



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

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

**‘The True Meaning of Progressive
Christianity’**

1 September 2013

**Happy Father’s Day To All The
Dads!**

Presiders: Aaron Harper and Shukry Sahhar

Reader: Mollie Bialkowski

Music: Gwenda Waldie

Servers: Kate McLoughlin, Marika Simpson

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

*This Liturgy is Inspired by the 8 Points of Progressive Christianity
(progressivechristianity.org) and The Canberra Affirmation (www.rexaehuntprogressive.com)*

We Are A Community Coming Together That Is Inclusive Of All People

Entry into the celebration

The gong is sounded three times

The calendar has turned another bend
Around the circle of seasons.

All: The Winter has gone and Spring has now come.

Women: New buds shoot,

Men: Magpies swoop,

Women: Wattles and tulips flower,

Men: Snakes and spiders awake from their slumber,

All: And we long to remove our wooly jumpers and

Feel the warmth of the sun on our skin.

Spring reminds us that following times of quietness and withdrawal,
Bold colours of new experience again blossom.

And that after pruning the limbs of old habits and beliefs

New life in God springs forth in personal and spiritual growth.

**All: The Christian story teaches us that after death comes
resurrection and new life.**

(Aaron Harper)

So let us celebrate the richness and diversity of life
in the presence of God.

Lighting of the candle

The community candle is lit in silence.

Hymn *People stand as they are able, to sing an affirmation that this is a place of peace.*

Praise The Beauty of Life

Words: George Stuart

Tune: TIS 52, Sing Hosanna

Verse 1

When we gaze at the wealth in the cosmos,
When we ponder both time and space,
Supernovas and quasars, the Big Bang!
We are humbled in our own birthplace.

Speculation;
Observation;
Fascination with the universe!
Wait in silence;
Stand with patience;
As we greet infinity!

Verse 2

It would seem that our Earth is unrivalled –
Life is here but is not elsewhere;
Trees and birds, fish and beast, bugs and insects
In the habitat that we all share.

Conservation?
Desecration?
Preservation is the call we hear.
Life so marv'lous,
Yet mysterious –
Value nature's company!

Verse 3

We acknowledge the birth of a baby
As a wonder beyond compare;
All the organs and limbs in just nine months
It's amazing that it is all there!

Expectation;
Dedication;
Procreation – what an awesome gift.
Life's abundance
Is so precious;
We are blessed exceedingly.

Verse 4

God within, and between and beyond us
Brings a wonder and sanctity;
All that is and what was and what will be –
Is expression of God's harmony.

Contemplation;

Invocation;

Meditation brings God's mystery near.

Prize the joyous;

Pause in reverence;

Touched by God's eternity.

Welcome

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

Joyful, Joyful

Henry Van Dyke

Tune: Ode to Joy, TIS 152

Verse 1

Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, God of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before you
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of fear and sadness,
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

Verse 2

All your works with joy surround you,
Earth and heav'n reflect your rays.
Stars and planets sing around you,
Centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain
Call to praise God joyfully.

Verse 3

You are giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest.
God our centre, Christ our brother,
All are yours who live in love;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to your joy above.

We Strive To Protect And Restore The Integrity Of The Earth And Its Inhabitants

This is a time to reflect on a social justice or environmental issue.

As Christians, we are inspired to be the imitation of Jesus.

**All: We will not retreat from the world, but will act within it
To bring around the implementation of justice
For all of Earth's peoples,
For all its creatures,
And for the Earth itself.**

(Aaron Harper, Inspired by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Reflection

Silence

Music for Reflection

**The Path And Teachings Of Jesus Lead Us To An
Awareness And Experience Of The Sacred And The
Oneness And Unity Of All Life**

Introduction of Special Guests

Readings From Our Religious Tradition and the World Around Us:

- **‘Who Is My Neighbour’ by Reverend Rudy Plug**
(http://www.trinityunitedbeeton.com/sermons/sermon_08_10_26.htm)
- **Gospel According to Luke 14:1, 7-14**

Contemporary Word

We Find Grace In The Search For Understanding, Believing There Is More Value In Questioning Than In Absolutes

We honour the one called Jesus:

All: He invited others to share a re-imagined vision of the ‘sacred’, and to build a realm of grace, love, integrity, justice, and inclusiveness.

He demonstrated an open table fellowship to all.

We too share his vision

All: And affirm the significance of his life and teachings.

(Based on The Canberra Affirmation)

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

Wake, Now My Senses

Words: Gretta Vosper

Music: Slane, TIS 626

Verse 1

Wake, now, my senses and hear the Earth call;
Feel the deep power of be-ing in all;
Keep with the web of creation your vow,
Giving, receiving as love shows us how.

Verse 2

Wake, now, my reason, reach out to the new;
Join with each pilgrim who quests for the true;
Honour the beauty and wisdom of time;
Suffer your limit and praise the sublime.

Verse 3

Wake, now, compassion, give heed to the cry;
Voice of suffering fill the wide sky;
Take as your neighbour both stranger and friend,
Praying and striving their hardship to end.

Verse 4

Wake, now, my conscience, with justice your guide;
Join with all people whose rights are denied;
Take not for granted a privileged place;
Our love embraces the whole human race.

Recognition Of New Members

From time to time at St James
we recall how new people arrived,
decided to stay,
and enrich the life of that congregation by
their presence,
their contributions and
their faithfulness.

So today we celebrate that in the life of this congregation,
several people have arrived and decided to call 'St James'
their spiritual home.

**All: As a Church, we take this opportunity to thank each of you
for what you contribute to our spiritual family:
experiences,
insights,
enthusiasm,
questions,
faith,
doubts,
gifts for ministry.**

We pray that we will be a blessing to you, as you are a blessing to us,
and that you will know God's presence each day of your life,

All: And that together we will life fully, love wastefully, and be all that we can be.

Together with those who have been here longer,
we are the people of God in this place.

Could those people who have been at St James for 2, 5, 10, 20, 30,
40, 40+ years, and visitors, to also stand.

**All: Together we represent the Spirit of God to each other,
And to the world around us.**

We Strive For Peace And Justice Amongst All People

**We Will Now Sing 3 Verses of ‘Prayer of Peace’,
Share The Peace,
And Sing the Last Three Verses of ‘Prayer of Peace’.**

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

Prayer of Peace

David Hass

Verse 1

Peace before us, peace behind us,
Peace under our feet.
Peace within us, peace over us,
Let all around us be peace.

Verse 2

Love before us, love behind us
Love under our feet.
Love within us, love over us,
Let all around us be love.

Verse 3

Light before us, light behind us
Light under our feet.
Light within us, light over us,
Let all around us be light.

You are invited to share the peace with your neighbours.

Verse 4

Christ before us, Christ behind us
Christ under our feet.
Christ within us, Christ over us,
Let all around us be Christ.

Verse 5

Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia,
Al-le-lu-ia.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia,
Al-le-lu-ia.

Verse 6

Peace before us, peace behind us,
Peace under our feet.
Peace within us, peace over us,
Let all around us be peace.

**The Way We Behave Towards Each Other Is The Fullest
Expression Of What We Believe**

Care candle

We are people of all ages who enter this space
bringing our joys and concerns.
Joys and concerns shared.

Response

**All: Awe inspiring mystery
Beyond our limits of understanding
We release our joys and our concerns
Believing that in speaking them
It may not change the situation
It may not change others
But it will change us.**

**Where there is hurt, let us bring healing
Where despair reigns, let us create hope
Where there is joy, we'll join in laughing
Love be our guide, on life's winding road.**

(Aaron Harper)

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

The Care candle is lit

**We Commit to a Path of Life-Long Learning, Compassion,
and Selfless Love**

Offerings

Our offerings for the celebration of life in this place and beyond,
shall now be received.

Presentation *People stand as the gifts are presented*

**All: May these offerings be used to extend God's realm of
love and compassion,
grace and inclusion,
hope and forgiveness.**

Amen.

(Aaron Harper)

People sit

Words of Mission and Blessing

The presence of God reaches beyond this place...

The candle is extinguished

As we depart, we will walk the transformative path of Jesus.

**All: We dedicate ourselves to non-violent peacemaking and
considered forgiveness, action for social justice, and stewardship
of the earth and all life upon it.**

We will encourage humour, challenge, and acts of generosity.

All: For we are all connected. At our centre is a oneness: we are one with the 'sacred', one with ourselves, one with others, and one with the universe.

(Based on The Canberra Affirmation)

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

All Creatures of the Earth and Sky

Words: Gretta Vosper

Tune: Lasst uns Erfreuen, TIS 100

Verse 1

All creatures of the Earth and sky,
Come, kindred, lift your voices high,
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Bright burning sun with golden beam,
Soft shining moon with silver gleam
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Verse 2

Swift rushing wind so wild and strong,
White clouds that sail in heav'n along,
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Fair rising morn in praise rejoice,
High stars of evening find a voice:
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Verse 3

Cool flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for all life to hear,
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Dance, flame of fire, so strong and bright,
And bless us with your warmth and light:
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Verse 4

Embracing Earth, you, day by day,
Bring for your blessings on our way,
Alleluia, Alleluia!
All herbs and fruits that richly grow,
Let them the glory also show;
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

'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.

Luke 14:1, 7-14

14:1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

14:7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable.

14:8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host;

14:9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.

14:10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

14:11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

14:12 He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid.

14:13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

14:14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

“Who Is My Neighbour?”

by Reverend Rudy Plug

A stranger wandered into Canb’ra one day, and
Was asking each person he met along the way
A question he pondered and wondered about;
It kept him up late, it plumb wore him out!
But he had to know – yes he did! – so he’d ask
Each man, woman, teenager child he came past,
This question that puzzled his puzzler so:
“Tell me, Who is my neighbour? I just have to know!”
The stranger was indeed a very strange sight;
Some folks thought his head was not screwed on right,
So instead of answering his urgent plea
They just looked away, or they walked ‘cross the street,
And some would just smile and then pick up the pace
And hurry away like they were in a race.
No-one stopped to chat with this forlorn young dude;
They really did not intend to be rude...
The truth was that they – well, they just didn’t know
The answer he sought for, so on they would go.
“After all”, they would reason, “we don’t know his name,
Or where he might live, or where from he came,
So how can we say who his neighbour might be?

Since I don't know him, it couldn't be me!"

So on he would question as he wandered through town,
And each hour it seemed he would frown and he'd frown,
A frownier frown than he had just before,
So much so that soon his frowner was sore!

Then, as he was resting upon a tree stump,
Still puzzling and pondering, his mind in a frump,
He looked, and there stood right beside him, a kid
Whose hat was so big it's whole face was hid.

The hat she yanked off, and there stood a young girl
About 4 foot one, with long curly curls.

"Hello, my name's Sophie", she said with a grin,

"You must be a stranger to Canb'ra", she smiled.

"I am", he agreed, then said, "Please tell me child,

I've asked and I've questioned and pleaded with others,

With teens and with seniors, and kids out with mothers,

This question that's puzzling and bothering my head:

Just who is my neighbour??"

...do you know what she said?

She smiled her best smile, and she grinned her best grin,

And clapped her wee hands again and again,

"I know!" she excitedly answered the man,

"I know, yes I know! I can tell you, I can!"

His frown disappeared and he jumped to his feet,

He took both her hands and they danced in the street!
Why, he was so happy he didn't know what to do!
Then he stopped and he said, "Oh please tell me, won't you?"
"I will, yes I will", said the girl with the curls,
"I'll tell you just who your neighbour might be:
My neighbour is YOU, and your neighbour is ME!"
And, pointing at others as others walked by,
She added, "And so is that girl, and that guy;
That lady on the corner, that clerk in the store,
That man on the bicycle, that child, and what's more,
Your neighbour is anyone you chance to meet
While shopping, or playing, or walking the street.
It's every person, old, young, big or small,
The dull and the snappy, the short and the tall.
It's anyone who has a need you can meet,
In an other country or on your own street.
It's any and everyone in this big world
With straight hair like yours, or like me, with curls".
"Why – of course!!", said the man, "But – how did you know?
How did you learn this? Where did you go?"
"I went", said the girl with the curls with a smile,
"To Sunday School, we learned a whole pile
Of things about Jesus, what he said, what he taught;
He loves everybody, we're all made by God.

He made us to love Him, and love one another,
We're part of God's family – that makes you my brother!
And it doesn't matter if people you meet
Agree with what you think or not, don't you see?
It's love – God's love – that matters the most,
To care for your neighbour whatever the cost.
If we share God's love, everybody will see
That we are all neighbours; all of them, you, and me!
“Well, I gotta go now – you have a nice day.
It was lovely to meet you”. As she skipped away
He wondered and pondered and puzzled some more,
But this time his puzzler didn't get sore.
He thought about Jesus and Sophie and such,
And he thought about what she had told him so much,
And glad – he was glad, that God in His plan
Had made it so even a child understands!
And off he too scampered, on down the street,
And to every person he happened to meet
He tipped his ball cap, and said with a grin,
“Well howdy there, neighbour, good to see you again!”

The End

(Rudy Plug, October 22, 2008)