



Order of service
Date: Sunday June 14th, 2020
Pentecost 2A

We acknowledge that we are worshipping on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung people, of the Kulin nation, and pay our respects to elders past and present.

DON'T FORGET YOU CAN LOG INTO THE CHURCH WEBSITE AND SEE MUCH OF THIS BY VIDEO ON THE FRONT PAGE!!!!

INTROIT – Hearts of love (verses 1,2)

1. And who are we that gather in this ordinary place?
To share a meal and friendship
and to warm some empty space,
But people seeking beauty and to offer what we hold
Such gifts as we've been given:
Hearts of love and gifts of gold.

2. And who is this who joins us in the sharing of this meal?
This God, who fashioned all we know,
with loving unconcealed.
So, as we break this bread of life,
we're drawn to seek its goal:
That all would share in living
Hearts of love and gifts of gold.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: From the north and from the south,
from the east and from the west,
from *Mentone* and from *Black Rock*,

All: God calls us together to worship and serve.

One: Out of poverty and wealth,
out of health and disease,
out of whatever circumstance in which we live,

All: God calls us together to worship and serve.

One: Out of a spirit of jubilation and despair,
out of times of hope and uncertainty,
out of whatever state our heart is in,

All: God calls us together to worship and serve.

One: Come, let us worship God.

Sing – TIS 125 (vss. 1,2,3,6)

1

The God of Abraham praise
who reigns enthroned above,
ancient of everlasting days,
and God of love:
the Lord, the great I AM
by earth and heaven confessed!
We bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blessed.

2

The God of Abraham praise,
whose all-sufficient grace
shall guide us all our happy days
in all our ways.
He calls us each a friend,
he calls himself our God;
and he shall save us to the end
through Jesus' blood.

3

He by himself has sworn,
we on his oath depend:
we shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
to heaven ascend:
we shall behold his face,
we shall his power adore,
and sing the wonders of his grace
for evermore.

6

The whole triumphant host
gives thanks to God on high:
'Hail, Father, Son and Spirit blest!'
they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God and ours!
with heaven our songs we raise:
all might and majesty are yours,
and endless praise.

WELCOME

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all!

And also with you!

Opening prayer

You name us, O God, with grace we do not fully grasp;
for you call us to love as we have been loved.
You send us, O God,
to persons and communities in need;
for you call us to see and respond with compassion.
In following your call, strengthen us to follow
your example in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Prayer of confession

Gracious Host of Heaven and Earth, we celebrate your invitation
to worship and serve in your name.
We are honoured by your call and long to answer in faithfulness.
Yet we confess those attitudes and allegiances which hold us back:
fear... discouragement... guilt...
laziness... lack of confidence... greed...
self-centredness... lack of compassion...
and all other things that lie in our hearts.
May we hear you speak our names.
And pray that you will fill us with courage so we might move forward in faith
and respond with compassionate love. Amen

Words of affirmation

You have been named by God
and called by the Spirit of Christ
to serve in this world.
Live in faith and proclaim the good news of God.
Your sins are forgiven!

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

EARLY WORD – Imani’s Moon

(Follow the link below if you want to watch the whole story)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8QWslVmlT0>

Hello children and others listening in.

By now most if not all of any children watching this should be back at school. I hope
the first week back for many of you went well.

And now it’s only one more week to school holidays!

Yay!

Awww!

I’m not sure who would be saying which of these at the moment.

Anyway, let’s move on.

Today I am showing you a story called Imani’s moon.

You can follow the YouTube link on the order of service if you have it, to see the
whole story or keep watching here for an edited version.

The story is set in an unnamed village somewhere in Africa.

For those of you using this text only version here is a brief summary of the story.

Imani lives in a village in Africa. She is very tiny, and gets teased by all the other village children, who tease her about her size and that she is worthless. Imani started to believe this. With the help of her Mama who told her wonderful stories each bedtime about others doing great things she got the confidence to go after her dream which was to touch the moon. She tried several ways to do this and failed each time, and even though the other children teased her more, she didn't give up. Inspired by the warriors in her village doing the jumping dance, she did the same and reached the moon, and the moon goddess welcomed her and gave her a shiny round moon stone – her own tiny moon – to take with her. Imani returned to earth and told her Mama the story and declared this was her story because she believed.

In *Imani's Moon*, the author tells the story of a little girl who didn't think she could do anything great. Many of the kids in the village teased her and that only made Imani's self-doubt grow. Her mama told her that if she believed in herself she could do great things.

The reason I told you this story today is because in the Old Testament reading from Genesis today we hear a story this time of a very old woman named Sarah. She had been told by visiting strangers that she was going to have a baby. Not only did it seem unlikely as she was old, but as time passed and nothing happened she began to doubt it would happen.

For both Sarah and Imani, the ability to believe in the perceived impossible is difficult. Children, you face many tasks that seem impossible, but if we adults can show you how then you can trust God's promises you will make it through. We all at times doubt our abilities, our faith, even God at times in our lives, but it is how we respond to the doubt that matters. Imani responded with a plan, Sarah responded with questions and hope.

How do you respond in moments of doubt? Maybe you make a plan. Maybe you talk to an adult and ask questions. Maybe you say a prayer about it.

Maybe you write down your doubts and questions in a book and think about them. All these are good things to do.

Well that is all for now. Keep safe and...say it with me...wash your hands. Bye for now.

SHARING OUR STORIES –

READINGS:

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ²He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³He said, "My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." ⁷Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to

prepare it. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

¹⁰Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. ²Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." ⁷And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Matthew 9:35-10:8

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

¹⁰Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

PREACHING - Sacrifice

So, we begin that long season of Pentecost or Ordinary time that takes us from the highs of Easter, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday...ok so maybe not so much that one, but then again, ubuntu, hey pretty interesting.

Alright, alright, let's get into this ordinary Pentecost season by focusing on, sacrifice.

Yes, I know, sacrifice is hardly ever ordinary.

Or is it?

How many times a day, or a week, do you sacrifice small things so that others can have their way, or to keep the peace, or because you are not that invested anyway, or for the sake of time, or because you are too tired, or whatever. It is all actually pretty ordinary stuff.

Not wanting to diminish these sacrifices, as they can add up and become overwhelming at times, but there come for all of us in our lives those times of major sacrifice.

Maybe it is moving overseas with your partner because they got a once in lifetime job opportunity, or giving up work to stay at home with the children, or moving in with a sick parent to care for them, or as a young person having to care for a sick parent, not going to the school you wanted to because your family can't afford it, giving up on an Olympic games dream because injury has forced you out of your sport.

You get what I mean.

They are big, and demand something big from us, and often straight away, and can often last a long time, or a lifetime.

In today's bible stories from Genesis and Matthew apart from whatever else we hear in these stories we hear of sacrifice.

In the passage from Genesis, Abraham and Sarah are very old. In the previous chapter we read that Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 90. They may or may not be actually that old, but they are definitely senior citizens. And Sarah, implied in the text, has passed menopause, so conception was out of the question.

Here are two older people, living a nomadic lifestyle, in an environment that can be harsh, being told to expect a child anytime soon.

Now I ask you to imagine, particularly the members of Beaumaris congregation, and particularly those of you the other side of say 70 even, what you would think about a baby coming your way?

For the women, can you even imagine what it would mean for your body now? I know some of you have health issues so can you imagine having to carry a baby through that?

Men, can you imagine the changing your house all over again for a new baby, buying all that stuff again, making the house child proof, figuring out how on earth will we fit this child into our lives.

And then, then after the baby is born, sleepless nights, poo and wee and nappies, and well, you get the picture, don't you?

Kind of makes you wonder – seriously God, what were you thinking?

Sarah and Abraham, despite the joy that is painted by this new child, would have sacrificed a lot, more so Sarah, in bringing this child into the world.

The Matthew passage is simple by comparison. Jesus is calling his disciples to a simpler way of life, possibly sacrificing time with their families, and then having them go out and do the things Jesus was, and had been, doing. They were giving up a former way of life, maybe ones they really enjoyed, to follow Jesus and engage with a life that asked much of them.

So let's dig a little into the texts to see where else they take us.

Let me begin with a kind of aside to the Genesis passage that links us to last week's theme of the Trinity.

Three strangers visit Abraham, but it becomes clear as the story unfolds and the use of the term “Lord” that these men are angels.

Both Jewish and Hebrew tradition make much of this story.

Christianity has done so especially in relation to the very famous icon by the Russian artist Rublev. You can see that here.



It depicts the three angels who visited Abraham in relation to the Trinity, but it must be clear, such an interpretation does not come from the Old Testament context.

This is a story that takes place in the midst of family life, typical of a semi-nomadic family in those times.

Whilst the events taking place were pre-empted in chapter 12, they filter in from the edges of family life right to its centre.

But it is also set in the context of the bigger picture of Israel’s ongoing relationship with God/Yaweh.

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would endure, that Israel would thrive, this was the blessing.

This event happening to this family was held in that bigger story.

God was working God’s mysterious plan into reality through this one family.

To Abraham the promise, the blessing was given.

Through his son, Isaac, as Rev. Prof. Howard Wallace notes, *in whose birth the divine irony, the godly unexpected, the reversal of circumstances, is set at the very forefront of Israel’s story.*

There was a sacrifice being asked here of Abraham and Sarah, but one that was deemed worth the risk.

The payoff was far more important – simply the future of Israel.

The story from Matthew has a similar scope, but then goes further.

On the surface the future of Israel is at stake in this story too.

But that is as much about Matthew’s reorganising of the material he received from Mark’s gospel and elsewhere. This was in order as you know, to attend to the particular concerns of his community and his point in time.

It is clear though that Matthew indicates an understanding that Christ’s mission is directed only to Israel. This may well reflect Jesus’ own understanding of his mission, and this is made explicit by having Jesus make the claim that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Now I know we can feel a little disconcerted at this attitude, especially coming from Jesus.

But let’s face it.

In his lifetime, there was a lot going on just for the Jews, for Israel. They were lost.

They were lost under Roman occupation.

They were lost under misguided leadership from the temple.

They were lost under a king who appeared to be so deranged as to be outright dangerous.

Maybe it was enough.

But the signs show, even in Matthew that there was more at stake, that Jesus bought into. At the very end of Matthews gospel, we hear the great commission to go out to everyone.

What is happening in this story today I think is a precursor, even preparation for this bigger mission.

Bill Loader notes this about the passage –

The passage reflects the changing patterns of discipleship and ministry. We begin with Jesus' ministry. We see that he commissioned others and sent them out to minister as he did (probably reflecting early post Easter practice). These were set apart within the wider body of those who affirmed his message, most of whom lived out their discipleship where they were. Acts still reflects the commission that the apostles go out in pairs (eg. Paul and Barnabas; Peter and John), but Matthew has dropped this element, preserved in Mark, perhaps because it no longer applies. By Matthew's time such commissioned apostles have died and their equivalents are rare; perhaps wandering prophets and travelling preachers whose behaviour brought many into disrepute (and brought Paul unjustly into disrepute). The authority passed from the travelling apostle to the local leaders and on pragmatic grounds to whatever structures of authority developed locally. This resulted in a very complex situation which entailed dealing with local charismatic authority, rulers of hosting households (mainly men), and appointees from outside. In Matthew's setting the authority seems to be borne primarily by the congregation in council, exercising the authority given Peter as the representative leader.

Which begs the question that arises in the passage, what is the nature of this authority?

Again, Bill Loader tells us this –

10:1 tells us that Jesus authorised the 12 to do what he himself had done. His ministry is their job description. The summary of 9:35 is very close to the task set the disciples in 10:1. The rest of their commission will fill in the missing items (see 10:7-8). Their mission is set within the context of Christ's compassion. They are being authorised with what kind of authority? The authority to love! It included involvement in liberating people from the powers which oppressed them, whether physical or spiritual: 'He gave them authority to cast out demons and to heal all sickness and all disease.' In 12:28 Jesus will declare: 'If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.'

The nature of this authority is love.

So the sacrifice being asked of these disciples of Jesus is not merely about discomfort, having less, leaving family, maybe being at odds with the leadership of the day.

The sacrifice being asked of them is to love – to love the unlovable, to love those you don't know, to love even those who hate you and persecute you.

These specific tasks or activities that Jesus calls them to perform must be done not to control, manipulate or gain popularity, but rather as a sheer act of love, for the sake of the one in need and nothing else.

But there is actually something else.

'If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.'

It has now really gone beyond the kingdom of Israel, despite what I said before.

These activities are indicators of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God, so long as love is the prime mover in it all.

What on earth then does this mean for us at the beginning of this long, ordinary season?

I think it means something like, we know something about sacrifice.

Now I don't mean necessarily what has come our way before March of this year in terms of sacrifice, but I don't disregard them.

What I mean is since the Covid-19 pandemic has taken hold, we know something different about sacrifice.

And not just us from BUCA.

I mean all of us, right around the world.

We have been asked to make sacrifices the likes of which most of us have never had to do.

And the reasons why, although they have never been couched in this way, is kingdom of God stuff – for the greater good, for the good of all people. As Jesus said, it is easy and normal for us to make some sacrifice for someone we love, but to do it for people we don't even know and will never meet, is the stuff of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God.

Despite any misgivings some might have, this is also what lies behind the Black Lives Matter movement.

And for most of us, the sense of contributing to something great, like little Imani did in Imani's Moon, is enough to carry us through the sacrifice.

For those who wear the tag Christian, we lay claim to an understanding that as we individually and as a church, seek to do the work Christ left for us, we trust in God to sustain us on the way.

Amen.

Sing – TIS 658

1

I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard my people cry.

All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.

I who made the stars of night,

I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear my light to them?

Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord;
is it I, Lord?*

*I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

2

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.

Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord;
is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

3

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame;
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.

Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord;
is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – read by Jan Graham.

HOLY COMMUNION

(For those at home not joining the Zoom worship, you might like to read through the communion service and understand that your elements are blessed already by these words, and partake by yourself or others in your household)

The Invitation:

The feast is ready. Let us begin!
Jesus invited all to the feast of peace.
Jesus risked everything in compassion.
Jesus promised to make himself known in the breaking of the bread.

The Story:

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,
“This is my body for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
In the same way he also took the cup after the meal, saying,
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

The Exhortation

Let us therefore break bread together.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God, for your love is unconditional and abundant.

With your own hands you shaped the creation
and filled the earth with your wonders.
You breathed into us and we rose from the dust,
and the face of the earth came alive.
From the cloud you spoke to Moses
and through your prophets you promised
to pour out your Spirit on all flesh.

In those last days you sent your child, Jesus the Christ,
to speak your words of mercy and peace.
Though he was killed, you raised him to new life,
and now he comes to all who are thirsty,
pouring out the new wine of the Spirit,
intoxicating us with visions and dreams,
awakening within us your marvellous gifts
of wisdom, faith, healing, prophesy and discernment,
and firing our tongues with everlasting songs of joy.
Therefore we join our praises
with countless men and women before us,

disciples and apostles,
 saints and martyrs,
 acclaiming your power in goodness
 and your might in compassion, as we sing:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.***

We greet the one who comes in your name,
 your true light, your true love, your true peace;
 the bread of compassion,
 the wine of renewal.

THE INVOCATION:

As he broke bread before the brokenness of his death,
 as he poured out wine before his blood was poured out on the cross,
 as he gave his life in acts of goodness,
 as he invited all to the feast of new hope,
 so come to us, God of Jesus, in your love.

Epiclesis:

Come to us, Spirit of our Lord of love,
 and let the bread and wine before us
 bear your life to our life,
 nourish us with his vision of hope,
 and unite us in one body of peace.
 Feed us with your brokenness,
 Renew us with your poured out life,
 Empower us with your powerlessness,
 that we may take root in your risen life
 and bear fruit in your world.
 You are our life;
 You are our hope;
 You are our peace;

And we praise you as we join together in communion with all people as we pray:

***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.
 and 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 forever. Amen***

The Breaking of the Bread

The bread which we break
is an offering of life to us all.

The cup which we take
is a celebration of love for us all.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Distribution

Christ's body broken give you life.

Christ's life poured out give you hope.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

We thank you Holy God,
for breaking into our world, our lives and our experience.

We thank you Christ Jesus,
for this meal of remembering,
and the stories of love and grace that it tells.

We thank you Holy Spirit,
for your presence and your challenge
for us to become agents of God's compassion and peace.

In the name of Jesus Emmanuel.

Amen.

Sing – God it was (To TIS 477)

1. God it was who said to Abraham,
'Pack your bags and travel on!'

God it was who said to Sarah,
'Smile and soon you'll bear a son!'

Travelling folk and aged mothers
Wandering when they thought they'd done –
This is how God calls his people,
Losing all because of One.

2. God it was who said to Moses,
'Save my people, part the sea!'
God it was who said to Miriam,
'Sing and dance to show you're free!'

Shepherd-saints and tambourinists
Doing what he knew they could –
This is how God calls his people,
Liberating what they should.

3. God it was who said to Joseph,
 'Down your tools and take your wife!
 God it was who said to Mary,
 'In your womb I'll start my life!
 Carpenter and country maiden
 Leaving town and trade and skills –
 This is how God calls his people,
 Moving them through what he wills.

4. Christ it was who said to Matthew,
 'Leave your books and follow me!
 Christ it was who said to Martha,
 'Listen first, then make the tea!
 Civil servants and housekeepers,
 Changing places at a cost –
 This is how Christ calls disciples,
 Finding those he knew were lost.

5. In this crowd of common people,
 Once unknown, whom we revere,
 God calls us to share his purpose
 Starting now and starting here.
 So we celebrate his calling,
 So we prize and praise his choice,
 As we pray that through this company
 God will act and raise his voice.

BLESSING –

One: The harvest is large,
 but there are not many workers to gather it in.

All: We are God's servants.

One: Jesus gathered his followers
 and sent them out to change the world.

All: We are God's servants.

One: To proclaim the gospel. To heal.
 To bring new life. To challenge injustice.

All: We are God's servants.

One: Jesus sends disciples to be his hands, his feet, his
 voice.

All: We are God's servants.

One: And yet there are risks involved in being disciples.

All: We are God's servants.

One: Go and serve in the name and power of Jesus Christ.

All: We are God's servants.

One: Know that you are blessed as you leave here and go out into the world as you
 are able. In the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Recessional – Sent by the Lord am I

Sent by the Lord am I;
My hands are ready now
To make the earth a place
In which the kingdom comes.
Sent by the Lord am I;
My hands are ready now
To make the earth a place
In which the kingdom comes.
The angels cannot change
A world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love,
Of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do,
To set it really free.
O help me to obey,
Help me to do your will.