



Order of service

Date: Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Pentecost 5A

**We acknowledge that we are worshipping on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung people, of the Kulin nation, and pay our respects to elders past and present.**

**DON'T FORGET YOU CAN LOG INTO THE CHURCH WEBSITE AND SEE MUCH OF THIS BY VIDEO ON THE FRONT PAGE!!!!**

**INTROIT** – The way you wear your troubles

The way you wear your troubles  
I swear they're gonna wear you to the bone  
The way you wear your troubles  
I swear they're gonna wear you to the bone  
Well, I know you have to wear them  
But you don't have to wear them all alone

The cross on your shoulder  
Belongs to you and to nobody else  
The cross on your shoulder  
Belongs to you and to nobody else  
Well, I know you have to bear it  
But you don't have to bear it by yourself

The road that you're walking  
Is long, grey, lonely and wide  
The road that you're walking  
Is long and grey and lonely and wide  
Would't it be easier if somebody was walking...  
Would't it be easier if somebody was walking...  
Well, now...  
Would't it be easier if somebody was walking  
By your side?

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

L Come bless the Lord, let us exalt God's name together.

**P God, the most High, takes care of us,  
we shall never be ashamed.**

L Look to the Lord and let your light shine,  
our God frees us from all our fears.

**P Our God keeps guard over us and answers all our prayers.  
When the righteous cry out, God hears them  
and rescues them from all their troubles.**

L Taste and see that our God is good.

**P Happy are those who take refuge in God.**

L Let us worship God.

**Sing – TIS 465**

1

Father in heaven,  
grant to your children  
mercy and blessing,  
songs never ceasing,  
love to unite us,  
grace to redeem us -  
Father in heaven,  
Father our God.

2

Jesus, Redeemer,  
may we remember  
your gracious passion,  
your resurrection.  
Worship we bring you,  
praise we shall sing you -  
Jesus, Redeemer,  
Jesus our Lord.

3

Spirit descending  
whose is the blessing,  
strength for the weary,  
help for the needy;  
make us your temple,  
born a new people -  
Spirit descending,  
Spirit adored.

**WELCOME**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all!

**And also with you!**

**NEW SONG – We will lay our burden down.**

1. We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,

We will lay our burden down,  
In the hands of the risen Lord.

2. We will light the flame of love,  
We will light the flame of love,  
We will light the flame of love,  
As the hands of the risen Lord.

5. We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,  
In the hands of the risen Lord.

### **Opening prayer**

*(Your Welcome Invitation, by John van de Laar, © 2008 Sacredise)*

How hard we make things, O God,  
how heavy the yoke we place on ourselves  
through our insecurity and pride,  
through our fear and unbelief,  
through our denial and stagnation;  
How threatening our world becomes  
when we make life and joy depend on our own ability.

But, you have invited us to a different life, a deeper joy,  
you have offered us a lighter yoke  
if we will just stop for a moment  
and follow you.

Thank you for your gently urgent whisper,  
your softly persistent touch,  
calling us to come, to rest,  
and to lay down our self-imposed burdens;  
With relief and hope we respond to your invitation,  
gladly taking up your yoke,  
joyfully lifting your burden,  
and freely giving ourselves to you in love, in praise and in service. Amen.

### **Prayer of confession**

*(Working To Rest, by John van de Laar, © 2008 Sacredise)*

In a world of heavy burdens, O Christ,  
you gently call,  
In a world of wounding yokes, O Lord,  
you invite us to rest.

But, how can we relax if others continue to stagger  
under the burden of poverty and hunger?  
How can we find rest when others are imprisoned by yokes  
of abuse or crime-bred fear,  
of ethnic and intolerant violence,  
of political and racial hatred?  
How can we be restored when the world groans  
because of our negligence,  
our exploitation,  
our denial,  
and our greed?

Bind us to the yoke of your kingdom, Jesus,  
so that we will not rest  
until we have lifted the burden of another,  
so that we will not stop  
until we find our peace along with all people  
and all creation.  
Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Amen.

### **Words of affirmation**

Jesus said - "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest. Abundant life, abundant rest. We can want for no more.  
Your sins are forgiven.

**ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

### **EARLY WORD – Honouring our dents**

I want to talk about dents. Here are two stories.

My second car, a white Ford Cortina, took me and two friends to Wilson's Prom one  
November many years ago to do a four-day walk.

On the way through the grassland part before getting to Tidal River, my car was  
accosted by a careless emu, who ran smack bang into the side of my car, scaring  
the blazes out of my friend Cam who was sitting by that door. It fell over, stunned,  
then got up and ran away, leaving an almighty dent in the side door, which was now  
broken and could not be locked. The door was never the same again.

When I was in cubs and was moving to scouts, there was a ceremony called The  
Leaping Wolf, where we swung across a gap from one wooden beam to another,  
from the cub group to the scout group. It was a big occasion. Our parents came to  
witness the big transition. Then came my turn. I was a little anxious, but it didn't look  
too hard. I grasped the rope and took off. I was flying, soaring to the next stage in  
my great scouting career...then whack!! My shin banged hard into the pole on the  
scout side and left a bleeding gash and a super sore shin. I grinned and bore it,  
secretly inside going owie, owie, owie. This same spot was to be hit many times  
over the years, like a magnet for any shin hitting object. I have a dent to this day.

This got me to thinking then about dents. And I apologise if I have spoken about this before, but it is worth another mention.

In the animated movie *Cars 2*, the not quite as good sequel to *Cars*, there is a noteworthy scene.

The lead character of *Cars* was a bright shiny red sports car named Lightning McQueen. The second film centres more around McQueen's best friend, a tow truck named Tow Mater.

Mater is, in many ways, the opposite of McQueen. He's rusty, unsophisticated, unpolished (socially and physically). He accidentally gets caught up in an international spy adventure and needs to have his appearance changed to spy on another organisation. During the process of disguising him, he is willing to be a different colour, to lose the rust and have a shiny paint job. But when he's told they'll need to repair his dents so the ruse will work, he refuses.

He says – "Those dents aren't just for looks. Each one reminds me of one of my close calls, usually with his best friend Lightning McQueen. I want to remember these dents forever."

The dents may make him imperfect, but they are part of who he is.

At our church, we sometimes use this invitation to Holy Communion: *Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*

The invitation is to everyone, not just some supposed few who have ever been tired or had a burden to bear. We all come bearing something, don't we? A sadness. A worry. An ache.

A dent.

Sometimes the dents are obvious to everyone. Sometimes we are pretty good at hiding them. But all of us are dented in some way or other.

Each one of those hurt places can conjure up a memory or fear of losing someone or something so important that our breath catches at the very thought of it. The dents make us who we are. They make us human. They make us amazing.

Let's sing a song about that.

**SING:** I am amazing

1. I am amazing

I am filled with power

And God loves me

Like crazy

2. You are amazing

You are filled with power

And God loves you

Like crazy

3. We are amazing

We are filled with power

And God loves us

Like crazy

4. God is amazing  
God is filled with power  
And we love God  
Like crazy

5. I am amazing  
I am filled with power  
And God loves me  
Like crazy  
Like crazy  
ALL: I am amazing

**SHARING OUR STORIES** – Choosing a braver faith.

**READINGS:**

**Song of Solomon 2:8-13**

<sup>8</sup>The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. <sup>9</sup>My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. <sup>10</sup>My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; <sup>11</sup>for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. <sup>12</sup>The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. <sup>13</sup>The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

**Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30.**

<sup>16</sup>“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, <sup>17</sup>‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ <sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup>the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

**PREACHING** – Try yoke light!

I don't know about you all, but I am feeling pretty weary these days.

This time of living within restrictions and living with a protagonist that you cannot see and never know where it might be...is tiring.

So the words from the gospel are very timely as far as I am concerned.

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest*

At the most I can only speak of myself when I say that this time is not restful. Not enough of doing nothing, of good sleeping, of no responsibility, of time by myself to...rest.

The world around continues even if that world is just your family.

But before I let this spiral into a poor me tirade, this notion of rest is of relevance to all of us I suggest.

The gospel speaks of rest, holy rest if you like, but it speaks of this rest in the context of being burdened, or yoked, by that, which is oppressive. This rest allows the taking on of a new yoke, that of Jesus, which is light.

On one level this seems absurd to get rid of one burden only to take on another.

But it only seems absurd when one misunderstands Jesus' agenda.

When I was about primary school age, there were these people round the corner from us who had in their front yard a set of stocks.



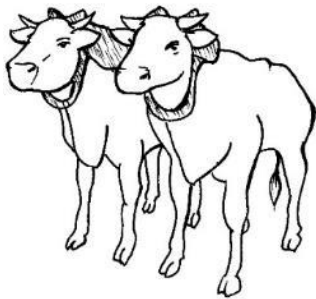
My brother knew the teenage son who lived there, who in fact is now a well-travelled international orchestral violinist and went to Ringwood Uniting Church for a time. It was unclear whether the stocks were joke, decoration or threat to wayward children. Either way they were a symbol of a type of yoke – the yoke of servitude used by those seeking to oppress or dominate.

Such was the case in Jesus' time with regard to the Romans. Yokes were used by the Romans as a sign to all that they had to be obedient to the greater power of their captors.



This was a yoke the people in Jesus' time understood. Many had worn it. But they also understood other yokes as well.

There was the yoke of cooperation and common purpose.



In biblical times and still today in some places, oxen and donkeys used for farm work were fitted with a yoke joining the two animals together.

Yokes were made to measure for the particular animals so as not to irritate or discomfort them and allowed the two animals to combine their strength for the task at hand. This kind of yoke was a symbol of cooperation and common purpose.

Another type of yoke is a long pole with buckets hanging from each end. This pole enables a person to carry a heavy load by distributing and balancing its weight. This kind of yoke represents strength.



When Jesus was speaking of his burden or his yoke, he was actually speaking of discipleship, and the last two examples of yokes represent Jesus yoke, one that was based on cooperation and common purpose and enabling strength for the task. In this sense then his burden was light as it was not carried alone nor allowed to crush the one carrying it.

This yoke is represented by many clergy when they wear a stole.



This is a representation of the minister taking on the yoke of Christ.

Bill Loader describes it like this:

*The invitation of Jesus in 11:28-30 is beautiful. It is the kind of thing which sages said. It is not a summons to idol worship of Jesus, but a call to learn a new way, especially a new way of interpreting and understanding God's will. That will, God's Law, God's word, was commonly portrayed as assuaging the thirst and feeding the hungry souls. Remember the woman on the street in Proverbs who invited people to her feast (Proverbs 8-9) and Isa 55:1 with its splendid call to share free food? This is*



*the same tradition. It is not a call to heaviness, but a call to lightness of being. It contrasts with the serious calls of those who interpret scripture as demand and stricture.*

It is the wearing of this yoke then that allows for rest.

But we do need to take care.

Again, I borrow from Rev Jan Richardson who reflects on this passage in light of words from a person she met who said – God wants us to make things easier for ourselves not harder. She wrote this in response:

***Make things easier, not harder.*** *The words have been haunting me for weeks now. I am a creature drawn to complication. Given the choice between making the way easy and making the way difficult, I sometimes tilt toward difficulty. I've learned my soul often needs to have something to push against, something to forge and form it. There's a difference, though, between the complications and complexities that forge the soul and those that drain it. I can wax poetic about the holy disruptions that have deepened me, but I recognize, too, my capacity for choosing complications that stem from some other, less sacred impulse. There are times when I make the way difficult for myself because I've taken on too much, or because I'm avoiding something that needs attention, or because I'm giving too much energy to something that I don't need to be giving that energy to. I recognize that I'm capable of manufacturing my own complications rather than waiting for the ones that come around naturally in traveling with Christ.*

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest*

But what kind of rest are we really talking about here? Probably any that is needed really, but in particular I want to focus on holy rest or Sabbath rest.

I think many of us, sadly this is also many of us in the church too, have forgotten what Sabbath really means, particularly those younger among us for whom Sundays, our traditional Sabbath, have kind of become just another day of doing stuff, and for others has become another day to work because you have no choice. I guess in some ways this passage is a call for us to reclaim and rethink Sabbath rest.

Margaret Guenther was an Episcopal Priest, spiritual director and retreat leader. She died in 2016 and was well known and highly regarded in the field of spiritual formation and spiritual direction. She is an author with whom I find much affinity and who I find extremely helpful.

A book of hers I have is titled, "At home in the world: A rule of life for the rest of us", in which she reflects on the Rule of St. Benedict in regard to the monastic way of life, and how a similar but less rigid rule can be applied to the lives of ordinary church going folk like you and me.

There is much of note in it but in one section she talks about Sabbath.

(See on p131ff)

She invites us to consider taking seriously the concept of Sabbath so as not to succumb to the peril of work, to recognise Sabbath's necessity and potential holiness. If we can do this we will take seriously the command to rest, not grudgingly as a sign of weakness but as a necessary ingredient of good stewardship of our

time and energy. We will look forward to Sabbath time, whichever day of the week it falls on for us.

When we resist Sabbath and fervently justify why we don't or won't engage in it, we are in danger of losing perspective.

Margaret advocates 'holy uselessness', or the joyous and restorative wasting of time, which she says is not the same as procrastination or avoidance of tasks.

She offers that the word 'silly' originally meant 'blessed', and that adults often lose the ability to let go and delight in simply being.

She suggests that children and dogs can be good teachers of this.

Another author you have heard me refer to before, Rev Eugene Peterson, now also sadly passed away in 2018, has said that Sabbath is about praying and playing.

The play of children can instruct us on holy uselessness. This may be familiar to you if you have grandchildren or remember when your own children were young. When Dheran was little he and I often clashed about priorities and agendas.

For example, we might have been out shopping which of course has to be done quickly, efficiently and off to the next thing or home to rest properly.

Dheran however wanted to stop at the merry-go-round to have a turn, even just a sit on, or look at the dogs in the pet shop, or go and fiddle with the gadgets in the national Geographic shop.

Usually no was the response, but sometimes I had to ask myself 'why?' Why can't we play while we shop? Why do my priorities always have to drive our shopping trips?

When he said it is unfair, there is truth to what he says. Why is the task more important than the play?

Why is work more important than Sabbath?

As Guenther puts it we are forced to ask questions like: what makes me new? What re-creates me? Is there a place for holy uselessness in my purposeful life?

Re-creation over against recreation is important. It is the stuff that energises you, that fills you up with oomph. For some it is exercise or a sport. For others it might be study or learning. For others still it is movies or music lessons, coaching junior sport, mixing with friends or being alone.

The point is to forget about achievement or pleasing others, and please the self, to find holy rest in ordinary things.

I am under no illusion however that we fight against our selves and the world wanting something different from us – productivity, multi-tasking, accountability.

But you see, it is about balance, and perspective.

Too much pleasure can become narcissistic and selfish, and responsibilities can fly out the window.

Too much work on the other hand can become stultifying, exhausting, and take you from those who love you.

The Song of Solomon, a biblical book we rarely dabble in, is clearly sexy and romantic, but it is also instructive in regard to Sabbath.

(A brief aside to note here that this book is more than meets the eye. It may be the original Romeo and Juliet story, talking about the rise of genuine love in a context that would crush it. Maybe more of that another time.)

When the beloved says “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away”, it is not merely a come on as it were, you know, wink, wink, nudge, nudge, say no more. It is an invitation, which says, “Come on let’s get out of here. It is spring, it is beautiful outside. Let’s go out and play and look at the flowers and the birds and the trees and roll down the hill and walk barefoot in the creek, and just enjoy it all.” It is beautiful permission giving to play.

Jesus’ invitation to come and rest (or is it a command?) is about a way of living life. *The promise is not joy one day after strictures now, but joy now, embedded in the life of God and located in the midst of the world in its joy and pain - also in its hostility. With such a sense of rest we can turn our attention to what really matters, people, and turn aside from the busy hassles of religiosity with its industry of piety which continues to make of many churches its factories.*

Jesus could make a killing in these times. If he had an advertising billboard, or ads on Facebook or YouTube he might use the slogan – Troubled? Try Yoke light!

What did these words change?

If you ask the burdened heavily laden ones who have come to Jesus down through the ages, they will probably testify, that those words changed everything!

Maybe these words will do that for you too?

What does your Sabbath look like in these days?

Maybe it is time to take stock, to make time for praying and playing, for re-creating yourself.

You all are invited; kick your shoes off, let go of your burden and rest. Holy rest.

Nothing quite like it, and guaranteed, you will like it.

Go on – what have you got to lose?

**Sing** – We will lay our burden down.

1. We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,  
In the hands of the risen Lord.

2. We will light the flame of love,  
We will light the flame of love,  
We will light the flame of love,  
As the hands of the risen Lord.

3. We will show both hurt and hope,  
We will show both hurt and hope,  
We will show both hurt and hope,  
Like the hands of the risen Lord.

4. We will walk the path of peace,  
We will walk the path of peace,  
We will walk the path of peace,  
Hand in hand with the risen Lord.

5. We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,  
We will lay our burden down,  
In the hands of the risen Lord.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** – read by Wendy Hinde.

Before God and each other, let us consider the doors of possibility before us, as we pray to move our hearts and our energies beyond the familiar to embrace the reign of God.

For all who thirst –

whether for water or relationship, for welcome or justice,  
or merely a place to rest and to be:

Turn our lives outward in ever-expanding senses of connection and love.

For all who struggle with choices –

choices about the beginnings or endings of commitments;

choices whose doors do not yet reveal the vista beyond, or the path it may bring;

choices about what to do with one's life, and what to do for the sake of others:

Turn our lives outward in ever-expanding senses of connection and love.

For all on journeys, seeking answer to prayer –

for healing or comfort, strength in trying times and joy in shared times,  
and wisdom and love in all times:

Turn our lives outward in ever-expanding senses of connection and love.

We pray for the world in this time of uncertainty - countries with unstable leadership, countries whose minorities are suppressed, often violently. May care and concerns for fellow human beings be foremost in the decisions that are made.

We pray for our country in this time of turmoil, may the decision makers be mindful of the needs of all, as they plan for the future - a time - the likes of which we have never experienced before.

We pray for our church in this time of change - may your guiding light, Lord, be our strength. Give strength to those who are sick, those in caring roles, and those in positions of leadership

Loving God, in your mercy, hear our prayers. And all these prayers we bring in the name of the Risen Christ who taught us to pray saying:

***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.*

**Sing – TIS 547**

1

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art -  
thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father, thy child let me be;  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3

Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight,  
be thou my dignity, thou my delight;  
thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower:  
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

4

Riches I scorn and the world's empty praise,  
thou my inheritance, now and always:  
thou and thou only the first in my heart;  
high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5

High King of heaven, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

### **BLESSING –**

Go in peace - love and care for one another in the name of Christ Jesus  
and may the love of God fill you,  
the wisdom of God guide you,  
and the strength of God support you and comfort you,  
both now and forevermore. Amen

### **Recessional – Deep Stillness**

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland;  
for you, deep blue of the desert skies;  
for you, flame red of the rocks and stones;  
for you, sweet water from hidden springs.  
From the edges seek the heartlands,  
and when you're burnt by the journey  
may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit  
soothe and replenish you.  
In the name of Christ.  
In the name of Christ.

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for you, deep blue of the desert skies;  
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