



Pentecost Week 4

Worship@Home June 28, 2020

Call to worship

God gives life freely, thanks be to God.
We are free from death,
for we live under grace.
This God welcomes the little ones.
God calls you by name
and welcomes you in compassion,
Come and rejoice, whoever you are,
for there is a place for you.

Acknowledgement of Country

We give acknowledgement this day to the
First Peoples of our land, and in particular
the Bunurong peoples. We pay our respects
to their elders past, present and emerging.
We commit ourselves to truth-telling and the
seeking of reconciliation.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Light your Candle

Hymn: Father welcomes all his children Tis 491

*Father welcomes all his children
to his family through his Son;
Father giving his salvation
life for ever has been won.*

Little children
come to me
for my kingdom is of these;
life and love I have to give
mercy for your sin. *Refrain*

In the water
in the word
in his promise
be assured:
those who are baptized and believe
shall be born again. *Refrain*

Let us daily die to sin
let us daily rise with him
walk in the love of Christ our Lord
live in the peace of God. *Refrain*

'Robin Mann

Opening prayer

You greet us with love and compassion.
We give you thanks.
You give us a “yoohoo”
and greet us by name.
You reach out to welcome us with
a warm smile and space to share
around your table.
You bid us ‘welcome others’ to the feast with
our own “yoohoo”
over the metaphorical fence.
We give “yoohoo” to the little ones and bring
them in with gentle care.
Remind us to offer Kingdom hospitality and
value all people as you value us.
You greet us with love and compassion.
Thanks.



Worship for You @ Home: Pentecost Week 4 Uniting Church in Australia, VicTas, Presbytery of Gippsland



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Confession

How long O God will we forget your face, how long will we seek and not find you?!

We echo the lament of the Psalms, consider and answer us we pray.

We make mistakes and forget we are free. Instead, we choose to sit in the consequences of our disconnection.

The deep hurt in our soul draws us back to you.

Remove our guilt and shame and remind us of your steadfast love. You set us free! And you welcome us as your little ones, and gift us with grace and salvation.

You restore us to you in your steadfast love
We are freed and forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

The Readings

- Genesis 22: 1-14
- Matthew 10: 40-42

For these words of faith,
and Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Rev Ian Turnnidge

How long, O Lord?
How long must I bear pain in my soul?
Sorrow in my heart, all the day long?

How do you hear the voice of God?
It's an audacious thing to even think that one might be able to hear the voice of God.

Perhaps it's a question that's not helpful?
How we hear God might, not be helpful to ponder. It might be more helpful to ask **where** do we hear God? Or **in what** do we hear God? What is listening?

This week we are gifted with a reading from the Hebrew Scriptures of Abraham being 'tested' by God; to listen into the story of the journey of Abraham taking Isaac to the distant place to offer sacrifice. In the Gospel reading we hear of a community of welcome, in mission and ministry.

And in our service today, we will listen and pray the beloved Psalm 13, "How long, O Lord? How long will you hide your face from me?" A cry from the depths of our humanity for connection, re-connection: the most profound call of the human heart for God.

What's the cry of your heart to God, today?
What is listening to God? How do you hear the voice of God?

At the moment, I have a friend who has a "Direct line to God". It's quite a worrying thing, because the non-Christian kind of spirituality he has entered into has convinced him that his meditative practices, these new beliefs he has adopted, and the leader he has met has "The Direct line to God". It is such a different kind of belief and understanding of spirituality to the Christian Path.

Reflection continues P3

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Reflection continues

When I think about how I might hear God in my life, I'll share a story with you that happened just last week, here at Cowes, that might illustrate one of the ways I think I hear God.

As I was working at my desk, about 30 minutes before yet another ZOOM meeting, I had the impulse to get out of the house. I got up and walked up Chapel street Cowes, thinking it was a good opportunity to get some milk and bread at a quiet time of the day.

As I walked past the church, a young couple were surveying the building. If you're not familiar with the church building here at Cowes, it's an impressive structure. We have an original an 1895, '3-arched window' weatherboard church hall, and connected to it a worship centre, built in 'modernist' 1970's style, that has the most extraordinary roof line. Think of a convex-parabola, the keel of a boat, as the roof. It looks like a wave or a massive shark fin, or skate ramp! The architect, Paul Archibald, is also credited with the Uniting Church at Rosebud.

This couple was doing more than just looking at the building. They were clearly gesturing towards the parabolic roofline, and taking in the geometry. So, I asked them if they wanted to come in and have look? They did! We had a brief chat, I gave them some time to themselves to look about: and then we talked. The man was an architect student. One of his passions is Modernist design. He's been here before and always wanted to have a look inside. I was able to share with him the photo album of early building pictures, and share with him how the congregation actually helped build the building. It was a great conversation and a great chance meeting. To me it was one of those moments when I thought, "What are the chances – surely that is of God?"

Now, I don't want to push what was going on behind this chance meeting too far, (I've lived that kind of 'spirituality', and it can drive you crazy), but personally, I'm happy to hold that as a moment when, at some level, I was responding to the Divine impulse.

That's how it goes for me sometimes. A moment when my 'listening' is so automatic I find myself in the right place at the right time. Other times, something I've been reading or watching might make sense to another matter I've been dwelling with. But, then, I've always been delighted by the 'happy accident', the chance meeting of very moment.

I wonder how Abraham heard God? In the story today, Abraham's reply to God, "Here I am" is repeated. We are told that this is a test: God tested Abraham. But what did God test?

Lutheran theologian, Paul Nuechterlein reminds us of the two Hebrew words that are used in the Bible for God. The first Hebrew word is Elohim. It's the most general word for God: when the First Commandment says "Thou shall have no other gods before me", the word for god is Elohim. The same word is often used to describe false gods in the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the opening of today's story, it is Elohim who calls to Abraham. "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there was a burnt offering on one of the mountains I show you."

The second word for God in the Hebrew Scriptures is that name of God gifted through the burning bush to Moses. As Moses tests God, as he tries to avoid going to confront Pharaoh, God proclaim to Moses the name, Yahweh (YHWH), "I am who I am." In our English Bibles, where we see 'LORD' written, it refers to the Hebrew name for the one true God: YHWH.

Reflection continues P4

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Reflection continues

So, with that knowledge, when we look later in the story, after the long journey to the distant place, after Isaac has questioned his father as to the sacrifice; at the penultimate moment, when Abraham reached out his hand and takes the knife to kill his son,

“...the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

And he said “Here I am.”

He said “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him...”

In this terrible moment, the moment of absolute betrayal and violence, it is YHWH, calling to Abraham. The other voice what began this quest, was a false god.

Perhaps the test of Abraham was a test concerning his discerning of God’s voice?

Although this understanding of the story is different from our traditional thinking, it sits truer to the text, and more-true to the God who continues to be revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. This One True God, YHWH, does not delight in sacrifice: but in the state of the human heart: the heart that does justice, loves kindness, and walks humbly with God. The one we see in Jesus of Nazareth.

So, if, in this reading the story of Abraham and Isaac is a story about how we listen for God; how do you listen for God?

Does the listening come to you in the form of the prayer of Psalm 13, “How long, O Lord? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul? Sorrow in my heart, all the day long?”

The Gospel reading reminds us to be a welcoming community. Today’s reading mirrors when Jesus commissions the disciples on their first mission: taking with them nothing, relying on the welcome they receive in each place they visit. Our Gospel today calling us to be that very welcoming community of faith. The place,

the people where seekers of the One True God might find God. In those we welcome, we might even meet Jesus, or the prophet or a righteous person; even ‘the little ones’ like you and me.

Considering how we listen and hear God is important, because it is a primary part of our ministry: the ministry of following Jesus Christ.

Our Basis of Union reminds us that “Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people’s attention and awaken faith...” We are in the season of Pentecost. These stories remind us of God’s call to us all both individually and as a community, in our words and actions to be ready to hear that Spirit of God alive in others. And to be brave enough to listen for that ‘awaken-ed faith’ in the lives of all. Because, it is in discipleship that Christ “calls people into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews them as his church. And in this, I hear the answer to the prayer of Psalm 13.

This is listening, hearing, living Good News.

LISTENING
TO GOD

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Hymn: Be still, my soul

TIS 123

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side;
bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change he faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future as he has the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake,
all now mysterious shall be clear at last.
Be still, my soul: the tempests still obey
his voice, who ruled them once on Galilee.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart
and all is darkened in the vale of tears,
then you shall better know his love, his heart,
who comes to soothe your sorrow,
calm your fears.

Be still, my soul: for Jesus can restore
the trust and hope
that strengthened you before.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be for ever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
sorrow forgotten, love's pure joy restored.
Be still, my soul:
when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

²Katharina von Schlegel

Offering

What other response is there to life freely given,
and the bountiful treatment of God to us?!

Let's give freely and generously and pray
God's blessing on all of our offerings.

Each of our offerings are "cups of water" that
we offer because that which we share with
others, we share with you.

We pray for the "little ones" who need us to
share.

Amen

Prayers of the people Psalm 13

*Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies
To the leader. A Psalm of David.*

How long, O Lord?

Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

God of presence

we hold before you

those who have lost your face,

those who have been so hurt and damaged

by themselves, by others and by the church

that they have retreated to a place of isolation

to keep themselves safe.

We join our voices in lament:

How long, O Lord, how long?

**How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?**

For those whose pain is overwhelming

whose days stretch out from sunrise to sunset

in sadness and in grief.

We join our voices in lament:

How long, O Lord, how long?

Prayer continues P6





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Prayer continues

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

*For those who bear the brunt of oppression and violence
who wear the marks of warfare on their bodies
and carry the memories in their minds
passing it on through generations,
who live in the paralysis of persistent fear,
longing for hope and healing.*

We join our voices in lament:

How long, O Lord, how long?

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!

**Give light to my eyes,
or I will sleep the sleep of death,
and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";
my foes will rejoice because
I am shaken.**

*Hear us, God of the lost
come with your comfort and compassion
come with your light that denies the darkness
come with your justice and reconciliation*

**But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.**

**And we will hold to the rock of ages
and we will anchor our hope in your story
and especially in the struggle,
while we have breath
we will sing
and we will bring
a cup of cold-water welcome
to the lost and to the least,
and when it is offered at our door,
we will gladly receive;**

In the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying,

**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.**

Hymn: Jesus' hands were kind hands TIS 236

Jesus' hands were kind hands
doing good to all
healing pain and sickness
blessing children small
washing tired feet
and saving those who fall:
Jesus' hands were kind hands
doing good to all.



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Blessing

We will sing of the freedom, freely given.
We go to declare the steadfast love of God
in which we trust.
God has considered us and answered us.
We are blessed and our hearts rejoice.

Go into life, refreshed and renewed by the
amazing experience of being 'with' God's
people.
You have been given a mission
...you are sent!
Go into life to welcome all,
especially the little ones.
Go into life, to love and to serve as the living,
breathing body of Christ in your community.

Hymn: Jesus' hands were kind hands ^{Tis} 236

Take my hands Lord Jesus
let them work for you
make them strong and gentle
kind in all I do;
let me watch you
Jesus till I'm gentle too
till my hands are kind hands
quick to work for you.

³Margaret Beatrice Cropper

Mustard seed stories

We are inviting you to send us stories of where
you see God at work in your life and in your
location. Send us a few sentences. We'll
include as many as we can in our worship
resource at the end of July, (they may be
edited!) and let us know if we can use your first
name and where you live.

Email: pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com
or phone Jennie on **0416 152051**, or post to
PO Box 126, Wonthaggi, 3995.
Look forward to hearing from you!

*Today's service has been prepared by
Rev. Jennie Gordon, Rev. Ian Turnidge
(Reflection), Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson.*

*Shearwater Congregations: Toora: Fish Creek:
Foster: Tarwin Lower: Inverloch: Wonthaggi:
Phillip Island: Uniting Church in Australia*



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