

**Make yourself welcome - Light Your Candle**



**Christ,  
the Light of the World**

*Take a moment to slow  
down and watch the flame  
awhile*

**Acknowledgement of Country**



*Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress*

*Look out your window*

*What of nature and all creation can you see?  
Pause now for a whole minute and notice the  
birds, the breeze, the light...*

We gather on the lands of the First peoples of this Nation, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging as an act of healing and reconciliation in this Nation.

**Call to Worship**

**Let's breathe in**

the Spirit of God's love and presence:

**Let's breath out**

the rush of the morning: the week's  
tension.

*..and we pray*

We feel the sigh of our heart  
'Too deep for words',  
and trust again in the Spirit of God  
Who intercedes the silences  
of our whole being.

Loving God,  
we praise you for the opportunity to  
gather in worship.

**Open our hearts**

as we bring ourselves in humble desire to  
follow you and live your wisdom.

**Open our eyes**

to see how our lives impact others and all  
creation.

**Open our ears**

and help us to hear the voices of those  
who have been silenced for too long.

**Open our minds**

to understand the impact of the world on  
our discipleship.

Show us your glory,

and guide the thoughts of our hearts and  
our reflections, as we worship, we pray.

**Hymn TIS 569**

**Guide me, O thou great Redeemer**

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty;  
hold me with thy powerful hand:  
*bread of heaven,  
bread of heaven,  
feed me now and evermore,  
feed me now and evermore.*

Open now the crystal fountain  
whence the living waters flow:  
let the fiery, cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through:  
*strong deliverer,  
strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield,  
be thou still my strength and shield.*

When I tread the verge of Jordan  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
*songs of praises,  
songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.*

*Used with Permission William Williams 1717-91  
CCLI 241 739*

**Psalm 119: 129 – 136**

Your decrees are wonderful;

**therefore my soul keeps them.**

The unfolding of your words gives light;

**it imparts understanding to the simple.**

With open mouth I pant,

**because I long for your commandments.**

Turn to me and be gracious to me,

**as is your custom toward those who love your name.**

Keep my steps steady according to your promise,

**and never let iniquity have dominion over me.**

Redeem me from human oppression,

**that I may keep your precepts.**

Make your face shine upon your servant,

**and teach me your statutes.**

My eyes shed streams of tears

**because your law is not kept.**

#### Prayer of confession

Holy Creator, we have not always been aware of our privilege and power.

*(silence)*

**We are a people of inequity and injustice.**

We have not always understood the impact of silencing on others.

*(silence)*

**We are a people who have known and taken for granted ways and laws that disempower and dismiss.**

We have not always been careful of those who have less opportunity in our world.

*(silence)*

**We are a people with a voice, yet we have not always spoken the truth.**

Gracious Creator, we know that we have hurt our own lives by the actions and inactions we have justified through our privilege.

*(silence)*

**We have not understood the value of the diversity with which we have been created.**

Forgive us and teach us to notice the invisible, to value the commodified, and to hear the voices of the silenced. *(silence)*

**Forgive us and teach us to move out of the way and make room in our lives for the "other."**

**Show us how to live your Grace, we pray.  
Amen.**

#### Words of affirmation

The greatest assurance we have is our inherent diversity.

Our call is to honour, celebrate, enhance, and listen to the glory of all of who we are. The great good news is that we are given a new beginning every day.

And we are asked, whenever we are awakened, by the sun, or by new awareness,

to strive again to love more fully and include more completely.

God has done this for us. Let us praise God by doing so for one another.

#### The Readings

**Romans 8:26–39**

**Matthew 13:31–33,44–52**

For these word of faith and Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God**



**Reflection - Mustard Seed stories**  
**Rev Jennie Gordon**

A couple of weeks ago we asked you to send in some Mustard Seed stories: stories about how one small word or action made a big difference to your life or faith, stories about how God works through the smallest of seeds to grow great things. And you did! - Thank you.

Here they are:

Have you ever tried to hold a mustard seed in your hand? To demonstrate just how small they are, I put one single seed in a locket and took it to the church. We handed the locket around for each person to see. Several weeks later I was explaining to one of the more mature ladies how to find a steampunk locket to make her own. The smallest image can trigger a deeper conversation... Cathie

When I was a 16 year old Sunday School teacher I overheard the superintendent say to another teacher "How do I get these kids to understand that Jesus is someone who walks and talks with me daily?" This piqued my curiosity and ultimately led to my becoming a Christian, rather than just someone who had an intellectual belief system... Helen

Various reasons encourage us to take the time to recognise and listen to God many times during the day. Recently I recalled a conversation, from a time in the past, when I thought that I was apologising for not being a better friend over the years, and now ask myself if I was actually apologising to God through that person, for not being the person he wanted me to be. Do we actually see God through many people? When we actually take the time, even in meditation, to recognise God's love for all, to share that love with those around us, not only to those in our Church, but in what we are doing in the community... Bev

Pre Covid - I just "happened" to sit with a lady after church at morning tea who had just had a knee operation and asked who her surgeon was and decided to follow up and this surgeon has changed my life - giving me back my ability to walk (previous surgeon was also contacted but only interested in my ability to pay!) - a chance conversation - changed the course of my future ... D

Doug ...

(the first verse and chorus of a song he wrote):

It just takes a touch,  
 you can do just as much  
 By tenderly reaching right out;  
 It just takes a look – a glance that you took  
 Can gently remove someone's doubt.

*Stretch out your hand!  
 A faith you will need  
 No bigger than a mustard seed,  
 To make a change  
 that leaves the world stirred –  
 A look, a touch, a word.*

Last week, I received in the mail a beautiful, hand-made card. On its cover was a small gold cross and the words 'This Too Shall Pass'. It was made of embossed white cardboard and crafted with great skill and care. Inside was my name and a prayer, printed over the delicate image of a green leaf. Margaret wrote the message on behalf of the Elders and pastoral carers of our congregation.

What made it even more special, I was told that she had made it while she was in hospital. I feel very touched that in a time of her own need, she created such a thoughtful and generous gift. I have put the card next to the candle that I light during our on-line Sunday Service. Heartfelt thanks to you Margaret, for revealing God at work in this way... Laura



In the reading from Matthew's gospel this week, we receive a whole barrage of images, like slides flicking on and off the screen, about what the Kingdom of Heaven might be like.

Jesus sits with the disciples and he tells them these one-sentence stories, parables - leaving so much untold. Story after story in quick succession - a mustard seed growing to accommodate birds, yeast in bread, treasure in a field, a pearl of great price, a net full of fish, (sorted and the bad bits thrown away, just like the angels will do at the end of time...) - then he says to them, "Do you get all that?"



I can see them looking around, at the ground, avoiding his gaze and mumbling a hesitant, 'yes,' maybe because that's what they think he wants to hear, not because they really do understand. Do you? Do I?

Then Jesus tells them about bringing out the new with the old: *13:52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."*

Reading into this last verse we can glimpse something of an invitation where both the old and the new are equally valued. Bringing the treasure out of the ancient texts as they point to the coming of the

Messiah. Then living it, in the light of the most surprising and unexpected treasure of all - the incarnation of God-with-us in Jesus, and the resurrection; life out of death.

We are in the season of Pentecost. The promise of the Spirit is made real and she is constantly doing new things and opening the kingdom of heaven to all, here and now amongst us.

When we start with the texts, then move to our Mustard Seed stories, we are holding the ancient stories in one hand, and the stories of the ongoing work of the Spirit, in the other. We are open to see the miracle of God's presence with us through all the ages and stages of life, even from the smallest of beginnings. Even from our own tiny attempts at faithfulness and understanding.

There's been a conversation happening across the world through social media called the Kindness Pandemic. Since the rise of COVID-19 there has been a global sharing of stories of kindness, goodness and compassion. They are mustard seed stories and I think that they are much more satisfying than what we might be fed from the nightly news. They are stories of hope, humanity and the kingdom of God amongst us. Treasure in a field.

So keep drawing from the storehouse of our sacred stories and keep sowing seeds of kindness and compassion in a world that needs hope and healing, maybe now more than ever before.

*From out of the old, in conversation with the new, our faith is formed.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Will Willimon's Lectionary Sermon Resource. Year A Part 2, p111 Abingdon Press, 2019

### Prayers of the people

Groaning Spirit you cherish us.

We are weak and vulnerable and you lift us up. You show us your Kingdom and we see the truth, that nothing can keep us from you. Even when we feel distant and it feels as though our world is hurtling out of control you hold us in your love and remind us that we are yours. For your Spirit alive in us, we give you thanks.

***Panting, sighing Spirit. Please pray for us.***

We pray for our world. Sometimes we shake our heads in confusion. Where is the justice? The creation groans as it longs for its coming wholeness in you. But in the meantime, we look around and know that we are guilty of exploiting our resources and spoiling our natural world. Our footprints are large. Please help us to engage in better practices that care for the environment. For your Spirit alive in our world, we give you thanks.

***Panting, sighing Spirit. Please pray for us.***

We pray for our leaders. We only have to listen to the news to know that the choices they make are tough. Sometimes we think those choices are so unjust. Help us to stand together in leadership for systems which bring justice for all and care for the vulnerable. Help us to model our societies on your Kingdom. Help us to stand with you in reversing the values and bringing honour and equity to the 'little ones'. Help our communities to be conformed to your kingdom. Remind us that economies are built on care and compassion for all, not on greed and profit. For your Spirit active in our communities, we give you thanks.

***Panting, sighing Spirit. Please pray for us.***

When there is trouble, remind us that we can never be separated from you. Distress, or

harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword, nothing will cause you to move from us. We are also not separate from one another. Help us to remember this truth and to seek reconciliation and connection with each other, and with our world. For your Spirit alive in others we give you thanks.

***Panting, sighing Spirit. Please pray for us.***

Groaning Spirit, pray for us. Bring us into closer union with you as we listen for the rhythms of life in you, and as we seek to hold each other in deep relationship, in the intimacy of your love. When we have no words at all, Spirit of God, pray for us and remind us that all is well, all manner of things are well, for you are at work in us and you are at work in our world. May your kingdom come, may your kingdom come.



We bring all prayer, together in

### 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.

### Passing the peace

Who is on your heart, in worship today?  
Make sure you get in touch with them this week, and share the Peace of Christ.

### Offering

What gift or talent is God asking you to offer today? Where can it be offered?  
Thank God for your abilities and capabilities.



### Notices

Did you know that there are great resources and news updates on the Synod website? <https://victas.uca.org.au> and on the Presbytery of Gippsland website: <https://gippsland.unitingchurch.org.au/>



### Hymn: TiS 531

#### Sent forth by God's blessing

Sent forth by God's blessing  
our true faith confessing  
the people of God  
from his table take leave.  
The supper is ended:  
may now be extended  
the fruits of his service in all who believe.  
The seed of his teaching  
our hungry souls reaching  
shall blossom in action for all humankind.  
His grace shall incite us  
his love shall unite us  
to work for his kingdom  
his purpose to find.

With praise and thanksgiving  
to God ever-living  
the tasks of our everyday life we will face  
our faith ever sharing  
in love ever caring  
embracing as neighbours  
all those of each race.  
One feast that has fed us  
one light that has led us  
unite us as one in his life that we share.

Then may all the living  
with praise and thanksgiving  
give honour to Christ  
and his name that we bear.

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### Blessing

Hear these words from Paul  
*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

You are loved by an infinitely gracious and merciful God. Respond to the love of God by taking the time to see where God is in all things. May our worship lead us ever deeper into God's love, which lead us out into lives that embrace God's ways. Go in peace.

