



WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH

<http://www.wodenvalley.unitingchurch.org.au/>



World Refugee Day
PENTECOST 4 – 21 June 2026

Jesus practised radical inclusion! All are welcome here

Leaders: WVUC Pastoral Carers [listed last page]
Music: Joan Pratt
Reader: Sandra Shumack

WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD

The Gong is sounded three times. We hold silence. We listen to the Gong calling us together, calling us to be present in this time of Worship.

Prelude (a time for quiet preparation – please be seated)

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

We acknowledge that we are worshipping on the land of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people. They made their land sacred, as we have made this place sacred. We honour their elders- past and present- and continue to work for reconciliation and justice for all.

Lighting of the Worship Candle

Today we affirm World Refugee Day. As we light our Worship Candle we are aware of the issues affecting Refugees throughout the world and give thanks for the positive contributions made by Refugees to our Australian society.

May Christ protect those who were forced out of their homeland as Christ experienced displacement since His birth. May the Holy Spirit lead and comfort those who are willing to lose everything, but keep the faith.

May God's word of hope and love shine in our lives. **We centre ourselves for worship as we gather here in prayer, song and word, open to God's love and compassion. Amen.**

Welcome and Introduction

You are all most welcome today – our people at Goodwin Monash and on Zoom at home, or other places – those who may be here for the first time, or visiting today.

Both the former St James and South Woden congregations have had close involvement over many years in practical and financial support of refugees who have settled in Canberra. Both congregations have joined in Palm Sunday rallies and the former St James donated a pole within the SIEVX memorial in Weston Park.

Australia has one of the highest numbers of foreign-born residents in the world [both in total numbers, and per capita], as well as one of the highest immigration rates in the world. Immigrants account for 30% of the population, the highest proportion among major Western nations. There are also 88,000 migrant arrivals under permanent visas.*

Call to Worship

Loving God,

It is good to be together with our friends here and on Zoom, and other places, listening for your voice, united by your Spirit, and confident in your love for us. In this time of worship tell us about your peace, compassion and kindness so that we can seek it and experience it anew.

Help us find peace and healing

in the joy of music and words,

in the stillness of prayer,

and in the Spirit's enfolding love.

We give thanks to you with a grateful heart,

as we journey together in faith and love.

Hymn TiS629: 'When I needed a neighbour were you there?', Sydney Carter.

[Please stand as you are able].

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, thank You for giving us a place in Your creation, for making each one of us, an unrepeatable wonder, and setting us on this earth in this time.

When we recognise Your presence, life is better.

When we call on Your help and spend time with You, life is better.

When You break in on our consciousness

with Your timely, gentle, surprising, funny, startling ways of saying hello, life is better.

Thank You God for always coming to meet us where we are, at our best, at our worst, in ordinariness, in crisis, You welcome us and offer help and healing.

So will You silence any fears that we don't deserve Your love,

take away any guilt from mistakes we have made,

bring us close to You,

cheer us up and cheer us on.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Passing of the Peace

This is the home of our Community of Faith. A place of peace. A place where we befriend one another. May the Spirit of the Living God dwell in you now and always.

And also with you. [Please share the Peace in a way which feels comfortable for you]

Hymn TiS459 [ii]: 'In Christ there is no east or west'

[Please stand as you are able].

We Reflect on the Word for Our Time

Bible reading: Matt.2: 13-18:

The Escape to Egypt

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.

"Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."^[a]

¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."^[b]

Psalms 121: TiS76: 'I to the hills will lift my eyes' -words revision by

Rev. Granton Douglas Hay, former Minister at South Woden UC.

[please stand as you are able]

Reflection – Carolyn Curnow

Life experiences as a refugee: Shukry Sahhar and Bill Bogar

Music for reflection

[During this music you might like to consider our support of refugees who are arranging migration, for settlement in our communities.]

Prayer for World Refugee Day

Gracious and merciful God, we gather in one heart and mind to pray for all families and individuals who have left or fled their country, their land, their homes, seeking safer and better lives. We lift up to you their hopes and dreams, their fears and anxieties, and all their needs and necessities, and pray that they may be protected on their journeys, their dignity and rights may be fostered, honoured and upheld, and they may be welcomed with open arms into generous and compassionate communities. All these we ask, through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

Affirmation – [together]

We are not alone. We live in God's world.

We believe in God,

who has freely given the Holy Spirit

to bind us together as a community of grace.

We believe that the spirit can lead us

in the discovery of truth,

in the pursuit of justice, and

in the practice of caring for one another.

In our homes, in the church and in the community

the Spirit offers us inspiration and courage.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Hymn TiS650, verses 1,2,3,4,6: 'Brother, Sister, let me serve you'.

[please stand as you are able].

Together we bring our Offering:

We have made arrangements for today's Plate Offering to be donated to Canberra Refugee Support whose work has supported local refugees for many years. Loving God we give thanks for the many different ways the members of our congregation contribute to the faith and mission of your church in this place and the wider community – through gifts of money, time, talents and love. Keep us aware of the needs of others. Amen.

Prayers of the People: Care Candle Song – Aaron Harper (we light the Care Candle)

1. 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.

2. 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.

A Pope's Prayer for Immigrants - by Pope Francis.

Merciful God, we pray to you for all the men, women and children who have died after leaving their homelands in search of a better life.

God hear our Prayer

Though many of their graves bear no name, to you each one is known, loved and cherished.

May we never forget them, but honour their sacrifice with deeds more than words. We entrust to you all those who have made this journey, enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation, in order to reach a place of safety and hope.

God hear our Prayer

Just as you never abandoned your Son as he was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph, so now be close to these, your sons and daughters, through our tenderness and protection.

In caring for them may we seek a world where no one is forced to leave their home and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

God hear our Prayer

Merciful God and Father of all, wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering, and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centeredness.

Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters.

God hear our Prayer

May we share with them the blessings we have received from your hand, and recognize that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to you, our true home, where every tear will be wiped away, where we will be at peace and safe in your embrace. **Amen**

We go out into the World

Today is also Winter Solstice. Let us conclude with a Solstice prayer:

An endless cycle
and yet a perfect model.
We need a winter in our lives.
A time of rest, a time to stand still.
A time to reacquaint ourselves
with the faith in which we live and breathe.
It is only then that we can draw strength
from the one in whom we are rooted,
take time to grow and rise through the darkness
into the warm glow of your springtime,
to blossom and flourish,
bring colour and vitality into this world,
your garden.

**Thank you Creator God
for the seasons of our lives. Amen.**

Blessing – together. (Please remain seated for the Blessing)

**May God bless us with encounters
that turn strangers into neighbours,
that turn fear into friendships,
that turn hatred into hospitality,
that turn pain into peace. Amen.**

Postlude (a time for quiet reflection – please remain seated)

utube of 'We are Australian' – The Seekers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrLTel_9zso

'This week' at Woden Valley Uniting Church

Notices, significant Birthdays, Celebrations.

Morning tea is now served. You are invited to share in the time of fellowship.

This service of Worship has been prepared and led by the WVUC Pastoral Carers – Carolyn Curnow, Helen O'Loughlin, Helen Fairbrother, Helen Sahhar, Sally Phillips, Sandra Shumack, Stephanie Tolson and Willa Mauldon. [Affirmation *from* Prayers on Parade (2006), compiled by Allan Shephard, Stepney, South Australia: Axiom Publishing. Permission is given for the use of this text in worship, pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au], Church of Scotland Weekly Worship. Vatican Kit for the 105th World Migrant and Refugee Day <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/immigrants-and-refugees>. Refugee picture: Artist Kelly Latimore, *Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2025.