



A Liturgy of Release
for

David Osmond

On submission of a Masters of Science by Research

Thursday 5 April 2001
Church of All Nations,
Uniting Church,
Carlton

Gathering

We come to worship God.

Life is weaving webs.
More about adventure
Than certainty,
More about questions
And wonder
And finding our place in creation's delightful maze
Than finding answers.

More about faith.

(From "Spider's web" in Whispers by Ross Kingham)

Liturgist welcomes those present and introduces themselves.

We gather today to acknowledge a period of transition in the life of David Osmond and to release him for the journey that lies ahead.

Opening Sentence

Jesus came that we might have life and have it in abundance.
Abundant life involves interaction with the gathered community. So we will now sing a song of gathering.

Song: Gather us in

Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away,
see, in this space, our fear and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.
We are the young, our lives are a mystery;
we are the old, who yearn for your face;

we have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and haughty;
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take of the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt of the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away,
but here in this space, the new light is shining,
now is the kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever;
gather us in, and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

A word from David and those gathered.

On arrival you received a roll of ribbon. When David has finished speaking you will be given the opportunity to respond by sharing a memory - or prayer (spoken or unspoken) for David. As you speak please walk across to David and hand him ONE end of the ribbon.

Together in God, we make tangible the continual weaving of community that God calls us all into. This is to remind David and ourselves that we are never asked to travel alone.

Reading: Exodus 20:18-21.

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.

The people remained at a distance while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

Reading: Psalm 139:1-18.

(Read in paragraphs by alternate sides of the church; organ and door sides)

(All)

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me
You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts
from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with
all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.

(Organ side)

You hem me in - behind and before;
you have layed your hand upon me
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

(Door side)

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
If I make my bed in the depths, you are there;

(Organ side)

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

(Door side)

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me,"
and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for the darkness is as light to you.

(Organ side)

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

(Door side)

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret
place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes
saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me were written in your book.
Before one of them came to be.

(All)

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.
When I awake, I am still with you.

Reading: John 3:1-21.

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus. "And do not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven - the Son of God. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the son of Man must be lifted up. That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned in

the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light, so that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been through God."

Reflection on the readings by Jenny Hayes

Song: Galilee Song

Deep within my heart I feel voices whispering to me.
Words that I can't understand; meanings I must clearly hear!
Calling me to follow close, lest I leave my self behind!
Calling me to walk into evening shadows one more time!

Chorus
So I leave my boats behind!
Leave them on familiar shores!
Set my heart upon the deep!
Follow you again, my Lord!

In my memories, I know how you send familiar rains
falling gently on my days; dancing patterns on my pain!
And I need to learn once more, in the fortress of my mind,
to believe in failing rain as I travel deserts dry!

Chorus

As I gaze into the night, down the future of my years,
I'm not sure I want to walk past horizons that I know!
But I feel me spirit called like a stirring deep within, restless 'til I live
again beyond the fears that close me in!

Chorus

Fire mountain (Whispers by Ross Kingham)

Perhaps not enough of us
Have been to Horeb, mountain of fire,
Of burning bush,
Of lightning and thunder and smoke,
And meeting place.

We are called to different peaks
Different mountains,
But the same igniting
In the depths
Of awesome hope
And wrestling trust,

Without which there is no going forward
Towards promise,
Only circling in yesterday's memories,
Quaint but not spirited,
Not relishing what is and what could be,
Lit By that fire.

Reading: Revelations 21:1-7, 22-27.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink

without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives light and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

The Sending Out of the People

Living God

We give you thanks that when we were still far off
you met us in your son and brought us home.

Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace,
and opened the gate of glory.

May we who share Christ’s body live his risen life.

We who drink his cup bring light to others.

Keep us in this hope that we have grasped
so that we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name.

Song: Let All Creation Dance

Let all creation dance in energies sublime,
as order turns with chance, unfolding space and time,
for nature’s art, in glory grows,
and newly shows God’s mind and heart.

God’s breath each force unfurls, igniting from a spark
expanding starry swirls, with whirlpools dense and dark.
Though moon and sun seem mindless things,
each orbit sings: ‘Your will be done.’

Our own amazing earth, with sunlight, cloud and storms
and life’s abundant growth in lovely shapes and forms,
is made for praise, a fragile whole
and from its soul heaven’s music plays.

Lift heart and soul and voice: in Christ all praises meet
and nature shall rejoice as all is made complete.
In hope be strong all life befriend
and kindly tend creation’s song.

*(The coloured ribbon is removed and David opens a bottle of
Champagne to mark the beginning of the celebration).*

Invitation

All gathered are invited to stay for the festivities.

Thanks

David would like to take this opportunity to thank

- the musos:
 - Ethel, Kerensa, Claire, Chris and Jane.
- Mac Nicoll for the poetry.
- Jenny Hayes for the reflection on the readings.
- Church of All Nations for the use of the church.
- All gathered for sharing in the celebration.