

MOOROOLBARK UNITING CHURCH

Pentecost 18 - Sunday 27th September 2026

GATHERING BEFORE GOD

Introit: TiS 99 (vv. 1) God we praise you, God, we bless you

God, we praise you, God, we bless you,
God, we name you sovereign Lord!
Mighty King whom angels worship,
Father, by your church adored:
all creation shows your glory,
heaven and earth draw near your throne,
singing, 'Holy, holy, holy,
Lord of hosts, and God alone!'

Call to Worship and Greeting Based on Psalm 78

Give ear to God's teaching.
Incline your ears to parables and dark sayings of old.
***We gather to hear the stories of our forebears in faith,
ancient stories of God's mighty deeds of power.***
Do not hide them from your children.
Tell the coming generations of God's glorious deeds.
***We gather to sing God's praises
and proclaim the wonders of our God.***
Come to the fount of living water.
Drink deeply from the waters of life.
***We gather to drink abundantly
from the wellspring of our salvation.***
We gather as Christ's people, people reborn.

The Lord be with you,
and also with you.

Let us worship God.

Hymn TiS 569 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer

Welcome

Acknowledgement of country

We gather on land taken from the First Peoples of this land.
In our case, the land of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation. We continue to benefit from this history.
We honour and remember the elders and their people who have worshipped and celebrated the Creator Spirit of this land for tens of thousands of years,

and who have carried culture, custom, language and practice until this time.

We will strive to walk alongside their descendants working for a deeper understanding of each other and for reconciliation.

Prayer of praise

Holy God, Holy Mystery, grant us the courage to delve deep into the teachings of our forebears in faith, that we might fathom the depths of the dark sayings of old.
For we see in the stories of our ancestors the truth we would deny in our own story.
We see your presence amidst their hopes and fears.
We see the humility it takes to truly lead.
We see the courage it takes to follow in faith.
We see life finding a way when all hope seems lost.
The whispered truths of the dark sayings of old haunt our waking dreams, telling us what our lives would become if we but had the faith to believe.

We believe, Great Spirit.
Help our unbelief.

... (*silent prayer*)

Prayer of confession

We give you praise,
But what is it you really want from us?
What may we offer you who has given us life?

We know you are a God of second chances, forgive us when we grumble and groan, about our circumstances in life like the children of the Exodus; forgive us when we see you acting in others as a challenge to ourselves, like the chief priests and elders of old; forgive us for making commitments, when we know we will not keep them, like the son in Jesus' parable.
Make us one in your Spirit, and renew us in your compassion and grace, that our eyes may be opened to your presence and our minds may be filled with the very mind of Christ.

....(*silent prayer*)

Declaration of forgiveness:

Hear the good news:
No matter who you are,
or what you have done in your life,
God's kingdom is open to all
who hear the call to repentance
and turn their lives back to God.
Be you ungrateful in receiving love and care,
jealous of grace given to others,
unfaithful in promise and commitment,
the kingdom is available to all.
As we open our hearts and give our lives to Christ,
I declare God's forgiveness is truly ours.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for the day

God of overwhelming mercy,
you offer forgiveness to each and all;
the poor and needy gladly receive your grace.
May we be counted among them,
never despising your mercy,
nor those who find it;
for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

First reading: Exodus 17:1-7 Water from the rock

Hymn TiS 247 Let all be one in mind and heart

Gospel reading: Matthew 21:23-32 'by what authority do you do this'

Do not hide these words from your children;
***we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD,
and his might, and the wonders that he has done.***

Prayer with the children

Sermon:

Musical meditation:

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn TiS 608

Where cross the crowded ways of life

Offering and Dedication

God of overflowing abundance,
when your people suffered from thirst,
you brought water from a rock
to satisfy their need.
From the rock of your love, O God,
your blessings flow like ever-flowing streams.
Receive our thanks and praise
for your many gifts.
Receive too our hearts, our hands,
our dreams, our industry, and our love.
May our gifts draw both us the givers
and those who benefit from them
closer to you and to one another,
as we all share
the love and mind of the Lord.

Amen.

Notices

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

RETURNING TO GOD'S WORLD

Hymn: TiS 636

God has spoken to his people, hallelujah

The children share their activities

Benediction and Dismissal

Based on Philippians 2

"If there is any encouragement in Christ,
any comfort in love,
any sharing in the Spirit, . . .
complete [God's] joy
by thinking the same way,
having the same love,
being united,
and agreeing with each other."
Do this and you will live,
and the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
is with you now and forever.
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
in the name of Christ, Amen.

Blessing TiS 776(ii)

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)
