

**Eastwood Uniting Church 22 August, 2021**

**National Day for COVID Prayers**

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**

***Preparation Song- Be thou my vision*** <https://youtu.be/6CMclLT_Hjg>

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, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.
3. Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul’s Shelter, Thou my high Tow’r:
Raise Thou me heav’nward, O Pow’r of my pow’r.
4. Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.
5. High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven’s joys, O bright Heav’n’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

***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 -*** Gathering  <https://youtu.be/ouJCm43JTKY>

From before recorded time, the First Peoples cared for this Land.
We praise the Creator for the beauty of this Land
and honour those who have offered themselves in tending it.
We acknowledge the Elders and communities who have told the sacred stories
and nurtured faithfulness to the Creator.
We ask God’s blessing on those who continue to work
for the healing and restoration of this Land and Her Communities.

Cooee Warami mittigar Come – you are welcome here

欢迎来到这里 오신 것을 환영합니다

nǐ hǎo 你好 Anyong haseyo 안녕하세요

***A Prayer Calling on God***(based on Psalm 84)

It is good to be here in your presence Lord.

Here we are at home with each other and with you.

Here we discover the joy of life and the strength to live each day

with praise in our hearts to you.  You alone are God!

You alone can show us the way to the life that lasts forever.

We love you, Lord, and we lift this prayer in adoration of your holy name. **Amen.**

~ posted on **SermonHelp.com.**<http://www.lectionarysermons.com/>

***Introducing the theme in Prayer***

In this time of COVID-19, we pray:
When we aren’t sure, God, help us be calm;
when information comes from all sides, correct and not, help us to discern;
when fear makes it hard to breathe, and anxiety seems to be the order of the day,
slow us down, God;
help us to reach out with our hearts, when we can’t touch with our hands;
help us to be socially connected, when we have to be socially distant;
help us to love as perfectly as we can, knowing that “perfect love casts out all fear.”

(Source: “A Prayer during times of Covid-19”, published by The United Church of Canada)

***A Prayer of Confession*** (read by Rev Ann Perrin) – Another version of Psalm 130

<https://youtu.be/nWOdyFOB_lg>

Our sins are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

**Human and Divine – encountering Jesus Christ**

***Readings from Scripture***

***John 6:56-69***

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father." Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So, Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

***Ephesians 6:10-20*** Read by Jason Masters

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit, at all times, in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

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

***Song – Armor of God*** <https://youtu.be/nSenEQmcafg>

 Who’s got their armour on? We’ve got our armour on!

 Piece by piece we’ll put it on.

The shield of faith – the breastplate of righteousness –

 Sword of the Spirit – the belt of truth

 The helmet of salvation, then tie my shoes with the readiness

To share the good news.

***Message – Amelia Koh-Butler***

***Covenant Response***

We covenant together, proclaiming One God
– Father, Son and Spirit, committing to a shared life of worship, witness and service.
We will seek to live the way of Jesus Christ, respecting and caring for God’s creation.
We call upon the Holy Spirit to enliven us and set us to work
for reconciliation and renewal in the world.
Others will know whose we are by how we learn to love one another,
so we covenant together to love as Christ has loved us. Amen. (C) 2017, A.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

***Meditative Response – Something inside so strong – The Spirituals Choir – Labi Siffre*** (lyrics attached)

<https://youtu.be/gkwzl8J5nWU>

**Empowering the Community’s Spirit**

***Prayers – National Day of Prayer for COVID*** [led by Rev Marion Gledhill]

***Sending Song – Here I am Lord*** <https://youtu.be/g8rPkYzcsVg>

I the Lord of sea and sky I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin - My hand will save.

I who made the stars and night, I will make the darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them, Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord - Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go Lord - If you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart.

I the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain
I have wept for love of them - They turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone, Fill their hearts with love alone
I will speak my word to them - Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, My hand will save
Finest bread I will provide, Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them, Whom shall I send

 Songwriters: Anna Laura Page, Daniel L. Schutte

***"Beatitudes for these days", by Thom M Shuman***

Blessed are they who wash their hands, for they shall hold living water;

blessed are those who keep their distance, for they shall draw closer to God;

blessed are they who self-quarantine, for they shall help others;

blessed are those who do not hoard, for they shall feed families;

blessed are those who sing songs to sheltering neighbours, for they shall be members of the heavenly host;

blessed are parents who learn to teach at home, for they shall learn from their children;

blessed are they who shop for older folk, for they shall receive everlasting thanks;

blessed are the frontline health workers,

for they shall be called healers of humanity.

- Thom Shuman, from "Voices Out of Lockdown" © 2020 Jan Sutch Pickard (ed), Glasgow, [www.ionabooks.com](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ionabooks.com%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3HBoJ-4RC279yBHE7oBOfMbYjeF0c9PcEsYyPrCm8SAK6OqHe8NfGNUDE&h=AT3-qnl2hexHGJYgEPF7OWOIv8zQD50sptmIo9bytpBnwON_Mv5NSRuvhuoMXr98TsoAccxiEU3ng-THuF1YJ827XJneJ50D1NODAbsm3WqRRF-uce0iZ1SDo55j81BQCnorCnc&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT2vwWPdShh-1mhrS3o0I9JJ6P_LD8uFnN1YGBQYBX5gThmZsLZgTujkmIuTer8SDZanCWi7ZKJMGuBgmcAbW69N0c7vvMv0hKJUHYyYiz7KcE_4Q3VyX8p3GkVY0OpPMcd2PrdR0gbmSrVBPRvrteVnjt0Aqzt8dO7rSIHkZNNwaaxhvpQ-wM0w)

***Extra material for Devotional times at home***

Gracious God,
We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.
We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.
We pray for those in need of healing.
We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.
We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.
We pray for your Holy Spirit’s discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.
We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.
This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**
(*Source: National Council of Churches in Australia*)

## **(Something Inside) So Strong.** [Labi Siffre](https://www.bing.com/search?q=Labi+Siffre&filters=ufn%3a%22Labi+Siffre%22+sid%3a%2293b8fc88-2e8c-03a6-4150-5bbaf6204cb8%22&FORM=SNAPST)

The higher you build your barriers The taller I become
The farther you take my rights away The faster I will run
You can deny me - You can decide to turn your face away
No matter, cos there's

Something inside so strong
I know that I can make it
Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong
You thought that my pride was gone
Oh no, there's something inside so strong Oh oh oh oh oh oh
Something inside so strong

The more you refuse to hear my voice The louder I will sing
You hide behind walls of Jericho Your lies will come tumbling
Deny my place in time - You squander wealth that's mine
My light will shine so brightly it will blind you
Because there's

Something inside so strong

Brothers and sisters, when they insist we're just not good enough
Well we know better
Just look 'em in the eyes and say we're gonna do it anyway

Psalm 23 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iv-eJKjzqaA>