

## A song to sing or to read: The Power of Your Love – TiS 685

Lord I come to you, let my heart be changed, renewed  
Flowing from the grace that I found in you  
And Lord I've come to know the weaknesses I see in me  
Will be stripped away by the power of your love

*Refrain: Hold me close, let your love surround me  
Bring me near, draw me to your side  
And as I wait, I'll rise up like the eagle  
And I will soar with you, your spirit leads me on  
In the power of your love*

Lord unveil my eyes, let me see you face to face  
The knowledge of your love as you live in me  
Lord, renew my mind as your will unfolds in my life  
In living every day in the power of your love. *Refrain*

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## Closing Challenge for the week

So the question is, who is my neighbour? A challenge this week is to undertake an action that affirms and values someone else. Pray for them – write to them – speak on the telephone with them – do something that makes their life easier in some way.

**Amen**

With thanks to Anne Vail and Raelene Burn for preparing today's reflection



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Church in a Bag  
Sunday 24 May  
Dubbo Uniting Church



## A Gathering

God of all, as we come to worship, we give you thanks  
for all who have prayed in this place,  
for those whose gifts are living legacies,  
for those whose work we are adding to.  
Thank you for the ongoing ministry of your people here,  
and may your kingdom come.

## Preparation

Dear God, sometimes I come to you in prayer  
with words already formed and answers already assumed.  
Lord, lead me gently to the foot of the cross,  
to look and to listen again to the prayer of your Son.  
Help me simply and quietly to live generously,  
and to love, as he did.

**Amen**



**Reading: John 17:1-11**

**Reflection: That we may be one**

The prayer of Jesus is, as it always has been “that we learn to love one another” (John 17:11).

Loving our neighbour is costly and acts of kindness may put us at risk, but there is also a cost to closing ourselves off from one another.

The context this week is one of continued shock and sadness. It feels as though the lives we had planned are in suspension as we try to navigate our daily existence under the restrictions, we are required to follow throughout this COVID19 pandemic.

Our thoughts and prayers go out in compassion for all who are grieving at this time, all who wait for news, and all medical staff who care for the sick – and to all the cities and countries working out how to continue to live an ordinary life under these challenging circumstances. We pray too for all who are afraid. As we hear the news, help us to be open to the responses full of love and compassion, from friends, family and members of the public who have offered support in any way they could to those in need. What does it mean to be community when trouble comes, and members of the community suffer?

In the light of our ongoing situation, we may reflect on the love that binds us together.

**Community is vital.**

**WE ARE GLUE - we stick together when it counts.**

Jesus asks that we might be one – not to remove our difference and diversity, but to foster a community where each person is valued, just as we ourselves are valued by God. God sets us in community to be beacons of self-giving love and unity in the face of all that would seek to divide us. We need to invest in one another.

We live our lives ‘in the world’. We cannot be removed from its pain, its challenges and its dangers. How does our worship, our teaching, and our being together as a church, equip us to be sent out into the world? There are no easy answers to the challenges we currently face around the world. Certainly, some towns, regions and possibly countries may never be quite the same again.

Some of the battles that we thought had been won, have to be fought again and again because we do not always learn from the mistakes of the past. We should be very wary of those who come to us with simple solutions for complex problems, the conspiracy theorists and those who take the opportunity to use their social media time for negative feedback and bullying.

There are some actions that can never be fully understood and some motivations that defy all reason and all humanity. Hate speech needs to be robustly challenged wherever it appears.

We look to politicians to articulate their positive vision for the future of our country. How should we live in community? How should we relate to our international neighbours? How should we care for the elderly, the poor, the dispossessed, the benefit claimant, the jobless, the refugee? As Christians, we need to contribute to this debate wherever it is happening. We should look for a positive vision of our common life and of the common good.

We should not allow fear to dominate our lives so that we lose our ability to connect with our neighbour.

### A Listening Song

We encourage you to listen to “Hands”, a song by Jewel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfsS3pIDBfw>

