



Weekly Worship



Pentecost 9
Sunday July 30, 2023

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Jesus told a parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all the seeds ... but becomes a tree"

We gather knowing that even from little things, God can grow big things to surprise and renew.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Guide me O thou great redeemer TiS 569

OR: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty TiS 111



Prayer

Guide us O great God.
Guide us as we wonder at all you do
and how you do that with us.

We hear of the tiny mustard seed
growing into a strong and tall home
for the birds of the sky.

We give thanks that you care for the sparrows;
that you care for each of us;
that you care for the whole of creation.

Be near us when we find it hard
to see what is possible in you.

When the mustard seed is too tiny ...
When the tree grows too slowly ...
When we look for something more enthralling
than a scrubby mustard bush ...

We also hear of Christ's love for us
but often fear it can't be true.

We observe a time of silent reflection.

Followers of Christ, the apostle Paul reminds us:

neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As Paul speaks of Christ's love, may we find ourselves immersed often and always in that gracious love. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**





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Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Genesis 29:15-28
Psalm 105:1-11, 45b
Romans 8:26-39
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting

Rev. Jennie Gordon

As followers of Jesus, we are trained for the kingdom of heaven, disciples as pilgrims on Jesus' way, instructed as companions in the realm of love. This realm of heaven looks like what we have been shown in Jesus' picture parables from today's reading in Matthew's gospel. Seemingly small and insignificant in the wider world, but capable of unexpected and exaggerated abundance, worthy enough to risk everything to discover.

Recently my son was married in a glorious and short ceremony in the State Registry Office followed by a wonderful reception with music and dancing, speeches and poetry, food and wine and lots and lots of love. It had taken me a long time to work out what to wear and, in the end, I chose an old/new outfit. My sister's dress is mid-length black velvet and she loved to wear it on the most special occasions. She was another mother to my children and died 15 years ago. Wearing her dress meant that she was there somehow, her vivacious presence was marked in a tangible way. Over my shoulders, I threw an outrageous piece of fabric, a shawl of vibrant orange and soft blue, my new expression, to honour the day.

In the last verse of the reading from Matthew's gospel, we hear Jesus say: "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." We are encouraged then, as people disciples for the realm of heaven, to bring out of our treasure what is new and what is old. We don't drag the new kicking and screaming out of the old, or cling to the old and refuse to make eye-contact with the new, neither do we preference one above the other. They sit alongside each other, both treasures, waiting to be brought out into the light.

Reflecting continues





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Reflecting continues

What is the new and what is the old? Maybe that's a matter for interpretation. The bible is a collection of little books of every sort and description written over a long period of time, the very earliest dating, in part at least, as far back as 1200 BC or perhaps even earlier, the latest as late as AD 150. ... [1] The bible could be said to be a treasure of old. So also, may be some of our prayers, creeds and hymns. These are treasures of the past that can anchor and reassure us, that speak in the ancient, honoured voices of our ancestors, our saints. Sometimes we need them to hold on to and some hold on to them tighter than others. We hear the voices of the Reformation in the 1500's, calling us into a different way of worship and service, are they old voices or are they new? Is there a new reformation happening now?

As a treasure of old, the bible is constantly being read in new and exciting ways. Inspired exegesis, new understandings of history and language and deeper spiritual insights in the context of our current world, all lead us to new ways of reading the old stories and text. Fresh expressions of church are springing forth, do you see them? New ways of coming together and being sent as followers of Jesus, inspired by the Spirit amongst us. Some people constantly seek and yearn for new ways, loving change, refreshment, challenge and a fresh vision. We need to hear those voices too, maybe they are the new reformers.

We are encouraged to see them both as treasure, the old and the new, as expressions of the mysterious realm of heaven that is working away within, around and amongst us, like yeast in the flour, energising and making us rise with life. We are encouraged then, to bring out the old and the new and to wear them together in our lives of worship and discipleship. I wonder, what does that look like for you, and for your community of faith?

[1] Mary Ellen Chase, *The bible and the Common Reader* (New York: Macmillan, 1944) p.3

Affirmation of faith

The Apostles' Creed

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Singing: Lord Jesus we belong to you TiS 686

OR: Like the murmur of a dove's song TiS 419





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Offering

Loving God, though what we offer may seem small as mustard seeds, bless and grow these gifts that they and we may grow into your vision of the kingdom of heaven, in the name of Christ. Amen.

Notices

July 31st is National Tree Day.
[National Tree Day](#)

Established in 1996 by Planet Ark, National Tree Day has grown into Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event. The program is a call to action for all Australians to get their hands dirty and give back to their community. Each year, around 300,000 people volunteer their time to engage in environmental activities that educate Australians about the world around them. While every day can be Tree Day, we dedicate the celebration of Schools Tree Day and National Tree Day to the last Friday and last Sunday in July. It's a day to venture outdoors, get to know your community and, most importantly, have fun!

Prayers for World & Community

God of things small and large, of things that draw us into vision and hope, help us to see yeast that leavens your bread, and seeds that invite renewal.

We pray for our world and reflect on the damage that humans have created to its environment. We give thanks for those who plant trees and seek to reverse the loss of habitat. May we be agents of your good creation, offering stewardship and care that it may sustain us all, especially those most vulnerable to human induced change.

We pray for places of conflict, knowing that many movements towards peace have come from small seeds. May small things grow into big things towards peace and justice for the world.



We pray for our community. We pray for those who seek a voice especially where it is not heard. We pray for both first nations people and later arrivals and our journey together. We pray for our nation coming to terms with an often difficult history and the call to be truth tellers, to encourage the right voices to be heard. May yeast leaven your bread for the sake of all who call Australia home.

We pray for our church, our families, our friends. We pray for places known and unknown that seeds of hope may grow, that yeast may surprise us with bread for all.

We pray together then as Jesus 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 for ever. Amen.**





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Singing: Thine be the glory

TiS 380

OR: Christ be my leader TiS 624

Blessing

The kingdom of heaven is:

like a small seed that grows into
a tree sheltering birds;

like yeast that takes a lifeless lump
of sticky flour and turns it
into delicious sourdough bread;

We go as people who see growth, renewal and
hope because this is the kingdom of heaven.

Go to bless and be blessed
in God's name:

Source, son and spirit. **Amen.**

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