***The Desert Place* A Liturgy for the First Sunday in Lent Sunday 6th March 2022 Mornington Methodist Church**

**Preacher Rev David Poultney**

**Before we begin** If you don't die of thirst, there are blessings in the desert. You can be pulled into limitlessness, which we all yearn for, or you can do the beauty of minutiae, the scrimshaw of tiny and precise. The sky is your ocean, and the crystal silence will uplift you Anne Lamott

**CENTRING** *The Paradox of Silence* Joy MacCormick *Again I feel the touch of silence, a stillness both within me and around. No words, no music can express its beauty they serve but to intrude and destroy. This is no emptiness, no hollow vacuum, no sense of “all is mere illusion, nothingness” but rather deep, infilling, overflowing contentment and a peace beyond expression. From this stillness grows the call to action a contradiction it would seem at first. Not so – for as breath is to life, so inner silence is to outward action*

**WELCOME** Kia noho a Ihowa kia koutou God be with you **Kia koe anō hoki And with you also** Hold hands people of God in love **Bind our hearts together in God’s grace.**

**CANDLE LIGHTING** We light this candle to remind us of the light of God’s love, The warmth of God’s welcome, And our faith in the ever presence of God, So together we say: **Welcome to our place, Welcome to worship, Welcome in the name of our living God Amen**

**WELCOME & NOTICES**

**WORDS FOR BEGINNING** adap. Iona Community From Bethlehem to Nazareth, from Jordan to Jericho, From Bethany to Jerusalem. From then to now, **Come, Lord Jesus.** To heal the sick. To mend the broken hearted, to comfort the disturbed, to disturb the comfortable, to cleanse the temple, to liberate faith from convention, **Come, Lord Jesus.** To carry the cross, to lead the way, To shoulder the world’s pain and take it away, Come, Lord Jesus. Today, to this place, to us, **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**HYMN WOV 636** He came singing love Colin Gibson

He came singing love and he lived singing love;
he died singing love.
He arose in silence.
For the love to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

He came singing faith and he lived singing faith;
he died singing faith.
He arose in silence.
For the faith to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

He came singing hope and he lived singing hope;
he died singing hope.
He arose in silence.
For the hope to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

He came singing peace and he lived singing peace;
he died singing peace.
He arose in silence.
For the peace to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

**MEDITATIVE READING** *Lent is not for the faint hearted* adap Kate McIlhagga *Lent is not for the faint hearted. It demands that we, like Thomas, put our hand in the side of the crucified Christ. Lent is s journey towards the cross, A journey of enlightenment: from wilderness to feast, from desert to oasis. Lent is not tidy, days grow shorter, summer slips away into autumn and with it wind and rain. Lent is a journey. so at the end of Lent we should expect to find ourselves somewhere different from where we started Lent can be an opportunity to explore what is the nature of the promised Kingdom of God on earth that we long for; a time to discern how we are called to work for it. No, Lent is not for the fainthearted!*

**PRAYER**  We are fed and nourished deeply, by the One who is, the model of a whole and flourishing humanity the very image of the compassion and justice that are of God’s own nature. We are like the well watered valley, watered by a life giving spring, the Spirit, the Energy that is God. **We rejoice in the One who is life to us, Who is our nurturing and the promise of our wholeness,** We pray that in our turn Our lives in their sharing be life giving and how we love and act be like water in a dry land. **Holy Wisdom, lead us deeper into the possibilities of lives made sacred, In turn may we give life and nurture hope. This is our resolve, this is our prayer Amen**

**BEGINNING LENT** In this season of ashes we ask what marks us? What signs us? What would the Passover angel see on our door, were we called to liberation tonight? A dollar sign, the Golden Arches, a Nike tick? The colours of our sports team, our political party, our nation? In this season of deep truthfulness we pray to live with the truth of what should mark us, The Sign of Christ. May we have the courage to live truthfully, to re-order our lives, To make present in our flesh the way of Jesus, In reconciliation, justice and love. **May God bless our intention, May we keep a true Lent and enter deeply once more Into the story of he who lived, and died and who defeated even the grave, Jesus. Amen.**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day 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.**

**A PRAYER ON DEEP TRUTHFULNESS** Michael Leunig. In order to be truthful we must do more than speak the truth, we must also hear truth, we must also receive truth. We must also act upon truth, we must also search for truth. The difficult truth within us and around us. We must devote ourselves to truth, Otherwise we are dishonest and our lives are mistaken. **God grant us the strength and courage to be truthful Amen**

HYMN FFS 22 Gentle is the way of Jesus Shirley Murray

Gentle is the way of Jesus: gentle is the healing soul bandaging the wounds of conflict, making peace, and making whole; gentle is the loving purpose calling us to live this part, by the chemistry of kindness changing our ungentle heart.

Inner violence besets us, inner sickness, born of strife: lost, our innocence as children, lost, the focus of our life, hungry in a world of plenty, thirsty in the showering rain, searching for a sense of meaning, seeking soul-food to sustain.

Save us God, from what consumes us, save us from the selves we hate, bring us back into your household, to the home you would create; stir in us the daily graces that allow your way to start, keeping company with Jesus, changing our ungentle heart.

**A STORY**

**FROM THE SCRIPTURES** Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Luke 4:1-13

**A REFLECTION**

**HYMN WOV 635** First set your mind Colin Gibson

First set your mind on the Kingdom of God and on his justice and truth, then all you need will be given to you, allelu, alleluia …

No one can live by bread alone; sharp is our hunger of soul, only the word of the Lord will sustain, allelu, alleluia …

Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open to you, allelu, alleluia …

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND CARE FOR OTHERS**

**THE OFFERTORY** Francis Macnab God, the source of all goodness, help us to bring some gladness to others; God the source of the best harmony, help us build harmony in the face of division, God the source of the expansive spirit, so expand and enlarge our spirits to be carriers of goodness and harmony and generosity **Amen**

**HYMN FFS 27** God of unexplored tomorrows Beverley Jones

God of unexplored tomorrows, of today and yesterday, God of rock and flowing river, be our refuge, be our way.

Guardian rock above, before us, strong foundation where we build, landmark through the haze of doubting, shelter where our fears are stilled.

Be the cleansing, quenching water, irrigate, disturb and move, stir us from our easy shallows, current of refreshing love.

God of rock and flowing river now and ever with us stand, to transform our land of promise into each one’s promised land.

**COMMISSIONING**  We now extinguish this candle but let us say together: **We now embody this light and promise To reflect the light of God’s love In all that we say and do Amen**

**CLOSING LITANY AND BLESSING WORDS** Iona Community Where Christ walks, **we will follow.** Where Christ stumbles, **we will stop.** Where Christ cries, **we will listen.** Where Christ suffers, **we will hurt.** When Christ dies, **we will bow our heads in sorrow.** When Christ rises again in glory, **we will share his endless joy.**

And the blessing of God be with you always, The Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the World **Amen**

**THE GRACE Kia tau ki a tatou katoa, te atawhai o to tatou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti, Me te aroha o te Atua, me te whiwhinga tahitanga ki te Wairua Tapu. Ake, ake, ake Amine**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all Amen**