

Order of Service 13-06-2021

Song of Procession

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie Eleison, have mercy,

Christe Eleison, have mercy.

As we come before You with the needs of our world,
We confess our failures and our sin;
For our words are many yet our deeds have been few,
Fan the fire of compassion once again.

When the cries of victims go unheard in the land,
And the scars of war refuse to heal,
Will we stand for justice to empower the weak
Till their bonds of oppression are no more?

If we love our God with all our heart, mind and strength,
And we love our neighbours as ourselves,
Then this law of love will heal the nations of earth
And the glory of Christ will be revealed.

Lord, renew our vision to be Christ where we live,
To reach out in mercy to the lost;
For each cup of kindness to the least in our midst
Is an offering of worship to the throne.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=575a9FuWpdo&list=PLmRxR8y_N_n8mRLlunrIJ_mx3pTxVFAIc&index=15

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wurrundjeri people of this land. We recognise that many of us are not the first peoples of this place and that many of benefit from the colonialism of this land. As we do this, we recognise that we desire to walk together on this land, growing into the fullness that awaits us as reconciled peoples.

Welcome (Peter Rivett)

May this paper liturgy find you on your favourite chair, in a safe and warm place.

I write this welcome from my parent's house on Thursday after. At my house we have no power due to the storm cell that passed over us last night. There are some 25 trees down in our street, with many resting on powerlines. Some of our neighbours had lucky escapes as trees fell on to roofs and garages. Some were not so fortunate.

As we cut up the three trees that snapped like toothpicks in our front yard, we had a collection of neighbours and strangers grabbing branches, offering help and equipment all around our neighbourhood. We had people who have gas stoves offering to boil kettles for us or offer us hot showers at their houses. In the midst of this great moment of upheaval, neighbours came into the street, into relationship. In our language, It was a kingdom of God moment.

Opening Prayer

Creative gardener, Holy one whose hands scatter seeds across the earth. Be with us. Create spaces for germination, allowing life to grow even in the desolate places, especially in the desolate places. Bring a sense of your abundant harvest to come. Amen

Opening Song:

All Ye Refugees: Sandra McCracken

I am the One, the earth is my handmade work
The skies I laid them wide, beauty unfurled
Horizon to horizon
Creation to creation, sings you home

Welcome home, gather round all ye refugees, come in.

Oh refugee, I did not cast you out in death and broken ground,
Salvation springs
My body and my blood, the healing that you need
Come and receive

Welcome home, gather round all ye refugees, come in.

Watch and wait and see, what is yet to be
Watch and wait and see, for the morning

Go out in joy and join the great procession
The mountains and the heav'ns all will rejoice
Horizon to horizon, creation to creation
Horizon to horizon, creation to creation
With one voice

Welcome home, gather round all ye refugees, come in.

Source: Musixmatch

Prayers of the People

Our dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you Lord that you walk with us in our faith journey. We thank you too that we are able to gather in our Church this morning. Be with us as we gather.

Gracious and loving God, You call us to love you with our whole being, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. At this time of upheaval and distress for nations and people across our world, may your love hold us together. May your love be the lens through which we see each other and your world.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are present with us as one who knows our suffering, bring comfort and peace to all those who are grieving the loss of loved ones, work, connection and hope for the future.

May we embody your compassion – responding to the suffering of our neighbours, our families our friends, and strangers with generosity. Life-giving Spirit, you weave us together as the Body of Christ, strengthen our life together, even though we are physically separated. Nurture us in faith and discipleship, that we may bear witness through our living, to your abundant grace and liberating hope for all people and the whole creation.

Through Christ our Life and Hope, we pray. Amen. *Dr Deidre Palmer – President of the Uniting Church in Australia*

Offering Prayer

Giver of Abundant life, we bring our sacrifices to your work. With thankfulness we offer what we have to ensure this community can support the ongoing work of your kingdom.

Amen

Song

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

Gaither Vocal Band, Ernie Haase & Signature Sound

There's a sweet, sweet, spirit in this place
And I know that it's the spirit of The Lord
There are sweet expressions
On each face
And I know you feel the presence of The Lord
Sweet Holy Spirit

Sweet heavy dove stay right here with us
Filling us with your love
And for these blessings
We lift our hearts in praise
Without out a doubt we'll know
That we have been revived
When we shall leave this place

Source: Musixmatch
Songwriters: Akers Doris
Sweet, Sweet Spirit Lyrics © Manna Music, Inc., Manna Music Inc

<https://youtu.be/PZiONT-6P2s?list=RDEMGAvdTmObYRWaFD7ei5ic5w>

Prayer of Illumination

We come to our reading today seeking many things,

Comfort,
Affirmation,
Order in the chaos.

But mostly, we come seeking an understanding of your kingdom. We have already tried our kingdoms, they haven't really worked out so well. So we come, once again, seeking your kingdom.

What do you have for us? Something grand and wonderful, all marble and gold? Something that shows us what life in you looks like?

God who grows the seeds in the soil, who produces new wine, who feeds all those who come in hunger, reveal your kingdom in your words today.

Amen

Reading

Mark 4:26-34

26He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.” 30He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.” 33With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Amy-Jill Levine; Marc Zvi Brettler. The Jewish Annotated New Testament (p. 79). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

post-reading: ‘Lord, may your Word live in us’.

Reflection (Peter Cannon)

[A reflection on Mark 4:26 – 34 \(with a little on 1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:13\)](#)

Rev Peter Cannon

I love a good story. It seems to be able to carry me through into spaces, ideas and times I have never been. I also find that really great stories are engaged differently by different people. Stories give colour and vibrancy to understanding life. Our context and experiences feed into how we engage the story. There is no either/or.

It is the same with Biblical stories. They provide a window into God’s story, creation’s story, the human story and our connectedness. We get glimpses and see elements of life with God dynamically.

In our reading from Samuel, we read of the very real grief of Samuel of the rejection of Saul. Much is not clear in the telling. Was the grief over a bad decision by Samuel, his disappointment in Saul or his broken relationship with him? We are not told but left to imagine.

We are told that God sees into the heart. We glimpse that God sees beyond what we can know. It points to a deeper knowledge and insight that we are invited to participate in.

We also read of God changing God’s mind! God “regrets” or is “sorry” for having chosen Saul! Wow but we have been brought up with the notion that God never changes and is above all such things... Maybe then we are seeing that God actually journeys through life with us, allowing us to make decisions, both good and bad? Maybe we are seeing a God that is willing to risk bad choices from God’s people? What a mystery! What does that say to me about where I fit?

And Jesus then makes clearer what life is like *living in tune with God*. (I use here this description rather than the traditional terms, living in the “Kingdom of God” or “Reign of God”.) But the weird thing is that Jesus speaks in parables... He seems to be trying to make things clearer by obscuring them in metaphors and story! One thing Jesus does say that hints towards understanding is to listen. Yes, even to keep listening and seeking. We need to open our ears to hear. The story becomes a window, a window arising from the everyday.

In Mark 4: 21 – 25 he encourages his disciples to keep listening so as to understand. Such understanding invites us to participate in the community of God's people, a community that grows without our manipulation or control.

Yet in the very next parable there is no explanation for us. But in the parable after that, an explanation of sorts is given by Jesus. It was often presented to me as being about faith being like the seed which grows but it seems to be more about the community in tune with God. It describes life in a new community of those *in tune with God* (under God's reign). There is protection, comfort and a new home. The exhortation to continue to listen and explore however warns us to not get locked into one understanding but to continue to listen in our setting.

As I listened to a discussion about these readings, I was struck by the range of issues and ideas that were touched on. Some were about politics, others were about community relationships and others about God's involvement with people. In the end, I was struck with how the stories became a window into understanding more about God and living close to God, all while living alongside one another.

Frustrated that I haven't explained much? May I suggest spending time to listen, to test the water? Maybe take some time to observe? I wonder if you will see more clearly in ordinary life the wonderful mystery of God?

Some questions for reflection:

How does sitting with the mystery of God lead us to see God's presence? What characteristics will you then see in the communities of those who claim life as God's people?

The parables raise suggestions that much is beyond our ability to affect or change. What then are we left with to do if we are to participate in living as part of God's community?

Covid has brought major disruption to our lives. How do you see God's Spirit working and bring life in the midst of this? How can you participate in what God is doing?

Prayer of Confession and affirmation

God who speaks in whispers, we confess that we often fill our heads and our lives with so much static and noise that we miss your calling. Sometimes we intentionally block our ears to you to avoid hearing your uncomfortable truth. It is not that we do not wish your kingdom to come, it is that we are often too comfortable or too afraid to move ourselves into the reality of that kingdom.

God who shows us miracles, we often overlook the awesomeness of you revealed in the ordinary. With our eyes drawn to things of our own making, or symbols of strength and power, we forget that your miracle is revealed as a seed sprouts. We are often engaged in our societies desire of the spectacular that we neglect the miracle of life is found in the welcoming of the stranger, the sharing of bread and celebration of life at the table. We forget that your everyday miracles are never any less miraculous.

God who implores us into wonderfully disruptive behaviour, we are sorry when we allow social expectations to limit our response to your desires. Forgive us when we would rather retreat than risk ourselves in your prophetic vision.

Prayer of Affirmation

God who expresses life in the extraordinary ordinary, you understand us. You understand our shortcomings, our misgivings and fears. You understand us because you hold us in our weakness. You

understand us because you confront our apathy. You understand us because you call to us even in the midst of our busyness, knowing that we will hear you and that we desire to respond. God who breathes life into our every moment, be present in us.

Amen

Song –

The Summons: John Bell

Will you come and follow me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
Will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown
In you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
If I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
And never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
In you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
If I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean,
And do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean
In you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
If I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
And never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound
In you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
When you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
And never be the same.
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
In you and you in me.

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https://youtu.be/qer1dou6-xg?list=PLmRxR8y_N_n8mRLlunrIJ_mx3pTxVFAIc

Benediction

Imagine what the mustard seed of the kingdom of God might do this week in your life.
Not a gram, nor a kilogram, nor a truckload. Just one mustard seed.
Imagine.
Now go and live out that reality.
Yes! Let it be so! Amen!

Adapted from the **Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren**
website. <http://rockhay.tripod.com/worship/orders/2010/10-10-03.htm>

Outroit –

Hallelujah George Frideric Handel, Aneta Mihályová

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

The kingdom of this world

Is become the kingdom of our Lord

And of His Christ, and of His Christ

And He shall reign for ever and ever

And He shall reign for ever and ever

And He shall reign for ever and ever

For ever and ever, forever and ever

King of kings (Forever and ever Hallelujah!

Hallelujah!)

And Lord of lords (Forever and ever Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!)

King of kings (Forever and ever Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!)

And Lord of lords (Forever and ever Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!)

King of kings (Forever and ever Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!)

And Lord of lords (King of kings and Lord of lords)
And He shall reign

And He shall reign

And He shall reign forever and ever

King of kings (Forever and ever)

And He shall reign (Hallelujah! Hallelujah!)

And He shall reign forever and ever

King of kings! and Lord of lords!

King of kings! and Lord of lords!

And He shall reign forever and ever

Forever and ever

Forever and ever

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah!

Source: Musixmatch

Songwriters: Handel

Hallelujah lyrics © Warner-tamerlane Publishing Corp., Buena Vista Music Co., B Lion Music, Tcf Music Publishing Inc, Australian Music Examinations Board Ltd, Classical Kids Publishing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=918Xj0XSxhs>