

**Australian**

**Church**

**Women**

**FELLOWSHIP DAY**

**1978**

**THE**

**WAY**

**AHEAD**



INTROIT: The Congregation remains seated while a recording of "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord" (from "Godspell") is played.

WE PRAISE GOD

Leader: In the name of the Lord, welcome to you all.

People: *In the name of the Lord, welcome to you too.*

Leader: This day we celebrate the coming of the Lord. Lord, we celebrate your coming into time and space, into this time, into this space.

People: *You have come and created the universe. You have come in the human family you have called out of the dust of the ground.*

Leader: You have come in the words of the prophets and in the person of Jesus Christ. You have come in the lives of faithful people of every age.

People: *You are still coming in your Holy Spirit, coming into the life of the Church, into our lives and the life of the world to complete your purpose in creation.*

ALL: *Lord, make us joyful members of the great apostolic succession in which your love includes us all. Make us strong in truth and love to share the wonder of your coming to all people in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

HYMN:

CONFESSION

Leader: If we say we have no sin in us, we are deceiving ourselves and refusing to admit the truth; but if we acknowledge our sins then God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sin and purify us from everything that is wrong.

Let us come before God and examine ourselves in silence seeking God's grace that we may draw near to him with repentance and faith ...

ALL: *From thinking that we make this world, who only measure it,  
From saying that cement is stone or bricks make cliffs,  
Good Lord deliver us.*

*O secret and mysterious God ...*

*Your secret you have advertised and your mystery made  
plain ...*

*We confess that to us you remain secret and mysterious yet,  
because we fear to release ourselves to receive what you  
offer of yourself. Give us your spirit, who makes all*

*things well, that we may give ourselves and know you,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Leader: Hear the reassuring words our Saviour Christ said to all who turn to him:

"Come to me all you who are tired of carrying your heavy loads, and I will give you rest.

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life."

Be assured therefore, that he will have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

#### MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Reader 1: As we think together about the way ahead, let us consider the Church of tomorrow and what it will be like, as the Scriptures speak to us.

How do we know the way we should go?

Reader 2: Jesus replied, "I am the way; I am the truth and I am the life; no man comes to the father except by me."  
(John 14: 6 - 7).

Reader 1: What will be asked of Christians in repentance and service in the future Church?

Reader 2: Is this not the fact that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and to bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isaiah 58: 6 - 7).

Reader 1: Will there be equality for all people?

Reader 2: There will be neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female for you are all one in Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3: 28).

Reader 1: In what areas will the mission and outreach of the Church cover?

Reader 2: " .... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." (Matthew 25: 35-37).

Reader 1: Can we hope for unity in the future?

Reader 2: I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine; all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. (John 17: 9-11).

Reader 1: Will the Church of the future use large buildings?

Reader 2: The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. (Acts 17: 24-25).

Reader 1: Should the church be working towards a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth?

Reader 2: But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and truth. (1 John: 3: 17-18).

Reader 1: What things will still be central in the future Church?

Reader 2: Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the Gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved - unless you believed in vain. (1 Corinthians 15: 1-2).  
For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus Christ on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the

new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes. (1 Corinthians 11: 23-26).

Reader 1: Let us meditate in silence on these words ....

Reader 2: Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (11 Corinthians 5: 17-19).

HYMN:

ADDRESS:

RESPONSE IN FAITH GIFT AND PRAYER

Leader: Let us stand and affirm our faith.

All: *We affirm our faith in God, the Father who created the universe and sustains it in love.  
We affirm our faith in Jesus Christ in whom God's truth and power became human in a life lived like our own. He died on the cross, he rose from the dead, he reigns with the father.  
We welcome the Holy Spirit in whom the truth and power of God still come among us.  
We acknowledge one universal Church of our Lord, in succession to the apostles, through which God seeks to show the world his truth and power.  
We look to a future when God's creative work will be complete, his people share fully in his gift of life and the whole universes ring with the joyful sound of his praise.*

OFFERTORY HYMN:

OFFERTORY PRAYER -

Leader: All that is good comes from you O Lord. We dedicate these gifts and offer ourselves for your service. Amen.

We Pray for Ourselves and Others

Leader: Enable all people to grow. May they find wisdom, creativity and fulfilment. In the role each person has in life, in family, home or work place, may he or she grow towards increasingly meaningful relationships with others and as a child of God.

Response: *Sustain all people in their personal struggles, joys and tragedies. May they know that in all experience you are a vital element.*

Leader: In the Church of today and tomorrow may there be an awareness of your guiding hand. May we grow in fellowship - in accepting the humanity of our brothers and sisters and seek not to label young or old, rich or poor, male or female.

Response: *You have called us to be your body - you have called us to take your reconciling love to the world. Make perfect this imperfect institution.*

Leader: Our national and world communities seem to be facing more problems than ever before. Give us hope and faith to face the future. Give us wisdom and a sense of purpose so that we may play a responsible role.

Response: *When famine strikes, you are there - hungry. It is your body that they beat in the political prison. Your skin is black and Rhodesian or American or Aboriginal and endures the brunt of racism.*

ALL: *This is your world, Lord. Yours by creation, yours by suffering, yours by renewal. Let us be part of it all. Amen.*

A Litany for the Future.

Leader: Eternal God, Lord of all creation in whom we live and move and have our being  
People: *Our Father, which art in heaven*  
Leader: Everlasting Father, father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who came that we might have life  
People: *Hallowed be thy name.*  
Leader: God of love who sends your Holy Spirit into our world  
People: *Hallowed by thy name*  
Leader: Deliver all people from the bondage of this life: from fear, from pride, from greed, and from self-love. Give us courage to share suffering when it comes. Restore to us the joy of resurrection.  
People: *Thy kingdom come.*  
Leader: By their knowledge of you, may all people everywhere learn to love you and seek to live together in peace and love with one another.  
People: *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*  
Leader: In the wilderness you gave the people bread. You feed the birds of the air, you clothe the lilies of the field. You know what things we need.  
People: *Give us this day our daily bread.*  
Leader: Forgive us our sins and help us to forgive others; for to forgive is to love and to love is to forgive.  
People: *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*  
Leader: Spare us from those trials with which you know we cannot cope. But do not spare us from those which will make us better people.  
People: *Lead us not into temptation.*  
Leader: You have already won the decisive battle against evil, but the powers of darkness will do their desperate work in our hearts. Come and deliver us Lord.  
People: *Deliver us from evil.*  
Leader: Yours is the glory in the face of Jesus Christ, shining now in our faith, our hope and our love.  
People: *Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

HYMN:

BENEDICTION:

SUGGESTED HYMNS:

GOD HAS SPOKEN BY HIS PROPHETS

(Australian Hymn Book No. 92 -  
Tune: Hymn to Joy - Beethoven).

WE LIMIT NOT THE TRUTH OF GOD

(Australian Hymn Book No. 335 -  
Tune: Ellacombe).

SEEK, O SEEK THE LORD

(Australian Hymn Book No. 397 -  
Tune: Venantius.)

ALL MY HOPE ON GOD IS FOUNDED

(Australian Hymn Book No. 465 -  
Tune: Keine Hoffnung).

\*\*\*\*\*

PREPARED BY A GROUP FROM THE  
CHESTER STREET EPPING CONGREGATION  
OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA.

\*\*\*\*\*