

**Call to worship**

God gives life freely, thanks be to God.

We are free from death,  
for we live under grace.

This God welcomes the little ones.

God calls you by name and welcomes you  
in compassion,  
Come and rejoice, whoever you are,  
for there is a place for you.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

We give acknowledgement this day to the First Peoples of our land, and in particular the Bunurong peoples. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We commit ourselves to truth-telling and the seeking of reconciliation.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

**Light your Candle**



**HYMN 491 Father welcomes all his children**

*Father welcomes all his children  
to his family through his Son;  
Father giving his salvation  
life for ever has been won.*

Little children  
come to me  
for my kingdom is of these;  
life and love I have to give  
mercy for your sin. *Refrain*

In the water  
in the word  
in his promise  
be assured:  
those who are baptized and believe  
shall be born again. *Refrain*

Let us daily die to sin

let us daily rise with him  
walk in the love of Christ our Lord  
live in the peace of God. *Refrain*

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**Opening prayer**

You greet us with love and compassion.

We give you thanks.

You give us a "yoohoo"  
and greet us by name.

You reach out to welcome us with  
a warm smile and space to share  
around your table.

You bid us 'welcome others' to the feast  
with our own "yoohoo"  
over the metaphorical fence.

We give "yoohoo" to the little ones and  
bring them in with gentle care.

Remind us to offer Kingdom hospitality  
and value all people as you value us.

You greet us with love and compassion.

**Thanks.**

**Confession**

*How long O God will we forget your face,  
how long will we seek and not find you?!*  
We echo the lament of the Psalms,  
consider and answer us we pray.

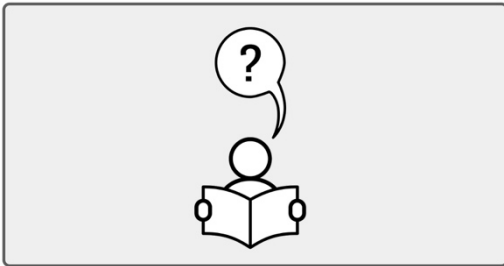
We make mistakes and forget we are free.  
Instead, we choose to sit in the  
consequences of our disconnection.

The deep hurt in our soul  
draws us back to you.

Remove our guilt and shame and remind us  
of your steadfast love. You set us free! And  
you welcome us as your little ones, and gift  
us with grace and salvation.

You restore us to you in your steadfast love  
We are freed and forgiven.

Thanks be to God.



### The Readings

- Genesis 22: 1-14
- Matthew 10: 40-42

For these words of faith,  
and Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflection: Rev Ian Turnnidge

How long, O Lord?  
How long must I bear pain in my soul?  
Sorrow in my heart, all the day long?

How do you hear the voice of God?  
It's an audacious thing to even think that  
one might be able to hear the voice of God.

Perhaps it's a question that's not helpful?  
**How** we hear God might, not be helpful to  
ponder. It might be more helpful to ask  
**where** do we hear God? Or **in what** do we  
hear God?  
What is listening?

This week we are gifted with a reading  
from the Hebrew Scriptures of Abraham  
being 'tested' by God; to listen into the  
story of the journey of Abraham taking  
Isaac to the distant place to offer sacrifice.  
In the Gospel reading we hear of a  
community of welcome, in mission and  
ministry.

And in our service today, we will listen and  
pray the beloved Psalm 13, "How long, O  
Lord? How long will you hide your face  
from me?" A cry from the depths of our  
humanity for connection, re-connection:  
the most profound call of the human heart  
for God.

What's the cry of your heart to God, today?  
What is listening to God? How do you hear  
the voice of God?

At the moment, I have a friend who has a  
"Direct line to God". It's quite a worrying  
thing, because the non-Christian kind of  
spirituality he has entered into has  
convinced him that his meditative  
practices, these new beliefs he has  
adopted, and the leader he has met has  
"The Direct line to God". It is such a  
different kind of belief and understanding  
of spirituality to the Christian Path.

When I think about how I might hear God  
in my life, I'll share a story with you that  
happened just last week, here at Cowes,  
that might illustrate one of the ways I think  
I hear God.

As I was working at my desk, about 30  
minutes before yet another ZOOM  
meeting, I had the impulse to get out of the  
house. I got up and walked up Chapel  
street Cowes, thinking it was a good  
opportunity to get some milk and bread at  
a quiet time of the day.

As I walked past the church, a young couple  
were surveying the building. If you're not  
familiar with the church building here at  
Cowes, it's an impressive structure. We  
have an original an 1895, '3-arched  
window' weatherboard church hall, and  
connected to it a worship centre, built in  
'modernist' 1970's style, that has the most  
extraordinary roof line. Think of a convex-  
parabola, the keel of a boat, as the roof. It  
looks like a wave or a massive shark fin, or  
skate ramp! The architect, Paul Archibald,  
is also credited with the Uniting Church at  
Rosebud.

This couple was doing more than just  
looking at the building. They were clearly  
gesturing towards the parabolic roofline,

and taking in the geometry. So, I asked them if they wanted to come in and have look? They did! We had a brief chat, I gave them some time to themselves to look about: and then we talked. The man was an architect student. One of his passions is Modernist design. He's been here before and always wanted to have a look inside. I was able to share with him the photo album of early building pictures, and share with him how the congregation actually helped build the building. It was a great conversation and a great chance meeting. To me it was one of those moments when I thought, "What are the chances – surely that is of God?"

Now, I don't want to push what was going on behind this chance meeting too far, (I've lived that kind of 'spirituality', and it can drive you crazy), but personally, I'm happy to hold that as a moment when, at some level, I was responding to the Divine impulse.

That's how it goes for me sometimes. A moment when my 'listening' is so automatic I find myself in the right place at the right time. Other times, something I've been reading or watching might make sense to another matter I've been dwelling with. But, then, I've always been delighted by the 'happy accident', the chance meeting of very moment.

I wonder how Abraham heard God? In the story today, Abraham's reply to God, "Here I am" is repeated. We are told that this is a test: God tested Abraham. But what did God test?

Lutheran theologian, Paul Nuechterlein reminds us of the two Hebrew words that are used in the Bible for God. The first Hebrew word is Elohim. It's the most general word for God: when the First Commandment says "Thou shall have no

other gods before me", the word for god is Elohim. The same word is often used to describe false gods in the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the opening of today's story, it is Elohim who calls to Abraham. "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there was a burnt offering on one of the mountains I show you."

The second word for God in the Hebrew Scriptures is that name of God gifted through the burning bush to Moses. As Moses tests God, as he tries to avoid going to confront Pharaoh, God proclaim to Moses the name, Yahweh (YHWH), "I am who I am." In our English Bibles, where we see 'LORD' written, it refers to the Hebrew name for the one true God: YHWH.

So, with that knowledge, when we look later in the story, after the long journey to the distant place, after Isaac has questioned his father as to the sacrifice; at the penultimate moment, when Abraham reached out his hand and takes the knife to kill his son,

"...the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

And he said "Here I am."

He said "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him..."

In this terrible moment, the moment of absolute betrayal and violence, it is YHWH, calling to Abraham. The other voice what began this quest, was a false god.

Perhaps the test of Abraham was a test concerning his discerning of God's voice?

Although this understanding of the story is different from our traditional thinking, it sits truer to the text, and more-true to the God who continues to be revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. This One True God, YHWH, does not delight in sacrifice: but in

the state of the human heart: the heart that does justice, loves kindness, and walks humbly with God. The one we see in Jesus of Nazareth.

So, if, in this reading the story of Abraham and Isaac is a story about how we listen for God; how do you listen for God?

Does the listening come to you in the form of the prayer of Psalm 13, "How long, O Lord? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul? Sorrow in my heart, all the day long?"

The Gospel reading reminds us to be a welcoming community. Today's reading mirrors when Jesus commissions the disciples on their first mission: taking with them nothing, relying on the welcome they receive in each place they visit. Our Gospel today calling us to be that very welcoming community of faith. The place, the people where seekers of the One True God might find God. In those we welcome, we might even meet Jesus, or the prophet or a righteous person; even 'the little ones' like you and me.

Considering how we listen and hear God is important, because it is a primary part of our ministry: the ministry of following Jesus Christ.

Our Basis of Union reminds us that "Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people's attention and awaken faith..." We are in the season of Pentecost. These stories remind us of God's call to us all both individually and as a community, in our words and actions to be ready to hear that Spirit of God alive in others. And to be brave enough to listen for that 'awaken-ed faith' in the lives of all. Because, it is in discipleship that Christ "calls people into

the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews them as his church. And in this, I hear the answer to the prayer of Psalm 13. This is listening, hearing, living Good News.



#### Hymn TIS 123 Be still, my soul

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;  
leave to your God to order and provide;  
in every change he faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend  
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: your God will undertake  
to guide the future as he has the past.  
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake,  
all now mysterious shall be clear at last.  
Be still, my soul: the tempests still obey  
his voice, who ruled them once on Galilee.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart  
and all is darkened in the vale of tears,  
then you shall better know his love, his heart,  
who comes to soothe your sorrow, calm your fears.  
Be still, my soul: for Jesus can restore  
the trust and hope that strengthened you before.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on  
when we shall be for ever with the Lord,  
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,  
sorrow forgotten, love's pure joy restored.

Be still, my soul: when change and tears  
are past,  
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

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Katharina von Schlegel 1697, tr. Jane Laurie Borthwick 1813-97  
alt. .KFINLANDIA

### Offering

What other response is there to life freely  
given, and the bountiful treatment of God  
to us?!

Let's give freely and generously and pray  
God's blessing on all of our offerings.  
Each of our offerings are cups of water"  
that we offer because that which we share  
with others, we share with you.  
We pray for the "little ones" who need us  
to share. Amen

### Prayers of the people: Psalm 13

*Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies  
To the leader. A Psalm of David.*

**How long, O Lord? Will you forget me  
forever?**

**How long will you hide your face from  
me?**

*God of presence  
we hold before you  
those who have lost your face,  
those who have been so hurt and damaged  
by themselves, by others and by the church  
that they have retreated to a place of  
isolation  
to keep themselves safe.*

*We join our voices in lament:  
**How long, O Lord, how long?***

**How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?**

*For those whose pain is overwhelming  
whose days stretch out from sunrise to  
sunset  
in sadness and in grief.*

*We join our voices in lament:  
**How long, O Lord, how long?***

**How long shall my enemy be exalted over  
me?**

*For those who bear the brunt of oppression  
and violence  
who wear the marks of warfare on their  
bodies  
and carry the memories in their minds  
passing it on through generations,  
who live in the paralysis of persistent fear,  
longing for hope and healing.*

*We join our voices in lament:*

**How long, O Lord, how long?**

**Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!**

**Give light to my eyes,  
or I will sleep the sleep of death,  
and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";  
my foes will rejoice because  
I am shaken.**

*Hear us, God of the lost  
come with your comfort and compassion  
come with your light that denies the  
darkness  
come with your justice and reconciliation*

**But I trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord,  
because he has dealt bountifully with  
me.**

**And we will hold to the rock of ages  
and we will anchor our hope in your story  
and especially in the struggle,  
while we have breath  
we will sing  
and we will bring  
a cup of cold-water welcome  
to the lost and to the least,  
and when it is offered at our door,  
we will gladly receive,**

**in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray  
saying:**

**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.**



**Hymn TiS 236 Jesus hands were kind hands**

Jesus' hands were kind hands  
doing good to all  
healing pain and sickness  
blessing children small  
washing tired feet  
and saving those who fall:  
Jesus' hands were kind hands  
doing good to all.

**Blessing**

We will sing of the freedom, freely given.  
We go to declare the steadfast love of God  
in which we trust.  
God has considered us and answered us.  
We are blessed and our hearts rejoice.

Go into life, refreshed and renewed by the  
amazing experience of being 'with' God's  
people.

You have been given a mission  
...you are sent!

Go into life to welcome all,  
especially the little ones.

Go into life, to love and to serve as the  
living, breathing body of Christ in your  
community.

**Hymn TiS 236 Jesus hands were kind hands**

Take my hands Lord Jesus  
let them work for you  
make them strong and gentle  
kind in all I do;  
let me watch you  
Jesus till I'm gentle too  
till my hands are kind hands  
quick to work for you.

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**MUSTARD SEED STORIES –**

We are inviting you to send us stories of  
where you see God at work in your life and  
in your location. Send us a few sentences.  
We'll include as many as we can in our  
worship resource at the end of July, (they  
may be edited!) and let us know if we can  
use your first name and where you live.

Email: [pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com](mailto:pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com) or  
phone Jennie on 0416 152051, or post to  
PO Box 126, Wonthaggi, 3995.

Look forward to hearing from you!