

Welcome

How wonderful that you have this resource before you!

Welcome;
you are worshipping with people across the Shearwater congregations, on the south-east coast of Victoria, and even wider, there are no borders here.

All are welcome.

Light Your Candle



The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Call to Worship

Put it all down:

the worries of the week just gone,
the thoughts for the days ahead.
the wonderings about today's news...

Here in this time and this space,
simply sit with the One who calls you,
open to listen and to learn,
to receive the good news
to share love and find pathways of peace.

Spend some time simply sitting
and praying this invocation:

*Come, Holy Spirit,
come and pour
your presence
upon me.*



Acknowledgement of Country

An acknowledgment from a local school on Mornington Peninsula (you could use gestures as you read/speak this):

*Here is the Land, Here is the Sky
Here are your friends, Here am I*

*We stand together hand in hand
To respect and acknowledge
The original owners of the land:
We're on Boon Wurrung country.
(name the land you are on)
We commit ourselves to truth-telling and
the seeking of reconciliation and healing.*



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Opening Hymn 409 O Breath of Life

O breath of life,
come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.

O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then in your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore: for this we plead.

O breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part.

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
equip your church to spread the light.

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739

A reading from the Hebrew scriptures:

Read:
Genesis
32:22-31



Prayer of thankfulness

God of abundance,
you have sung the world into being
through your unbounded imagination;
painting golden flowers on the wattles,
splashing sweet scent on the tea tree,
whipping up waves like horses,
riding rough on the wind-swept seas.

God of abundance,
you have sung the world into being
though your deep mystery of life;
teaching spiders to weave intricate webs,
freeing birds for flight, wombats to dig,
and letting whales dip and dance
along the paths of their migration.

God of abundance,
you have sung the world into being
through your all-embracing love;
setting awe and wonder in our eyes,
the capacity for kindness in our bodies
and a deep desire in our souls,
to connect with you and with each other.

In the quiet, we bask in the beauty
of the abundance of our lives
and we give you thanks.

Prayer of confession

God of wonder, mystery and love,
we confess that we wrestle
with so many things;

we long to speak words of truth
but find ourselves staying silent

we long to reach out with love and care
but find ourselves turning away

we long to walk with the outsiders
but find ourselves often in the company
of the powerful and the privileged

As we wrestle, forgive us

for failing to live
your love.
As we wrestle,
bleed our longing
and make it a
channel of peace.



Words of affirmation

Friends in Christ,
God meets us in our struggle,
with words of comfort and hope.
We are forgiven, we are loved,
and called to live lives of forgiveness
and love.
Thanks be to God, Amen.

The Readings

Read:

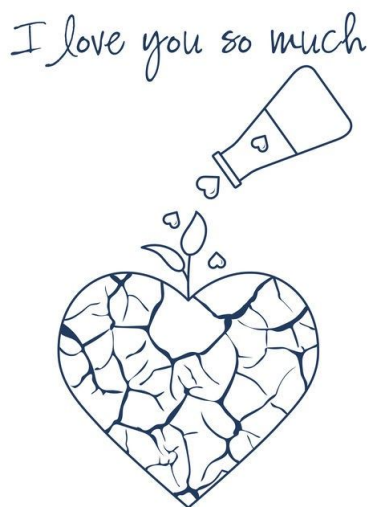
Romans 9: verses 1-5
Matthew 14: verses 13-21



Reflection - Rev Deacon Wendy Elson

God Is Calling His People (The Message)
Romans 9: 1-5 - At the same time, you need to know that I carry with me at all times a huge sorrow. It's an enormous pain deep within me, and I'm never free of it. I'm not exaggerating—Christ and the Holy Spirit are my witnesses. It's the Israelites . . . If there were any way I could be cursed by the Messiah so they could be blessed by him, I'd do it in a minute. They're my family. I grew up with them. They had everything going for them—family, glory, covenants, revelation, worship, promises, to say nothing of being the race that produced the Messiah, the Christ, who is God over everything, always. Oh, yes!

Right after the beautiful Romans reminder that nothing can separate us from God, we witness Paul's heartbreak and pain. Paul's "great sorrow" and "unceasing anguish" is exposed at what he feels is wasted privilege. He laments the fact that his readers enjoy the amazing blessing offered to them as children born into the welcome of God. These believers have the privilege of a rich heritage and an identity built on the knowledge of God's adoption and they have been offered everything that adoption into God's family can give: glory, the law, the worship and the promises. They have a deep sense of belonging and entitlement. Yet Paul's heart bleeds because he feels that they have not fully known and understood the mercy and grace of God who draws all people deeply into the heart of God.



We are also a very privileged people, as church, in this place at this time. I wonder if Paul would sorrow over us. Most of us within the church are gifted with so much. Do we think everyone else should think like us perhaps, and share the same faith views as we do? Should they be like us, think like us, be lucky enough to share our understandings and knowledge? So, I can't help but wonder what it is that Paul thinks his readers have missed, what

would cause them to have everything but miss the blessings of a walk of discipleship.

Paul sorrows because he sees that his readers haven't taken hold of the gift offered them or understood the nature of the Kingdom of God. They are given great privilege but they find it hard to accept the message, to share and to include others into their privilege. They enjoy the power of privilege, and a sense of entitlement, but not the importance of relationship and inclusion and the need to share it.

Let us look then at the gospel story. Where do you place yourself in this story? Are you one of the people sitting near the lake, hungering and thirsting and longing for what Jesus offers? Perhaps you are the one with the ability to share from your picnic? Are you a disciple being asked to do the seemingly impossible role? Are you a bird soaring over, just spectating? Perhaps you are Jesus whose heart is also breaking; he has just heard of the death of his much loved cousin John and has gone aside to sit with the heartbreak of this. And the people follow. Despite his own pain Jesus looks on them with compassion. He recognises their need and sees that they are given the nourishment needed (to the point of over-abundance).



This is evidence of God with us, Emmanuel, at the point of our need. This is Jesus who is anointed (as we are) to feed the hungry, give freedom to the captive and to include everyone at whatever point of need they have. Jesus

invited the disciples into this space of sharing in abundance. Even the little one who shared the picnic basket was blessed by sharing in this mercy and grace. This snapshot is one of the mustard seeds of what the Kingdom here and now can look like, everyone sharing what they have as a blessing for others.

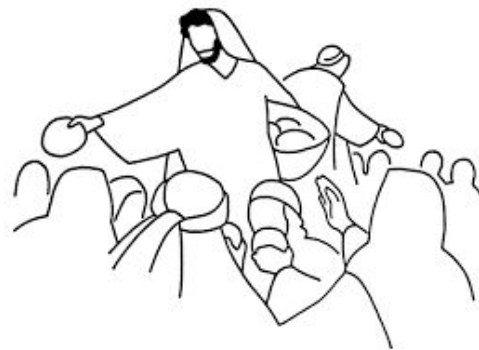
Paul's deep sadness for them comes from his own encounter with the Christ and the effect it has had on him. Have you encountered the Christ? What does this encounter prompt in you? For Paul it exposes an extraordinary tenderness, a vulnerability of heart that cries at the brokenness of relationships and the potential for grace and mercy.

We are a people of privilege. We live in a society which offers us many possibilities and opportunities. Not all of us share equally in the opportunities afforded to us, however. Many around us know extreme socio-economic hardship, or the devastating effects of racism, the loss of our freedom through incarceration or being detained, or the daily grind of disability, and so many other tough circumstances. Many around us go through life voiceless and invisible for a myriad of reasons. So, where is the grace and mercy which is at the heart of Christ's encounter with us? God's word is written on our hearts: we are indeed a privileged and chosen people.

There is a wisdom that teaches that God's word is written on our hearts because when our hearts break the Word is absorbed into us, internalised and perhaps soothing us as a balm, a salve. Paul appears to be in just such a place with his heart bleeding at the opportunities lost, the people staying hungry. Our hearts are sheltered and held

in God's heart. We are people of great privilege. It is simple. Go and feed them.

In our identity as the people who belong in Christ, don't miss out on the depth of this blessing, you are the flesh and blood body of Christ. In grace and mercy, Jesus still calls you..... go feed them.



Prayers of the People

In today's gospel reading, Jesus withdraws from the crowd. He has just heard the terrible news of the murder of his cousin, John the Baptist.

We withdraw to pray, with the burdens of our week, our families and our world.

TiS 741: O Lord hear my prayer

O Lord hear my prayer

O Lord hear my prayer:

When I call answer me.

O Lord hear my prayer

O Lord hear my prayer:

Come and listen to me

Jacques Berthier 1934-94 Taize Community 1991Used with Permission CCLI 241 739

Loving God, we open ourselves in prayer
To bring the cry of our hearts
To You, the Source of our very being.
As Jacob wrestled through the night
May we too pray with such determination
and grace.

For those who have been wounded
in battles of the heart
For those wounded in battles of love

For those wounded in war
May the nothing we have but loaves and fishes bring hope and healing

We pray for those who wrestle in the dark with God.

We pray that we may always seek to learn as a disciple does

We pray for our Uniting Church Ministerial candidates, that they may learn and grow

May the nothing we have but loaves and fishes bring hope and healing

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For those who have nothing
For those who with much, feel the nothing-ness of life
For those who have nothing left in the fight

May the nothing we have but loaves and fishes bring hope and healing

We pray for the small voice with loaves and fish

We pray that little we share can make a huge difference

We pray that we might find the resources to meet the needs of the world

May the nothing we have but loaves and fishes bring hope and healing

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When the disciples had travelled with Jesus for some time, they finally asked "How do we pray?"...

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

Bless what we have and what we offer: our money, our time, our prayer. Use these things to bring about hope and healing in your world, through Jesus' name.
Amen



Notices

Is it time to write a letter to the local paper? You could share your experience of the blessing of belonging to a church community at a time like this, or share something of where you have been surprised by kindness, or struck by awesome beauty. We need to share and read stories like this - like overflowing baskets of good news.

Did you know that the online service from St. John's Cowes each week is based on this resource? You can watch it online, just follow the link on their website: <http://cowes.unitingchurch.org.au/>

Hymn:

TIS 537 Let us talents & tongues employ

Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy;
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.
*Jesus lives again,
earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around:
loaves abound!*

Christ is able to make us one,
at the table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.
*Jesus lives again,
earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around:
loaves abound!*

Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God-Immanuel everywhere.
*Jesus lives again,
earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around:
loaves abound!*

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Herman Kaan. 1929. Words by permission Stainer
& Bell, London.



Blessing

**God who was and is and shall be,
Three in one, One in three,**
You call us in and you send us out
to multiply your goodness
in whatever way we can.

Bless us, as each day breaks
and fresh hope dawns.

Bless us, as we offer what we have
to feed a hungry world.

Bless us, as we take our rest
sure of your presence
and bathed in your love.

And all the people say: **Amen!**

Here's a colouring pic for you
- you might want to colour it in
and cut it out and put it on your fridge
to remind you of God's abundant love
for you and for all,
now and always.

