



Weekly Worship

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday June 13, 2021

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Bring some seeds that can be sown to grow vegetables or flowers. Scatter a few around the base of the candle. Keep some for the prayers. Bring a small envelope for each person.

Light the candle.

Christ is the light of the world.

Call to Worship

Come everyone, come into this time of worship
leave the regrets that weigh you down,
leave the grudges and the gripes,
bring your open heart, your ready voice,
your love, your life.

Come Spirit of God, rest on us all,
fill us with the fire of your eternal presence
so that we might shine your light
for all to see.

Acknowledging

As we gather we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this occupied land that was never sold or ceded. This land that is in need of deep healing. We pay respects to elders past, present and emerging and commit ourselves to walking together in justice and truth.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Come to be our Hope

TIS 688 (NB: Can easily be sung to ODE TO JOY)

Come to be our hope, O Jesus
come to set our people free.
From oppression, come, release us,
you alone give liberty.

Come release from every prison
those who suffer in our land.
In your love we find the reason
still to live and understand.

Come to build your new creation;
show the way of servanthood;
give new life to every nation,
changing evil into good.

Come and open our tomorrow
for a kingdom, now so near.
Take away all human sorrow,
give us hope against our fear.

¹ Jaci Maraschin & Marcilio de Oliveira Filho





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Listening

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13) 14-17

Prayer

Singing: Behold, behold...

*Behold, behold, I make all things new,
beginning with you.
And starting from today
behold, behold, I make all things new.
My promise is true
for I am Christ the way.*

² John Bell

God who makes all things new
we come with awe and gratitude
for the gift of this day.
The winter brings fresh blessings:
crunchy frost and clear blue skies,
howling winds and soaking rains,
snow on the peaks and roaring surf.
Our senses are filled with your glory.

In the changing of the seasons,
we witness the parables of Jesus unfolding.
Harvest is over, soils are bare,
seeds are being prepared for sowing.
The cycles of the year teach us
about preparing, tending, waiting,
then watching for 'the green blade rising
from the buried grain'.

We wonder too, at the way you renew us,
new thoughts, new experiences of you,
new ways of sharing your life.

In the quiet we bring our thanks to you,
for all the new things you are doing,
within and around us.
(time of quiet)

Singing: Behold, behold...



There are times when life is bare and barren,
and we lose hope,
and other times when we struggle to grow,
or have bits that need to be pruned,
or are too impatient
to wait and watch for what you are doing.

Remind us again of your constant forgiveness,
your freedom, your renewal.
Make us new so that we can walk your way
with light steps and a joyous heart.

Make us new, over and over,
through and through,
so that we can be your church,
fresh and alive, with hope in our sails
and your guiding love at the helm.

In the quiet we wait, we watch and we listen,
knowing that you will make us new.
(time of quiet)

Singing: Behold, behold...

Friends, from Pauls' letter to the Corinthians we
read: So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new
creation: everything old has passed away; see,
everything has become new!

Thanks be to God, Amen





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Listening

Read: Mark 4:26-34

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting

Rev. Nathaniel Akoi Atem

I have found the similarity of the parable of the growing seed to be related to the parable of the Fig Tree. By saying this: these two parables have a lot in common with each other based on the kingdom of God. They are both parables of the kingdom, that is, they both tell us something about what the kingdom of God is like. They both have to do with leaves, seeds and with fruitfulness and growth.

So it is appropriate that we reflect together this message on the parable of the growing seed. The reading of today reminds me and I can quote from the previous devotion of Rev Arnie Wierenga in our last Church Council meeting in Orbost, when he shared the parable of the barren Fig Tree in the Gospel of Luke 13: 6-9. In which I had been interested in the questions of, "What can be pruned to help us flourish? What expectations/habits can we let go of?" I had related this question to my Sudanese cultural background, where the Sudanese men do not cook because they are men! But we let go of that shame here in Australia and learnt to cook in order to support our wives.

In the reading according to Mark, examples I can use to explain this are: If we are disciples in the world, we have left our home and family to share the Gospel with people who have need to hear about Christ. Then we have to minister every morning and every evening, we pray that God will use us to bring his people to life and to grow his kingdom.

And yet the years go by, and we do not see the growth. What is happening?

You are a small church for instance in a community of people, most of them are not interested in Christ. Every Sunday you come together to worship God and proclaim his praises, you faithfully teach God's word and share Christ with friends and neighbours as you have opportunity. You plan events to reach out to the community, some people visit and stay.

Many others come and go. You are praying and working like crazy to see your church fruitfully grow, but no matter what you do you seem to stay about the same size. What is happening?

Sisters and brothers in Christ in Gippsland regions and in our Church. Jesus describes for us in these two parables, the parable of the growing seed and the parable of the Fig Tree.

Jesus told us these parables in order to encourage us to keep on sharing Christ in our regions even when we do not see results.

The kingdom of God does not always grow the way we think it should grow. So we need to grasp hold of these parables so that we may understand how God's kingdom grows, and what is our part in it all.

The first thing we need to learn from this parable I think is that if we want to see God's kingdom grow, we must plant the seeds. This is the most basic step when it comes to gardening or to ministry.

We are a farming community here in Gippsland. We are always preparing the ground and ploughing the land and getting everything ready for planting the seeds.





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Responding: Prayers for the World & Community

You may choose to invite people to scatter some seeds near the candle as these prayers are offered

We can not know the many ways you work in the world, God of all goodness, but we ask that you hear these prayers, like seeds we sow, and through your mysterious presence, grow hope and healing, shelter and comfort, reconciliation and peace.

We pray for places of ongoing war and conflict in our world:
(name some places, scatter seed)

**grow hope and healing,
shelter and comfort,
reconciliation and peace.**

We prayer for places struggling with the pandemic with inadequate health care and insufficient access to vaccines:
(name some places, scatter seed)

**grow hope and healing,
shelter and comfort,
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for lives and livelihoods impacted by lockdowns; businesses struggling, events disrupted, families kept apart, lives lost:
(name some people, scatter seed)

**grow hope and healing,
shelter and comfort,
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for our world, national and community leaders in the constant challenge of making wise decisions in these times:
(name some people, scatter seed)

**grow hope and healing,
shelter and comfort,
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for our church leaders, toiling to lead in a time of change, looking and listening for the new things:
(name some people, scatter seed)

**grow hope and healing,
shelter and comfort,
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for those we hold in our hearts, whose struggles we see and whose pain we share, and we pray for each other and ourselves:
(name some people, scatter seed)

**grow hope and healing,
shelter and comfort,
reconciliation and peace.**

Jesus, teller of parables, open our ears to hear you, our hearts to love you and our mouths to participate in speaking your new words into being.

As we pray the prayer you taught your disciples:





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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.**

Passing the peace

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

Offering

Bless the gifts we bring; our money, our time,
our faithfulness and our selves. Bless them and
use them where there is need. Bless them and
bless us as we participate in the growing of your
goodness and grace, for the love of all. Amen.

Notices

How are your people and your community in
the latest responses to and challenges of the
COVID-19 pandemic? What impact have the
lockdowns had on people and on your church
community? What new things might God have
grown through this time?

Singing: God gives us a future (TiS 687)

God gives us a future, daring us to go
into dreams and dangers
on a path unknown.
We will face tomorrow
in the Spirit's power,
we will let God change us,
for new life starts now.

We must leave behind us
sins of yesterday,
for God's new beginning
is a better way.
Fear and doubt and habit
must not hold us back:
God gives hope, and insight,
and the strength we lack.

Holy Spirit, teach us
how to read the signs,
how to meet the challenge
of our troubled times.
Love us into action,
stir us into prayer,
till we choose God's life
and find our future there.

³ Elizabeth J Smith & John Michael Brierley





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Blessing

Offer each person an envelope and invite them to take some of the scattered seeds to sow in a pot or in the ground, or to give to someone who will use them.

As you gathered us in, so send us out,
Spirit of life.

Send us out as new people,
blessed to have shared this time together,
open to the new things you are doing,
and ready to respond as we are able.

Children of God, followers of Jesus,
go knowing that you are loved
and that you have a particular part
in God's mysterious and wonderful work
in this world.

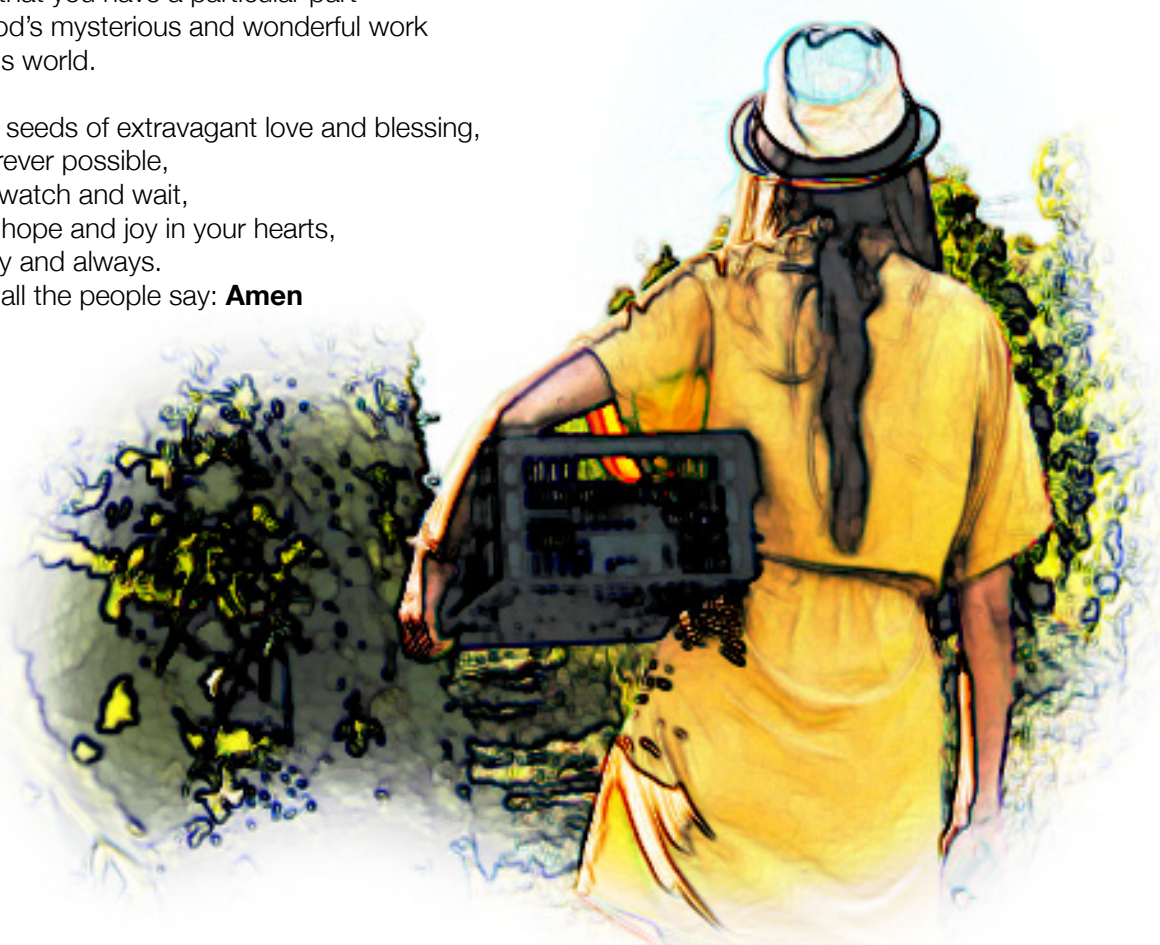
Sow seeds of extravagant love and blessing,
wherever possible,
and watch and wait,
with hope and joy in your hearts,
today and always.
And all the people say: **Amen**

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² Words and music: John Bell AoV2-085

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