

Woden Valley Uniting Church



1 March 2026

Lent 2

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

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land that upon which we meet; the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples. They walked on this land in the presence of the Eternal Spirit, caring for it and each other. We commit ourselves, as second nations people, to walk alongside them, seeking always healing, reconciliation and justice for all.

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 that you are here with us today.

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

God makes peace within us. God makes peace between us. Let us share it with a greeting around this big table. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn: Will you come and follow me *(Please stand as you are able)*

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown?
Will you let my name be known?
Will you let my life be grown in you
And you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you
And you in me?
3. Will you let the blinded man see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen?
And admit to what I mean in you
And you in me?
4. Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell that fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
Through my sight and touch and sound in you
And you in me?
5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you
And you in me

WE REFLECT ON WORDS FOR OUR TIME

For A New Beginning *John O'Donohue*

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

2 Genesis 12:1-4a

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

The Messenger *Marcus Zusak*³

My full name's Ed Kennedy. I'm nineteen. I'm an under-age cab-driver. I'm typical of many of the young men you see in this suburban outpost of the city – not a whole lot of prospects or possibility.

...Constantly, I'm asking myself, "Well, Ed – what have you really achieved in your nineteen years?" The answer's simple:

Zilch.

I cook ...I eat.

I wash but I rarely iron.

I live in the past and believe that Cindy Crawford is by far the best supermodel.

That's my life...

(And finally, after many compassionate but risky deeds, the conversation with the mysterious card deliverer goes like this):

(Card deliverer): 'If a guy like you can stand up and do what you did, then maybe everyone can. Maybe everyone can live beyond what they're capable of.'

...And that's when I realise...I'm not the messenger at all.

I'm the message.

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**

³ Text slightly adapted

The Care Candle is lit

Prayers of the People (*right-hand side & left-hand side alternating*)

Leader will say: So that the blessed become the blessing

RHS: We pray for the welfare of your church here on earth in all its manifestations: guide and govern it by your Spirit, so that all who call themselves Christians may be led in the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

Leader: So that the blessed become the blessing

LHS: We pray for all the peoples of the world and their leaders; we pray for countries in crisis, especially those that are undergoing upheaval; we pray for the safety of those who desperately seek refuge because they are at risk in their own countries. We pray that they may be received with compassion, humanity and tolerance wherever they seek safety. Give wisdom to those in authority in every land and give to all peoples a desire for righteousness and peace, and the will to work together in trust, to seek the common good and to share with justice the resources of the earth.

Leader: So that the blessed become the blessing

RHS: We pray for our nation, celebrating the diversity of all the members our community whatever their origins, race, religion, beliefs, culture or lifestyle. We pray for understanding and acceptance of the differences that can and should contribute to a resilient, mature and nourishing society.

Leader: So that the blessed become the blessing

LHS: We pray for those who suffer; the sick; the poor; the depressed; the lonely; the unloved; the persecuted; the unemployed; those who grieve; and we pray for those who care for them.

Leader: So that the blessed become the blessing

RHS: For all who work for the good of the community in many diverse and often unseen ways we pray for vision, strength, and joy. With all who humbly serve the last and least we pray for faithfulness, patience, and love.

Leader: So that the blessed become the blessing

All: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer⁴

Gracious Spirit,
Who loves us like a mother,
Whose realm is blooming among us now. And within.
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.

Hymn: TIS 585 I heard the voice of Jesus say

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

Words of Mission and Blessing

As we go from here: the table will be wide.
And the welcome will be wide.
And the arms will be opened wide to gather all in.
All hearts will be opened wide to receive.
And all will come unhindered and free.

We will turn to each other without fear. And all will become the blessing.

Hymn: TIS 666 We are marching in the light of God

Postlude – *(Please remain seated)*

Notices & Sharing

Acknowledgements LicenSingOnline license #609357; <https://sage-ing.org/wp-content/uploads/ODonohue-ForANewBeginning.pdf>; *Lord's Prayer* By Bret Hesla, published in J. Nelson-Pallmeyer & B. Hesle. 2005. *Worship in the Spirit of Jesus. Theology, Liturgy, and Songs Without Violence.* Cleveland. The Pilgrim Press; , Zusak , Marcus. (2002) *The Messenger Sydney.* Pan Macmillan. *And the Table is wide* © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com; Shakespeare, W. *The Merchant of Venice Act4*

⁴*Lord's Prayer* By Bret Hesla