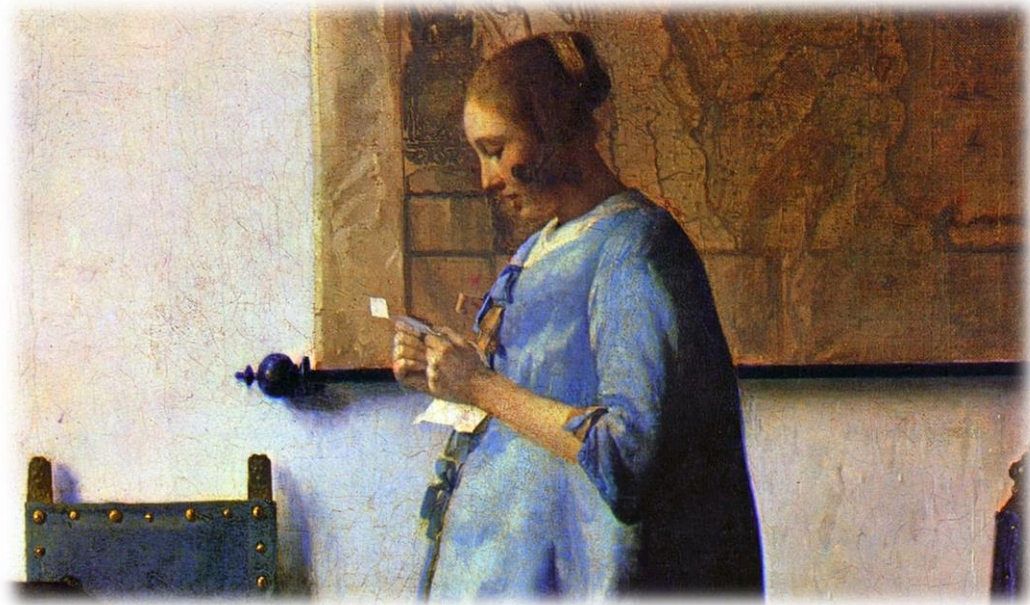


WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT.
EASTER 6
9:00am Liturgy
Sunday, May 5th, 2024



Johannes Vermeer, Woman Reading a Letter

Easter 6 focuses upon the theme of what it means to live as an Easter Christian: namely the life of friendship grounded and founded in the fact that Jesus Christ makes us his friends. In a sense Christianity is a faith of enchantment, to quote Max Weber, where the ordinary becomes extraordinary, where enchantment takes hold.

Johannes Vermeer was a little-known artist in 17th century Holland: just another 'genre painter'. He worked all his life in the town of Delft and died destitute. The times in which he painted were not his times. Paintings typically represented the rising merchant/business class - usually men - who bank-rolled portraits mirroring their success. Vermeer on the other hand, had the gift of seeing the extraordinary in the mundane - friendship offered through seemingly ordinary and bland actions: servant milkmaids in the kitchen pouring milk, women sitting sowing at the doors of their simple homes - and above, the beautiful depiction above of a young woman, dressed in blue, simply reading a letter. What is clear, is that this *ordinary depiction of the woman in blue is an extraordinary moment of friendship with a beloved.*

Today Bruce as preacher will pursue the theme of 'Opposite Action', an important behavioural principle in psychology with sound application for Christian spirituality, where an ordinary moment may be transformed into something extraordinary, as we seek to respond to our ever-changing situations and challenges in new life-changing ways. 'Opposite action' opens the path to new possibilities and friendships.

GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

We Prepare Ourselves for Worship

News and Notices

Acknowledgement of First Nation's People

Let us acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,
The first inhabitants of this place,
part of God's good creation.
We honour them for their custodianship of the land,
on which we gather today.

Our Mutuality

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God, and so we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity

Christ is risen
He is risen indeed.

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit

We Light the Community Candle

Welcoming Song 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin, arr. Daniel Galbraith

Chorus:

Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul

Worship his holy name

Sing like never before, oh my soul

I'll worship his holy name

1. The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes

Chorus

2. You're rich in love and you're slow to anger
Your name is great and your heart is kind
For all your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Chorus

3. And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forever more.
Forever more!

Chorus

A Confession of Our Human Condition and the Power that Friendship with God Gives Us Shaping our Actions

(from a narrative in the film "Mississippi Burning")

Setting

On Sunday morning after spending six days struggling to create meaning from life, the people of Bearden, Tennessee, would go to church, because they knew Jesus was going to be there.

Sister Ora Wallace would begin the familiar hymn.
Immediately the entire congregation would join her
because they felt the presence of Jesus.

When the pastor would say,
"I know the Lord is in this place! Can I get a witness?"

**The people responded with shouts of praise saying
"Amen" and "Halleluiah"!**

Through song, prayer and sermon the community affirmed Jesus' presence and their willingness to make it through their troubled situation.

Some would smile and others would cry.
Someone, depending upon the Spirit's effect on her,
would clap her hands and tap her feet.

All of these expressions were but black people bearing witness to Jesus' presence among them.

He was the divine power in their lives...

How could black people know they were human beings when they were treated like cattle?

How could they know that they were somebody, when everything in their environment said they were nobody?

How could they know that they had value that could not be defined in dollars and cents, when the historical symbol of the auction block was an ever-present reality?

Only because they knew that Christ was present with them. That his presence generated the love and friendship they experienced in their Christian community.

This gave the lie to the reality outside and enabled them to respond in ways contrary to what may be expected.

They responded with actions offering their friendship of protest.

Confession

We confess our need for deep friendships, for those conversations that extend into the night, both pleasurable and difficult:

for sharing who we are and receiving from others.

We confess our vulnerability lubricated by laughter: **and sometimes tears.**

We confess our difficulty in managing our emotions.

Allowing them to take-over, inhibiting our capacity to live prayerfully, deeply and creatively:

may your friendship transform us from being ordinary people to becoming extraordinary people!

Declaration of Forgiveness

We are all beggars.

We are all members of a species that is not sufficient to itself.

We are all creatures plagued by unending doubts, restlessly compensating for and deluding ourselves.

But the good news is this: we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Peace

We share the peace in Spanish

La paz del Señor esté siempre con vosotros....**Y contigo**

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

All Age Offerings

Song with the Children Live in the Spirit of Love

Ed Seabough © 1977

1. Live in the spirit of love,
live in the spirit of love,
love one another as Jesus loves you,
live in the spirit of love.

2. Serve in the spirit...

3. Go in the spirit...

Readings

1 John 5:1-6, p. 991

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ^[a] has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **3** For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, **4** for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. **5** Who is it who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? **6** This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the

Gospel: Matthew 5:38-42, pp. 786-787 (The Sermon on the Mount)

³⁸ 'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰ and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴² Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Thinking Together: Bruce

During this time we receive the offerings that you make

Offering Song The Same Love

Paul Baloche and Michael Rossback © 2012

1. You choose the humble and raise them high,
you choose the weak and make them strong;
you heal our brokenness inside and give us life.

Chorus:

*The same love that set the captives free,
the same love that opened eyes to see
is calling us all by name, you are calling us all by name.
The same God that spread the heavens wide,
the same God that was crucified
is calling us all by name, you are calling us all by name.*

2. You take the faithless one aside
and speak the words, "You are mine",
You call the cynic and the proud, "Come to me now".

Chorus

Outro

You're calling, you're calling
You're calling us to the cross (x4)

Prayers for the Church and World: A Time for Prayer Together

Today we pray for the peoples of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. We dare not forget in our hearts and minds the peoples of Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, and the international community as attempts continue to be made to find ways forward from the current violence, even as social tension rises on university campuses in the US and elsewhere. We also keep close the peoples of Ukraine as they continue to live under the imposition of war and the people of Russia as they themselves live under repression.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

SENDING OUT

Sending Song The Summons

Iona Community © 1987

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,

will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

3. Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?

Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,

and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

4. Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Commission and Blessing

The wisdom of love and friendship is the foundation for justice
Go now, and bear fruit for God, fruit that will last.
As Christ has loved you, so love one another.
The blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you always.

Our service has ended.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ.

Liturgist/Preacher: Rev'd Geoff / Rev'd Bruce
Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul
Musicians: Elizabeth Gould (piano), Caitlin Launt (vocals)
Reader: Jan Sismey
Flowers: Silk Flowers

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