



Call to worship:

From the north and from the south,
From Gippsland to Inverloch & Wonthaggi
from the east and from the west,
From Fish Creek to Cowes
From Foster and to Tarwin Lower
God calls us together to worship & serve.

Out of poverty and wealth,
out of health and sickness,
out of whatever circumstance in which we
live,
God calls us together to worship & serve.

Out of a spirit of jubilation and despair,
out of times of hope and uncertainty,
out of whatever state our heart is in,
God calls us together to worship & serve.

We Sing: God of Abraham Litany

God of Abraham, lead us
Lead us to your kingdom
In to Fruitfulness together
Lead us together
Lead us to freedom.

God of Sarah be with us
Lead us to your kingdom
In to Fruitfulness together
Lead us together
Lead us to freedom.

God of Christ Lead us
Lead us to your kingdom
In to Fruitfulness together
Lead us together
Lead us to freedom.

Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications Used with
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Prepared with with love from & for SHEARWATER CONGREGATIONS: Toora: Foster: Fish Creek: Tarwin 1
Lower: Inverloch: Wonthaggi: Phillip Island: shared with our neighbouring congregations in Gippsland &
within the Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod VicTas Presbytery of Gippsland

Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the First Peoples
and to their elders past and present, and to
those emerging. May we seek
reconciliation and healing in our Nation.

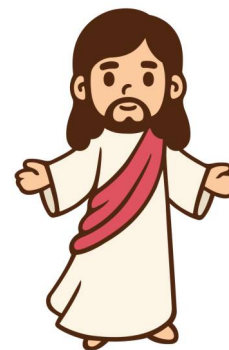


Light your candle

We light a candle: a reminder of Christ,
the Light of the World.

Welcome

Welcome yourself today to worship this
morning: thanks for being you, right here!



Ring somebody this week to make them
welcome to this worship you are sharing.

Today's Theme

Our Old Testament takes us to the story of
Abraham and Sarah. The great laughter of
Sarah at the work God would do in and
through her at her great age!
The Gospel reminds us to see the world
with eyes of compassion: and lean into the
love of God in all we do in faith.

Opening prayer

God of impossible dreams and promises
Christ of every life journey
Spirit of Love in our hearts

We open ourselves to your presence:
At our tables
In our lounge rooms
By our bedside table.

Open your ears to hear, our hearts to your
grace, and our minds to understand your
prophetic voice to us this day.

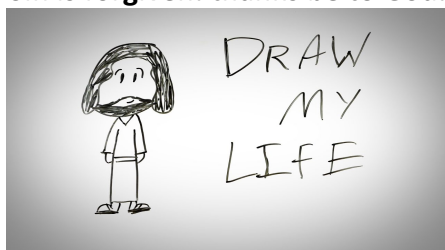
In song, silence, scripture and prayer
In symbol, light and shadow
Illuminate your way
Brighten our pathways
That we may see and feel and know You.
In Creation, Redemption and New Life.

Confession and Assurance

Sarah denied her own laughter at the
prophetic voice that suggested that she
would have a child at her great age.

We confess to God where we have
laughed at the promises of Christ

God forgives: God more than forgives.
God brings New Life
Sin is forgiven: thanks be to God.



The Readings

- Genesis 18: 1-15 & 21: 1-7.
- Matthew 9: 35-10: 8

For these words of faith and
Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God

Reflection: Rev Jennie Gordon

It begins with a stirring of the heart; a
message arrives through our eyes, ears,
touch, smell, our taste or our innate
knowing and we are moved with
compassion; deep in our gut we feel it. We
know something is wrong; people are
hurting and hungry, harassed and helpless
and we sense their distress.

Today we have two rich stories sitting side
by side, one from the Hebrew tradition and
one from the gospel of Matthew. In the
Genesis reading, Abraham is sitting on the
verandah in the heat of the day when he
notices three tired travellers nearby, and
he senses their weariness and hunger. In
the gospel reading, Jesus has been the
traveller, moving through villages and
cities, teaching, proclaiming good news
and curing every ill, and again, he is moved
with compassion seeing the lostness of the
flock, harassed and helpless.

What begins as a movement of the heart
then shifts into strategy and action.
Abraham jumps up and runs to meet the
strangers who become guests. He makes
sure they are washed and comfortable
before running around making plans with
others to prepare the banquet of blessing
that will end in laughter and love. Jesus
rallies the team around him. He gives them
authority, a specific plan and role
description and a warning. Then the gospel
writer names them all and defines them as
apostles, ones who are sent; messengers
or envoys. In both stories there is a leader
who is the catalyst, perceiving the need,
summoning up resources through the
people around them to offer care and
comfort, to share the love and hospitality
of God.

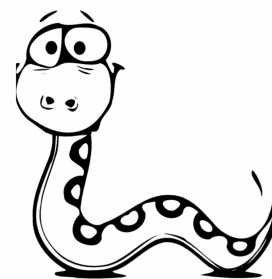
Let's go back for a moment. It begins with
a stirring of the heart; a message arrives

through our eyes, ears, touch, smell, our taste or innate knowing and we are moved with compassion; deep in our gut we feel it. We know something is wrong; people are hurting and hungry, harassed and helpless and we sense their distress. Do we? Or are we desensitised to the pain of our neighbours, our planet, our world? Images bombard us from all sides, there are so many forms of media now, bringing us into intimate spaces of pain and pleasure, laughter and lostness. Have we become numb? During this pandemic, as we have witnessed the unfolding of this unprecedented global emergency, what happens within us? Being numb, overwhelmed and underprepared are normal responses and sometimes necessary to protect us from too much information. I wonder if that's how the apostles were feeling as they were being sent, two by two, to the lost sheep of Israel?

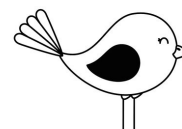
In order to move into strategy and action we need to firstly be moved. We are called to see with compassion, to be people with open eyes and open hearts and to feel that stirring within us. As we feel the stirring of the heart, we need to remember that we are not alone. We stand in a tradition that goes back to Abraham, a tradition that reaches out to meet the needs of the world as God reached out to meet us in the birth of a vulnerable baby, to listen to the suffering of the silent ones, to place a table of plenty before the hungry ones, to bring peace where there is disruption and to bring the lost ones home. Other traditions meet us in Abraham also, a multi-faith network of compassion, of hearts stirring, of reaching out.

As Jesus sends the Apostles, he tells them to go just as they are; they don't need anything extra. They don't need to be

weighed down by carrying things that are distracting, heavy and unnecessary. He sends them only to the lost tribes of Israel; there's plenty to do in their own patch, let's begin right here. That's the strategy. He's teaching them how to *be* disciples. At the end of Matthew's gospel, he will send them on a bigger mission, into the whole world, to *make* disciples, but not now. Jesus understands that he's sending his disciples out on a risky mission, one that he has already embarked on, and they have every reason to be afraid. Like sheep in the midst of wolves. *Therefore*, he says, be as wise as serpents and as guileless as doves.



Serpents are snakes; snakes are vigilant and alert to dangers. Their wisdom keeps them safe and alive. A snake's most common form of self-protection is avoidance and they bite us only in self-defence. They are alert and know the ways of the environment in which they live, including the animals to keep clear of and the ones that will make a good dinner. They have a warning hiss...



Doves don't bite. Their guilelessness or innocence is in their harmlessness, their inability to injure. They may slap you with a wing if you get too close to the nest, or try to pick them up, but that's about the limit. They build flimsy nests of thin twigs,

sometimes in strange places. They have a soothing coo...

Jesus sends the disciples out to be vigilant to the dangers of the mission and at the same time to avoid causing harm. We are encouraged to take heed. To have our hiss and our coo ready for the right circumstances. A hiss as warning when we feel unsafe, a coo as a sound of the gift of peace.

When we have a stirring of the heart and are moved with compassion by the needs of those around us, we need to lean on these stories for courage and hope. Abraham shows us that outrageous hospitality can lead to unexpected blessing. The story about Jesus encourages us that we have what we need, to go local, to make a difference where we are. According to theologian N.T. Wright, God's action begins with love and ends with celebration, taking in suffering en-route. In one translation, Matthew 10:8 says, '*you have a received a free gift, give a free gift.*'

So, take your hiss, and your coo, and as love is a long haul, be sure to travel light.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE



***Bring some autumn leaves to your
Worship Space &
as you repeat the refrain,
study the colours
and place a leaf on your prayer mat.***

Musical God who is the very rhythm of our lives, we hear the beat of your heart-song echoing through our world. We celebrate

with you the goodness of all creation, affirmed and held by you in its own rhythm. Our celebrations are sometimes in harmony, sometimes just a din, but they are joyful and we sing our thanks to you as we worship you with gladness.

***You are faithful through all generations
and your steadfast love endures forever.***

We know that you made us and we are yours, held and cherished by you. But sometimes our rhythm falters and our hearts ache with sorrow. Sometimes we hear our own pain and it feels like nothing will ever be right again.

***You are faithful through all generations
and your steadfast love endures forever.***

You have sent us out to all the communities around us to share the good news of your love. You have given us a deep compassion because we have loved one another as you have asked us to do. We witness the pain and sorrow of others. The 'crowds' around us also are harassed and helpless. Like the crowds in Matthew, they also are without direction and without a guide. They are lonely. They also have disease or sickness. They also have mental suffering.

***You are faithful through all generations
and your steadfast love endures forever.***

Our hearts are grieved as we witness great sadness amongst others in our church families and in our communities. We have experienced loss. Some of us have lost friends or family or relationships. Some of us have been in hospital. Some of us are in aged care or have loved ones there. Some of us work in the frontlines with those who are doing it tough. This time of isolation has been rough on us God. We have been

unable to care for one another and show our support the way we wish we could. We miss hugs and visits. We can't go into hospitals or aged care with the voice of love in our usual way.

You are faithful through all generations and your steadfast love endures forever.

We know that hardship ultimately leads us to hope as we hear your voice in our pain. While our hearts are full of lament in this strange autumn time, we are reassured by your Presence, by your steadfast and faithful love evident throughout the Scriptures and throughout our own lives. Your Gospel bids us bring healing and peace to the lives of others and to share generously as your Kingdom comes near through us.

You are good. You are faithful through all generations and your steadfast love endures forever.

When we come to the end of our own resources, there is You. We give thanks to you and bless your name with thanksgiving and praise, for you are faithful and you hear our prayers in our vulnerability and weakness. You breathe new life into us and bring us back into the rhythm of your heart-song, warming us back into love and life. Hear our prayer O God and renew us again. **Amen.**



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

OFFERING

We joyfully sing our thanks to you O God
and bring our gifts to share.

*Sing or hum 'Freely, freely'
Place your offering on your prayer mat*

Freely, Freely, you have received

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name.
I've been born again in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his love as he told me to.
*He said 'Freely, freely you have received;
freely, freely give.*
*Go in my name, and because you believe
others will know that I live.*

All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name
In earth and heav'n in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his pow'r as he told me to.
*He said 'Freely, freely you have received;
freely, freely give.*
*Go in my name, and because you believe
others will know that I live.*

God gives us life in Jesus' name
He lives in us in Jesus' name

And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his peace as he told me to.
*He said 'Freely, freely you have received;
freely, freely give.*
*Go in my name, and because you believe
others will know that I live.*

Songwriter: Carol Owens, Maranatha Music Used with
permission CCLI 241 739

Be in touch with your church treasurer this
week to see how to have your offering
collected.



BLESSING

Share kindness to all,
as the kindness you offer others
is your worship.
God remembers you and
knows your name,
so be confident and unafraid.
In all you do remember
God's steadfast love,
to you, all people and all creation.

Sent By the Lord Am I

Sent by the Lord am I;
My hands are ready now
To make the earth the place
In which the Kingdom comes,
Sent by the Lord am I;
My hands are ready now
To make the earth the place
In which the Kingdom comes.
The angels cannot change
A world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love, of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do,
To set it really free.
Oh, help me to obey;
Help me to do your will.

Traditional Nicaraguan Melody: arranged Esther
Jones trans Jorge Maldonado Used with permission
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