



**THE UNITING CHURCH OF
ST JAMES, CURTIN**

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

**“We Come As We Are.
We Offer What We Have.”**

Presented by Network Y – For The Young in Heart

16 June 2013

**St James is a safe place for all people to
worship regardless of race, creed, age,
gender, cultural background or sexual
orientation.**

GATHERING

Entry into the celebration

The gong is sounded three times

We come as we are: female or male, young or old.

We come as we are: whatever wealth – poor, middle class or rich.

We come as we are: in sickness or in health.

We come as we are: whatever race, creed, cultural background, or sexual orientation.

We offer what we have: our interests, gifts and talents.

We offer what we have: our time, attention and energy.

We offer what we have: our capacity to live, to love, to have faith and give hope.

All: We come as we are: open and without pretence.

We offer what we have, for the betterment of our community.

For this is the essence of the realm of God.

(Aaron Harper)

Lighting of the candle

The community candle is lit in silence.

CELEBRATING

Hymn *People stand as they are able, to sing*

One

Aaron Harper, 2008

VERSE 1

Whatever race, whatever creed,

Whatever sexuality.

Whatever wealth, rich or poor,

Whatever power, great or small.

CHORUS

We come together as one, our hearts united
To see the Kingdom of love, come to Earth from heaven.
We are connected as one,
The universe evolves
Our lives in its mould.
And so we gather as one, no separation
Between black person or white, or man or women.
We live together as one,
The Earth our domain,
Origins the same.

VERSE 2

We are fine threads, being interwove
In different shapes, and different seams.
We are fine threads, many colours
God's art piece, life's tapestry.

VERSE 3

Homeless people, and climate change.
War and torture, hunger and AIDS.
Many issues, we must face.
Together solve them, one human race.

Opening Prayer

In the depth of ourselves
We discover the source of love, the source of life and the ground of
being.
As a Church, we desire to express this,
Through living fully, loving wastefully, and being all we can be.
May our living, loving and being, be a river flowing through each of
us,
Out into the world,
Bringing healing and transformation for good.

All: Amen.

(Aaron Harper, Inspired by John Shelby Spong)

Welcome

A Retelling of “One Body, Many Parts”

1 Corinthians 12:12-26.

“One Cake, Many Parts”

(Aaron Harper)

For even as a cake is made up of many ingredients, and many ingredients make up one cake, so it is with our Church community. We are all one in spirit – female or male, rich or poor, Australian or another nationality.

A cake is not one ingredient, but many. Even if the sugar said “I am not as important as the flour”, it is still an equal and vital part of the cake. For without the sugar, where would the sweetness be? If all ingredients were the same, no cake could exist! The maker of the cake places each ingredient into the mix in the exact quantities that are required.

There are many ingredients, but one cake. The egg cannot say to the apple “I have no need of you” or the nuts to the oil “I have no need of you”. In fact, like bicarb soda, the least of the ingredients can actually be the most important.

For we all need our “oils”, to smooth our rough edges.

(Table 1 to pour ½ cup oil into bowl).

We all need our “eggs”, to bind us together.

(Table 2 to add two eggs to the bowl).

We all need our “sugars”, to add sweetness where we might be bland.

(Table 3 to add 2 cups of brown sugar and beat well).

We all need our “flours” and “yeast”, to help us expand and rise to the occasion.

(Table 4 to add two cups of self raising flour and 1 teaspoon of bicarb soda).

We need our “fruits” to give us fibre, to help cleanse us from within.

(Table 5 to dice 2 apples and add apples and sultanas to bowl).

We need our “nuts”, to provide some nuttiness – and we are all a little nutty sometimes!

(Table 6 to add nuts to the bowl).

We need our “cinnamon”, to add some spice to life!

(Table 7 to add cinnamon and stir).

All ingredients are honoured. All ingredients are combined into a whole. Each ingredient supports another.

For we, at St James, are truly many ingredients, but one cake.

Hymn *People stand as they are able, to sing*

In What Strange Land

Shirley Murray, Tune: Mysterium

Verse 1

In what strange land will I sing your song,
O God, my God?

To what new code must my heart belong,
O God, my God?

The boundaries shift as the lines delete,
And the way back home is a tired beat:
There are new directions to take my feet
To follow you.

Verse 2

With what new eyes will I see your hand
O God, my God?

By what new chart will I understand,
O God, my God?

The old worlds wither away and die;
Your new creation is like the sky,
With new found galaxies spinning by,
Which dazzle me.

Verse 3

You test my faith in a different sphere,
O God, my God.
You guide the cursor that brings me here,
O God, my God.
For childhood things keep me in the past,
Remembered hymns that still hold me fast,
Familiar words that were meant to last,
And sing along.

Verse 4

You put a new song in my mouth,
O God, my God.
You lift my spirit to touch your truth,
O God, my God.
You give me bread when I fear a stone,
You do not leave me to walk alone,
My heart will trust in your heart's unknown,
O God, my God!

With The Children

Children gather on the conversation mat.

CONTEMPORARY WORD

Some readings from our broad religious tradition shall now be read.
Luke 7:36-50.

Music of Reflection

Contemporary Word

AFFIRMATION

Hymn *People stand as they are able, to sing*

It Is Love

Scott Kearns

Verse 1

What stands tall when all has fallen,
Remains when strength is gone?
What can heal the broken spirit,
'mid chaos find a song?

Chorus

It is love, and love alone.
It is love, and love alone.

Verse 2

What consoles an aching spirit,
Brings joy despite the pain?
What can sooth our hurt fill'd anger,
Seeks sharing wealth as gain? Chorus.

Verse 3

What inspires responsibility,
Seek worth in great and small?
What views self and others equally,
Seeks peace and joy for all? Chorus.

Verse 4

What will feed our hungry children,
Will bind the wounds of war?
What will speak sweet peace in conflict,
What makes the spirit soar?

Chorus Last Time

It is love,
Respect and care,
Within, and then with others gladly shared,
At home, and everywhere,
It is love, and love alone.
It is love, and love alone.
It is love.

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Care candle

Today, we come as we are
With our joys and concerns,
Our hopes and fears,
Our wants and needs.
Some are known to those around, some are buried deep within our hearts.

Today, you are invited to pause, to reflect, and to be mindful of these,
To come forward and receive a candle as we listen to a song called
“Lanterns” by Birds of Tokyo,
And to light your candle as your lantern,
To hold close or to hold high,
As a symbol of hope and a sign faith
That through us, the world can find healing and peace and will be a better place.

And so we take this flame, and light our special care candle.

"Lanterns" by Birds of Tokyo

Lately I've found
When I start to think aloud
There's a longing in the sound
There is more I could be.
In darkness I leave
For a place I've never seen
It's been calling out to me
That is where I should be.

We never carried days on our own.
But now it's up to us to know:
The weight of being so much more
We will find ourselves on the road.

On we march,
With a midnight song,

We will light our way
With our lanterns on.
On we march,
Till we meet the dawn,
We will light our way
With our lanterns on.

As we walk out
Without question, without doubt
In the light that we have found
It is finally clear:
Our day has come
And we'll stand for who we are
We are ready, we are young
We have nothing to fear.

We never carried days on our own.
But now it's up to us to know:
The weight of being so much more
We will find ourselves on the road.

On we march,
With a midnight song,
We will light our way
With our lanterns on.
On we march,
Till we meet the dawn,
We will light our way
With our lanterns on.

We held the light
To our faces
And realised
We were chasing
Shadows behind
Not worth saving.
So burn it bright
Forever illuminating.

On we march,
With a midnight song,
We will light our way
With our lanterns on.
On we march,
Till we meet the dawn,
We will light our way, with our lanterns on. [x2]

In darkness I leave
For a place I've never seen
It's been calling out to me
That is where I should be.

THE JESUS MEAL

Offering

Our offerings for the continuing work of in this place and beyond,
and our gifts of bread and wine, shall now be received.

Presentation *People stand as the gifts are presented*

May the blessing of God bring these gifts to life:

All: **new hope of healing;**

fresh ways of coping;

a chance to rest;

a chance to work;

a way to live gracefully.

Amen.

Hymn *People stand as they are able, to sing*

Come As You Are

Deirdre Browne

Tune: Come As You Are, TIS 693

Verse 1

Come as you are: that's how I want you.

Come as you are; feel quite at home,

Close to my heart, loved and forgiven.

Come as you are: why stand alone?

Verse 2

No need to fear, love sets no limits;
No need to fear, love never ends;
Don't run away, shamed and dis-hearted,
Rest in my love, trust me again.

Verse 3

I came to call sinners, not just the righteous;
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail, to live by my promise,
Why do you think, I'd love the less.

Verse 4

Come as you are; that's how I love you;
Come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change, the love that I bear you;
All will be well, just come as you are.

Welcome

At this table we give thanks for justice, love, peace and freedom.

Men: *At this table we give thanks for friends and strangers
together in community in this safe place.*

Wm: **At this table we welcome old and young.**

A place at the table, and all are invited.

Thanksgiving

We give thanks for the unfolding of matter, mind, intelligence, and
life,

that has brought us to this moment in time.

All: **we celebrate our common origin**

With everything that exists.

We celebrate the mystery we experience and address as 'God',
ground and sustainer of everything that exists,
in whom we live and have our being.

And we acknowledge this mystery embodied in every human person,
aware that each one of us gives God unique and personal expression.

**All: God is everywhere present.
In grace-filled moments of sharing.
In carefully created communities
of loving solidarity.**

We are one with everything, living and non-living, on this planet.
All: Connected. Interrelated. Interdependent.

The Story

We remember the stories from our tradition.
How on many occasions Jesus would share a meal with his friends.
Bread and wine shared in community.
For everyone born, a place at the table.

How bread would be taken, a blessing offered, and then shared
between them.
Bread and wine shared in community.

How some wine would be poured out,
a blessing offered, and then passed between them.

The bread and wine symbolized human lives,
and the power of giving and receiving.

May the passion of life as seen in Jesus,
and in the lives and struggles of many other
committed and faithful people then and now,
enable us to dare and dream and to risk.
All: Together may we re-imagine the world.

Together may we work to make all things new.
**All: Together may we celebrate the possibilities and hope
we each have and are called to share.**
For everyone born, a place at the table.

Bread and Wine

Bread is broken

We break this bread for the broken Earth,
ravaged and plundered for greed.

**All: May there be a healing of our beautiful
blue and green planet.**

We break this bread for those
who follow other paths:
for those who follow the noble path of the Buddha;
the yogic path of the Hindus;
the way of the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs;
and the descendants of Abraham:
the children of Hagar and Sarah.

**All: May there be healing where there
is pain and woundedness.**

We break this bread for the unhealed hurts and wounds
that lie within us all.

All: May we be healed.

Wine is poured into the cup

This is the cup of peace and new life for all.

A sign of love for the community of hope.

**All: A reminder of the call to live fully,
to love wastefully,
and to be all that we can be.**

Communion

To eat and drink together reminds us
of the deeper aspects of human fellowship,
for from time immemorial the sharing of bread and wine
has been the universal of all symbols of community.

*The bread and wine will be distributed, with the congregation
standing in circle. Please bring your liturgies. The bread is gluten
free.*

After Communion

Divine Presence in all of life,
we give thanks that we have gathered
together in this sacred place.

**All: We rejoice in the giftedness of each person here.
We are grateful for who we are for each other.
May we be continue to be truly thankful
in all we do and all we become.**

(Rex AE Hunt, adapted)

SCATTERING

Remain in circle.

The presence of God reaches beyond this place...
The candle is extinguished

As we finish our time together, let us sing “The Power of Love”.

Hymn *People stand as they are able, to sing*
The Power of Love

Geoff Bullock (version II, amended A Harper)

Verse One

God has come to me,
As my heart is changed, released
This miracle of grace gently sets me free.
God I've come to know,
The weaknesses I see in me,
Will be stripped away
By the power of love.

Chorus

I'm held close,
And God's love surrounds me,
I'm brought near
Drawn into God's side.
In God's life
I'm rising like the eagle
And I will soar with you
God's spirit leads us on
In the power of love.

Verse Two

God who comes to all,
Hope that shines to light the way,
Mercy soothes our souls, healing every heart.
Love that sees the tears
Overcomes our darkest fears
Grace that lifts us up
In the power of love.
Chorus.

COMMUNITY

'This week' at St James

Notices

Birthdays and anniversaries

Significant events

Journey candles

Fellowship

Morning tea is now served.

You are invited to share in the moment of fellowship.

Today we re-launch Network Y.

It is a Network for the young in heart. It has no age boundaries, but will be focused on providing a space within St James for the younger generation.

Our aim is to have a monthly activity, to which all will be welcomed. These will be advertised through the notices.

We hope you will join us to make this a successful group.

Mary and the Jar of Alabaster A Harper

Luke 7:36-50

Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined *at the table*.

And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining *at the table* in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind *Him* at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."

And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."

Those who were reclining *at the table* with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this *man* who even forgives sins?" And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Contemporary Word

The story of Mary anointing Jesus with the alabaster box is, I think, one of the most sensual, confronting and provocative stories in the Bible.

If you doubt this, put the story in a modern context.

Imagine if a scantily-dressed women, obviously a prostitute, walked into this Church right now, knelt down before, lets say XXXX, removed his shoes, wet his feet with her tears, dried his feet with her hair, and poured a Calvin Klein perfume over them.

I'm sure our reactions would be:

1. well this is strange;
2. who is this women; and
3. oooo what's XXX been up to in his spare time.

Whilst it is easy to be critical of the Pharisees, I'm afraid that I think most of us, including me, would have a similar reaction to what they had!

It is difficult to know what emotions were going through Mary's mind, but I think it might have been a mix of unworthiness, thankfulness and love. It was certainly a shocking act of passion.

Last Sunday my partner and I went to see Jesus Christ superstar – an amazing amalgam of music, song, and visual effects. One song that really moved me was Mary's song "I don't know how to love him". Let me read the words to you, as they seem, to me, to beautifully reflect the mixed thoughts that Mary might have been going through at that time:

I don't know how to love him.
What to do, how to move him.
I've been changed, yes really changed.
In these past few days, when I've seen myself,
I seem like someone else.
I don't know how to take this.
I don't see why he moves me.
He's a man. He's just a man.
And I've had so many men before,
In very many ways,
He's just one more.
Should I bring him down?
Should I scream and shout?
Should I speak of love,
Let my feelings out?
I never thought I'd come to this.
What's it all about?
Don't you think it's rather funny,
I should be in this position.
I'm the one who's always been
So calm, so cool, no lover's fool,

Running every show.
He scares me so.
I never thought I'd come to this.
What's it all about?
Yet, if he said he loved me,
I'd be lost. I'd be frightened.
I couldn't cope, just couldn't cope.
I'd turn my head. I'd back away.
I wouldn't want to know.
He scares me so.
I want him so.
I love him so.

What I take from the story is that Mary came to Jesus as she was, without pretence. There was no dressing up, containing her emotions, acting for the crowd. It was a heart of honesty and humility, one we would do well to mimic, especially in those times of life when we are confused, overwhelmed, unsure of ourselves.

And she offered what she had. Many commentators have speculated on the cost of the alabaster and where Mary may have got it from. Who cares? What is not in doubt is that it was probably the most precious thing Mary owned, and she gave it willingly. Similarly, we are asked in this community to give the best of ourselves. Giving is the story of Christianity.

Come as you are. Offer what you have. This is the realm of God.

Amen.