

ORDER OF LITURGY FOR SUNDAY 3 MAY 2020

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Christ is risen. Alleluia.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Let us pray.
**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

**Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy**

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,**

**you alone are the Most High
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Let us pray.
God of all power,
you called from death our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep:
send us as shepherds to rescue the lost,
to heal the injured,
and to feed one another with understanding;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A reading from Acts, chapter 2, beginning at verse 42

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Hear the word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd:
therefore can I lack nothing.
- ² **He will make me lie down in green pastures:
and lead me beside still waters.**
- ³ He will refresh my soul:
and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.
- ⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil:
for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.**

⁵ You spread a table before me
in the face of those who trouble me:
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup shall be full.

**⁶ Surely your goodness and loving-kindness
will follow me all the days of my life:
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

A reading from 1 Peter, chapter 2, beginning at verse 10

¹ Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation — ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture: 'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' ⁷ To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner', ⁸ and 'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Hear the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John,
chapter 10, beginning at verse 1

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came

before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

For the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

The sermon: from Fr Shane

Let us pray:

O Saviour Christ, in whose way of love lies the secret of all life and the hope of all people. We pray for quiet courage to match this hour. We did not choose to be born or to live in such an age but let its problems challenge us; its discoveries exhilarate us; its injustices anger us; its possibilities inspire us; and its vigour renew us, for your kingdom's sake. Amen

At the moment our society faces a dilemma which is creating huge amounts of tension. Because as many have said – we don't just have one crisis at the moment – we have two. On the one hand we have a health crisis: containing the COVID-19 virus and flattening the curve and saving people's lives – that is one tremendous ongoing world-wide crisis – at the time of writing this over 3 million cases; 230,000 dead rising at the horrific rate of over 5,000 more dead a day. Lucky, we have been at the moment spared the worst of this reality here in Australia. But on the other hand we have an economic crisis. The mounting cost of shutting down most of the country and indeed the world so as to be able to keep our distance and give researchers the chance to find a vaccine must give our leaders, especially our Federal Treasurer nightmares. While I do admit the actions have been supported by both sides of the parliament; for a political party that prides itself on its disciplined approach to spending and that focusses the attention of government energy, almost to the exclusion of any other factor of life, on the *care and growth of the ECONOMY*, the mounting bill for their actions as a government on our behalf so far in this pandemic, must really hurt. This is the cause for the tension at the moment – many argue that the rising costs of fighting the COVID-19 virus will have a worse long-term effect upon societies than the effects of not fighting it and that the economies of the world need to restart very soon or we may not have a society or world economy on the other side of this pandemic! And so we witness the intricate dance being performed daily to attempt to lessen that tension. It is another reminder to me of how central the 'economy' has become to the existence of our society and of indeed the world. I might be showing my age or just being obscure but I do remember a central plank of the election campaign for Bill Clinton back in 92, a phrase which became a cliché as soon as it was uttered and yet is one I have heard often since, in sentiment if not exact words: 'It's about the economy, stupid!' As if it were wrong to think that anything else could take the place of the economy as the centre piece of all society. Now I'm not naïve enough to believe that an economic focus is necessarily all evil or going to fade away any time soon but in this Easter season I want to scream out, on behalf of Christians everywhere or maybe just for my own sanity, 'It's about Jesus,

stupid! The centre of my life is Jesus – Christ risen from the dead - God incarnate – and while other things are important, some more important than others, my marriage to Janet, my family, this parish community, fine art, culture, wine, a challenging Sudoku, the fate of Manchester United Football club and even, God forbid, the state of the economy, especially as wryly reported each night on ABC news by Alan Kohler, none of these are as important as Jesus. He is the key that truly unlocks life; abundant life!

Now I am also aware that while this is easy to state it can also be hard to hold onto when life becomes difficult or uncertain. Yet that is why we are here today – God’s people together – focussing our attention for a moment on the presence of God. As we state every Sunday boldly in this Easter season, “Christ is Risen – He is Risen indeed – we know that this risen Lord is revealed in the breaking of the bread. In that engaging Gospel from last week from Luke, chapter 23 – Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we hear in verse 35: “Then they told what had happened on the road and how Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.” But we also know that Jesus is revealed in the breaking open of the scriptures. Again from just last Sunday, Luke 23, verse 32: “They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us.’” As an aside, Jesus is the key for how we read all of Scripture. While not a big fan of Continental reformer John Calvin, I agree wholeheartedly with him when he stated that the Scriptures should be read with the aim of finding Christ in them.

What is revealed to us today about Jesus in the wonderful array of Scripture proclaimed? You would not be mistaken on thinking that a key insight is that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and traditionally today is called Good Shepherd Sunday. And while this is true, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd who offers us guidance, nurture, direction, and protection, the Gospel is a little more challenging and offers far more than just that for us. As Debie Thomas rightly points out, “In ten verses of packed metaphor, John gives us sheep, a sheepfold, a shepherd, a gate, a gatekeeper, a pasture, a sneaky band of thieves and bandits, and an even more sinister group of smooth-tongued “strangers.” At one point, the Gospel writer comes right out and says, “Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying.” No kidding!

Let us focus on just one of those metaphors – Jesus states both in verse 7 and verse 9, “I am the Gate!” Others rightly in regards to this metaphor have said that Jesus didn’t say, “I am the wall, the barrier, the enclosure, the dividing line” Nor did Jesus say, “I am that which separates, isolates, segregates, and incarcerates.” No – it’s I am the Gate: the door; the opening; the passageway – the way to true life.

Michael Leunig's cartoon says it all for me.



I have often preached that the church lives most of its life *scattered* as opposed to *gathered*. In fact the ratio is 1: 167! The Jesus who is revealed in the Scriptures today is the Jesus who calls us out into fresh pasture. True that we find nourishment here in church and in worship but this is not the end point.

Faith in Jesus is not only about bringing more people into here, as nice as that would be for me as the Priest of this parish. It is more about seizing the fullness of life that Jesus promises to bring to our every moment of life out there – away from this place of beauty and worship: in other words – living as people of the Kingdom of God. Verse 10 today: “The thief comes only to steal and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” While that life seems to be very tested at the moment even as I say these words, and the temptation is to close everything down and lock our gates – both physical and the gate of our souls – we are called to a life which is true and full.

To paraphrase Bill Clinton once again, “it’s all about Jesus, stupid” – the gate to true abundant life. A life that never denies the real threats of thieves, bandits, and strangers yet hopes for pasture, nourishment, protection and rest; a life that perseveres and maybe even thrives in the valley of the shadow of death. The Lord be with you.

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (prepared by Betty Bracken)

Let us commend the world, for which Christ prays, to the mercy and protection of God:

Lord of life, in whom we find our path and our peace, may we respond to your grace and guidance by caring for your world and the people in it.
Grant to our leaders, sensitivity and wisdom as they endeavour to responsibly assess needs, share resources, and protect the vulnerable.

We give thanks for this good and bountiful land. May we use its resources wisely and find ways to support others in greater need.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of grace, we pray for your worldwide church: the Anglican Communion in Japan (Bp Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu); The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Diocesan Building Committee; Mullum Mullum Parish, Ringwood (Maria Brand, Karen Winsemius).

Bless our parish community at St Peter's Box Hill as we witness to your gospel of love and care praying for and calling neighbours and friends.

Bless Shane, Alasdair, Lewis and our liturgy team as they prepare and present our worship each Sunday. Support the wardens and parish council as they quietly continue their work via phone and web meetings.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of life, we give thanks for all places of learning. Support our children and young people whose routines and lives have been disrupted and bless families and teachers who offer loving support.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We commend to your care and comfort those in special need at this time Alan Moss, Charles Crook in palliative care, Emily, Miriam, Dianne, Kent, Lorraine, Neville, Nancy, Kate, Russ, Betty, Jessie, Don, Jim, Alma, Muriel, Faye, Eileen, Nola, Margaret and those we name before you now in our hearts.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We remember all who have died in your love, those who have gone from this parish before us, including "Sandy" Wilson, Thomas Orange, Bonnie Fowler, Frances Allen, Frank Groom, John Noble, Lilian Law whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

**Grant that what we have asked in faith
we may by your grace receive,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Jesus said: Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11.28

Jesus said: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6.35

Let us pray

**We do not presume
to come to your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.**

**We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.**

**But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.**

**Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ,
and to drink his blood,
that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.**

Christ our Passover Lamb has been offered for us, therefore we come to celebrate the festival. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, with a sincere and a true heart.

**Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary
and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross,
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin,
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

And now we give you thanks that you raised him to life triumphant,
and exalted him in glory.

By his victory over death,
the reign of sin is ended,
a new day has dawned,
a broken world is restored
and we are made whole once more.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation,
this bread and wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'
Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,
unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, Father,
in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

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 for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
We who are many are one body,
 for we all share in the one bread.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Eternal God, giver of life,
in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.
May we who celebrate this holy feast
walk in his risen light and bring new life to all creation.

Father,
 **we offer ourselves to you
 as a living sacrifice
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Send us out in the power of your Spirit
 to live and work to your praise and glory.**

Notices:

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**