

Woden Valley Uniting Church



22 March 2026

Lent 5

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

**Come light, light of hope and love, give light to creation
Enlighten our hearts and show us your truth.**

May this candle be to us a tangible reminder of the transformative spirit of Lent that is here with us today. **Amen**

A Lenten Call to Worship¹

And the table will be wide.

And the welcome will be wide.

And the arms will be opened wide to gather us in.

And our hearts will be opened wide to receive.

And we will come as children who trust there is enough.

And we will come unhindered and free.

And our aching will be met with bread.

And our sorrow will be met with wine.

And we will open our hands to the feast without shame.

And we will turn to each other without fear.

And we will give up our appetite for despair.

And we will taste and know delight.

And we will become bread for a hungry world.

And we will become drink for those who thirst.

And the blessed will become the blessing.

And everywhere will be the feast. Amen

Song: Come and find the quiet centre²

1. Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.
2. Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, touches base,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're
shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.
3. In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest
dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare.

¹ And the Table is wide © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com

² Shirley Erena Murray

Welcome and Introduction

Passing the Peace

In love, hope and unity, with vision and service, let us greet each other with a sign of peace. May the peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn: TIS 653 – This is a day of new beginnings (*Please stand as you are able*)

WE REFLECT ON WORDS FOR OUR TIME

Romans 8:6-11

⁶The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life^[d] because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[d] his Spirit who lives in you.

Psalm 130

John 11: 1-7, 11-27, 38 - 43

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[b] from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Reflection

Music for Reflection

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

Offerings

We acknowledge that in addition to this collection, many do so elsewhere through direct debit or any other means, and 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.**

The Care Candle Song - Aaron Harper (*please remain seated; the care candle is lit*)

**We take a match,
And light a spark,
To show the want within our hearts,
To share each joy,
To bear each pain,
We take a spark,
And light a flame.**

**We take a flame,
And light a fire,
To represent our heart's desire,
To share our hopes,
To bear our shames,
We take a spark and light a flame,
We light a flame.**

Prayers of the People³ (*Please remain seated*)

Gone in a blink...
Dragging on forever...
Not enough in a day...
Too much on our hands – Time.
Run off our feet...
Left twiddling our thumbs...
So busy we spin our wheels...
How vast the stretching silence sometimes – time.
Don't run out of it...
Don't waste it...
Don't watch it...
Only it will tell – time.

**God of eternity, all time is in Your hands and so are we.
Thank you for the beauty You show us –
the love You shower on us – the while we while away.**

Help us to cherish the time we have with each other.
Gone in a blink, it will not come again so teach us never to take it for granted.
When we can sit and soak up the laughter of our loved ones, (children) keep us still.
When we can learn something new, don't let us be so busy we miss our moment.
When we can make someone's day, don't let us be too preoccupied with tomorrow.

³ From Church of Scotland Weekly Worship for 22 March 2026

God of eternity, all time is in Your hands and so are we.
So, we take time now to ask for Your help.
In a world where people are hungry, where there is violence,
where war rages and apathy and greed fuel it,
where time and time again, the poor and the weak have their brief time in the sun
clouded over, help us to take the lessons we learned at Your feet and walk a
different path. Amen

Hymn: TIS 537 – Let us talents and tongues employing *(Please stand as you are able)*

COMMUNION

Welcome to our table. Jesus is the Christ of the table. There he sat and ate with friends and religious leaders, sinners and self-righteous alike. At the table he sat with his mother at the wedding in Cana and in the temple he overturned the tables in anger. At the table he sat with his followers, the doubters, the betrayer, the brash and the silent.

And here among friends or strangers, whether we are gathered around this simple table, or in different places around our city, Jesus welcomes you and me, the Christ of the table welcomes each and every one of us.

Let us remember that at the table on that night, Jesus took bread and when he had blessed it, he broke it and said “Take this and eat it, it is my body and it is given for you. Do this to remember me.”

Later during the meal, he poured out a cup of wine and when he had given thanks, he said;

“In this cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Take this, all of you, to remember me.”

As Jesus prayed and said a blessing at the table, so let us pray.

We give thanks, eternal God, for your abiding ways down through the ages. For the mystery of creation, life, love and hope.

For the way of Christ, who sits at our tables every day. For the ongoing dwelling of the Holy Spirit within and around us.

God beyond holiness, as we do what Jesus did in an upstairs room, let your Spirit move among us to settle on this bread and wine that they may be for us, the body and blood of Christ.

And let the same Spirit stir us, our souls and lives so that as we share this sacrament, we may recognise our Lord amongst us at this table, that he may be in us and we in him. AMEN

The bread we break is a sharing in the broken body of Christ.
The cup we take is a sharing in the shed blood of Christ.
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

(We come to collect the elements and wait to eat and drink together.)

The body and blood of Christ given for us all. **AMEN**
Accept O God, our sacrifice of praise.
Accept our thanks for all that we are.
Our hands were empty and you filled them. AMEN

The Lord's Prayer – Abba Prayer

Father of heavenly love,
all joy surrounds your name,
your kingdom come
your will be done
till earth your grace acclaim.
Give us today our bread
to share with those in need.
Forgive our sins
as we forgive
with word and by our deed.
Deliver us from fear
when trials test our days.
Your kingdom, power
and glory are
our true delight and praise. Amen

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

Words of Blessing: TIS 779 – May the feet of God walk with you *(Please stand as you are able)*

Postlude

Notices & Sharing

Acknowledgements:

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Leader: David Cran
Communion: Joan Pratt
Music: Helen Swan
Reader: Matt Jackson
Prayers: Sally Phillips

