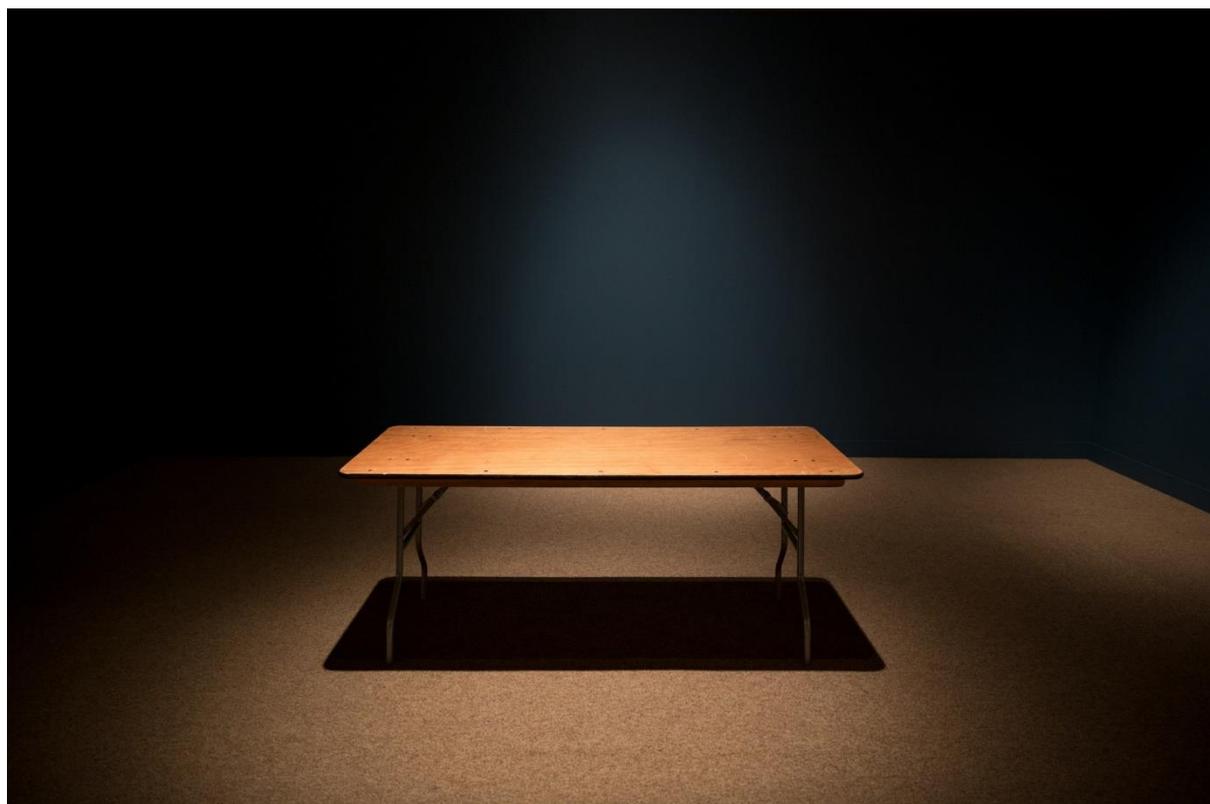


ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



28 AUGUST 2022

PENTECOST 12



“Who’s invited?”

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.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge those who were here before us,
The first inhabitants of this place.
We honour them for their custodianship of the land,
on which we gather today.

Welcome

We have come today with different needs and motivation. This is a time for reflection as we celebrate once more God calling us, God walking with us, in our journey of faith. May our singing, our reflecting, our listening, enable us to give thanks to God, to hear God's word for each one of us.

Hymn: TIS468, We are your people...

Gathering Prayer

Loving God,

With people across the ages, we want to acknowledge with thankful hearts the love that sustains us, the hope that brings us here today. May we share with each other in the joy that has reshaped lives, reshaped our life, in so many ways.

We confess that there are times when we do not hear the word of grace, times when we find the journey of faith too difficult, too demanding, times when we are not interested. But you never give up, you provide a way for us. You forgive us and urge us on.

Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God

Scripture: Luke 14: 1-14

¹ On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely. ² Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had edema. ³ And Jesus asked the experts in the law and Pharisees, “Is it lawful to cure people on the Sabbath or not?” ⁴ But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him and sent him away. ⁵ Then he said to them, “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a Sabbath day?” ⁶ And they could not reply to this.

Humility and Hospitality

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Reflection - prepared by Ron Townsend

This Gospel passage in Luke is about God inviting each and every one of us to feast, in his Kingdom, both now and in the fulness of God’s time – AND we don’t need to establish ourselves as the big shot, who is worthy before all others, to be invited.

Why not?

Because we are all ‘big shots’ in God’s reckoning!

God has **given you all good things** for no good reason other than that God loves YOU, loves you enough to die for you ...and invites YOU to do the same for **ALL** others. All others! Particularly those who have not been given ‘good things’ in their lives.

God loves us all and desires that ALL be part of his ‘party.’

So how serious are you about this invitation?

- What is stopping you accepting God’s invitation to his party right now....and....?
- What would it be like for you to reach out to someone who is very different from you – holds different values – lives differentlyand invite them to God’s party?

- What would it be like ‘to give up your seat’ for someone who is ‘worthless,’ in the eyes of our society?
- What would it be like to stop putting down those who are different and difficult and dangerous and offering them the best places in the party which is your life?
- And what would it be like, if someone asks you why you’re doing this, to say: ‘because it’s what God wants for you and for ALL?’

Jesus invites not just his first-century hearers but his twenty-first century followers to live differently, to break the rules of “what have you done for me lately?”, and to value others because they are -- we each are! – loved children of God.

A couple of questions to reflect upon at home:

You are invited to this Kingdom Feast, what does that feel like?

And how can you in your daily living, be not just a Kingdom invitee, but a Kingdom inviter?

Perhaps share your reflections with a family member or friend.

God bless you all

Ron

Hymn: TIS690, Beauty in brokenness...

HYMN Song: #358, Gift to the World (During which the offering for Share Sunday is received)

We bring the gifts that you have brought us
 We sing the songs that you are teaching to us
 Take our lives
 Take our time
 Take our possessions
 Make us your gift to the world
 Make us your gift to the world (repeat) 1.

Prayers – prepared by Mardie Townsend

Let us pray

Loving God, we come now with our prayers for all people: for those who know your love and care, for those who do not; for those who have plenty, for those who are in need; for those we know, for those who are strangers to us.

Lord, we pray for your church. At this time when we are witnessing schism in an already fractured and disconnected Christian community, help us to listen to your word to us about reaching out to those who are marginalised for whatever reason. Heal **our** brokenness Lord and, in doing so, enable us to show your love to all.

We pray for the comfortable: for those who feel they do not have need of you; for those whose lives are too busy to fit you in; for those who close their eyes and ears to the challenges you place before them. May their comfort and complacency be challenged by your word, your commandments and may we, who claim to be your disciples, take up the challenges you place before us.

As your world faces the challenges of climate change, war, pandemic and economic contraction, we pray for all who are struggling due to threats beyond their control.

We pray for governments, corporations, environmental organisations and communities affecting and affected by global warming. Grant them courage and insight, Lord, so that they may work to protect your creation and the lives and livelihoods of your people. We pray especially for the peoples of the Pacific and the Arctic, whose capacity to influence global action is limited but whose lives may be most detrimentally affected.

At this time of pandemic, when our healthcare system is stretched beyond its limits, we pray for all health care workers and for all who seek their care. Grant healthcare workers the strength to deal with the pressures they face, so that all in need of care may receive it. Challenge us all, including our governments, to recognise the greed and selfishness that underpin the fragility of the healthcare system, and to accept the need for those of us on higher incomes to forego tax cuts so that quality healthcare may be available to all.

We pray for all who are 'doing it tough' in these difficult economic times. Inspire us to be generous in our support for charities such as the Share Appeal, so that those in need may receive appropriate support. And challenge us to continue to show hospitality through support for the Little Free Pantry, food vouchers and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Finally, Lord, we pray for those in distress: the bereaved, the dying, the lonely, those experiencing mental illness. Grant them courage and show them your peace.

These prayers we offer in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together, 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 and 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 forever. Amen

Hymn: TIS440, Christ, from whom all blessings flow...

Blessing

The blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen

Postlude

Acknowledgement

1. “Gift to the World” by Robin Mann (All Together OK, Open Book, 1996)

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

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Music: Peter Hurley

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