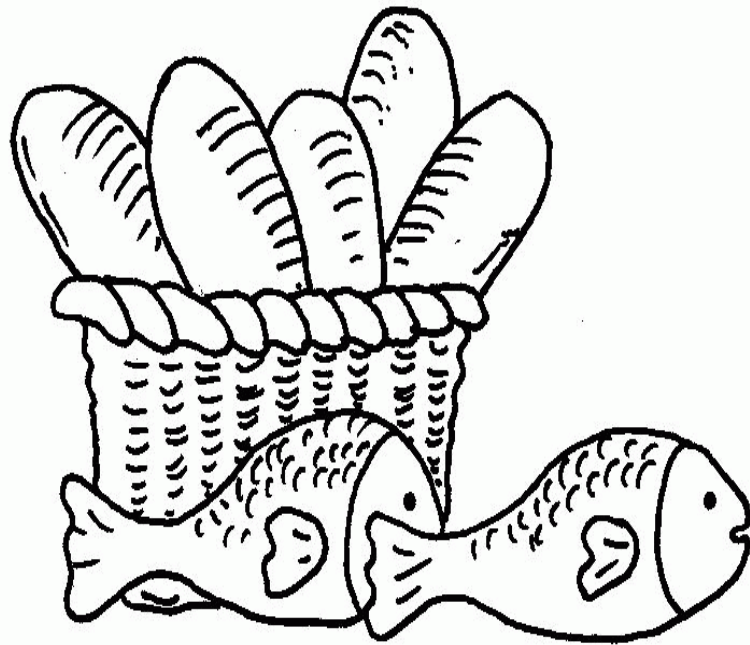


ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



6 AUGUST 2023

PENTECOST 10



WORSHIP AT HOME

At worship we will be lighting a candle to remember all those who are part of our church community and who are not at worship with us today. You may like to light a candle at home as you follow these worship resources.

Introit- TIS 693 vs 1 Come as you are

Acknowledgement of First Peoples. By Bible Reader Robyn Mulder.

Welcome and Greeting.

Call to worship.

L: Whatever your struggles, however much you wrestle with questions, big and small,

P: come to worship and receive a glimpse of something more, a taste of greater love.

L: God is here amongst us as we gather, ready to meet us with whatever we need

P: to restore our hope and encourage our faithfulness. Amen.ⁱ

Prayer of Approach and Confession.

L: Loving God, more, much more to learn of you and trust you, to cherish and serve you to love, worship and adore you, this is our prayer; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Most lovely God, most loving God, we place the transcript of our daily lives before you, written surely in our being, and we pray that you will edit our story with the radical grace of Christ Jesus.

We are not as others think we are, we are not even what we imagine ourselves to be. Our insight is defective and we are not able to read ourselves correctly. You alone see the full text, the lines of glory, the pages of shame, the many grey paragraphs, and the unfinished sentences.

P: Look upon us with your saving mercy.

Please forgive and delete every single thing that is unlovely and unloving.

Correct and restructure all that is misshapen.

Highlight the things worth repeating or enlarging.

Rephrase the unfinished sentences so that they may continue on to declare your glory.

L: You alone are capable, you alone can be trusted to deal with all the secret pages of mind and heart. Make us more yours than we have ever been before, and in being more yours, become more truly ourselves. Through Christ Jesus our Saviour.

Amen!

L: Listen to the Good News: "Here is love. Not our love of God, but God's love for us in giving us the true Son to be the remedy for the corruption of our sins."

In the name of the Son of God, light of the world, friend of sinners, rescuer of the lost, healer of the broken, joy of the redeemed, I declare to you:

Your sins are forgiven and the pages of your life are made new!

R: Thanks be to God, Amen.ⁱⁱ

Hymn TIS 613 Lord of all hopefulness -all 4 verses

Pass the Peace

L: May the Peace of God dwell with you!
and also with you.

Service of the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14: 13-21 Robyn Mulder

¹³When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

¹⁶Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸“Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Hymn TIS 429 Break thou the bread of life

Sermon and Video “A Mixed Economy church”

by Rev Deacon Mat Harry.

On Sufficiency

“The Insufficient life is what prevails in most of the world today. Lacking something is not uncommon to the majority of people. Insufficiency becomes a part of their life.” said Rev Gospel Ralte, from the Gippsland Presbytery recentlyⁱⁱⁱ. And as a Sri Lankan Uniting Church minister, he should know from first hand experience of his home country. And what a wonderful first name to have, Gospel! And despite the poverty in his background, he is an enthusiastic Christian, who sings and plays guitar with gusto!

Everyone desires to have a full life, with enough for our needs. When we are in the situation of lacking something we truly need, the worry, the stress and wandering thoughts and the generally insecure feeling confronts us and could lead us to despair and hopelessness. In this situation of lack, what shall we do? Where shall we turn to for help? Let us look at the sufficiency of supply that the crowds and the disciples of Jesus had experienced in the first century, and see what we can learn from it today.

The story today begins with Jesus grieving over the recent death of his cousin and good friend, the prophet John the Baptist. John had been beheaded while in the prison of Herod Antipas, this Herod being one of Herod the Great’s grandsons. In a drunken party, Herod stupidly promised his niece Salome whatever she asked for, and at the behest of her mother Herodias, Salome asked for John the Baptist to be killed, and his head to be brought in on a platter. Herodias was not only Herod Antipas’ brother Phillip’s ex-wife, she was also Herod’s half-niece! So it was definitely an incestuous type of relationship which John had clearly pointed out to both of them. So Herodias wanted to silence her critic John. And she did, by arranging for his murder.

Jesus found out some days after the event, while he was in Galilee, which was a long way away. So Jesus was unable to get back in time for his cousin John’s funeral, as it would have been held within 24 hours of his death. So as you can imagine, Jesus must have been very distressed at John’s death AND for not being able to attend his funeral or comfort his family or be comforted by them. So his first reaction is to want to be alone, to turn to God in prayer to be sustained in his grief. And clearly

Jesus was supported and uplifted, because it was not long after than he returned to minister to the crowds nearby.

So point 1, if prayer is important to Jesus in order to be sustained by God in times of grief, loss, pain and distress, then so it should be for us, Jesus' disciples. Prayer is one of the main ways of being sustained and helped by God.

Next, as I said, Jesus saw the needs of the people in the crowd and had compassion for them. And for him, compassion meant more than simply saying "I will pray for you". He was practical and cured their sick people. And then as it grew late in the afternoon and into the evening, he became aware that people were getting hungry. The crowd's leaders thought the solution was to send the people away to the surrounding villages to buy food. But Jesus said, "NO, you feed them." And they said, "But we haven't got enough! We only have five loaves and two fishes, for all these 5000+ people! Impossible!" They felt they lacked sufficiency.

Jesus' answer was to ask the crowd to sit down, and then he prayed and blessed the food, and asked that it be shared out. And it was MORE than enough, more than sufficient! There were even 12 baskets full of left overs! Yes, a miracle by Jesus, we might say. And it was a miracle that one person shared their only lunch of loaves and fishes with faith, rather than with knowledge ahead of time that everyone would be blessed and fed by Jesus. And you can probably hear the echoes of our Holy Communion in the way this story is told.

It is the same today. We disciples may need healing like the crowd did. We may need the basics of life like food, water, power and shelter. But together, blessed by God, and by being willing to share what we have, even when we think it is so little or insufficient, yet under God's blessing, it will be enough.

Thirdly, these principles also apply to us as congregations today. Often the biggest sense of need we have is that we do not have enough people to be or to do what we think needs to be done to be a congregation. So how is our need for people to be met? Firstly, through prayer. Pray for more members of your congregation. Secondly, to take action, by caring for one another. And thirdly, by being willing to offer what we have, even if that seems to be little.

I would like to show the first part of a short video by Rev Deacon Mat Harry, the New and Renewing Congregations staff person in the Vic-Tas Synod. Mat demonstrates some different examples of being part of a congregation and how we might build that in our space. He calls it being a Mixed Economy Church."

(show video till about 3 ½ minutes). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqjU5TEYYi8>

So today as we celebrate Holy Communion, I would like you to be aware of being blessed and fed by God, and secondly, to ask God to show you what are the "loaves and fishes" of blessing that God has already given you, and how you might offer them to be blessed and multiplied by God, for everyone's blessing. What new thing might God be asking of you?
Amen.

Affirmation of faith - We are not alone^{iv} - said by all.

**We are not alone,
we live in God's world.**

**We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

**to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.**

**In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.**

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

(from The United Church of Canada, General Council 1968)

Hymn TiS 537 Let us talents and tongues employ

Announcements

Lighting of the Candle

As we prepare for our prayers for others, we light this candle to remember all those who are part of our church community but who are not at worship with us today.

Prayers of the People. Rev Ron Townsend

This is a responsive prayer

To the bidding: Feed us now Lord
Would you please respond: **Feed us with your own self**

Let us pray

We pray for all your people whose lives are threatened by war, terrorism or disaster, by famine or disease; for leaders of nations, and those who dispense justice.

Long ago you fed a multitude: take our small gifts and use them today to feed those who today hunger for justice and peace

Feed us now Lord
Feed us with your own self

We pray for all who are fed at your table; for pastors and teachers and all who provide spiritual nourishment to your people

Long ago you fed a multitude: take our small gifts and use them today to feed those who today hunger to hear your gospel

Feed us now Lord
Feed us with your own self

We pray for all who live in this city and those whose daily work enriches this community; For members of this congregation, for our families, our friends and for ourselves.

Long ago you fed a multitude: take our small gifts and use them today to feed those who today hunger for acceptance and love.

Feed us now Lord
Feed us with your own self

We pray for all who have no work, no home, no hope for the future; For the sad and the lonely, for the sick and all who care for them.

Long ago you fed a multitude: take our small gifts and use them today to feed those who today hunger for comfort and hope.

Feed us now Lord
Feed us with your own self

We remember the faithful people of this congregation, and all whom we have loved. Help us to follow in the steps of all who have offered their lives to you, that our small gifts may be turned to abundance in your hands and used to feed your hungry people. Bring us from death to life, that, with all your saints, we may come to see you face to face and rest in your eternal presence.

Feed us now Lord
Feed us with your own self
Amen

Adapted from Janet Nelson, 'Let us pray'.

Offering to the Glory of God^y

Knowing that each member of Christ's body contributes to the whole, we bring our gifts as we share in the unity and diversity of Christ.

Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION (glasses and common bread pre-prepared) with Lorraine Denniston and Heather Baxter.

L: As Jesus gathered people on the grassy shore by the lake
Jesus gathers us here today in community.
Young and old, male and female,
rich and poor, differently abled
with different ways of being
and at different stages of our faith:
 searching, deepening, growing.
May we be open to the radical teachings of Jesus.
Wherever we are on the journey,
we gather now in community.

Jesus who invites us here invites us to greet each other.
The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We bring our thanks and praise, O God,
for your generous and all-encompassing love.
The promises you offer us are as numerous as the stars in the sky
or the grains of sand in the desert.

In all history your people tell the story of your presence –
sustaining, enriching, enlivening.

On the shores of the lake
Jesus embodied your generous, embracing love
as he fed the multitude with an abundance
which reaches far beyond our understanding.
That same generous love led Jesus to die on the cross
and you raised him from death to life.
Christ continues to feed us with the foretaste of heaven.

In the strength of the Spirit we receive your love
both for ourselves, and for the benefit of all.

And so we praise you with the faithful of every time and place
joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation singing/saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

On the edge of a lake
a child gave to Jesus the bread and fish
which Jesus took, blessed, broke and shared.

Later in a room with his friends
the bread was on the table.
Jesus took it, blessed it, broke it, and shared it, saying:
Take this and eat it.
This is my body given for you.
Do this to remember me.

Then after supper
he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying:
This is a sign of the new promise
poured out for you and for everyone
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, whenever you drink it,
to remember me.

With this bread and this cup
we do as our Saviour/ Christ commands:
we celebrate his love that saves us from death.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

Pour out the Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ
and that we may be for you the Body of Christ in the world.
Make us one with him,
one with each other,
and one in ministry in the world
feasting together now and always.

We pray together in the language and traditions of our hearts:

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.**

L: The bread we break
is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take is
a sharing in the life of Christ.

L: These are the gifts of God for the people of God.
The Uniting Church has an open table
which means that anyone who loves God a little and would like to love God more
or wants to know God is welcome.

The Sharing

The Body of Christ, the bread of life given for you.
The life and love of Christ Jesus poured out for you in the fruit of the vine.

Prayer after communion

Thank you, God,
that we have been fed and nurtured at the table of Christ,
and now you send us out to take the life and love of Jesus
to the lake, to the hillside,
to the city streets, wherever we go in the power of the Spirit. Amen.^{vi}

Commissioning and Benediction. ^{vii}

L: Let our steps hold fast to your path,
May our words always honour you
May our hearts rejoice in your love.
Let us bring what we have to the Lord and get involved in his sufficient blessings in serving the
community for God's glory.
In the name of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer
Amen

**Recessional hymn - TIS 778 Shalom to you now.
(twice)**

Postlude

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

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Presider: Rev. Wendy Snook

Music: Peter Hurley

Church Office

Tuesdays, 9.30am-1.30pm

Fridays, 9.30am-2.30pm

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NEWS & NOTICES

ⁱ Words for worship 2014

ⁱⁱ By Rev Bruce Prewer

ⁱⁱⁱ Rev Gospel Ralte, Presbytery of Gippsland, in *Figtree resources for Aug 6, 2023*.

^{iv} Uniting in Worship 2

^v UiW2 p 270

^{vi} Holy Communion Mt 14-13 from the 2017 Transforming Worship conference liturgy, Adelaide SA.

Adapted by WS.

^{vii} By Rev Moira Dodsworth, Presbytery of Gippsland, in *Figtree resources for Aug 6, 2023*.