**MACEDON RANGES PARTNERSHIP SERVICE – Epiphany 5b**

**5th-7th February 2021**

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website at <https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/worship-services> or on YouTube at

[https://youtu.be/3BLySheIeVo](https://youtu.be/3BLySheIeVo" \t "_blank)

Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told to lead you. We suggest reading the passages when suggested below. We are touching on several of the scripture readings in one way or another this week.

If you would like to look at previous videos on our YouTube channel, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb4hzdO-YgzmrIRVC-oby_w>.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge all the Aboriginal Groups who have cared for and nurtured the land on which we meet: the Wurundjeri; Woi Wurruung; Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung.

We acknowledge their leaders: past, present and emerging for it is in them that Australia’s future lies.

You are welcome here, as we reflect in different rooms and districts, States and Countries around the world, our spiritual connectedness through Christ Jesus, is remembered.

**WELCOME and CALL TO WORSHIP**

How wonderful it is to have the opportunity to sit, to reflect, to pray upon and show our connectedness to the events that have happened around the world and to us, throughout this last week.

For all there have been times of joy and excitement, times of uncertainty and unknowing,. We particularly think of our brothers and sisters in Western Australia who have been under lockdown and who are experiencing bushfires at this time. We pray for all the people all around the world who are experiencing lock-down, especially those in the Northern Hemisphere. I invite you to spend a moment in silent prayer.

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** (by Bruce Prewer from *Brief Prayers for Busy People)*

God most wonderful, while I thank you for the mercy that covers all our sins, I also give thanks for the grace that has saved me from committing even more:

for the revenge not taken and forgiveness not withheld;

for the gossip not passed on and the condemnations not uttered;

for injustices not ignored and compassion not withdrawn;

for the lies not told and the sexual temptation not yielded to;

for the faith not compromised and my Lord not denied;

for the times when the Word has been validated in the rough and tumble of my own busyness,

as “grace is made perfect in human weakness“,

all thanks and praise be to you, my Saviour and my God. Amen!

**BIBLE READING:** Isaiah 40:21-31,

**SONG: Let all Creation dance (TiS 187)**

**BIBLE STORYTELLING:** Mark 1:29-34

You may like to read today’s other readings: Ps 147, Deuteronomy 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23,

**SOLITARY** by Rev. Linda Young

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

When Mark begins his account of Jesus’ life and work it’s like he can’t even stop to catch his breath. The word immediately is used ten times in the first chapter alone. Immediately Christ ascends from the water. Immediately he calls his disciples. Immediately he leaves the synagogue. Clearly, even this early into his ministry Christ is gaining a reputation and his name Is becoming known. Mark says that after Jesus healed the many, the whole town was at his door.

But then, in the midst of everything, Jesus leaves. In the morning, while it is still dark, Jesus wakes up, walks out and finds peace, in what Mark calls “a desolate place” and there he prays; doesn’t say anything to anyone, doesn’t leave a note, he is just gone.

This sets his disciples scrambling. The crowds want a show and they can’t find the main act. They search everywhere and when they finally find him, he says, “No, let’s move on.”

In this frenzy of activity and fame Christ sneaks out the back, praised his Father and reorients himself to his calling. There are many things to be learned from this passage but what stands out to me is that Christ recognises his need to get away. Even the Son of the Most High can’t get his thoughts straight in the midst of things. He needs that time alone, to think, to pray, to regain his focus. There’s this greed that comes from being in the spot-light and Christ rejects it outright. Fame and power are not why he’s here. It’s not why you’re here either. Get away. Listen to your maker. Get clarity for what you are here for.

**TEAM REFLECTION**

**PRAYER:** O Divine Healer – by Ginny Brown Daniel

O Divine Healer.

We confess that sometimes we yearn for to wave a magic wand on our wounded lives.

To remove our pain, illness and suffering. We hear the Gospel story of the one seeking healing from Jesus and assume you will perform a similar miracle for all of us. If we just pray hard enough and we do pray!

Open our eyes to recogize the teaching and tools you have given us with which to seek healing in the midst of our afflictions and diseases you whisper to us that wholeness requires self-care and rest:

You nudge us toward caregivers who can support and advise us.

You breathe into us energy to move and stretch and reach toward health.

You place in us an urgency to seek justice so that all may enjoy adequate health care.

Renew our spirits in the midst of our dis-eases and afflicting spirits.

Transform us, O Holy One, for the health of your creation. Amen**.**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**SONG:** God of the movements and martyrs by *The Many*

**SENDING OUT**

Go out and serve the Lord!

May the reflection of serving and the diakonia resonate with you this week.

May the service that you provide, in whatever small and large ways,

Always be in service to our God, and to each other. Amen

**OFFERING**

You may like to consider giving an offering to your congregation via direct deposit. Details for each are:

* Gisborne: Gisborne branch, Bendigo bank, B.S.B. 633 108, A/C: 1512 83736
* Romsey: Bendigo Bank, B.S.B. 633 000, A/C: 161501200, Account name: UCA Romsey Uniting Church
* Lancefield: Account Name: Lancefield Uniting Church, BSB: 633 108, A/C No: 112926639
* Mia Mia – Kyneton: Commonwealth bank, B.S.B. 063 517, Account no.: 1002 1775

*I will publish other congregation’s details as they come to hand. Contact you congregation’s treasurer for details if they are not here.*