

# Bairnsdale Uniting Church

## Worship@Home – 29/03/2020

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### Welcome to our first Worship@Home pack!

During this challenging time, while we are unable to gather for worship, we are offering these resources to help our congregation worship together apart. You may like to go through this service at 9:30 on a Sunday morning as normal, but of course, you can do it any time that is convenient and the Spirit moves you.

There are a number of ways you can join in.

For those with access to the internet, we will be videoing the service and posting it on YouTube. We will send you a link which you will also be able to find on our website.

You may also like to follow along with the order of service printed here.

Alternatively, you can read through the service here and follow the instructions as you are moved.

Whatever you do and whenever you do it, know that others are doing it with you. We are united as Christ's people by the Holy Spirit wherever we are.

Each week we will email the service and links to you if you have email. And we will post or drop off a copy to you if you do not.

We are learning as we go in these changed circumstances, so please give us feedback. What works for you? What might we do differently? How would you like to receive the resources? Do you have any other suggestions?

### Preparation for Worship at Home

For this service you will need:

- a cloth and a candle
- a bible bookmarked at Ezekiel 37 and John 11
- optional: a large bowl, some dry leaves from your garden, some greenery and/or flowers, a couple of small branches or twigs to lay in the shape of a cross, a stone, a glass of water, a strip of cloth.
- if possible, a smart phone or computer to play videos – if you don't have this, the words of the prayers, songs and reflection are available to read in this Order of Service.

### Gathering Prayer and Action

*Lay a cloth on a table or on the floor*

*Breathe deep and say:*

In our separation from one another,  
Cover us like a cloth woven with threads of love.  
Make us one in your Spirit.

*Place a candle on the cloth and light it*

*Breathe deep and say:*

In our separation from one another,  
Shine in us with the light that shines in the darkness and is not overcome. [John 1:5]  
Make us one in your Spirit.

*Place a bible next to the candle and open it*

*Breathe deep and say:*

In our separation from one another,  
Speak to us the living word of life and hope. [John 1:1-5]  
Make us one in your Spirit.

## Song

**We've lit a candle** by David & Dale MacGregor

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Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBcdekLiNZw>

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*We've lit a candle, we've come together  
Though separated we're joined in Love  
The way illumined your Word is opened  
We've brought thanksgiving for kindness shown.*

*We light a candle for those defenceless  
For all so anxious who fall apart  
who need Love's comfort from deepest sadness  
May all their ailing have healing come.*

*We'll light a candle in evening's window  
For all who lead us through this long storm  
Lord bless and guide us we live in new ways  
May love for neighbour "rhythm" our hearts.*

*We'll light a candle we'll look in hope for  
we are your people who know your Light  
May light there shining know living radiance  
in hearts, hands, hoping through Christ our Lord*

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## Prayer

God of promise, you put the flesh of hope onto the bones of our despair;  
you breathe new life into the body of our desolation;  
you give us the possibility of a future when we cannot see the way ahead.

We praise you that you come to be with us in Jesus,  
and give the faith, hope and love that rises up for us in him.  
He knew abandonment and loss, but from the tomb of his brokenness  
emerges healing for the cosmos.

In this time of our increasing separation and isolation  
may we know ourselves connected by your love for us all.  
When we are feeling cut off, help us to know the breath of your Spirit  
uniting us with you and one another.

Forgive us when we fall short of loving you with all that we are,  
and loving our neighbours as ourselves.  
Show us the way to love across the spaces of our distancing.

As the coastal scrub regrows after fire, holding the sand together,  
may the healing presence of your compassion unite us.  
And as the gentle waves wash the shore, cleansing the land,

so may the love of your Holy Spirit forgive, heal, renew and carry us forward through this difficult time.

In the name of Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life. Amen

## **Affirmation of Grace**

This is the best of all: when we are empty, God fills us;  
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate;  
when we are wounded, God brings healing;  
when we confess our sin, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,  
our sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

[adapted from Uniting in Worship 2 p.261]

## **Bible Reading 1**

Today we hear two bible readings about hope for new life in places of despair. As the words are read you are invited to place symbols in a bowl on your worship cloth.

### Ezekiel 37:1-14 – The Valley of Dry Bones

Read Verses 1-7

*Place dry leaves in bowl representing the dry bones*

Read verses 7-10

*Place green leaves and flowers on top of dry leaves representing the new life given by God's Spirit breath*

Read verses 11-14

## **Bible Reading 2**

### John 11:1-44 – Jesus, Martha, Mary and Lazarus

1. The Death of Lazarus – read verses 1-16

*Lay twigs in the shape of a cross across the bowl as a reminder of Jesus' suffering*

2. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life – read verses 17-27

*Place stone into bowl as a reminder of the hard reality of death*

3. Jesus Weeps – read verses 28-37

*Sprinkle water into the bowl as a sign of Jesus' tears for the world*

4. Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life – read verses 38-44

*Drape a strip of cloth from inside the bowl to the outside – a reminder of Lazarus' graveclothes and a sign of the freedom and new life that Jesus brings even in the place of death*

For the word of God in scripture, For the word of God among us,  
For the word of God within us, Thanks be to God!

## Reflection – Can These Bones Live?

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOkxD6xNdeg>

See text and images on separate sheet.

## Questions for Discussion or Contemplation

Where is the valley of dry bones for you at this time? Where is hope fragile?

Where do you see hope and new life arising?

## Prayers of the People

Please pray for:

- Peace for the world which God loves – all peoples and nations and the very earth itself in this time of pandemic.
- Comfort and healing for those in need – those known to you, and those known only to God. People ill with COVID19. People facing death and those grieving for loved ones.
- Strength of faith and action for the Church – our local congregation, the Uniting Church in this Presbytery and beyond, the whole body of Christ in this region and around the world in this time of great uncertainty.

## 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 for ever. Amen.

## Sending and Blessing

*Blow out the candle*

*Breathe deep and say:*

May God's light shine on in our hearts.  
We are one in the Spirit.

*Close the bible*

*Breathe deep and say:*

May God's word speak loud in our lives.  
We are one in the Spirit.

*Move the bowl off the cloth (perhaps leave this in your house as a reminder of worship through the week?)*

*Fold up the cloth*

*Breathe deep and say:*

May God's love cover us and unite us.  
We are one in the Spirit.

In the name of God the Source of all Creation,  
the Wisdom of all Love, the Breath of all Life,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen