

Welcome

In our worship today we will consider words of encouragement, consolation from love, compassion, sympathy and sharing in the Spirit.

Our parable reminds us of God's generosity in Kingdom Life.

Light Your Candle



As you light your table candle, hold somebody you know in need of encouragement, consolation from love, compassion or sympathy, in prayer:

Jesus the Christ the Light of the World

Acknowledgement of Country

Jesus Christ, the Light of the World was in this place long before the colonisation of the country:

We pay our respects to the First Peoples who, as custodians of the lands, cared for them since time immemorial: we honour their Elders past and present: and welcome those emerging, to lead our nation to healing and wholeness.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Call to Worship

If there is any encouragement in Christ:

Let the mind of Christ dwell in you.

If there is consolation from love:

Let the mind of Christ dwell in you.

If there is compassion and sympathy:

Let the mind of Christ dwell in you.

God, who is at work in each one
Dwell with us in this time to worship
Enable us to work out our salvation
In the Holy space of Worship

Hymn: Together in Song:

609 May the Mind of Christ my Saviour

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in everything,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self denying,
this is victory.

May I run the race before me
strong and brave to face the foe
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.

*Used with Permission CCLI 241 2739 Katie Barclay
Wilkinson 1859-1928 ST LEONARDS*

Opening Prayer

Life giving God

In this time of worship

We pause the rhythm of daily life
To dwell with you in Word, Prayer, Song
and meditation.

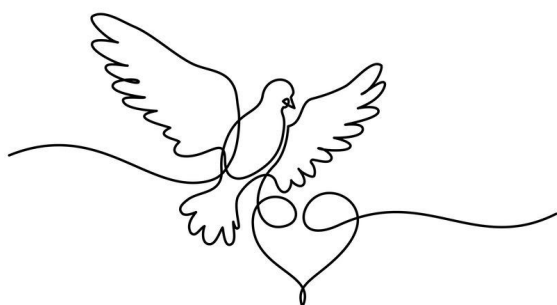
As we read, help us to Listen to the
wisdom of your Spirit

As we pray, may we hear how we enter
into your kingdom life here and now.
As we Sing, let the melody remain with us
and bring comfort to living the faith.

As we become still in meditation
We become aware of where we have
been, what we have done, or not done:
Self-full: Sin full:
less than our whole being:

Prayer of confession

May we pause in prayer and
contemplation and say to God the things
that need saying;
<pause in prayer>
work out salvation with fear & trembling
for God is at work in you
enabling Grace to live in you.
Sin is Forgiven: **Thanks be to God**

**Sharing a Psalm: Psalm 78: 1-4, 12-16**

Hear my teaching, O my people;
**incline your ears
to the words of my mouth.**

I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will pour forth mysteries from of old,

Such as we have heard and known,
which our forebears have told us.

We will not hide from their children,
but will recount to generations to come,
**the praises of the Lord and his power and
the wonderful works he has done.**

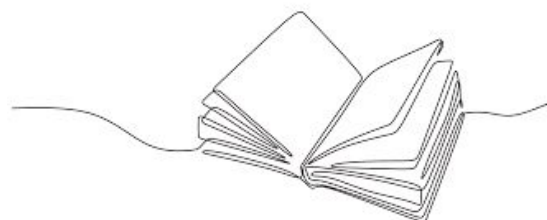
For he did marvellous things
in the sight of their forebears,
in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

He divided the sea
and let them pass through;
he made the waters stand still in a heap.

He led them with a cloud by day and
all the night through with a blaze of fire.

He split the hard rocks in the wilderness
**and gave them drink
as from the great deep.**

He brought streams out of the rock
and made water gush out like rivers.

The Readings

Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21: 23-32

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

Reflection: Rev Jennie Gordon

“Who said you could do that?” What comes to mind when you read or hear that question? Maybe you can hear the voice of one of your parents, or a particular teacher? I do hope that didn’t bring a traumatic event back to the surface for you – if it did, please phone a friend. These are challenging words because they imply that we may have transgressed someone’s power or authority and done something that we shouldn’t have done.

We were a small youth group in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne in the late ‘70’s. The church had just allowed us to use the back-stage area as Our Room so we had a working-bee one Saturday morning. Getting into the room was easy, the key was hanging near the side door of

the pharmacist's house across the road. One of our group worked as a window dresser and he had access to all sorts of good things. It took us most of the day, but we did it. Amongst other designs, we painted a huge rainbow across one wall, and it looked so amazing we all signed our names to it. Sunday came, and instead of wonder and applause we were greeted with a stern, you guessed it, *"Who said you could do that?"* Not from the minister, mind you, I think Dad was quietly pleased with what we'd done.



"Who said you could do that?" Or direct from the text, *"By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"* These questions speak into a particular understanding of authority and power. In today's reading from Matthew's gospel, Jesus has just cleaned out the temple, after entering the city on a donkey to the acclaim of the crowds. The tension is building in the city of Jerusalem and this prophet is disturbing the peace. The crowds seem to have a corporate knowing, preempted and primed by John and realised in Jesus. The people who need to believe that they are in control and have power over the crowds are feeling threatened. The chief priests and elders approach Jesus with these

questions as he teaches in the temple. They carry with them the full weight of the religious laws and many deeply held expectations about righteousness and order.

Jesus responds with a question about the baptism of John that they can't answer without compromising themselves or stirring up the fearful crowds. So, he tells them a story with an obvious conclusion, then a sting in the tail. The writer of the gospel of Matthew wants us to remember that Jesus' ministry was built on John's ministry and that God was working through John to prepare the way for Jesus. Jesus portrays the chief priests and scribes as the elder son, the ones who want to keep on being seen to be following God's will, but have refused John's offer of baptism, even after they see the transformation in people's lives. He tells them that two of the most despised and immoral professions, tax collectors and prostitutes, are ahead of them in the line to get into the kingdom of God, because even though like the younger son, they were seen to be flouting God's will, they accepted baptism by John and were changed.

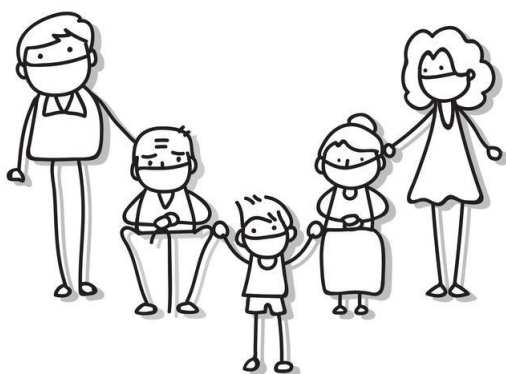
Jesus meets the approach about power and authority with a lesson in humility and turns the tables on their expectations about righteousness and order. Maybe the chief priests and elders only understood the idea of 'power over', that authority is about control over others. Jesus turns this idea upside down by lifting up the most powerless of people, the most rejected and puts them first, offering the concept of 'power with', alongside each other, especially the most vulnerable.

At the end of the gospel of Matthew, in chapter 28, Jesus will say to the gathered

crowd, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." It's a claim from the resurrected Jesus that no one listening will dispute. They will hear this claim as an ultimate truth, that Jesus is filled with the unimaginably creative power behind and beyond all that is. That this authority is greater than any structure, ruler or righteous order and that this power has allowed him to be with us, alongside us, breaking the bounds of death to bring us into life. With this authority he tells the disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

These COVID times have turned the tables on us, that's for sure. Have you thought how they might have upset our previously comfortable notions of righteousness and order? How about our ready compliance with wearing face masks, social distancing and stopping at borders? How about continuing to grow our faith and care for each other even when we can't meet?

Fight Covid-19



Are there rules that we've taken for granted about the church, worship,

membership, faith and making disciples that have been challenged and might need to be changed? Through the text this week we are reminded that Jesus has the power and authority to change us, to call us into new understandings, to help us see a way of living that breaks open our complacency, habits and fear and invites us to live differently.

The encouragement then, from Paul's letter to the Philippians to 'be of one mind' is more than a fanciful, idealistic, warm and fuzzy group hug where everything stays the same. It reaches deeply into our understanding of who we are together as people with equal power and responsibility towards each other. We are being invited to listen to the questions of our time and ultimately, we are called to trust the one whom even the wind and sea obey.

May it be so, Amen.

Prayers of the people

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
Philippians 2:1-2

We humble ourselves and ask your blessing on our people, on our world and on ourselves.

If we are of the same mind as Christ Jesus we will look always through the eyes of compassion. If we are of the same mind as one another, we will know one another's pain and sorrow. If we are to look not to self interest but to each other's interests first, we know there is much to pray for.

We pray for all who know injustice and unfairness through the systems which are meant to include and care for them. People feel like just a number sometimes God. This hurts us because it is not how your Kingdom operates.

We confess Christ, the one who comes.

We pray for those who are in prison. We can't imagine the struggles for them and for their families. Or perhaps we can.

We pray for those who are held and have lost their freedom simply for looking for a place to call home. We pray for our refugees, those who settle here and those who can find no home.

We pray for those in bondage through fear, through addiction, through poverty. Those who find their choices limited by homelessness and hunger.

We confess Christ, the one who comes.

We pray for those experiencing loneliness and sorrow. For those grieving loss, for those adjusting to life which is so different from their hopes and dreams.

We confess Christ, the one who comes.

We pray for our children. We want all children to thrive and flourish, but we recognise that doing so is difficult for many of them. We feel so helpless sometimes in such a big issue. And so we pray.

We confess Christ, the one who comes.

We pray for those who work to make a difference. We pray for our teachers, our medics, our carers and others such as social and community workers, our police. We pray for all those who stand up and believe that the world can be a better place. And that they can make it so.

We confess Christ, the one who comes.

Sometimes, the way this Christ comes is through us. Make us ready and

responsive. Help us be your hands and feet to a hurting world. Give us peace and hope and help us to share it abundantly. In fact, to BE your peace and light and hope here in this space.

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.

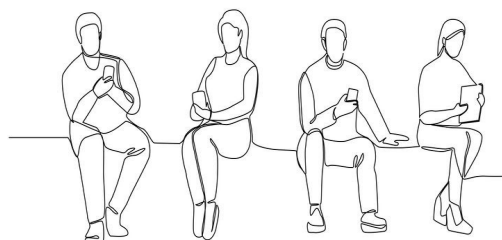
Give us today our daily bread.

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



Let the peace in your heart manifest in letters of encouragement, phone calls of love, and gestures of compassion or sympathy:

May the Peace of God rest with you.

Offering

When we let go and share
When we share, we let go.

The gifts of life, the resources from living
and the very being our ourselves, we offer
in Worship, for the Work of the Good
News in this place and beyond.

In Christ we pray: Amen

Notices

If you'd like to join a shearwater worship "On-Line" you can access worship from St

John's Uniting Church, Cowes here:

<http://cowes.unitingchurch.org.au/index.php>

The Gippsland Presbytery also have worship and prayer resources here:

<https://gippsland.unitingchurch.org.au>

Hymn: 411 Filled with the Spirit's Power

Filled with the Spirit's power,

with one accord

the infant church confessed

its risen Lord:

O Holy Spirit, in the church today

no less your power

of fellowship display.

Now with the mind of Christ

set us on fire,

that unity may be our great desire:

give joy and peace;

give faith to hear your call,

and readiness in each

to work for all.

Widen our love,

good Spirit, to embrace

in your strong care

all those of every race:

like wind and fire with life

among us move

till we are known as Christ's,

and Christians prove.

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WOODLANDS

Blessing

*May the Mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me,*

*May the Word of God dwell richly
in my heart*

May the Peace of God rule my life

May the Love of Jesus fill me

God, who is at work in each one

Dwell with us as we carry on

Enabling us to work out our salvation.

May I run the race before me

In the encouragement, consolation and
compassion of Christ,

this day, and every day: Amen.

