



Sunday 13th February 2022

Introit – 703 As the deer pants for the water – Christian Fellowship TV 2019

<https://youtu.be/78lj3sl8L9M>

Welcome

May the Worship bless you

Acknowledgment

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.

Call worship

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord

They shall be like a tree planted by water

Sending out its roots by the stream

Happy are those who delight in the word of God

They shall be like trees planted by streams of water

Which yield their fruit in its season and their leaves do not wither



Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession

Loving God, you bless us in so many ways that make us whole

You transform our lives

We long to be closer to you

We long to know you

Jesus our Lord

You came to save us

to release and set us free

to make us whole

We long to be closer to you

We long to know you

Holy Spirit

You fill us with God's love

You empower us for ministry

We long to be closer to you

We long to know you

Come upon us Holy Spirit
 Open our hearts so we may be saved,
 forgiven, made whole, empowered for ministry.
Come Holy Spirit, come upon us

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 We thank you for the gift of forgiveness
 For your grace and release from all that binds us and oppresses us

**Forgive us
 Set us free
 Make us whole
 We ask this in Jesus' name, amen**

560 All my hope on God is founded from Hymn Channel 2017
St Albans Church Bristol
<https://youtu.be/W3LCGh02Vew>

Readings -from The Message

Jeremiah 17:5-10

⁵⁻⁶ GOD's Message: "Cursed is the strong one who depends on mere humans, who thinks he can make it on muscle alone and sets GOD aside as dead weight. He's like a tumbleweed on the prairie, out of touch with the good earth. He lives rootless and aimless in a land where nothing grows. ⁷⁻⁸ "But blessed is the man who trusts me, GOD, the woman who sticks with GOD. They're like trees replanted in Eden, putting down roots near the rivers— Never a worry through the hottest of summers, never dropping a leaf, serene and calm through droughts, bearing fresh fruit every season.

⁹⁻¹⁰ "The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But I, GOD, search the heart and examine the mind. I get to the heart of the human. I get to the root of things. I treat them as they really are, not as they pretend to be."

Psalm 1

How well God must like you— you don't walk in the ruts of those blind-as-bats, you don't stand with the good-for-nothings, you don't take your seat among the know-it-alls. ²⁻³ Instead you thrill to GOD's Word, you chew on Scripture, day and night. You're a tree replanted in Eden, bearing fresh fruit every month, Never dropping a leaf, always in blossom. ⁴⁻⁵ You're not at all like the wicked, who are mere windblown dust— without defence in court, unfit company for innocent people. ⁶ GOD charts the road you take. The road *they* take leads to nowhere.

Luke 6:17-26

¹⁷⁻²¹ Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him—so much energy surging from him, so many people healed! Then he spoke:

You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding. You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry. Then you're ready for the Messianic meal. You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes with the morning.

²²⁻²³ "Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like!—for even though they don't like it, I do . . . and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.

²⁴ But it's trouble ahead if you think you have it made. What you have is all you'll ever get. ²⁵ And it's trouble ahead if you're satisfied with yourself. Your *self* will not satisfy you for long. And it's trouble ahead if you think life's all fun and games. There's suffering to be met, and you're going to meet it. ²⁶ "There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them.

Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

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Young at Heart



What do trees need to be healthy?
Good soil, water, light and carbon dioxide and nutrients in the soil and not too much heat.

Today's readings speak of us being like trees

From NRSV

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord

From The Message

*“But blessed is the man who trusts me, GOD, the woman who sticks with GOD.
They're like trees replanted in Eden, putting down roots near the rivers—
Never a worry through the hottest of summers, never dropping a leaf,
Serene and calm through droughts, bearing fresh fruit every season.*



We are grounded in God

The very core of who we are is centred on God and our spiritual food comes from God
Our living water is the Holy Spirit. Our sustenance is the Word of God. We are rooted and grounded in God
through prayer and bear the fruits of the Spirit and our leaves never wither because of our trust in God.

Hymn - Not the powerful not the privileged

John Bell – Iona Community – Presentation from Wheaton College with some thoughts about John Bell
and John teaching the hymn and other songs. Goes for 30min or so. Good if you like John Bell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8W5IzB5VG8>

Sermon

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

I'd like to talk to you about a woman of prayer named Dorothy Aumann. You may recognise the surname. She came from one of the old orchard families in the region. She was a woman of prayer, a lifetime elder and an artist. Last time I saw her she was weary and finding it difficult - being in her late nineties. After Dorothy passed away, I heard she had a possum cloak and wondered whether she had been an aboriginal elder, as many aboriginal people have lived in the Templestowe and Warrandyte area over the years. Her book of prayers from all the elders and church council meetings and prayers of the people has been collected and published and are treasured.

To me prayer is the foundation of our relationship with God.



I drew this rather rustic drawing of a tree to show what prayer offers us. It forms the soil we are planted in and bloom in and find life in and grow in and find God in. God forms the tap root at the core of our being, the word of God sustains us, and we draw from the living water of the spirit. Whenever we pray, we are grounded in God.



Prayer and the presence of God is obvious in today's gospel and the Beatitudes of Luke are provocative, where Jesus congratulates the poor for being poor, the hungry for being hungry and the weeping and reviled for their situation. But - woe to anyone who is wealthy, well-fed, laughing and enjoying a good reputation. What on earth is Jesus saying?

In ancient society and ours, people expect to be wealthy, well-fed, laughing and enjoying a good reputation. In our society when people see someone begging outside a supermarket, they assume the person has mental health issues or is on drugs. It's easier to label people. Then people don't have to get involved and we can keep them at a distance. Not Jesus! Crowds of people, the poor, the excluded, the deformed, the diseased, the labelled, the sinners and the unwanted, were welcomed by Jesus. They came to hear him speak the word of God. They came to reach out to him, despite being labelled as unclean, and they were healed.

Where is the good news in the gospel for us today? We come to hear the word of God in the gospels, and we come to be healed. Jesus invites us to be vulnerable and reach out to him in our hearts and find healing. All those in the crowds who came stood together in solidarity with one another in their willingness to become vulnerable and openly declare their need for healing. They were not alone. All of them shared this

vulnerability and need for wholeness and Jesus welcomed them all just like he welcomes all of us. We stand together in solidarity in our need for wholeness.

I watched a TED talk a few years ago by Brene Brown from The States. It's culturally very American but the issues she speaks about are universal. She speaks about people's self-talk: *I'm not good enough* and where that thinking comes from and how it holds people back and how being vulnerable helps people know they are enough. I'll put a link in the pastoral care tips in the written materials. The first step to finding healing is the willingness to be vulnerable and declare your need for healing, like the crowds of people who sought out Jesus and reached out to him. When we belong to a community and share the same needs and desires, it's not so scary to be vulnerable. We are among friends.

Jesus offered the hospitality of God to all those who came to him. The context of the beatitudes was the crowds of suffering people seeking healing and his teaching. We can reach out to Jesus in many ways to claim this hospitality and healing.

These are some ways to find healing:

Firstly, by making time to be with Jesus in prayer where we have a conversation and listen in our hearts. Secondly, by building a relationship of trust where we are willing to become vulnerable and reach out to Jesus and others, to find healing.

Thirdly, by being willing to receive Jesus' blessings by surrendering to his grace.

Fourthly, by sharing our stories of healing and how God has brought us through difficult times with others. Finally, by accepting we are loved by God, who makes us to be loved and to love others.

Sharing our stories helps others. My sister-in-law was a Buddhist, and I shared my story of finding strength in God during tough times when she opened up to me and shared her story of her husband dying of cancer after only 18 months of marriage. Not long afterwards, she became a catholic and found solace and support in her faith and church community. She found that Jesus is closer to us than our breathing, is always present to us and always there for us. I find Jesus is a comforting presence in the midst of life's chaos and noise. Jesus is a source of comfort for anyone doing it tough and suffering. Jesus said: *Blessed are you who weep, for you will laugh*. He meant the time will come when the sunshine comes out again and grief has become a familiar friend and we are able to move on and embrace new hopes and begin again.

The good news is we can ground ourselves in God and allow our roots to go down into the living waters of the spirit where we are nourished and come alive in Christ and his community, the church. We can find healing and comfort and support. The good news is the poor in spirit who are willing to become vulnerable and reach out to Jesus for healing will be healed and will receive the kingdom of God. God's hospitality is there for all of us. We are all welcome.

Moment of Quiet Reflection



717 Give thanks with a grateful heart – Henry Smith (Teachable heart 2010)

<https://youtu.be/Y1WmzRxBGFY>

Offering prayer

(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.

Prayers of the People – Rhonda Goodall

Lord our God how great you are. You never cease to amaze us, Lord, with your eternal love for and faith in us, your constant friendship and forgiveness is beyond all measure.

In our prayers today we remember the countries of Andorra, Italy, Malta, Portugal, San Marino Spain and The Vatican City. Be with the leaders of each of these Mediterranean European countries as they continue to keep their people safe from the pandemic. Give them the courage to make unpalatable policies which are aimed to reduce the death rate and encourage vaccinations. Assist them Lord in governing to promote equity and the distribution of wealth for the benefit of all.

In our ecumenical prayers Lord, we prayer for the ministers and the congregation of the New Hope Baptist Church, Blackburn North. Guide them as they prepare their programs to further your word amongst the wider community.

We also pray for the Uniting Church congregation in Yarra Junction and for Uniting AgeWell's Carnsworth community. Be with their leaders as they develop programs and activities to further your work Lord amongst them, that there be progress in their mission of building active community centres, inclusive of playgroups, youth programs and aged care facilities.

Lord we pray for our Whitehorse cluster of churches community. That you will guide us and give us courage in our mission and outreach within the community at large. Enable us to see and experience your glory in the faces of our neighbours.

Lord we remember the sick and infirmed amongst us. Lord, ease their suffering and give them comfort and peace in their time of need. Give us the grace Lord to do the hard things cheerfully, and to enjoy the easy things gratefully. And as our Lord Jesus taught us to pray:

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.

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 253 O Lord Jesus Marrkamir – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRedscL9cjk&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLlsLD2rC&index=6>

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

Hymn 778 Shalom to you Now – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9qTgdyYNQLlsLD2rC&index=35>

Pastoral Care tips

There are many websites that offer resources for prayer. **Joan Chittister** is one of my favourite writers and her website offers a great deal of resources for prayer and reflection.

<https://www.joanchittister.org/>

Brene Brown has a website.

She has written many books that have helped people find healing or reflect about life

<https://brenebrown.com/>

This is the link to Brene Brown's TED talk – The Power of Vulnerability

<https://youtu.be/iCvmsMzLF7o>



Healing Prayer

If you would like prayer after a church service, please let me know and a pastoral partner or minister's assistant and myself will pray for you.

Hospitality

The team is focusing on the theme of Hospitality this year and I've attached the notice about the Lenten studies for Lent. This year we journey with the gospel of Luke which focuses on Hospitality.

Hospitality means many things to many people and each one of us has had different experiences of hospitality. This Lent the ministry team will offer opportunities to reflect on hospitality, our hospitality to others and ourselves and God's hospitality to us. During Lent the worship services will focus on five readings that relate to hospitality. The Lenten studies will feature five films relating to hospitality, each one followed by discussion (Babette's Feast, Julie and Julia, The Visitor, Molokai and Les Miserables). There will be two groups meeting at two of the cluster churches. We have DVD's and possibly downloads.

Please contact Rev Tina to register for a group and indicate whether Sunday at 4pm or Wednesday at 10am suits. They will be accompanied by a weekly Praxis offered by Rev Pete, an invitation to journal or keep a folio. The invitation is to reflect about what touches your heart from the worship, studies or questions from the weekly Praxis. You may choose to buy a journal or use an online one (contact Rev Pete) or use an online resource called Bullet Journal (Rev Pete can assist with this) or keep a small folio of reflections, copies of articles or stories or photos in a folder or box.

A story about Hospitality in Nepal

I was a stranger in Nepal. I'd arranged my own guide and porter to guide me through the region of Lang Tang during the Maoist uprising during 2006. I knew the guide, Ishwar, from a previous trek and the porter was a young teacher named Chetan from the mountains around Pokara, seeking safety from the Maoists in Kathmandu.

We were trekking at high altitudes through a national park. We'd been trekking that day for over ten hours, and we were lost in the forest when we saw a light in the distance and trekked towards it. When we got closer, we saw it was a stone house. Ishwar knocked on the door and an elderly man in his eighties stepped out, lean and wearing well-worn clothes. He welcomed us into his home, smiling and gesturing us to sit down on a wooden bench around a firepit on the beaten earth floor of his home. The kerosene lantern on the table lit up the stone walls, giving us a sense of reassurance and safety. He made us hot tea and as we sat, I listened to Ishwar, Chetan and the old man have a long conversation in Nepali, with short interruptions to translate for me. He was the park ranger. There was a village not far from here. He would take us there. Guest is god in Nepal.

After our tea and feeling warmed by the fire, the park ranger took his lantern and led us down a long dirt track through the dark forests, where we lost track of time, until we saw lights in the distance. He kept shining the lantern onto the track, so we knew where to put our feet, and slowly led us down the side of a steep hill, until we reached the outskirts of the village. It was very quiet, and most people were asleep. The park ranger knocked on the door of a tea house and a lady stepped out wearing the traditional Tibetan striped apron and he had a conversation with her, then spoke with the porter who translated, yes there's room for us for the night. The park ranger smiled and waved as he walked away into the night, while the owner of the tea house waved and called after him in Nepali and then welcomed us in and fed us with hot soup. We went to bed quickly, Ishwar and Chetan in one room and me in another.

Have you a memory of being a stranger in a foreign country or within Australia where someone offered you this kind of hospitality? Give thanks to God for that person. If you'd like to share that story please send me a copy and I'll share it in the written materials.