



## Combined Service Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Introit - Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty Bryan Gilliland 2015

<https://youtu.be/Vrg7jQ5Ic8c>

### 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.*

### Gathering and Call to worship – Rev Pete

God, you came into the world weak:

A baby born in a stable,  
Sleeping in a feeding trough

With animal sounds and smells all around.

**This is how love came to earth.**

God, you have made us vulnerable.

Our bodies can get sick and hurt.

Our hearts are easily broken.

Life is not always safe.

**This is how love lives on earth.**

God, you have also made us resilient.

Bodies can heal.

Hearts can mend.

Lives and communities can change.

**This is how love heals us all.**

God, your power is made perfect in our weakness.

For weakness breaks us open  
and makes room for us to grow and flourish

**So that we can be your love**

**Today, tomorrow and every day.**

Let us worship God.

~ Thandiwe Dale-Ferguson

**YouTube Hymn: Come as you are- Paul Gurr 2013**

<https://youtu.be/b0cbQS55RTM>

## Prayer of Adoration, invocation and confession - Rev Pete

It seems that God's creation is not what was designed.  
 So easy to accept things and then become resigned  
 To never being different, wrongs ne'er to be repaired  
 Will ever come the time when your bounty's fairly shared?

We see the world around us now lost and full of sin  
 What we bemoan in others too often found within  
 My heart as cold as any, my thoughts for self alone  
 Where are the seeds of hope that in me you've freely sown?

What are the reparations that we must make today?  
 What words and deeds can ever right wrongs of yesterday-  
 Life stolen, stunted, ended – in anger, hurt and pain.  
 How can we hope to ever walk side by side again?

'Act justly and love mercy, walk humbly with your God!  
 Still challenges us to action – to walk the way you trod,  
 To join you in your journey, to usher in your reign,  
 Share grace with broken-hearted, and live with healing pain.

You are the generous sower – who still throws out your seed  
 For some the source of sharing, for others source of greed.  
 Turn inward thoughts now outward, as equals let us stand  
 In brokenness and sorrow – still guided by your hand. Amen

### Behold I Make all Things New (Alpha). 2016 Alana Levandoski

<https://youtu.be/nqiBc9uPkGo>

#### Isaiah 6:1-13

**6** 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. **2** 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. **3** And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

**4** The pivots<sup>[a]</sup> on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

**5** 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!" **6** Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. **7** The seraph<sup>[b]</sup> touched my mouth with it and said:

"Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." **8** 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!"

**9** And he said, "Go and say to this people: 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.' **10** 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."

**11** 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; **12** until the LORD sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. **13** Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled."<sup>[c]</sup> The holy seed is its stump.

#### Gospel Luke 5:1-11

**5** Once while Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, **2** he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. **3** 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. **4** When he had

finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”  
<sup>5</sup> Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.”  
<sup>6</sup> When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.  
<sup>7</sup> So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.  
<sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!”  
<sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken;  
<sup>10</sup> 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.”  
<sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

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### Young at Heart – “*The Holy Seed is its stump*” Rev Tina



The butterfly is a symbol of resurrection and transformation.

The resurrection story is told again and again in the bible yet, we tend to hold fast to images and thinking about who we are in the past until someone else offers feedback about who we have become today.

This has the potential to change our mindset.

God calls Isaiah to become a prophet. He sees himself as a man with unclean lips.

Jesus calls Peter to become a fisher of people. He is afraid and sees himself as a sinful man.

God sees us as capable of wonderful ministry. We see ourselves as sinful or unworthy or incapable.

This is not as it's meant to be. We are called to be part of the cycle of life and the resurrection story. Isaiah accepted his call to be a prophet but before that happened, he experienced repentance and transformation. Then he was commissioned by God to deliver a message of the destruction of his country and exile of its people and then he lived through it and came to know and understand the meaning of the word's “*The Holy seed is its stump*”



This is a stump of an old tree. Imagine how it looked for a very long time - dead.

But it wasn't dead. It was dormant while it was restored and transformed. Like a caterpillar in a cocoon. Like Isaiah was transformed.

The church may appear to be like this old stump, dormant with a shoot or two coming out. But, what if we are undergoing transformation to make way for new growth, where we emerge into the light and accept a new call. A new tree grows.

A butterfly lays eggs. Isaiah accepts his call. The people experience devastation and exile then return, are restored, and find new hope and a new nation emerges. That holy seed takes root in people's hearts and grows, and God's grace and blessing brings about new growth.

## Song -We are the Church – for Reflection and Prayer

*I am the church! You are the church!  
We are the church together!  
All who follow Jesus all around the world,  
yes, we're the church together!*

The church is not a building,  
the church is not a steeple,  
the church is not a resting-place,  
the church is a people!  
*I am the church! You are the church!....*

We're many kinds of people  
with many kinds of faces,  
all colours and all ages too,  
from all times and places.  
*I am the church! You are the church!....*

And when people gather  
there's singing and there's praying,  
there's laughing and there's crying sometimes  
all of it saying:  
*I am the church! You are the church!....*

I count if I am ninety  
or nine or just a baby;  
there's one thing I am sure about, and  
I don't mean maybe:  
*I am the church! You are the church!  
We are the church together!  
All who follow Jesus all around the world,  
yes, we're the church together!*

Richard K. Avery 1934-  
and Donald S. Marsh 1923-

### Sermon – Rev Tina

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



Simon Peter and his partners had been fishing all night in Lake Gennesaret near the border not far from the large fishing port Capernaum. They are using trammel nets made from linen, not visible to fish at night. Jesus, seen as a prophet brings the word of God to the people and there is such a crowd, he uses one of Simon Peter's boats to speak to the people. Its early morning and the fishermen are washing the nets, when Jesus asks them to fish from a particular place and when they do, they are amazed at the size of the catch. So, we have the word of God associated with what could be considered a miracle.

What stands out is Peter's response. He knows Jesus is divine and falls on his knees in front of Jesus, a response normally made to God, worship as a response to the divine. Not only that, Peter in front of everyone, business partners and the crowd, says: "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" He

calls Jesus “Lord.” He knows in his heart Jesus’ true identity and at the same time knows of his unworthiness before God. Peter was well known for his honesty.

Jesus’ response is one that angels make when speaking to those who are afraid in the presence of God and the divine. “*Do not be afraid*”. Then Jesus commissions Simon. “*From now on you will be catching people*”

Peter and his partners bring their boats to shore, and they leave everything behind, and they follow Jesus.

Three things happen in today’s gospel: Jesus proclaims the word of God and performing miracles; Peter is transformed and called and Peter’s response to his call. I wonder how the gospel speaks into our lives.

We witness Jesus proclaiming the gospel and performing miracles when we encounter the bible, over our lifetime of faith in Jesus. We, in front of everyone publicly confess there are things in our lives which need God’s grace and transformation and at times we may feel unworthy when we feel close to God and called into a particular ministry. We may fall down on our knees and worship Jesus and call him Lord, like Peter did, and yet be filled with many fears. Jesus says to us “*fear not*” and calls us to be fishers of people. I wonder how we respond to Jesus’ invitation.

Today’s gospel offers us many layers of meaning and offers us four actions:

An epiphany  
A reaction or response  
Reassurance from God  
Our commissioning

This dynamic keeps on repeating itself in our life again and again as we embrace it and grow in faith. God gently leads us step by step until it’s God’s time for us and we are ready to leave behind the things we need to let go of to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

I wonder whether there is something each one of us needs to let go of, to follow Jesus.

A fortnight ago the gospel was about Jesus leaving behind his hometown, so he could grow into all God called him to be, where he could complete his mission amongst us. Perhaps Jesus calls us to leave behind all that’s stopping us from being transformed into all God calls us to become. We often think of ourselves as one person, but time changes us and often it takes another person to reveal to us the changes in us. It’s a gift to come to know who we have become because of our faith if we are willing to listen.

The other day my seven-year-old granddaughter said when I read books, I don’t skim through them. I ponder on a word and look it up and go deeper into its meaning. That’s how I learn, and it takes me longer to learn because of it. I used to feel unworthy because I’m slow to learn, but my granddaughter helped me see that this is a good thing. I said: *Thank you*. Imagine a child being reassuring. Just like Jesus was with Peter who was feeling unworthy. He said: “*fear not*” and then called him. My granddaughter made me feel better about learning new things at “my age.” Now I feel more confident in responding to God’s call to learn “new things” at my age.

If someone offers you an insight about yourself, that helps you stop feeling unworthy and feel that yes, you have something to offer, listen and receive this gift and thank the person who gives it to you. Don’t let your mindset hold you back from responding to God’s call on your life.

We can understand how many people feel hopeless today, because of several years of this pandemic. They may think: *Why bother!* There will be another delay, postponement, or cancellation. Some of you may have watched the tennis last week and may have stayed up until 1:30am watching Nadal play. Aussies tend to support the underdog. Nadal had injuries and Covid and is considered too old for tennis. At one stage he was so close to losing the game. Yet, he fought back. He gave it all. He believed in himself. His opponent Medvedev is a young man and hoped Nadal would get tired. But Medvedev ended having leg cramps and needing massages. Somehow Nadal rose above whatever was holding him back, and he won. I was saying: Yes! Yes! Nadal was inspiring.



These images are from a holiday by the sea. I'm drawn to the sea. It's a place of rest. This year I felt tired after a long year of lockdowns and as I walked along the beach, I pondered about how can we keep on responding to God's call on our lives, when we are time, energy and health limited.

I believe all things are possible with God, if we can believe in God and depend upon the power of prayer. I know God will find a way and so will we. Perhaps we need to be willing to venture out and have a go and work at it and stick with it, whatever it may be. God's call is a walk of faith.

Perhaps if we let go and let God in, anything is possible. If I have to use a metaphor, it's Everest. We tend to think: *Basecamp*. God thinks: *The summit*. With God's help we can go higher in our expectations and achieve what we think is impossible. Jesus would say to us: *Fear not! From now on you will be catching people*. All things are possible for God. You have unique gifts and can make a difference and contribute. The good news from today's gospel is God offers each one of us an epiphany in life and invites us to respond and whenever we feel unworthy God reassures us and continues to call and commission us. Call isn't a one off. It's continual where we build on our gifts and contributions. May the Lord bless all of us on our journey of discipleship.

### Quiet moment



### 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?

### Communion Rev. Peter

Based on the litany by Rev Craig Mitchell,

[http://craigmitchell.typepad.com/mountain\\_masala/2010/04/holy-week-chapel-service.html](http://craigmitchell.typepad.com/mountain_masala/2010/04/holy-week-chapel-service.html)

### Gathering

There are times when the story of our lives takes an unexpected turn. A new chapter that throws us off-balance, a turn of events that leaves us stumbling, bewildered, frightened, and speechless; a shocking, unexpected loss, a close relationship shattered, a bitter reality revealed, the arrival of a pandemic, an undeserved fall from grace; A time when all our beliefs are called into question, when friendships turn

fickle, when every choice feels like a dead-end, when truth itself is played like a chess piece. There are times when the story of our lives pauses at a blank page and there seems nothing to write, nowhere to go next, no-one to tell, and no-one who cares. We all know times like these we all carry their memory in our hearts.

We invite you to glimpse and listen and touch and taste, to allow your senses to be windows to a story waiting to be written on your heart, mind and soul. Let us accompany one another into this place where we hear the assurances of God's love – even in the midst of struggle, pain and conflict. May the words and stories of encouragement and reassurance lift us and renew us.

### Communion

Why have we gathered here?  
**We come because we have been called to live out a story**  
**What story shall we live?**  
**The story of saving love**  
**Where did this story begin?**  
**It was whispered before time began. It was sung in the melody of Creation.**

Whose story is this?  
**This story is God's alone to tell. It hums in the rivers and the trees. It whispers in the skies and the seas. It calls to the people of all places. It speaks in our hearts, in our lives.**  
 Why then should we speak of this story?  
**This story calls our name in Creation. This story claims our lives through the Cross. This story shapes our future through the Spirit. We are its telling in this time and this place.**

So tell me the story of this night, of this table  
**The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it** (*taking and breaking bread*)  
**Tell me what he said and did**  
**This is my body which is broken for you Do this and remember me**  
 Tell me what he said and did (*taking and pouring cup*)  
**In the same way, he took the cup and said, "This is a new covenant in my blood. Drink it and remember me." This is our common story; our deep memory, our true destiny.**  
**So let it also be our storytelling, our testimony. Let's celebrate the way that grace has shaped our lives. I invite you to say aloud a prayer of thanks (pause)**

**Hear the storytellers of all ages whisper with us**  
**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**

**What is our prayer on this day?**  
**Pour out your Holy Spirit on us; so this everyday meal becomes an eternal feast; so that our eating and drinking today unites us with Christ, whose body and blood are given for us.**  
**So we know that you live in us and that we live in you.**  
**So that we live in your world knowing it is indeed yours.**  
**Living God, this is our prayer. Amen.**

### Lord's Prayer

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name*  
*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is 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 for ever. Amen.*

## Distribution

### Prayer after Communion by Kurt Struckmeyer

Let us pray.

God of love, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this meal. Send us from here to reveal your love in the world. Inspire in us the resolve and the courage, the compassion and the passion, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Amen

### Offering Prayer – Rev Pete

(inspired by Matthew 14:13-21)

Merciful God, the gifts we bring are so small in comparison to the vast needs in our world—nowhere near enough to save the thousands dying of starvation all around the world, or even to meet the needs of the hungry and homeless in our city. Yet we have brought what we can.

As You once multiplied the five small loaves and two fish, multiply these gifts as well, so that, once again, the hungry may receive all they need, and more. Amen.

~ *Christine Longhurst, re: Worship*

### Prayers of the People – Tim Joyce

God of passion and power,  
 When money becomes a prison:  
 When income determines worth:  
 When economies deepen injustice:  
 Where consumption replaces compassion:  
 Free us to choose life that our responses and our actions will be guided by love.

Almighty God

We pray for the Church throughout the world, that we may demonstrate to the world a living, vibrant faith. That it will be responsive to the context and demands of the day and to the needs of the people it serves.

We pray for the Whitehorse Cluster of Churches that united by our common faith, we will discern your will for us and forge the path ahead. We pray that we will serve you and our community. We pray for the ministry team of Tina, Peter and Pete. Guide them and grant them wisdom. We pray too Lord for other churches; for St Thomas' Catholic, Blackburn; UCA: Whittlesea; Bridgewater Centre, Rowville. We pray for the ministry they undertake in their communities, for their witness and work and that through them people may come to know You.

God of Peace - we pray for Your world. We pray this morning for: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Western Sahara, Tunisia.

#### **We are thankful for:**

How the early Christian church developed here.

The biodiversity of plants, animals and the natural terrain.

How Berber, Arab and European cultures have blended.

How these countries have remained and stood against the invasion of cultural and military forces from elsewhere.

#### **We pray for:**

All the people of these countries: Muslims, the tiny remnant of Christians, those of other faiths who continue to bear witness to their faiths and for all people of good will. An end to political violence. An end to how dominating powers have fought over these lands and their resources through the years. For those suffering exploitation and mistreatment as they travel through these countries.

#### **God of Justice**

We pray for these people and all who suffer, are mistreated, are neglected or forgotten – wherever they may be. We pray for the marginalised, forgotten, suffering or lonely. For the mentally ill, the unemployed, for those who live without hope. We pray for refugees and asylum seekers– that they will be treated with respect and dignity; as brothers and sisters in need. For victims of war and natural disaster– that their lives and their communities may be rebuilt. We pray for those without a roof over their heads, clean water to drink or food to eat, without friends or family – that you will provide comfort and support. We pray for

those impacted by the pandemic. For healthcare workers. For those who have suffered loss and hardship. For those battling to stay a step ahead in the development of vaccines. For just access to vaccines and medical care. We pray that our leaders, our governments, our churches, our communities, will be responsive to those in need. We pray for ourselves, that through our choices, actions and words we may live out our faith in our everyday lives, growing more compassionate and generous each day. We pray for justice  
O Lord

Merciful Lord, we pray for those in special need at this time. For the sick, the lonely, the grieving. Loving Lord, we entrust these people to your care and we pray that our decisions, our responses and our actions will be guided by love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **YouTube Hymn - The Summons – John Bell**

Sung by St Matthew's Episcopal Church 2021

[https://youtu.be/VP\\_QEeE\\_CQ4](https://youtu.be/VP_QEeE_CQ4)

### **Blessing**

We go in Peace  
With the Love of God  
In the Power of the Spirit  
May the Lord Bless and Guard us  
May the Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious unto us  
May the Lord Look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen

### **Song of Meditation to leave by – “I become what I receive” Alana Levandoski 2018**

<https://youtu.be/PJVeg97lEvE>

### **Pastoral care Tips – Rev Tina**



#### **Psalm 40:2 NRSV**

*<sup>2</sup> He drew me up from the desolate pit,<sup>[a]</sup>  
out of the miry bog,  
and set my feet upon a rock,  
making my steps secure.*

There seems to be a lot of fear and misunderstanding around hospitality and how we offer it during the pandemic. Most of us are familiar with poems such as Desiderata and Footsteps, reminding us God will never fail us.

We naturally love being together and for many a lifetime of intimacy and closeness can't be eradicated by a pandemic. We do the best we can to care for one another by using all we have, isolating if symptoms appear, having a RAT and PCR tests, avoiding mixing with people who have positive symptoms but still offering compassionate and practical support, using common sense, eating outdoors when in a crowd, not breathing all over each other, and the list grows longer. We no longer have lockdowns; most people are vaccinated and

have had a booster, and we are learning to live with Covid. It may not go away. So how do we continue to offer hospitality?

When I say hospitality it's not just about food. It's a mindset and ministry that embraces an open heart and compassion towards one another. This year we will be journeying with Luke's gospel and will focus on the theme of God's hospitality to us and ours to one another. Each of us has a different experience of hospitality and over the year we will explore this. During Lent I hope to offer five movies that explore hospitality as a Lenten Study, and we will have an opportunity to share our stories, discuss what we discover from the movie and think about hospitality. I will explore the most practical way of doing this where we take care of one another (COVID safe) and yet, enjoy the movies and have fun being together. Further details will appear in the newsletters.

Peter and Pete will also offer opportunities to explore hospitality in a variety of ways over Lent. Please join us on the journey as we explore Luke's gospel together.



*Many thanks to Lorraine and Barney*