

A song to sing or to read: God gives us a future TiS-687

God gives us a future daring us to go
into dreams and dangers on a path unknown.
We will face tomorrow in the Spirit's power.
We will let God change us, for new life starts now.

We must leave behind us sins of yesterday
for God's new beginning is a better way.
Fear and doubt and habit must not hold us back:
God gives hope, and insight and the strength we lack.

Holy Spirit, teach us how to read the signs
how to meet the challenge of our troubled times.
Love us into action, stir us into prayer
till we choose God's life and find our future there.

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Closing Prayer



God of unknown tomorrows
journey with us along the road of life.
We do not know what waits before us.
Be our courage. Be our hope.
Be our source of inspiration.
Hear the cries of our weary souls.
Show us your mercy in our time of need.

Grant us your peace in our distress.
Bring us into closer relationship with you.
In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

With thanks to Lorraine Smith for preparing today's reflection



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Church in a Bag Sunday 23 August

Dubbo Uniting Church



A Gathering

Blessed Jesus, at your word we are gathered all to hear you;
let our hearts and minds be stirred to seek and love and fear you;
by your gospel pure and holy teach us, Lord, to love you solely.

Preparation

God of winter mornings your love comes to us boldly
like the sun forcing its way through overcast clouds.
You warm our hearts with your love and acceptance
filling our dark places with light.

Each day brings new beginnings.
Children play with innocent and unending imaginations.
Young people dream dreams and plan for the future.
Adults anticipate what is yet to come.
Each day is filled with treasure
as yet unexplored, and undiscovered.
God of all days we adore you.



First Reading Romans 12:1-8

Life in God's Service



Paul wrote in verses 4 and 5
We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body.

Reflection

One of Paul's favourite thoughts is to think of the Christian Church as a body. The members of the bodies neither argue with each other or envy each other or dispute about their relative importance.

Our world does not have to be divided between those with overt or (open) power and those oppressed by it. Instead, our world can be ordered by the using of all our gifts towards the benefit and wholeness of all. This text holds much good news and is as needed now as ever.
What are the gifts our community might bring forward and celebrate?

God needs human hands through which healing is done, through which people are fed, and through which compassion is shown.

When our gifts are harnessed to the way of love and community well-being, we will be doing the will of God.

Lord, thank you for your faith in us, that you can use even us to be instruments of healing and peace.

Second Reading: Matthew 16: 13-20

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

Jesus said in verse 18

And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it.

Reflection

The end was coming very near, and Jesus needed as much time alone with his disciples as he could gain. He had so much to say to them, and so much more to teach them.

Jesus is interested in how the general public is receiving him and his message. More important to Jesus is how those who claim to be followers of his "way" understand his and their identity.

Who do we say Jesus is? How we answer that question will shape our lives. Peter did not have a faith-first revelation of who Jesus was; rather God through Jesus Christ made possible the revelation to Peter. From that moment, Peter received his blessing, and identity and his purpose.

To be a Christian means that through Jesus we too see the decisive revelation of God and what a life full of God looks like. Through that revelation we, who are the church, are given our identity as Christ's body in the world, and we are blessed and sent out to continue his work in the world.

*God of love prepare our hands,
our feet, our spirits
and our hearts
to do your work in the world
in Christ's name.*

