**MACEDON RANGES PARTNERSHIP SERVICE – Epiphany 3b**

**22nd – 24th January 2021**

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website at <https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/worship-services> or on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/SuT5qHMeenc>

Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told to lead you. We suggest reading the passages when suggested below. We are touching on several of the scripture readings in one way or another this week.

If you would like to look at previous videos on our YouTube channel, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb4hzdO-YgzmrIRVC-oby_w>.

**GREETING AND WELCOME**

Today, we are remembering the tragic history of our nation and the violent dispossession of her First Peoples. Today is a Day of Mourning. Today we mark in lament the truth of our shared history and we lift up to God our shared prayers for the First Peoples of our nation. We say sorry and we pray for forgiveness, healing and hope. But today is also a day of worship. So we come together and give thanks to GOD for the abundant grace and liberating hope which we know through Jesus Christ and which is for all people.

As we gather to worship today, we acknowledge the first inhabitants of this place, from time beyond remembering, the First Peoples.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that through this land, God nurtured and sustained The First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

**We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.**

We acknowledge that the First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers;

**the Spirit was already in the land, revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony.**

We acknowledge that the same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God’s ways;

**and so we rejoice in the reconciling purposes of God found in the good news about Jesus Christ**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Our land is alive with the glory of God;

Desert sands hum and gum trees dance.

Brown grasses sing and mountains breathe their stillness.

All created things add their rhythms of delight

and even stones rap out their praise

Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;

may our hearts join the beat of her joy

for our triune God is with us,

the source of all being surrounds and upholds us,

Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.

The spirit moves within and between us,

blessed be God, our wonder and delight.

**SONG:** Psalm 62 (Aaron Keayes)

**PRAYER:**

The words of the Psalm describe you, O God,

as hope, as salvation, as shelter.

We who hear these healing words are invited

to put all our confidence in you,

to pour out our hearts to you,

knowing that you hear.

Hear us now, O God,

as we gather to worship and to praise you.

Forgive us when we listen to the voices which tell us

to put our trust in whatever institution can increase our wealth;

in whatever breakfast food can expand our brainpower,

in whatever mode of transport can get us anywhere

faster, cheaper, more comfortably.

Renew our trust in you and help us to see this time

to deepen our relationship with you

and to re-align our priorities with yours.

Hear us now, Lord Jesus Christ,

as we gather to worship and to praise you.

Forgive us when we are reluctant disciples,

and renew our desire to follow you even if,

like those first disciples,

it means having the direction of our lives completely changed.

Forgive us, when we forget

that we do not have to do everything in our own power

when challenged to take risks of faith. Holy spirit, breathe new life into us now,

as we can only offer true worship and provide faithful discipleship

when we are empowered by you.

In Jesus’ name, we pray **AMEN**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE:**

Hear the good news:

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

everything old has passed away;

see, everything has become new!

All this is from God, with whom we are reconciled through ChristJesus

**THANKS BE TO GOD**

**BIBLE READING:** Mark 1:14-20. You may like to read today’s other readings: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps 62; 1 Cor 7:29-31;

**STORY “TIME’S UP “**

**ANDY --** Ada, what would you say if I told you I had met a bloke in the pub and he offered me a new job

**ADA --** what kind of job????

**ANDY –** Well, he wasn’t exactly specific about it, he just said “ follow me?

**ADA --** Did he mention wages?

**ANDY –** No

**ADA --** Terms and conditions?

**ANDY –** No

**ADA--** Holidays?

**ANDY –** No

**ADA --** Where you might be working?

**ANDY –** No

**ADA ---** Will we have to sell our house and move?

**ANDY-** I don’t know

**ADA --** Is this job legal?

**ANDY---** n n not sure?

**ADA----** all sounds a bit dodgy to me

**ANDY --** Simon and Andrew said YES

**ADA --** Really?????

**ANDY--** Yes, really. Just dropped their nets, gave the fishing boat back to their dad and went with this guy?

**ADA --** Really!

**ANDY -** AYE, Really. And then James and John, said it sounded like a great adventure and they would come to?

**ADA --** Right, how much did you all have to drink?

**ANDY—**Nothing Ada, the bar wasn’t even open.

**ADA ---** So, you are telling me, that these four men, just gave up perfectly good jobs, left their families behind, and went with a man they met in a pub?

**ANDY ---** Well it sounds bad when you put it like that, Ada. But I think the four of them had known this guy, and had heard his stories, and were convinced that what he said, was going to be good for them, and for everybody else?

**ADA --** MAYBE HE WAS A CON ARTIST?

**ANDY—**Some folk said that, but others vouched for him, said that he was related to JOHN the BAPTIST

**ADA----** Oh, Andy, you are talking about JESUS**.**

**ANDY—**Of course I am, who do you think I was talking about?

**ADA --** Andy, I really thought you had meant that it was you who had met the man in the pub, and wanted a new job?

**ANDY--** Well, Jesus is offering to everyone, the chance to pack in everything they are doing, and take the risk of following him. No half measures, just whole hearted discipleship. That will transform not just their lives but everyone around about them.

**ADA---** It certainly will if they don’t get paid.

**ANDY—**But God promises to provide them with all that they need.

**ADA---** And their families?

**ANDY--** Yep, them to.

**ADA---** sounds crazy!

**ANDY --** I know it does, but just imagine working with God everyday. Working miracles saving people, healing people, feeding people. Just imagine how different our world would be, working to help others and ourselves?

**ADA -----** NOW, that does sound exciting!

**ANDY ---** Oh, Ada, it sounds brilliant

**ADA –** Do you have to sign a contract or anything?

**ANDY--** No, just choose to follow Jesus.

**ADA---** Could we?

**ANDY --** We could!

**ADA ---** Should we?

**ANDY ---** We should!

**ADA ---** No more washing and ironing?

**ANDY ---** Nope, serving God and following Jesus

**ADA** --- Well, what are we waiting for?

**WHY FOLLOW JESUS?**

Jesus is caring, and kind, and helpful. Healing those who are sick, feeding the hungry, walking with the lonely. He cares for you when you are upset and when you are afraid, and likes being your friend. He does not try to bully you, nor control you, or force you to do things you don’t want to do! He shows you how to help, and gives you the words to speak, when you cannot find the right ones, He is a leader and a teacher and someone you can rely on, and will be your best friend at the moments that you need him. It is no surprise then that when he said “follow me “ that so many folk said yes to him. What would you say and do when you hear the words of JESUS. speaking to you “ FOLLOW ME “

**SONG:** “The Summons” (Will you come and follow me?)

**MINISTRY TEAM REFLECTION**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Give us the courage to accept the realities of our history, so that we may build a better future for our nation.

Teach us to respect all cultures. Teach us to care for our land and waters.

Help us to share justly the resources of this land.

Help us to bring about spiritual and social change to improve the quality of life for all peoples in our communities, especially the disadvantaged.

Help all young people to find true dignity and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love be the foundation on which we walk together as First and Second Peoples;

and build our families, our communities and our nation.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord **AMEN**

**WORD OF MISSION**

People of God, go from here to live out the covenant into which we,

the First and Second Peoples of this land, have entered with one another.

Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.

Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.

Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them.

Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord.

Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God,

until God’s promised reconciliation of all creation is complete

**SONG:** Ps 62 (refrain) by Aaron Keayes

**PETER’S FAREWELL**

**BLESSING & DISMISSAL**

Bless us therefore, as we depart this place: give us a generous spirit, a kind heart, and the grace to walk alongside our First Peoples, as brothers and sisters in Christ AMEN

Go in the power of God’s good Spirit: with the gentle fire of God’s zeal, with the breathe of life ready to work for justice and peace.

**We go in Christ’s name AMEN**

**SONG:** Deep Stillness

**OFFERING**

You may like to consider giving an offering to your congregation via direct deposit. Details for each are:

* Gisborne: Gisborne branch, Bendigo bank, B.S.B. 633 108, A/C: 1512 83736
* Romsey: Bendigo Bank, B.S.B. 633 000, A/C: 161501200, Account name: UCA Romsey Uniting Church
* Lancefield: Account Name: Lancefield Uniting Church, BSB: 633 108, A/C No: 112926639
* Mia Mia – Kyneton: Commonwealth bank, B.S.B. 063 517, Account no.: 1002 1775

*I will publish other congregation’s details as they come to hand. Contact you congregation’s treasurer for details if they are not here.*