

Order of Worship

Rev. Dr. Robert Stringer

St. Margaret's Uniting Church – Mooloolbark

10 Feb 2019 - Epiphany 5

INTROIT TIS 703: “As the deer pants for the water...”

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.
You alone are my strength, my shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

WELCOME

WELCOME TO COUNTRY & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ANCESTORS

We gather together on the land that cared and nurtured the people of the Kulin nation. The land where the people of the Wurundjeri language gather and celebrated their stories, songs and dances passed on by their ancestors, and the Great Spirit of the Dreaming over countless generations.

We acknowledge these ancestors and give thanks for their memory. We also acknowledge and give thanks for the foremothers and forefathers of St Margaret's Uniting Church. All those who have given their gifts to be a shining light of God for the wider community. To this community of saints, living and dead, named and unnamed we pay our respects.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

We light the Christ Candle

**We celebrate God coming to us in human form
bringing light to the world.**

CALL TO WORSHIP: (Dorothy MacRae-McMahon)

Sisters and brothers, will we take the risk
of seeing our world through the eyes of God?

With God's help we will.

Will we hear and taste and smell the poor of the earth
and walk towards the Christ who is already there?

With God's help we will.

Will we so believe in the grace of God that we can dare to feel the longings of the

people mingled with our own frailty?
With God's help we will.
We are not alone.

HYMN TIS 179: " Praise with joy the world's creator"

1
Praise with joy the world's Creator,
God of justice, love and peace,
source and end of human knowledge,
force of greatness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory,
power to rescue and release.

2
Praise the Son who feeds the hungry,
frees the captive, finds the lost,
heals the sick, upsets religion,
fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence --
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.

3
Praise the Spirit sent among us,
liberating truth from pride,
forging bonds where race or gender,
age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure --
foolishness none dare deride.

4
Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
one God in community,
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe, when
shown Christ's vibrant unity.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, your glory and majesty far exceed our capacity to imagine them, and yet you chose to share our humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. He made your holiness and your glory visible through his love and his compassion. A love that resonated in people's lives, and a compassion which permeated all his actions. Jesus calls us to make your holiness and your glory visible in and through our lives also, and so we pray as we worship you with awe and reverence, that we declare with our lips and our lives: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of your glory. Hallelujah! Amen!

FROM THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and

lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots^[a] on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The Seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

A WORD FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CHILDREN'S TALK

Try and line up someone who can make a good "coo-ee" call or do it yourself. Ask if the children/young people know when such a call would be made. Explain that it is a call often used in the bush to attract someone's attention. If you have people from different ethnic backgrounds - ask if they have any comparable calls to the "coo-ee" and get them to demonstrate and explain the use of such calls. We use all sorts of ways to attract someone's attention. Invite suggestions. (Call on the phone, shout, whistle, send an email or a letter, when watching the cricket, people make large banners to attract attention etc etc.) This is to show that there are many ways used to attract people's attention - and God uses different ways to attract people's attention also. Our reading about Isaiah's call shows that it happened in the temple while he was worshipping God - similar to what we are doing here in Church. Later in the service we'll hear about the apostle Paul, who was called to follow Jesus when he was actually on his way to persecute, to harass, Christians. Then we'll hear about three fishermen, Simon Peter, James and John. Jesus called them to follow him in the midst of their everyday work. So - the message for today is - God attracts our attention - calls us in all sorts of ways, maybe quietly, in our hearts - or through another person, maybe here in Church, or at home or at work - whoever we are, wherever we are, whatever we're doing - don't be surprised if you feel that God is calling you to tell people about Jesus and his love. There are lots of people, young and not so young, who do not know Jesus and the difference for good that he can make to lives. So - be prepared - perhaps there is someone God has chosen for you to tell about Jesus and his love.

WE SEND OUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE

We send you out to play and learn together,
and to discover how much God loves you.

HYMN TIS 467: "I am the Church, you are the Church"

*I am the Church! You are the Church!
We are the Church together!
All who follow Jesus all around the world,
yes, we're the Church together!*

1

The Church is not a building,
the Church is not a steeple,
the Church is not a resting-place,
the Church is a people!

2

We're many kinds of people
with many kinds of faces,
all colours and all ages too,
from all times and places.

3

And when people gather
there's singing and there's praying,
there's laughing and there's crying sometimes
all of it saying:

4

I count if I am ninety
or nine or just a baby;
there's one thing I am sure about, and
I don't mean maybe:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: *To be read by three people, representing Isaiah, Paul, and Peter. The responses of the people said in unison.*

Let us pray:

Voice 1: Isaiah's sense of unworthiness was dispelled through the awesome power of God blotting out his sin and removing his guilt. No longer were there any barriers to his responding to God's call to proclaim the word of justice to the people of his day and to us, through his witness. To God's question "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah replied "Here am I, send me." Forgive us, O God, when we cling to the excuse of our unworthiness to serve you, forgetting that in Jesus you have blotted out our sin and removed our guilt. **To your question to each of us "Whom shall I send?" may we reply "Here am I, send me."**

(silent reflection)

Voice 2: Paul reflected his sense of unworthiness when he described himself as unfit to be called an apostle because he persecuted the Church of God. Yet he witnessed that through the grace of God he had become a different person.

He responded to God's call to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of his day and to us through his witness. To God's call on his life Paul said "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain." Forgive us when we cling to the picture of ourselves as unfit to be called disciples of Christ because of past practices or behaviour. We know that through your gracious activity in our lives, O God, we are different people.

Help us to affirm, like Paul, that your grace towards us has not been in vain.

(silent reflection)

Voice 3: Simon Peter acknowledged his sense of unworthiness when he told Jesus to go away from him, because he was a sinful man. Yet when Jesus told him not to be afraid, Simon Peter abandoned his accustomed way of life to move into uncharted territory. To this call of Jesus on his life, Simon Peter left everything, to catch people instead of fish. Forgive us, O God, for allowing any sense of sinfulness and unworthiness to prevent us from hearing Jesus' call to follow him.

Help us to hear his words "Do not be afraid" as words of empowerment and freedom – freedom to let go of the past so that we can step fearlessly into his future.

(silent reflection)

VOICE 1: The calls of Isaiah, Paul and Simon Peter tell us something about God. That people are called, despite their imperfections, to give shape to God's vision of justice and love and peace for the world.

VOICE 2: We thank you, O God, for seeing beyond our faults and our fears and empowering us to be new people.

VOICE 3: We pray that you will use us all to witness to your love and your justice, your mercy and your peace revealed so fully in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen

Before God and the people of God we confess to our brokenness, to the ways that we wound our life, the life of others and the life of the world.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS:

Hear Christ word of love to us, God forgives you, Christ renews you and the Spirit enables you to live in love.

Thanks be to God!

WE LISTEN FOR A WORD FROM GOD

FROM THE EARLY CHRISTIAN LETTERS

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you— unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

In this scripture is the word of the Lord!
Thanks be to God.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

Luke 5: 1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Thank you, God, for your word to us today!
Thank you, God, for Christ Jesus, a living Word!

REFLECTION - Rev Dr Robert Stringer

Calling of Disciples in Luke 5:1-11

Value of gospel differences.

In Mark: The first Gospel to be written, puts the story of the calling of the first disciples immediately following the opening summary about the preaching of John the Baptist, the Baptism of Jesus, and the Temptations and then locates it in the context of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee.

In Luke the setting is different.

The calling of the disciples doesn't take place until Chapter 5:1-11. Jesus is empowered by the Spirit at the time of his baptism, this is followed by a time of testing in the wilderness, his rejection in Nazareth, and then he begins his ministry by healing and teaching in the synagogue, the healing of Simon's Mother in Law and the preaching of the Good News in the synagogues throughout Galilee.

Last week we heard how in Nazareth – Jesus outlines how his mission statement of liberation fulfils OT expectations of Isaiah Ch 64.

1. An emphasis on God's preference for the poor and disadvantaged,
2. Good News of practical action for social change to support the poor and disadvantaged and
3. This new community was available to everybody

Finally at Capernaum as part of his ministry he casts out a demon of a young man in the synagogue and heals Simon's Mother-in-law.

Jesus is fully involved in his healing and teaching ministry.

The next day the people seek Jesus out and want him to be their Preacher but he said he explains how he must preach the Good News in other towns in Galilee. v 43 & 44.

After some time Jesus returns to Lake Gennesaret in Galilee where he meets Simon and sons of Zebedee.

According to Luke the mission of Jesus is well under way by the time he encounters the fisherman Simon and the others at the lakeside.

The call to discipleship is a call to participate in this mission of Jesus.

Scene: the crowd is pressing in upon Jesus, a sign of the growing crowds responding to Jesus and the need for helpers. The crowds are eager to hear his preaching so when Jesus sees two boats on the beach he uses one for a pulpit.

It just happened that one of the boats belonged to Simon Peter. He had just finished cleaning his nets after a weary disappointing night's fishing when they hadn't caught anything. So Peter grudgingly offered his boat and in return he is guaranteed a ringside seat to listen to Jesus and his vision of a new society called the Kingdom of God. We would probably use words like the "Divine Community."

At the end of the teaching session Jesus suggests that they, Simon go fishing again even though they had failed to catch anything the previous night.

Imagine Peter – practical
You don't go fishing in the deep at midday.
There is nothing there anyway.
Mumble mumble ...
He may be a preacher.
But we will have to teach him a bit about fishing.

But Simon obeysand there is a miraculous catch, a sign of abundance.

Simon remembers the healing of man in the Synagogue and his mother-in-law.
And the great haul of fish – very important.

Parallels: John 21:4-11 When they also were told by Jesus to cast the net again on the other side of the boat caught 153 large fish and the net wasn't torn.

A response of awe and amazement – special religious experience of the Grace of God. An overwhelming religious experience of God's presence. – awe, fear / sinfulness / inadequacy

Parallels experience of the Burning bush (Ex 2) and Paul on the Road to Damascus
Reaction a feeling of Unworthiness

Parallels with the call of Isaiah (Is 6), a sense of awe in presence of God in the temple.

Jesus' response "don't be afraid".

Luke develops this into a call of the disciples to be Fishers of Men- v 10
To participate in the mission of Jesus, the Divine Community or Church.

One of the great surprises in the early church must was that Peter of all people becomes the first of the great apostolic preachers Acts 2: 24-36.

The one who denied Jesus three times becomes the most aliquant of preachers.

This unworthy leader became the successful spokesperson for the church on the day of Pentecost.

1 Another example of the mystery of divine grace reflected in this encounter by the miracle on the lake.

2 The call to discipleship is an act of grace.
The movement from unworthiness and fear to being a confident spokesperson.

Jesus declared Simon forgiven and commissioned as a catcher people. For others:

A Farmer of People
A Teacher of people
A Plumber of people
A Gardener of People
A Builder of People
A Networker of People
A Carer of People
A Server of People

No matter what your occupation discipleship is about reaching out to influence people, your neighbour, the people in your community, the people in our places of work, the members of our church.

Peter wasn't chosen because of his

- moral character
- learned background
- people skills

The command to follow Jesus may run counter to any fear of inadequacy, to one of confidence in the message that Jesus brings to our lives.

In obedience to a call to discipleship – miracles do happen.

What about You and Me?

What are you afraid of?

Do you feel unworthy?

I can't do that I am too inadequate.

We are all called to take part in the mission of Jesus to catch people/care for people.

to communicate the love of God, the good news

to share our experience

Like Isaiah. We do it

- through Grace
- through obedience to take on the task to be disciples/leaders in the church
- through trust the awe filled experience of God in our lives.

Because we are restoring people's care for one another combined with a relationship with God.

TIS 687: "God gives us a future"

1

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.

2

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.

3

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.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

CHILDREN'S SHOW AND TELL

OFFERING and OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Hymn TIS 658: "I the Lord of sea and sky..." is based on Isaiah 6

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Go now, and forsaking everything else, follow Christ.
By the grace of God, be all you have been called to be,
and cast wide the net of God's love.
Remind one another of the good news,
and hold firmly to faith that is saving you.

And may God give you a vision of glory;
May Christ Jesus touch you with the fire of mercy;
And may the Holy Spirit hear your prayers and renew your strength.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.

ASCRPTION TIS 782: "Go now in peace"

Go now in peace, go now in peace,
may the love of God surround you
everywhere, everywhere you may go.

Please join us for refreshments

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