

THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Ballarat Central Uniting Church



Sunday 22nd March 2026 - LENT 5

@ 10:00 a.m.

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

– CELEBRATION SUNDAY!

“With Jesus, there is Hope and Life!”

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

INTROIT: TIS 772 – Worship, honour, glory, blessing!

Worship, honour, glory, blessing, Lord we offer to your name;
young and old, their praise expressing, join your goodness to proclaim.
As the saints in heaven adore you, we would bow before your throne;
as your angels serve before you, so on earth your will be done.

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GREETING

Leader: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the
Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

ALL: ***And also with you!***

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, we gather in love of Jesus the Christ and open ourselves to
your Spirit.

We open ourselves to your life in the midst of death.

We open ourselves to your hope in the midst of despair. In the midst of
confusion and uncertainty, we open ourselves to a new way of seeing
things, a new way of understanding things in your love.

Stir us in our depths and call us out beyond every resistance. Amen.

HYMN/SONG: TIS 560 – All my hope on God is founded!

All my hope on 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.

Human pride and earthly glory, sword and crown betray our trust;
all we build with care and labour, tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God’s power, hour by hour, is my temple and my tower.

God’s great goodness lasts for ever, 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.

Still from earth to God eternal sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising for the gift of Christ his Son.
Hear Christ call one and all: those who follow shall not fall.

Author: Robert Bridges 1844-1930 alt. after Joachim Neander 1650-80.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

God does not abandon us to death and despair. Whatever has happened,
whatever our fears for the future, God’s compassion and steadfast love
surround us.

We are forgiven. We are loved, and God invites us again to live fully.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS, NOTICES

SPECIAL TIME WITH THE CHILDREN – Early Word

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Reader: "Your Word O Lord is a lamp to our feet".
ALL: "A light to our path."

Scripture Readings:

EZEKIEL 37:1-14 (NRSVUE)

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord."

PSALM 130 - TIS 81

Words: The Grail; Music: Joseph Gelineau (psalm),

J. Robert Carroll (response)



With the Lord there is mer-cy, and full - ness of re - demp-tion.

**Response: With the Lord there is mercy,
and fullness of redemption.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.

Response

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you.

Response

My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord more than those who watch for day.

Response

Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

Response

JOHN 11:1-45 (NRSVUE)

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." ¹¹After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but

I am going there to awaken him.”¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.”¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep.¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Jesus the Resurrection and the Life

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away,¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home.²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.”²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

Jesus Weeps

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.”³⁵ Jesus began to weep.³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has

been dead four days.”⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.”⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

The Plot to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

Reader: “Lord, may your word live in us.”

ALL: “*And bear much fruit to your glory!*”

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD: “With Jesus, there is Hope and Life!”

RESPOND TO THE WORD

OFFERING

(Your offerings for the mission and ministry of God through Ballarat Central will be gratefully received during the hymn. Please remain seated until the last verse.)

HYMN/SONG: TiS 376 – I know that my redeemer lives!

I know that my Redeemer lives — what joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead; he lives, my everlasting Head.

He lives, to bless me with his love: he lives, to plead for me above;
he lives my hungry soul to feed; he lives to help in time of need.

He lives, and grants me daily breath; he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives, my mansion to prepare; he lives, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name; he lives, my Saviour, still the same;
what joy the blest assurance gives, I know that my Redeemer lives!

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION *(Followed by the 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.*

SENDING FORTH OF GOD'S PEOPLE

HYMN/SONG: TiS 647 – Comfort, comfort, all my people!

Comfort, comfort all my people with the comfort of my Word.

Speak it tender to my people: all your sins are taken away.

Though your tears be rivers running, though your tears be an ocean full,
though you cry with the hurt of living: comfort, comfort.

Every valley shall be lifted, every mountain shall be low,
every rough place will be smoother: comfort, comfort.

Comfort, comfort all my people with the comfort of my Word.

Speak it tender to my people: all your sins are taken away.

Though your eyes see only darkness, though your eyes can see no light,
though your eyes see pain and sorrow: comfort, comfort.

Every night will have its morning, every pain will have an end,
every burden will be lightened: comfort, comfort.

Comfort, comfort all my people with the comfort of my Word.

Speak it tender to my people: all your sins are taken away.

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WORD OF MISSION

BLESSING

DISMISSAL SONG: ATOK 376 – Faith, hope and love!

Faith, hope, and love, this is what we long for.

Faith, hope, and love, this is what we need.

Faith, hope, and love, this is what we cry for.

Oh, teach us how to live.

Trust in the Truth, this is what we long for.

Trust in the Truth, this is what we need.

Trust in the Truth, this is what we cry for.

Oh, teach us how to live.

Freedom for all, this is what we long for.

Freedom for all, this is what we need.

Freedom for all, this is what we cry for.

Oh, teach us how to live.

Author: Trisha Watts-Solness © 1994 Trisha Watts, Willow Connection Pty. Ltd.

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Worship Leaders – Rev Lauleti Tu'inauvai, Andy Gault; **Elder** - Jen Mitchell;
Readers – Claudia Forsberg, Jen Mitchell, Tofila Fifita; **Prayer** – Susan Pierotti; **Choir Director** - Helen Duggan and BCUC Choir; **Organist** – Ray Hodder; **IT, Video & Audio** – Ben Daniel; **Welcome** – Margaret Bennett, Bron James; **Door Stewards** – Rod Devenish, Ken Jenkin; **Morning Tea** – Merriel & Geoff Le Marshall, Theresa Read, Jan Souter.

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