

Combined Service Sunday 30th January 2022

Welcome

I hope you find the worship a blessing

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations People, the Traditional Owners of this land and their many unique cultures and languages. We respect the knowledge and wisdom of Elders past and present. They have never ceded their sovereignty and we commit to walking with them in their quest for truth, justice and treaties.



Uncle Bob

Call to worship – Rev Peter

Love and God's hospitality to all is at the heart of our gathering.
Come, enjoy, and delight in God and each other.

YouTube Hymn: Come as you are - Paul Gurr - Willemina 2014

<https://youtu.be/bocbQS55RTM>

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation - Rev Tina

Lord, your love is endless and faithful.
You offer us the deepest call, a call that touches the core of our being,
inspiring us to venture out into the world.

You offer us a hospitality of the heart that transforms us.
You offer us life, not rejection, truth and love, not fear and death
life and hope, not stagnation and anxiety.

You, Lord, bring a deep conversion within our hearts.

You desire to bless and love us Lord.

We give you our thanks and praise.

Lord Jesus, you came for the poor of spirit, the marginalised and those without hope
who long for freedom from oppression, for wholeness and hospitality
to be loved, saved, and forgiven.

Lord, you come for those who long for a changed heart, and new beginning,
for rest, compassion, and deep conversion.

You Lord came for all of us, the hungry and for those with deep longings.

You came offering a new way of being that brings a future, life, and hope.

You came to bless us, Lord.

We give you our thanks and praise.

Holy Spirit, ever there for us, provoking us to change our mindset,
 helping us venture out of our comfort zones,
 so, others may see the light of Christ, shining within us.
 Holy Spirit, you never let us give up or lose hope,
 you gently awaken our soul, like a midwife,
 giving us courage to embrace all Jesus calls us to be.
 You fill us with compassion, so our hearts go out to those who suffer.
 You inspire us to offer a radical hospitality that changes lives,
 by blessing us, you make us a blessing for God and others.
We give you our thanks and praise.

Prayer of Confession – Rev Tina

Lord if we haven't loved or offered hospitality
 If we cannot or have not forgiven or asked forgiveness
 give us the grace to receive or offer forgiveness
 help us make a fresh start and a new beginning
 change our hearts O Lord.
 As we come before you now in this moment of silence
 with all that troubles our hearts, bless us Lord

Moment of Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us
 "Your sins are forgiven"
THANKS BE TO GOD

Meditation on Jesus' Hospitality – Rev Tina



*Did not our hearts burn when we journeyed with Him, when he shared the gospel with us?
 Were not our eyes opened, when he offered us hospitality?*

I invite you to find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.
 Make yourself comfortable, placing your feet firmly on the ground and hands resting on your lap
 and closing your eyes, just slightly, to shut out any bright light.

Notice any sounds around you.
 Sound of birds, the humming of passing cars or the sound of someone beside you breathing softly.
 Notice the sounds, then let them float away, like clouds passing through the sky.

Begin to notice your breathing.
 Allow it to slow down, noticing your tummy, rising and falling
 allowing your lungs to fill gently and naturally.

Breathing in slowly, then allowing your lungs to empty naturally.

Breathing out any tension or worries you may be feeling, allowing your lungs to fill with God's peace.

Imagine you're sitting beside Jesus
 Where he is listening to the deep longings of your heart, longings to be loved and accepted
 Longings for peace

Breathing out any worries Breathing in peace

Imagine Jesus looking at you Offering you grace and blessing

Breathing in His peace Breathing out any worries
Giving Jesus all your weariness

Stay with this peace
Just for a moment
Know you are loved

Silence for a moment

*I invite you to come back to the present moment with this gift of peace from Jesus
a gift you can carry for the rest of this pandemic and return to, whenever you need peace*

YouTube Hymn: O Love that will not let me go 2020 Fountainview Academy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvA6PYa54sg>



Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, open our hearts to the gospel today, amen

Readings

1 Cor 13:1-13

13 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing. **4** Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. **7** It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8** Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. **9** For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; **10** but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. **11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. **12** For now we see in a mirror, dimly,^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. **13** And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Luke 4:21 – 30

21 Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” **22** All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” **23** He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” **24** And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. **25** But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; **26** yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. **27** There were also many lepers^[a] in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was

cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. ©NRSV National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Questions for Reflection

Let’s explore together: some questions to discuss and go deeper – Rev Pete

What encouragement is there in this/these readings for us?

What warning is there in this/these readings for us?

What is God asking you to do and what excuses are you using?

YouTube Maori singing Hallelujah 2017 from Lemotu Va’a

<https://youtu.be/jIqxkh2zNwg>

Hallelujah (Leonard Cohen) – Jamie Brown-Hart & Canadian Virtual Choir Canada (Josh Tamayo) 2021

Memories from last year’s Lockdown 2021 – An amazing time of creativity which all of us journeyed through

<https://youtu.be/XIDim9aYWds>

Hallelujah best version eva – Young people singing (Murf waima 2012)

<https://youtu.be/k-cSVOoTSoA>

Reflection- Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.



No one likes to be rejected. It causes a deep wound or opens one. Yet, Jesus seems to provoke rejection by those who know him. Why?

Perhaps it’s to break free of the mindset of the people in his synagogue who were from his hometown, a small village called Nazareth, who at first, approved of what Jesus said to them and said, “*Is not this Joseph’s son?*”

Jesus’ cousin, John, baptised him in the Jordan river and he now knows he is God’s beloved Son after the Holy Spirit came upon him, then drove him into wilderness to be tested and now, filled with the Holy Spirit, draws him home, where he comes to the synagogue on the Sabbath and declares his mission and ministry to those who know him as Joseph’s son.

Jesus seems to provoke and insult his own people. He infers they are of little faith, shallow, and shares from Isaiah, accounts of God not blessing his people when Elijah and Elisha came to villages and that they too, will not be blessed by God, because Prophets are not accepted in their hometown by those who know them. This enraged them.

Jesus knew and revealed to those who stood before him the shallowness of their faith. He knew there was no possibility of deep conversion of heart amongst his own people. He knew they desired to stay

comfortable and within their own mindset where they lived their lives, as they always had. When Jesus confronts them about their unwillingness to change and open their minds to his mission, call and identity, they are enraged even more. Perhaps the people felt not being blessed by God meant God didn't love them or they didn't love God enough. This would have made them angry, so angry they wanted to reject the young man they had loved and knew as Joseph's son.

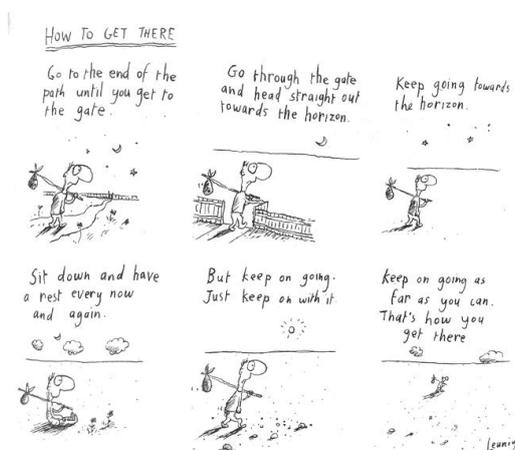
I wonder why Jesus provoked them. What is going on here? Jesus may remind us of a young adult breaking free of their parents and the small town they live in, to go out into the world to grow, to change their mindset and make a difference in the world. This is a rite of passage for many young adults. But this is not why Jesus provoked his own people where they became so enraged they wanted to kill him. More than this is going on here than Jesus breaking free.

Themes of acceptance and rejection of the hospitality of God offered through Jesus' ministry are central to Luke's gospel. Jesus declares God is offering hospitality to all and it's not only about meals. It's a radical life-changing hospitality of the heart that brings about a deep conversion. It's a hospitality of God where all are accepted and not judged. All are welcome. Whenever this hospitality is offered there's always a possibility of it being rejected or accepted.

Those who listened to or read the gospel of Luke knew it wasn't about Jesus being Joseph's son. It was about him being God's son, where God had first claim on him, not the people of his hometown. To embrace his call, mission and ministry, Jesus had to leave home and resist any attempt to confine and control him or make him a local prophet.

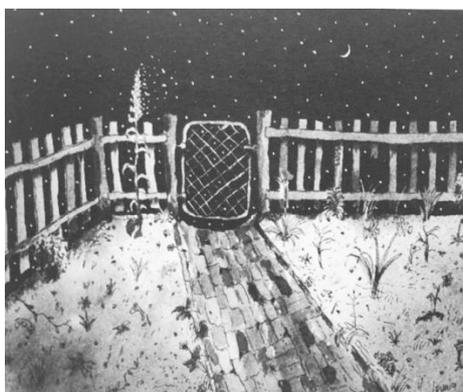
Jesus isn't going to receive hospitality from his own people. Not after what he said to them. No one likes the inner thoughts of their hearts exposed, especially when they don't want to change.

So, I wonder what the gospel has to say to us today.
Is it about staying on the journey of faith and persevering?



I don't think so. We do not journey alone. We journey together, with Jesus and one another. At times it's like the Emmaus walk. We walk together with Jesus, listening to his teachings and reflecting on his birth, life, death, and resurrection and at times we know him, and our hearts burn and sometimes his words provoke us and invite us to go through the garden gate, and far away from home, where we encounter the unknown and uncertainty.

Leunig (used with permission)



Leunig (used with permission)

A bit like life now, as we live through the pandemic, with all its uncertainty and anxiety, that forces us to address many issues in life, in order to adapt and remain resilient. Perhaps Jesus is provoking or inviting us to go deeper and experience conversion, so we can receive the hospitality of God.

Jesus declared God's hospitality was for all, especially the outsider, the "other", the marginalised, the hurting, the oppressed and the broken hearted and spiritually poor who hunger to know God. Jesus begins his ministry in his hometown in the synagogue on the Sabbath with a declaration of his mission and then goes out into the world to begin it. We will hear that his next step is to call disciples, some of whom were simple fishermen, who became fishers of people for God. May we be provoked to embrace Jesus' mission where we offer the hospitality of God to friend and "other".

Quiet Moment



Prayers of the People – Margot Kemke

Dear Heavenly Father, we bring our prayers before you today, our prayers for people all around the world, for those in our own country close to home, for our friends, our families and for ourselves.

We thank you for our freedom to worship and gather together as followers of Jesus, and we intercede for those who need your grace and compassion.

We pray especially for our leaders, Federal, State and local, who have great responsibilities for governing our country, for caring for the welfare of less fortunate citizens and ensuring peace and security for all. May they feel your encouragement and grace as we support them with our prayers.

Today we pray for the people of the Eastern Mediterranean countries of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey and for their national and spiritual leaders. The majority in Cyprus and Greece are Christian and in Turkey, Muslim. We pray for continuing prosperity and peace, and in Turkey, for media freedom and a lessening of human rights abuses especially among refugees.

We pray also for the ministers and leaders, and the congregations at St Mark's Anglican Church, Forest Hill, the Grace Faith Community, Nunawading, Uniting AgeWell at Box Hill and our three Cluster congregations here at Mountview, Forest Hill and Blackburn North-Nunawading. Help us all to serve our communities with our Outreach programmes and to care for each other with love and compassion. We pray for any who are needing medical treatment, for those who are isolated and lonely, and for those who are tired and overworked. Comfort them and heal them, we pray. We ask for many blessings for all those who are beginning their school year this week, and we pray that this year's studies will not be interrupted again by the pandemic which is still with us.

O Lord, hear our prayers, spoken and unspoken, which we bring to you from our hearts with humility. We pray as you taught us:

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 forever. Amen.*

Offering Prayer

(This Prayer is about offering up ourselves and giving thanks to God for all we have)

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom all for transformation through your grace and love, made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen

Blessing and commissioning – Rev Peter

Quote: By a British Politician

"When we assumed office four years ago we stood on the edge of the precipice. Since then, we have taken a giant leap forward". As quoted by Prime Minister Tony Blair during a White House Toast on 5th February 1998 (I think).

Quote: Martin Luther King Jnr.

"When I speak of love, I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response, I am speaking of that force which is ... the supreme unifying principle of life".

God's love is at the heart of all our gathering. It is known in the love we show each other and those we meet. Let us step forward, over the edge, into this new way of living together, trusting in the Spirit and following in the way. Amen

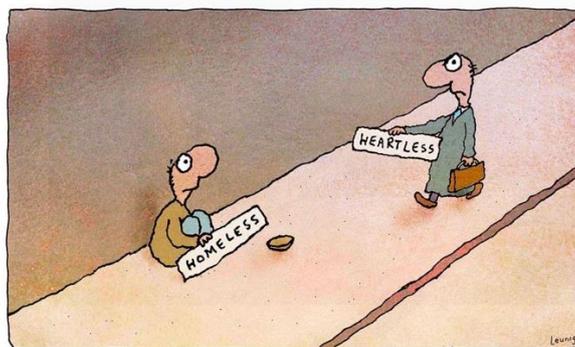
YouTube Hymn – I the Lord of Sea and Sky Daniel O'Donnell 2009 (Memories 64)

<https://youtu.be/VyHTkGrLicg>



Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina

How do we offer hospitality during the pandemic? These are challenging times when our hospitality needs to be radical. The invitation is to reach outside of the familiar, to "others" and risk rejection. That means welcoming anyone who we name as "other" than us, the stranger, the homeless, the undesirable, the outsider, lonely and the hurting and wounded in our community outside the four walls of our church buildings. Guests, whether neighbour or stranger are crucial to the making of our hearts. We need "other" people to grow as the people of God. Our faith calls us to be an outsider to our society. Consider the story of the good Samaritan. According to the story, Jewish people excluded Samaritans. Jesus taught that the outsider, the Samaritan, was the one who had compassion. Jesus has left us with values and ethics, that can guide us through life.



Leunig, used with permission

Hospitality is more than offering food and drink. Radical hospitality involves a willingness to be present to others and have a mutual reverence and respect for “others” that comes from a heart open to God, a heart that God fills with love, so it becomes as wide as the ocean. We make ourselves available to “others” by offering our time and being present. Time is the same as life. When we offer our time to others, we are laying down our lives for them. Time is precious and for us, our time is limited and precious. You may have heard parents of children say they are offering quality time to their children. That means being fully present to them, listening and sharing and being there and fully focused on their children and valuing them and wanting what’s good for them. That is radical hospitality. During these times of uncertainty, we are called as a community of Christ, to be an anchor for “others” in an anxious world and offer them an oasis of peace that gives witness to our faith.

The pandemic seems to be shaking the foundations of our world where reality is changing, and we have had to adjust. That is not the same as defeat. Our focus is not fear and the pandemic. Our focus is God and prayer. That alone will bring us through this time. We can’t escape the fact the pandemic makes people afraid and absent and want to shrink away from contact with unknown “others”. Today, it seems like the good of the community comes before the good of the individual. This comes at a cost, of losing our humanity and leaving “others” at the roadside and refusing to be a good Samaritan.

We need to connect with one another and “others”. This has been the great teaching of this pandemic. But how can we exercise compassion and live with integrity during these times? Connecting with “others” is about valuing one another and experiencing acceptance and love. Security systems and locked doors will not give our tired souls what friendship, compassion and hospitality will do. Some people may be experiencing rejection during the pandemic. How can we find our way around this and offer a radical hospitality where we and our loved ones stay safe? This is something we must pray about to try to find a way forward.

Perhaps standing firm in our faith, remembering who we are in Christ and using our gifts and resources to reach out to the “other” in a way that respects their needs and who they are - is enough. If our radical hospitality comes from the heart – it is enough. People need places of shelter during this challenging journey and even a word of appreciation, greeting, a smile or making eye contact can make a difference to someone who is feeling exhausted and alone. Perhaps this is – enough.