

**St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service, 24 January 2021**

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
'Abiding in Christ'**



Sign outside café in Nicholson St, Edinburgh

Music

'Melancholie'

Poulenc

Welcome and call to worship

We come together to praise and enjoy God with Body and soul, mind and heart, with song and word, with hands and feet.

We come together to celebrate the differences that might otherwise divide us: differences of age, of body, of culture, of opinion or ability, or religious conviction.

We come together to put things in perspective, to celebrate what matters, to laugh about things we take too seriously, to cry about things that truly touch our hearts.

We come together to worship God.
May it be so this morning.

Introduction and opening prayer

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

All: And also with you.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this year the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by the sisters of the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, is: "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit".

It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we might come to him and abide in him. He waits for us tirelessly, hoping that, united to him in love, we will bear fruit that will bring life to all. Faced with our differences, we risk withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in his love, and so bear much fruit.

In the three moments of prayer that follow, we remember the call of Christ, we turn to his love, to him who is the centre of our life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate relationship with God. Abiding in God's love strengthens the desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, you are the vinedresser who cares for us with love.

You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person.

And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.

We withdraw into ourselves.

Our trust in you is forsaken.

Enmity develops between us.

Come and direct our hearts toward you once again.

Grant us to live from your forgiveness

so that we may be together and praise your name.

Opening Hymn 615 Holy Spirit, ever living

Holy Spirit, ever living
as the Church's very life;
Holy Spirit, ever striving
through her in a ceaseless strife;
Holy Spirit, ever forming
in the church the mind of Christ;
you we praise with endless worship
for your fruit and gifts unpriced.

Holy Spirit, ever working
through the Church's ministry;
quicken, strengthening, and absolving,
setting captive sinners free;
Holy Spirit, ever binding
age to age and soul to soul
in a fellowship unending,
you we worship and extol.

Words: Timothy Rees (1874-1939)

Tune: Abbot's Leigh

Part 1: Abiding in Christ: The unity of the whole person

Reading: Psalm 103, 1-5 and 13-22

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's...

As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.
For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.

As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field;
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.
But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children's children,
to those who keep his covenant
and remember to do his commandments.

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.
Bless the LORD, O you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
obedient to his spoken word.
Bless the LORD, all his hosts,
his ministers that do his will.
Bless the LORD, all his works,
in all places of his dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in the Church. May the walls that separate us fall.

Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

Sung congregational response

Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may welcome the unexpectedness of your grace.

Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their faithfulness to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

Sung congregational response

Part 3 Abiding in Christ: The unity of all peoples with all creation

Reading: Rev 7: 9-12

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing,

‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honour
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.’

Reflection

Hymn 659 Put Peace into each other's hands (vv1-2)

Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it;
protect it like a candle flame,
with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands,
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.

Intercessions (Let us pray)

God of life, you have created every human being in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, expressions of faith, traditions and ethnicities. Grant us the courage always to stand against injustice and hatred based on race, class, gender, religion, and fear of those not like ourselves.

Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

All: God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, life and goods with all those in need.

Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new behaviours. May we learn to live in harmony as part of your creation.

All: God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

We reach out our hands in peace as we pray together the words that Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven.
Hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

The warp and the weft

Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together. When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression. We say together:

**All: Pray and work that God may reign.
Throughout your day
let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.
Maintain inner silence in all things
so as to dwell in Christ.
Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes: joy, simplicity, mercy.**

(These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community)

Hymn 659 Put Peace into each other's hands (vv3-5)

Put peace into each other's hands,
like bread we break for sharing;
look people warmly in the eye:
our life is meant for caring.

And at communion shape your hands
into a waiting cradle;
the gift of Christ, receive, revere,
united round the table.

Put Christ into each other's hands,
he is love's deepest measure;
in love make peace, give peace a chance
and share it like a treasure.

Words: Fred Kaan
Tune: Vriede in Handen

Blessing

Be one, so that the world may believe!
Abide in God's love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

**All: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and all peace in faith,
so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Organ Music

Vater unser im Himmelreich BWV 737

J. S. Bach

Worship Leaders: The Reverend Dr Rosie Magee, Arthur Chapman, Judy Chapman

Scripture Reader: Elizabeth Harry

Director of Music: Brigitte Harris

The Choir of St Andrew's and St George's West

Vocal ensemble: Eleanor Cozens, Eleanor Wilson, Caitlin McGillivray, Drew Crichton,
Andrew Carvel

Pianists: Eleanor Cozens, Tim Cooper

Technical team: Alison Bruce, Andrew Carvel, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

Digital Coordinator: Andrew Carvel

Sources:

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World Council of Churches: <https://www.oikoumene.org/> Week of Prayer for Christian
Unity 2021

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