



Order of Service  
Date: Sunday August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Pentecost 10A

**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** – Into the Deep (Malcolm Gordon)

1. Draw us from the shallows  
Out into the deep  
Our faith was weak and hollow  
But its strengthened in our need  
Though the waters overwhelm us  
Though the shore be far from sight  
From the storm you call forth stillness  
From the darkness you call light

*Even the wind and the waves  
Will listen to your voice  
Oh speak your love and your grace  
And calm the storm within*

2. Lead us from the certain  
Into your mystery  
With fearless love abounding  
You ride the raging seas  
Though the waters overwhelm us  
Though the shore be far away  
You walk on waves to find us  
Your hands reach out to save

*Even the wind and the waves  
Will listen to your voice  
Oh speak your love and your grace  
And calm the storm within*

3. Far beyond the headland  
Where fear and freedom meet  
The drowning and the dying  
You haul us to our feet  
Though the waters overwhelm us

Though the shore is far behind  
Drifting daughter's you will rescue  
Shipwrecked son's you will find

*Even the wind and the waves  
Will listen to your voice  
Oh speak your love and your grace  
And calm the storm within*

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**One:** In a world that often feels overwhelmed by waves of bad news,

**All: we often feel like disciples at sea – tossed and turned in the chaos of current events.**

**One:** But we are part of a dream – we are part of God's great dream!

**All: And we are not alone in this time of storms and turmoil.**

**One:** There is a presence reaching into our lives, offering calm and peace and hope to allay our fear.

**All: There is a dream that is being fulfilled through our lives; God's dream of abundant life.**

**One:** Come, Disciples of Christ, let us hold tight to the vessel of faith and the dream of possibilities; and let us be God's people in worship.

**All: For in our worship, we reach new shores; and in our worship, God's dream is fulfilled.**

**One:** Come, let us worship God in hopeful anticipation and faith.

**Sing – Don't be afraid**

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,  
My love is stronger than your fear.  
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,  
And I have promised,  
Promised to be always near.

## **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**

Here we are, Holy One, your people. Here we are, carrying our dreams in our spirits, and at the same time wondering what your dream is for us. Here we are, tossed about in a sea of anxiety, fear and conflict, holding fast to the edges of our known reality, yet hopeful that even our current uncertainty and anguish is somehow part of your great dream for humanity and this planet.

Come to us, we pray, as Jesus came to the disciples in that stormy sea many years

ago. Come to us, as Reuben came to the rescue of his brother, Joseph. Come to us and bring your calming touch and faithful presence into our awareness. Enter our boat and be in our midst in ways so tangible that we have no more room for doubt or fear. Come to us and anchor our confidence in your grace. Amen

### **Prayer of confession**

*Storm – lyrics*

*How long have I been in this storm?  
So overwhelmed by the ocean's shapeless form  
Water's getting harder to tread  
With these waves crashing over my head  
If I could just see you  
Everything would be all right  
If I'd see you  
This darkness would turn to light  
And I will walk on water  
And you will catch me if I fall  
And I will get lost into your eyes  
I know everything will be alright  
I know everything is alright  
I know you didn't bring me out here to drown  
So why am I ten feet under and upside down?  
Barely surviving has become my purpose  
Because I'm so used to living underneath the surface  
If I could just see you  
Everything would be all right  
If I'd see you  
This darkness would turn to light  
And I will walk on water  
And you will catch me if I fall  
And I will get lost into your eyes  
I know everything will be alright  
And I will walk on water  
And you will catch me if I fall  
And I will get lost into your eyes  
I know everything will be alright  
I know everything is alright  
Everything's alright  
Yeah, everything's alright*

THEN:

**One:** God, we often allow our fears and self-doubts to diminish our courage. Yet you come to us in the midst of the storm, giving us strength and making all things new.

**All:** **Help us trust the power of your voice to lessen our fear and make us whole. In Jesus' strong name we pray. Amen.**

## Words of affirmation

God is saving all of us by divine mercy, no exceptions. No matter how we are tossed about by our emotions, no matter how insecure and lacking in insight we are, we are all saved in spite of ourselves, good and bad alike.

Here again the Good News:

Your sins are forgiven.

**ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## EARLY WORD – Three bears in a boat.

Welcome the kids and parents.

If there are any children present, ask how they are going.

I want to start by saying I hope you are all managing with the new restrictions that came into place this week.

I was a bit worried about the exercise one, saying we can exercise with one other person for one hour a day.

Seeing as I am not doing anything, I am concerned whether I can keep up with one hour each day exercising. A big ask really.

Anyway, let's move on to something actually interesting.

Today I am telling a story by David Soman called "Three bears in a boat". It fits in with the story from Matthew's gospel today about the disciples getting caught in a storm while in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. You will see why.

Here is the text of the story below.

*Three Bears in a Boat By David Soman*

*Once there were three bears – Dash, Charlie and Theo, who lived by the sea. One day when their mother was out the three bears were trying to get honey when they broke their mother's beautiful blue seashell.*

*They were afraid and ran to the beach.*

*Theo whispered nervously, "What should we do?"*

*Dash said, "What if we found another blue seashell and put it back before mama gets home? She'll never even know that anything happened."*

*Charlie and Theo smiled. So just like that the sly bears slid their boat into the sea and set sail.*

*So off they sailed, passing many other bears in boats. Surely one of them would know where to find a blue seashell.*

*But none of these bears were very helpful.*

*Then they asked a big salty sailor bear and asked him if he knew where any blue seashells might be.*

*"Away over yonder is an island shaped like a lumpy hat. On that island there may be a seashell, a beautiful blue one. It could be underwater, or in the tallest tree, or on the very top of the mountain. It might even be hidden in a cave, I'm not dead certain. But if you look in the right place, I reckon you'll find it."*

*Excited and sure that they would soon have a new shell for their mother, the three bears sailed on.*

*They sailed on farther than they had ever gone before.*

*They sailed on until the island rose in a hump before them and began to search for the seashell.*

*They didn't find it underwater.*

*It wasn't in the trees, nor on top of the mountain.  
And it wasn't in a small cave they found.  
The three were most unhappy, and stared at each other with very squinty, very mad bear eyes, all the way back to their boat.  
They had no blue seashell and they felt very far from home.  
Back on the boat the three bears began to argue and blame each other.  
They didn't even notice that the sky had been turning darker and darker. And how the sea had turned rougher and rougher. Dash, Charlie and Theo were scared and didn't care whose fault it was anymore.  
Then they realised they were all to blame.  
They reached out their paws and clung to each other very tightly.  
And then like turning a page the little boat sailed out of the storm and into the sun.  
And there straight ahead was their very own island. The bears set sail for home.  
They knew what they had to do. They pulled their boat up on their own shore, and at the edge of the beach sat a beautiful blue seashell. Picking up the shell, Dash remembered the words of the old salty bear. "So, this was the right place."  
Looking at his brother and sister, then the three bears walked up the long dune to their house.  
Mama was waiting for them.  
"I'm sorry I broke your shell," said Theo.  
"Me too," said Dash.  
"Me three," said Charlie.  
"But look what we found you", Dash held up the beautiful new shell.  
And mother bear, being a mother, looked at each one of her three little bears and hugged them all very, very tight, kissed the tops of their furry heads and forgave them.  
Then she bought them inside for a warm supper.  
But they didn't get any dessert.  
The end.*

In the story today we have heard that Theo, Dash and Charlie set off on a boat venture to replace their mom's blue seashell that they broke during an accident. While out they encounter interesting people, places and events on the seas and on islands. It's only when they return home, after a storm on the boat, that they find the desired seashell and offer it to their mom who accepts it and forgives them, but still offers a bit of punishment. The disciples in the story we will hear soon experience another storm on a boat story and become afraid of something or someone walking on water. Jesus appears to them and tells them to not be afraid, reminding them that he is Lord of all – the wind, the waves, the water and the sea. In the end the disciples worship Jesus as the "Son of God," recognizing him as a leader. Jesus again proves to be the "hero" of the story, despite the lack of faith of his disciples, and the bears find what they needed despite their fears and faults. In the end the bears are welcomed home happily and forgiven by their mom, as the disciples are comforted and encouraged by their God.

Let's sing.

This is an old song that I adapted a little. It is set to a well-known tune. The song is called “Give to the wind your fears”. See you next week.

**SING:** Give to the winds your fears (To TIS 234)

1 Give to the winds your fears;  
hope, and don't be surprised.  
God hears your sighs and counts your tears;  
God shall lift up your eyes.

2 Through waves and clouds and storms  
God gently clears the way.  
Wait patiently; so, shall the night  
soon end in joyful day.

Translator: John Wesley; Author: Paul Gerhardt (1656). (Words modified by Rev Scott Finlay)

**SHARING OUR STORIES – Blessed Limping**

**READINGS:**

Genesis 37:1-4,12-28

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan.

<sup>2</sup>This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

<sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

<sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” He answered, “Here I am.” <sup>14</sup>So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, <sup>15</sup>and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” <sup>16</sup>“I am seeking my brothers,” he said; “tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.”

<sup>17</sup>The man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. <sup>18</sup>They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. <sup>19</sup>They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup>Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” <sup>21</sup>But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” <sup>22</sup>Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him” —that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

<sup>23</sup>So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; <sup>24</sup>and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. <sup>25</sup>Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers agreed. <sup>28</sup>When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

### **Matthew 14:22-33.**

<sup>22</sup>Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup>And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” <sup>28</sup>Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” <sup>29</sup>He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” <sup>32</sup>When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**PREACHING – Don’t be afraid...my love is stronger than your fear.**

Fear is a bad, bad thing.

Not only is there the thing we are fearful of, the spider, the new job, the bully at school – but there is the feeling of fear itself.

You know what I mean. We have all felt that fear about something.

The churning of our insides, the tightening in our chest, the fast breathing, our mind reeling to hold onto something, being frozen into inaction.

We’ve all felt it...and it’s bad.

This is what is present in both these stories from scripture this morning.

Joseph, innocently on his way to find his brothers, finds himself in the grip of fear as his brothers take his precious robe and throw him into a pit. What were they doing? Fear grips at him as he has no idea what is going on. He yells out until he almost has no voice.

The brothers mostly ignore him, but one of them snidely says – “you think you are better than us you little creep? Dad’s favourite! It’s time you learnt a lesson.”

“What do you mean? Joseph cries. “Reuben, Rueben what are you doing? Tell them not to do this”

Reuben, the eldest son, the responsible first born, squirms, and quietly says to his brothers –“Come on guys, this is going too far.”

And then it goes further.

Seeing the caravan of foreigners, they drag him out of the pit, shove him towards them and get 20 pieces of silver in return.

I don't imagine a scene where Joseph is quietly calling to them – please, please, what are you doing?

I imagine him screaming at them, fear tearing him apart, his eyes filling with tears as his life suddenly spirals out of control, and they hear his screams as the Ishmaelites take him away, they keep hearing them as the caravan moves off, keep hearing them as they turn their backs to make their way home and devise their story about what happened, and Reuben keeps hearing the screams as he tries to sleep that night, and awakens in the middle of the night covered in sweat, with the screams ringing in his ears.

This is the beginning of the Joseph cycle of stories. It begins with fear and betrayal. Let's remember, this is Jacob's son, and the cycle of deceit and betrayal continues. And yet, amazingly, God persists with this less than ideal crowd.

The nation of Israel has its beginnings in betrayal and fear.

Likewise, fear plays a large part in the gospel story today.

This story follows straight after last week's account of the feeding of the people in a lonely place. And this follows straight on after Jesus had heard of the death of John the Baptist.

So in the short period of a day, two at the most, Jesus hears of his cousins murder, and goes off by himself to get some space. This doesn't happen however, as a large crowd of people follow him.

He then ensures the crowd is fed as the day ends, then, bringing us to today's passage, sends the people on their way, and tells the disciples to get in their boat and head to the other side, and finally he gets time to himself to pray.

He must be exhausted, and the death of John must be weighing heavily on his mind and heart.

Meanwhile, the disciples have been caught up in rough water on the sea, a storm if you like, and they were far from land.

Then, here it comes, the real interesting bit, after his rest, early the next morning, Jesus comes walking towards them on the sea.

Is this the interesting bit?

Well, no.

When they saw him, they were terrified thinking it a ghost, and cried out in fear.

But, let's pause for a moment.

So, they are on the water, a storm blows up, they are in some trouble so it seems, but they are not afraid of this.

Is this because they are fishermen and used to storms? Or is it not that bad of a storm? Or is it really my issue, that after having seen the movie, The Perfect Storm, where a boat of fishermen going after a big catch, are caught up in the storm of the century, and they all drown in this enormous storm, is it really my issue that at the thought of that I am terrified?

Then I consider the Jesus walking on the water thing, and I imagine myself there, and screaming at the other men, “it's a storm, let's get to shore”, and they are



screaming, “Ghost!” And I’m yelling back at them, “It’s just the lightning playing tricks on your eyes, can’t we get out of here!” And Peter grabs me by the scruff of my shirt, and yells into my face, “Can’t you see it, that, that ghost coming for us! Don’t you think we are trying to get out of here?”

“But Peter, there are no ghosts,” I yell back, “But these waves are real and they will sink us if you don’t do something now!”

Phew I tell you; the fear is dripping off all of us, and I wasn’t even there.

Then, Jesus speaks – Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

And there you have it.

These words – do not be afraid - appear 365 times in the whole bible.

That’s enough for once every day. Every day, every year.

Do not be afraid.

Either that’s good news every day, or...

Well let me put it this way.

When someone says – Do not be afraid – they say it either to calm your fears about something which need not be feared; or to let you know that they are there to comfort you so don’t be afraid; or they say it because there really is something to be afraid of and they are convincing you and themselves to try and not be afraid.

I wonder which of these Jesus is trying to convey in this story this morning?

I wonder if it is possible for all three to be in play at the same time?

I wonder if this talk of not being afraid is even an issue for us?

I think it might be.

I mean, there are clearly things in life we fear.

And more so now with this whole pandemic confining living and threatening lives.

But, then again, I don’t think this passage is actually about being afraid. I think it tells us that fear is real and can at times inhabit us so deeply we become numb to life.

I think this passage is asking us to make it clear that when we are faced with fear, there is one who walks there, always towards us, with a great power. The power of compassion and healing.

But how might **we** access this kind of power?

That is Matthew’s point when he has Peter invited to walk on water. This faith thing.

The beauty of this story, is not really to belittle our faith, but to invite us anew, to consider what faith is, *how this word that we sometimes toss around so casually holds depths within, depths that will draw us beyond nearly everything we once believed.*

*This is some of what we might say right now about faith:*

*That faith is not something we can summon by a sheer act of will.*

*That it lives and breathes in the community that encompasses us.*

*That we cannot force faith but can ask for it, can pray that it will make its way to us and bear us up over the next wave, and the next.*

*That it comes.*

*That we can lean into it.*

*That it will propel us not only toward the Christ who calls us, but also back toward the boat that holds our life, incomprehensible in both its pain and its grace.*

*What are you knowing about faith right now? Where is it bearing you?*

*(Jan Richardson, The Painted Prayerbook)*

That is both an individual and communal question.

And an answer links back to the notion of power I mentioned before.

*We have a role to play, in all this. An awesome role, of helping people access that kind of power... (Loader)*

...of compassion and healing.

Whilst we might reflect on faith by ourselves, the community of the church hold a great responsibility in this time.

We are not the holders nor creators of compassion and healing, but we certainly are the bearers of these in Christ's name.

It is incumbent on us as we hold to what we believe about the needs of the many, that we wield compassion and offer healing in the best ways we can, from inside our own four walls, through a computer screen, from behind a mask, and not let these peculiarities water down how we convey these powers.

This will prevail for a time, but the next step, when we emerge from isolation, lockdown, restrictions, back into a different world, that world will be looking for healing and compassion and it will be incumbent upon us to be clear about how we will enable people to access it.

These are such big matters for a small group of folks in a seaside church struggling to keep their building in order and hold the congregation together.

But also remember.

Jesus talks of a planted seed, weaves an image of a web, where we are connected, reaches out his hand to us and says – you are not alone in this.

*I cannot promise*

*that this faith*

*will keep you afloat*

*as if by lashing these words*

*to your arms,*

*your ankles,*

*you could stop yourself*

*from going under.*

*The most this faith*

*can do, perhaps,*

*is to stand beside you*

*in the boat,*

*place its hand*

*in the small of your back,*

*and push.*

*Be assured that*

*though this faith*

*is eager to set you*

*in motion,*

*it will not*

*leave you forsaken,*

*will not compel you*

*to leap*

*where it has not already*

*stepped out.*

*This faith  
will go with you  
across the waves.  
This faith  
will accompany you  
across the waters.  
And if you  
find yourself  
flailing,  
this faith  
will breathe itself  
into you,  
will breathe itself  
through you  
until you are  
borne up  
by the hands  
that reach toward you,  
the voice that  
calls your name. Every name. Amen.*

**Sing – TIS 589**

1

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult  
of our life's wild restless sea,  
day by day his voice is sounding,  
saying, 'Christian, follow me':

2

As, of old, Saint Andrew heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home and toil and kindred,  
leaving all for his dear sake.

3

Jesus calls us from the worship  
of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us, saying,  
'Christian, love me more.'

4

In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
'Christian, love me more than these.'

5

Jesus calls us! By your mercies,  
Saviour, may we hear your call,  
give our hearts to your obedience,  
serve and love you best of all.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** – read by Jan Graham

Loving God, in your mercy, hear our prayers. And all these prayers we bring in the name of the Risen Christ 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 forever. Amen**

**Sing** – TIS 420 (To TIS 152)

1

Holy Spirit, go before us,  
every mind and heart prepare  
for good news of life in Jesus,  
for the joyful hope we share.  
Gently lead the lost to safety,  
gently teach them Wisdom's way,  
till they come to seek you gladly,  
till we find the words to say.

2

Holy Spirit, come and help us,  
give us words to speak of Christ.  
Teach us how to tell all people:  
deepest darkness can be light!  
Help us tell how faithful God is,  
and how Jesus sets us free;  
take our words, and make them gospel,  
so that many may believe.

3

Holy Spirit, stay to show us  
 how to serve as Christ served us.  
 May our words of love be grounded  
 in love's actions, first and last.  
 Your good news is news of justice,  
 and the strong befriend the weak  
 in your service, till compassion  
 builds the peace the nations seek.

### **BLESSING – Blessing in the Storm**

Perhaps this was Jesus' intention when he came to the disciples across the water, saying something like this:

I cannot claim to still the storm that has seized you,  
 cannot calm the waves that wash through your soul,  
 that break against your fierce and aching heart.

But I will wade  
 into these waters,  
 will stand with you  
 in this storm,  
 will say *peace* to you  
 in the waves,  
*peace* to you  
 in the winds,  
*peace* to you  
 in every moment  
 that finds you still  
 within the storm.

And I will still your fear and calm your soul and bless the whole of you.

Carry this blessing with you into the coming week. Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

### **Recessional – Into the deep (reprise)**

2. Lead us from the certain  
 Into your mystery  
 With fearless love abounding  
 You ride the raging seas  
 Though the waters overwhelm us  
 Though the shore be far away  
 You walk on waves to find us  
 Your hands reach out to save

*Even the wind and the waves  
 Will listen to your voice  
 Oh speak your love and your grace  
 And calm the storm within (Repeat)*