

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Epiphany 5C

February 6, 2022



The Great Catch (Luke 5: 6-7)

Hermano Leon Graphic

WORSHIP AT HOME

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.

Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.

Prayer

Jesus, friend and companion,
We are tired and weary and yet, hear your call to travel again into the deep waters.
In the dark times, our souls seek your Light.
When troubled with decisions
On how to be your people during this season,
We seek your comforting yoke to bear the burden.
As we are buffeted off course, we seek your direction,
Bringing us to the still waters of peace.
In our care for our neighbour,
We seek your anchoring love, which restores our soul.
Hold us. Warm us. Guide us.
For in you, we find a Way.
With you, we have hope.
Let your warming love be as the morning sun,
Bringing light across the waters
As new beginnings unfold.

Rev Anne Hewitt, 02/02/2022.

Acknowledgement of Country

From before recorded time, the First Peoples, including the Bunurong people, cared for this Land, Australia. We praise the Creator for the beauty of this Land and honour those who have offered themselves in tending it.

We acknowledge the Elders and communities who have told the sacred stories and nurtured faithfulness to the Creator.

We ask God's blessing on those who continue to work for healing and justice in this Land and Her Communities.

Call to Worship

By God's grace, we are who we are:

People who are called

But afraid to follow.

By God's grace we are who we are:

People who are called

And gifted with courage.

By God's grace, we are who we are:

People who are called

And given good news to share.

Hymn TIS 454 O Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness
bring, and adore him: the Lord is his name.

Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for you,
comfort your sorrows, and answer your prayerfulness,
guiding your steps in the way best for you.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth you would reckon to own:
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.

These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear,
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness
bring, and adore him: the Lord is his name.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell
1811-75 *alt.*

https://youtu.be/ytBTMroK__I

Prayers of Gathering in God's Presence

Holy God,
by your grace:
you touch our fears
with the fire of your compassion;
you touch our brokenness
with the fire of your forgiveness;
you touch our hearts
with the fire of your love.

Jesus Christ,
by your grace:
you step into our lives
and an unpredictable journey begins;
you challenge us to new thinking,
with overflowing results;
you so confront our doubts
that we can cast out our fears.

Holy Spirit,
by your grace:
you give us eyes
to see the emptiness of our world;
you give us ears
to hear the good news;
you give us words
to bring hope to all people and actions that change lives.

God in Community, Holy in One,
by your grace
we are who we are:
your children, your people, your church

Help us to be faithful to what you have called us to. Amen

Call to Reconciliation

Do not be afraid! Whatever you fear, God is ready to take away from you; whatever you have said, God is ready to speak mercy to you; whatever you have done, God is ready to forgive you.

Prayer of Confession

God enthroned in heaven: most of us would not consider ourselves to be holy. We sometimes think of others as inconveniences or intrusions, not as sisters or brothers. **We look at others with pride or indifference, not through the eyes of compassion. We are so busy listening to ourselves, we cannot hear the anguish and loneliness of our neighbours.**

Forgive us, God enthroned in our hearts. You have set us apart so we might be a partner with hurting people. We belong to your Kingdom so we might bring others in to live alongside us. **We would risk following Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who first risked calling us as disciples.**

Silence is observed.

Assurance of Pardon

The Holy One become wholly human so we might know love. The One enthroned on high endured the Cross so we might have life. Believe this good news: we are forgiven!

By God's grace, we are who we are: forgiven and restored people. Thanks be to God. Amen

(Rev Thom Shuman)

Service of the Word

Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet;
A light to our path

Scripture

Old Testament Isaiah. 6:1-13

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:
'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;

the whole earth is full of his glory.’

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’ And he said, ‘Go and say to this people:

“Keep listening, but do not comprehend;
keep looking, but do not understand.”

Make the mind of this people dull,
and stop their ears,
and shut their eyes,
so that they may not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and comprehend with their minds,
and turn and be healed.’

Then I said, ‘How long, O Lord?’ And he said:

‘Until cities lie waste
without inhabitant,
and houses without people,
and the land is utterly desolate;
until the Lord sends everyone far away,
and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land.

Even if a tenth part remains in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak
whose stump remains standing
when it is felled.’

The holy seed is its stump.

Epistle 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of

the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Jesus Calls the First Disciples Luke 5 : 1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection

Father of all people, creation and time,
Free us from all that distracts and preoccupies us this day,
Drop your still dew of quietness and peace,
Penetrate our jaded minds and lives,
Speak your word of grace to us now,
That we may be bearers of your grace to others.
Amen



All of us have experienced circumstances and moments in our lives when we face uncertainties or a change in the pattern of our lives, that raises anxiety, fear and a degree of challenge or adjustment for us. It may be choosing educational career preferences beyond schooling, or committing to a work choice, beginning a relationship with someone we met, getting married, starting a family, supporting a friend or member of a family through a crisis; or dealing with the unforeseen arrival of a health issue that is not easily resolvable, given treatment or life consequences to name a few. Even dealing with the ever-changing threats and challenges of dealing with a global pandemic or a church in the midst of significant change and the unknown path beyond the demolition of buildings. I love the way the heartfelt book, The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse, characterises this. The boy says, “what is that over there? It’s the wild, said the mole. Don’t fear it. Imagine how we would be if we were less afraid. Everyone is a bit scared, said the horse. But we are less scared together.”

Our gospel story today explores from one perspective what it means to hear Jesus’ call to venture into ‘the deep’ when we go beyond the known limits of knowledge and energy to explore areas of kingdom potential. The text invites us to go back to where we all began our journey of faith. For some of us it may have been a momentary turning point as it seemingly was for Peter and the first disciples in Luke’s account, for others of us it may have been a longer journey to realisation and conviction. It doesn’t really matter, it begs us to remember when did you first become aware of your acceptance of faith, hear Jesus words to you and how did they change the focus and direction of your life and beliefs?

Our story begins alongside a lake, the famous sheet of water known by three names, Lake Gennesaret, which means literally in Hebrew, “garden of riches”, a reference to the abundant fertility, both within and around its shores. The other two well-known names it was known by are the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberius. It was about 21 km x 13 km, it supported nine townships around its shore, with an estimated population of about 15,000 people living in each

of them. So Jesus goes Lakeside with the following crowd, much like John Wesley's ministry went to the fields, streets, hills and dales to share the good news where people lived.

Tom Wright tells us that along the shoreline there is a series of steep inlets, within a zigzagging pattern, that form a series of natural amphitheatres, so that a person on a boat a little way from shore and sitting down, can be clearly heard. Matthew and Mark's gospels convey the calling of the disciples as a very immediate meeting with Jesus. Luke's Gospel reading between the lines, suggests otherwise. Why would Jesus ask Simon and his friends and co-workers to take him out on the boat, if he didn't already know them? Jesus may well have bought fish off them at the marketplace and enjoyed some banter with them. After all fishermen lived a rough, hard life, filled with challenges, frustrations and like this account fruitless labour. Catching fish is never a certainty, as those of us who have tried it know. Harsh expletives and the exhaustion of fishing during the night wouldn't make Peter, a natural leader, more amenable to taking the boat out again. In fact I suspect that Peter's reply to Jesus, asking him to then go out to deep water, after a teaching session, was a highly edited version of what he would've said to Jesus, who wasn't a fisherman!

Whatever the reality think for a moment perhaps as Peter did. Jesus suddenly appears and ask you to do something you do in your line of work all the time and his request seems pointless or naïve at best. You might be resentful, or mutter under your breath and procrastinate, but then Peter tired and over things agrees to do it. Everything happens against the grain, it falls into place, on a scale you never experienced! Just remember too, a catch fish represented stability and care, for it provided food for the day, food to sell at the market place, to provide food and resources for other days as well; in a part of the world where food insecurity and a long winter to come were an established reality. For Peter and the others it was an abundance, "that signalled a world beyond the fishermen and their needs, a community."

But the wonder of Jesus presence and words doesn't stop there. Peter's reaction to realising/recognising Jesus divine nature and power is instant, "Go away, leave me Lord! I am a sinner." This recognition of God's otherness, difference and holy otherness (holiness) result in him experiencing an awareness of our own earthiness and unworthiness at times. Saint Augustine once confessed, "Lord what I am for you terrifies me, what I am with you consoles me. For you I am a priest, with you I am a Christian." Both Isaiah and Paul experienced a similar sense of unworthiness. "Woe to me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among people of unclean lips: yet my eyes have seen the king the Lord of Hosts!" says Isaiah. Shortly after he is cleansed by the live coal and offers to go for God, on what the later verses of the passage suggest is a fruitless mission. Paul in the passage today says, "For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Yet when Jesus met Paul on the road to Damascus life changed dramatically for him.

A country priest once said, "To Isaiah's dread, Paul's deep regrets and painful memories, Peter's fears and to our own deeply personal insecurities today, God whispers to us, what he said to Peter and the others, 'Don't be afraid.' Even as the psalmist in today's set reading, Psalm 138, prays in the last verse, 'Do not forget (forsake) the work of your hands (read to me)."

Jesus promises to lead the disciples into working with people, something that is totally out of their line of work. The fishing metaphor breaks down at this point for those of us who live now.

We don't see our work for Jesus is trying to catch people unawares, to lure them to faith or appeal to them by trying to make our faith appealing or easy. Knowing Jesus will give meaning to our call, not just to the first disciples but to the weary ones in February 2022. Sharing the good news says Lutheran Pastor Kendra Mohn, "isn't coercive, it is personal, relational work, or 'deep water work', where healing and abundance follow and mark the encounters of the disciples with Jesus and others." Jesus doesn't want to leave any others out, as the good news will go to all nations. As Tom Wright puts it, "there are no bystanders in the kingdom of God. The Gospels and books of the Bible are available today because Jesus kept his promise to Peter and the others and to those who have followed ever since."

Going into "deep waters" is never easy though. If we ever thought that having faith would make life a cinch, it doesn't take long to get over that idea. Melissa Bane Sevier, a contemplative Christian thinker, recalls a church she knew that embarked on missional work. They partnered with a local agency to provide lunch bags for children at local public schools for five days a week, during the summer months. Soon the volunteers found the volume of lunches grew, some took home the food to the whole family – so more volunteers and food were needed – the 'boat' was filling up, to tipping point. The church volunteers worried about healthier food and began purchasing more food themselves, due to limited agency funds. More children with families began to come.

Then the agency pulled out, over fairness to other programs at other sites and limited funds for offering the same items. The little church was devastated – they couldn't manage the program alone. They felt that they had failed. Over time they regrouped, faced the reality of their own disappointments and prayed about what to do. They contacted another agency and local food pantry and together the three of them began offering a regular service where families came to the church kitchen, had cooking and nutrition lessons from a dietician, had a meal together and then took groceries home for the making of those meals. This wasn't at all what they had in mind originally. Working with Jesus brings the unexpected. Does this story ring any bells for you about our ventures at Ormond?

There is something of an irony in Peter and the others invitation by Jesus isn't there? He doesn't tell Peter to clean up his act, or go and become a rabbi and come back. No he is called to bring all he is and the way he is, for Jesus needs people just as they are, just like you, me and so many others who are different, from all walks of life.

I love the way Peter Woods, (nicknamed, the Listening Hermit) expresses it, "at the end of my tether, with empty nets, I hear a call from Jesus, and I don't feel worthy – I wish he would leave me alone and exhausted there. He says, "Don't fear, come as you are. I don't want to change you, but share my love and life with you."

May we all know that as we venture into the 'deep waters' of our church life, community and personal lives together as the people of God, we can be less afraid and strengthened by God's spirit and the ever-present presence, grace and love of Jesus beside us and within. May we know this reality with certainty and peace in the depths of our heart and souls, today and always.

Amen.

Hymn TIS 468 **We are your people...**

We are your people;
Spirit of grace,
you dare to make us
to all our neighbours,
Christ's living voice, hands and face.

Joined in community,
treasured and fed,
may we discover
gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.

Rich in diversity,
help us to live
closer than neighbours,
open to strangers,
able to clash and forgive.

Glad of tradition,
help us to see
in all life's changing,
where you are leading,
where our best efforts should be.

Give, as we venture
justice and care
(peaceful, resisting,
waiting or risking)
wisdom to know when and where.

Christ, as we serve you
in different ways,
may all we're doing
show that you're living,
meeting your love with our praise.

Brian Arthur Wren 1936-
<https://youtu.be/AOLAZCl2A1E>

Prayers of the People

prepared by Heather Baxter

A word from Rev Dr Mery Kolimo from the Evangelical Christian Church of Timor
“It’s not enough for us to preach the good news. We must become it”

Let us pray:

Jesus

You call us into places that are difficult. Help us to respond to your call for action.

We pray for the people living in aged care accommodation, that they will find connection to the staff that assist them, and that they will embrace life and live it to the full. We pray for the workers and carers that attend to them. We wonder about their work conditions and their meagre pay, and pray for a better understanding and a more just way to adequately resource these citizen “angels”

It's not enough for us to preach the good news. We must become it.

We pray for those affected by the beginning of the new school year – from the new Prep children, who have had a few scarce months enjoying Kindergarten, right through to the those beginning year 12, who have had little preparation for this major year because of interrupted schedules in years 10 and 11. We pray for the teachers – those who are fearful of classroom contact because of the risk of the Omicron virus, and those who fear the possibility of returning to online learning.

It's not enough for us to preach the good news. We must become it.

We pray for our politicians, particularly as we head to elections in Victoria for both State and Federal parliaments. We cherish the democracy that our nation is built on. Help us to listen and learn and then choose wisely the candidates that fulfil your call to do justice and love mercy. We pray for the politicians around the world as they seek to shore up their power bases. We pray that their posturing and blustering will not cause blood-shed.

It's not enough for us to preach the good news. We must become it.

Jesus, speak your word to us – loud enough for us to hear. Then give us the courage to say yes and act for you.

We pray together

**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 693 Come as you are, that's how I want you...

'Come as you are:
that's how I want you.
Come as you are;
feel quite at home,
close to my heart,
loved and forgiven.
Come as you are:
why stand alone?

'No need to fear,
love sets no limits;
no need to fear,
love never ends;
don't run away
shamed and disheartened,
rest in my love,
trust me again.

'I came to call sinners,
not just the righteous;
I came to bring peace,
not to condemn.
Each time you fail
to live by my promise,
why do you think
I'd love you the less?

'Come as you are:
that's how
I love you;
come as you are,
trust me again.
Nothing can change
the love that I bear you;
all will be well,
just come as you are.

Deirdre Browne 1936-

https://youtu.be/qD4KAq_W8tY

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen

You can find a copy of today's sermon along with other congregational information on the church website.

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NEWS AND NOTICES

DEMOLITION OF THE HALLS - CHURCH SITE CURRENTLY CLOSED

The demolition of the Booran Rd hall and the North Rd hall is now underway. During this time the entire church site will be out-of-bounds. We will not have access to the church and the office will be relocated for the duration of the works.

During the demolition phase the office will be relocated to Trinity Uniting Church, Black St Brighton. We are very grateful to the Trinity Church Council for their generosity and hospitality during this phase.

When the project is finished the only building to remain will be the church. (The Fraser St hall will remain but this will be on the parcel of land which has been sold) New, temporary toilets will be provided on site. The church office will be located in the Link after the demolition.

During the demolition period the church office number will continue to be the new number 0411 958 127.

WORSHIP DURING THE DEMOLITION PHASE

Note: Zoom Services will commence for Ormond Uniting Church worship effective from Sunday 30th January until the demolition is finished and services at the church will not re-commence until the demolition is complete. Please email the office or check website <https://www.ormondunitingchurch.org/> if needing to request access to the Zoom link.

MEETING UP DURING THE “DEMOLITION PHASE”

Last year the Formation Group made a commitment to offer a time to meet together, chew the fat and enjoy each other’s company during the time that we are unable to be together in worship.

We'll meet in **Allnutt Park (Wheatley Road McKinnon) - Sundays at 6.00pm.**

BYO dinner, drink, and chairs. Following are the dates and the contact names of those who will be able to tell you about changes should the weather hamper the events.

6 Feb - Warwick Barry

20 Feb - Lorraine Denniston

(1 March - Pancake day?)

6 March - Ron and Mardie Townsend

20 March - David and Heather Baxter

Heather (for the Formation Group)

AN EXCELLENT DAILY REFLECTION BOOK

Ormond has been lucky to receive 3 additional copies (free) of With Love to the World this month. It covers the seasons of Lent and Easter.

This means there is an opportunity to "try before you buy". This resource covers about 3 months with a daily reading, reflection and prayer as well as stimulating questions to tackle at the end of each week. Normally the cost of a copy is \$6.00 and there are 4 copies during the year.

Let Heather know if you would like to try one of the 3 free copies and she'll post or deliver to you.

A NOTE FROM PAM

Dear Ormond Friends,

No this is not a return to regular letters but it is a heartfelt "Thank You".

It was such a pleasant time at Allnut Park on Boxing Day and I was so pleased that so many of you were able to come, considering many of you had family commitments. What a wonderful thing to bind all those letters together for me to keep as well as writing your own. I will really treasure yours. Thank you.

And thank you for the other very generous part of your gift. I will enjoy browsing in Readings to choose some books and I will wait and buy something special with the money. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time among you and my prayers and hopes are for your future, especially as the new building development takes place.

With grace, peace and love,
Pam

ANDREW'S LEAVE

A reminder that Cathy (Church Administrator) is now back in the office on Fridays from 9.00am – 5.00pm and Andrew is currently on leave returning on 8th February 2022.

ROSTER for Sunday 13 February 2022 (Service to be via Zoom)

READING	Robyn Mulder	
PRAYERS	David Northwood	
RESOURCES DELIVERY	Brenda Grootendorst	