirit, come confirm us'.

Blessing:

Recessional: 781 (TiS) 'Father, bless us as we go'.