

May our faith be evident not only in what we say,
but in how we live.

Amen.

Closing Responses & Blessing

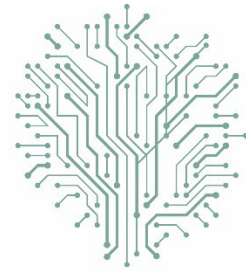
May God give us humble hearts to serve.

May Christ guide us to put others before
ourselves.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen us to live
faithfully in all that we do.

Amen.

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SALTBUSH
UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

Worship for the scattered Christian community

Matthew 23: 1-12
Practice What You Preach

Welcome

Welcome to worship. We are glad you are here.

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle to remind ourselves
of God's grace, which serves as the illuminating
light of the world.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the sovereign First Peoples of
these lands and waters where we meet, the
_____ Nation (of the _____ peoples).

We pay our respects to their elders, past and
present, and to all descendants of this/these
nations who have cared for this place since
creation.

We also honour all other Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Peoples here today.

Stuart McMillan

Assembly Consultant Covenanting Assembly Resourcing Unit

Music for Reflection

Suggested song:

Servant Heart

Laura Huval

https://open.spotify.com/track/5nUAGsQKx6eeUjEh4pKa2j?autoplay_ok=1

Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

The Word around the Bush

Matthew 23: 1-12

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’s seat; ³therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it, but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others, but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others, for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to have people call them rabbi. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. ⁹And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father, the one in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.^[a] ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

Questions for conversation

- What is something you heard for the first time from the reading or Word Around The Bush?
- What is challenging from this passage?
- How do we as a church/ community practice what we preach?

Silence

Please take a moment to find a comfortable position and prepare yourself for five minutes of

complete silence. Gently close your eyes and allow yourself to relax, while remaining fully present and aware of your surroundings.

Prayers of Confession and For Others

Gracious and merciful God,

We confess that we do not always practise what we preach.

We speak of love but fail to show kindness.
We speak of humility but allow pride to influence our actions.

We expect much from others while making excuses for ourselves.

Forgive us when we seek recognition rather than service, and when our words do not reflect our faith.

Teach us to live with humility, integrity and compassion.

Help us to follow the example of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve.

Loving God,

We pray for your Church throughout the world.
May our leaders serve with wisdom, always placing the needs of others before their own.

We pray for those who carry heavy burdens, especially those struggling with illness, grief, loneliness and uncertainty. Surround them with your comfort, strength and peace.

We pray for our communities, those who feel excluded or unheard.

Give us the courage to stand alongside them and to serve with genuine love.

We pray for our world, where pride, power and injustice continue to divide people.

Guide those in positions of authority to lead with compassion, fairness and humility.