

**Eastwood Uniting Church 1 August, 2021**

**Lockdown Prayers and Community Encouragement**

Leader: Rev Dr Amelia Koh-Butler

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*We continue in our community reading of the Letter to the Ephesians.*

**Creating Community with God**

**Sung Call to Worship:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysS9XT90_AY> [Phillips, Craig & Dean](https://www.bing.com/search?q=Phillips%2c+Craig+and+Dean&filters=ufn%3a%22Phillips%2c+Craig+and+Dean%22+sid%3a%221b824c95-472e-faef-2b8f-042fc4351ae1%22&FORM=SNAPST)

Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are, to worship
Come, just as you are, before your God – Come

One day every tongue will confess You are God
One day every knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly choose You now

***Lighting a candle***

Set our hearts on fire with love for you, O Christ our God
So that in its flame we may love you with all our heart,
With all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength,
And our neighbours as ourselves. Amen.

用對神你的愛來點燃我們的心，我們的主基督 好讓我們在祂的火焰中、全心全意地愛你， 用我們全部心思、全部靈與魂、全部力量，我們和我們的鄰居一起。 阿門。

너는 마음을 다하고 정성을 다하고 뜻을 다하고 힘을 다하여 주 너의 하나님을 사랑하라.’

***Acknowledgement of Country and Greeting*** Sacred Footsteps

As we gather in this place, we give thanks
for the First Peoples of the Lands we are on...

Wallemattegal, Barramattagal, Gurrunggai and others.
We acknowledge the commitment their ancestors made,
across the generations, to nurturing this Land.
Together, may we walk into the future,
recognising the sacred footsteps that continue to lead us
to the promise of Heaven.

Cooee Warami mittigar Come – you are welcome here

欢迎来到这里 오신 것을 환영합니다

nǐ hǎo 你好 Anyong haseyo 안녕하세요

***Passing the Peace – in Auslan*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1XtTL_StXc>

***A Prayer of Approach*** <https://youtu.be/4aPPJjGXBIA>

Open wide the window of our spirits, God, and fill us with light;

Open wide the door of our hearts that we may receive and entertain you

with all our powers of adoration and love. Amen *[Jamie Norwich McLennan from Before the Amen]*

***A Prayer of Confession*** (by Dorothy MacRae McMahon read by Rev Ann Perrin) <https://youtu.be/l7DIcwyOBQw>

O God, you know it is part of our humanness

to long for infallible signs,

especially when we are filled with doubt.

Deep down, we realize

that our relationship with you

would not be free and respectful

if we simply followed your directions all the time.

***Surround us with your understanding, Jesus Christ.***

***Lead us towards your grace, we pray.***

We know that you call us into

living fully and growing in wisdom

by reflecting on what we must do,

as we try to honour you

in body, mind, heart and spirit.

*Silent reflection*

***Surround us with your understanding, Jesus Christ.***

***Lead us towards your grace, we pray.***

You know, O God, that to walk the straight road,

which leads to life, is a complex journeying

between following our own convictions

and being your humble servants.

***Surround us with your understanding, Jesus Christ.***

***Lead us towards your grace, we pray.*** ***Amen.***

**Words of Assurance**

Christ has walked our way of question and indecision.

The Holy God knows all that we face in each day

and our frailty in choosing what we do.

Do not be afraid. We are forgiven!

***Thanks be to God.***

**Human and Divine – encountering Jesus Christ**

***What’s happening in Community Outreach*** – 2 Revs chat <https://youtu.be/IhIAwl_t6NY>

***Sacred Story from Scripture - Ephesians 4:1-16***

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

For the letters that teach us about God’s peace and promises - **Thanks be to God!**

***Song – As I place myself in isolation – Leigh Newton*** <https://youtu.be/d0VBirPPcrU>

1. As I place myself in isolation and distance now myself from others,
May this be the good that I can do;
By the means that I can, In the way that I can,
In the place that I can for you.
At the time that I can, To the people I can,
As long as it ever needs to be. Amen.
2. At this time of grief and seperation,
I choose to live for sake of others,
May this be the good that I can do;
By the means that I can. In the way that I can,
In the place that I can for you.
At the time that I can, To the people I can,
As long as it ever needs to be. Amen.

***Message – Amelia Koh-Butler***

***Offering –*** Our Bank Account details are as follows:   Eastwood UC Account    BSB: 634 634      Account #: 100020668

 In gratitude for life and resources, we offer ourselves in your service, O God of generosity.

 May our lives and ways of living become part of your gift to the world. AMEN

**Empowering the Community’s Spirit**

***Prayer for Isolation*** <https://vimeo.com/user106794168>

On my own... I stand by the window,

my own community, wondering what it means to be relational in isolation.
In this time and space, I see a faint reflection in the glass.
Eyes look back into mine, searching my soul, wondering what is there?
I consider my predicament, my identity, my desires.
I understand there must be more to life than this...
So, I pray: What did it mean for you, Emmanuel, to depart and break away from the community of holiness?
What did it mean for you to come here, leaving Heaven, to be Human?
What is it for me, one of your creatures, to discover myself, apart from you, Yet, loved by you?
What is it for me to follow your footsteps in discovering my life’s purposes, not in self, but in being yours?
I cannot see others, yet they are on my heart. I wonder if others remember me?

Lord - I feel alone. Sometimes - I feel forgotten.

Is this a prison? Are my curtains the new version of prison bars?
O God - I feel grief and the panic rises inside me.
I place my faith in you.Please calm my speedy heartbeat.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

In the confusion of my disturbed spirit, I ask you, in your Holy Spirit, To come and bless me.
Fill my spirit with your wisdom and strength. Fill my mind with your thoughts.
Guide my praying and guide me to be still.

I breathe .... And pray you give me air in my lungs, even as I pray for those who struggle to breathe.
In their isolation, I pray your make yourself known to them.
Guide me also to find ways of making your presence known to others through me being me.

In this isolation, help me to know you better,
help me to know myself better, help me discover your place for me in this new strange world.
In this isolation, Be my Holy Friend. Don’t leave me alone.
Help me remember you are always there. Amen

***Prayers for Others***

***Sending Song – I dream of a Church (Douglas Simper***) <https://youtu.be/UywHoXGaRqI>

 I dream of a church where love is freely shown,

 the peace of Christ is shared, the grace of God is known.

 I dream of a church where young and old embrace,

 affirming people’s gifts, a smile on every face.

 I dream of a church where wealthy serve the poor,

 the prejudice has gone, for love is now the law.

 I dream of a church where pilgrims learn to pray,

 the privileged and strong will give their power away.

 I dream of a church where people are set free,

 released from hate and pain, forgiveness is the key.

 I dream of a church where Jesus calls our name.

 the way, the truth, the life, there is no greater claim.

Words and music: © Douglas A. Simper

***Extra Devotional material for home***

**A Letter from Rev Dr Bec Lindsay**

Dear Amelia and EASTWOOD Team,

I am reaching out to say that you, the Eastwood congregation, and the wider community where you are located are in my prayers and those of many others as part of the Eastwood area enter into the harder lockdown conditions.

Below is a blessing from Jan Richardson which I hope is a reminder of the God who holds you close.

Peace - Bec Lindsay (on behalf of a wider group of UCA ministers)

**Beginning with Beloved**

Begin here: *Beloved.*

Is there any other word needs saying,
any other blessing could compare
with this name, this knowing?

*Beloved.*

Comes like a mercy to the ear that has never heard it.
Comes like a river to the body that has never seen such grace.

*Beloved.*

Comes holy to the heart aching to be new.
Comes healing to the soul wanting to begin again.

*Beloved.*

Keep saying it and though it may sound strange at first,
watch how it becomes part of you, how it becomes you,
as if you never could have known yourself anything else,
as if you could ever have been other than this:

*Beloved.*

–Jan Richardson, *The Cure for Sorrow,*p.99

**Prayer** (based on Psalm 51)

Mercy! Have mercy on me, O God Almighty!

I appeal to your unconditional love that never fails;

Forgive my sin because of your enormous compassion.

Wash away all my badness and make me clean.

All my sins are against you, my Lord -

Again I didn’t trust you, I turned away and did wrong.

You alone are holy and you alone can cleanse me;

Please let me rejoice in you again!

Form my heart to be devoted to you alone, O God,

And revive my spirit to be steadfast in loving you.

Remind me continually that I’m in your presence;

O that your Holy Spirit would thrive in me forever!

Restore my soul with the joy of your mercy

And strengthen my will to seek you continually.

My divided and distracted will is all that I have to give you;

So I come with my broken heart, humble and convicted.

O God, because of your mercy you will not reject me;

Your smile and your embrace means everything to me!

My reformed heart gives praise to you for all to hear;

O Lord, this is the offering that brings you delight!

~ written by Bill and Kristi Gaultiere, inspired by Psalm 51.  Posted on **Soul Shepherding.**<http://www.soulshepherding.org/>

**Reflecting on John 6:24-35**

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?"

Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.