**27th October 2019 Pentecost 22 (Proper 25)**

**A short but structured service**

*(other suggestions and alternatives are below)*

**Gathering**

**Call to worship**

Grace to you, and peace,

***from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

As we echo some of the words of psalm 65,

let us approach God with thanks on this morning in springtime.

***You, God visit the earth and renew it.***

***The bushes of the wilderness drip with dew,***

***the hills clothe themselves with happiness.***

The paddocks are covered with flocks,

the valleys are decked out with crops,

everything shouts and sings with joy.

***From the plains to the mountains,***

***praise is all due to you, generous God.***

***To you we come and make our vows.***

**Prayer of Approach**

Loving God, in the company of your Son, our Saviour, may we become enchanted with the light and the glory of your goodness. Let us praise and serve you with a delight which no sin can cloud, no worry erode and no happiness supplant. Through Christ Jesus, we pray.

***Amen!***

**Hymn**

**Prayer of confession**

It is written: “O you who hear our prayers, to you shall all flesh come on account of their sins.”

We now come to make our own confession.

**Let us pray.**

Loving God, Redeemer and Friend, we confess that we are people of many moods and sins.

Sometimes we become so contented with our lot that we forget others; neglecting their rights, needs, hopes, disappointments, and joys.

Sometimes we become so discontented with our lot that we make it hard for those around us; our sourness spreads through home, workplace, church and recreation.

We take many blessings without gratefulness, exercise our gifts without thankfulness, use up our friends without appreciation, and go to church without any sense of privilege and wonder and joy.

***Merciful God, we are glad that you understand us, because we cannot understand ourselves.***

***We are relieved that you can save us, for we cannot save ourselves***

***By the word of Christ Jesus, condemn that which is rotten,***

***straighten that which is crooked, and encourage all that thirsts for righteousness.***

***Let your forgiveness flood over us and through us, leaving no dark corner unwashed. For your love’s sake.***

***Amen!***

**Word of Assurance**

Long ago is was written in Holy Scripture:

            “To you, Lord God, shall all humanity come on account of their sins.

             When our transgressions pile up against us, it is you who forgives them all.”

My sisters and brothers, if some folk so trusted your mercy, centuries before the coming of Christ , how much more should we trust the forgiveness of God.

The grace of Christ Jesus is more sufficient for us.

Live now as those who are truly forgiven.

***Thanks be to God!***

*(often the Psalm may be used for the prayer and/or the word of grace)*

**Service of the Word**

**Psalm for the day – PSALM 65**

Epistle or Old Testament/alternate reading: **2 Timothy 4:6 – 8, 16 – 18 OR** Joel 2:23 – 32

**Gospel reading: Luke 18: 9 – 14**

**Short reflection and discussion** *(see links below)*

(Hymn)

**Prayers for others**

**Sharing of concerns**

**Sharing of notices**

**Prayers**

Caring for others is not for the weak minded but for the strong. The weak ones get cynical, the strong constantly re-engage through prayer and action.

**Let us pray.**

It is to our shared human shame, loving God, that there are people who are lost today, homeless  and destitute today.

***Please aid victims, and bring humanity to a new compassion and sense of a fair go.***

It is to our human shame, loving God, that children are abused today, unfed, unclothed and comfortless today.

***Please aid victims, and bring humanity to a new intolerance of all abuse.***

It is to our human shame, loving God, that there are diseased folk without treatment today, injured people without doctors and nurses today.

***Please aid victims, and bring humanity to a new intolerance of indifference.***

It is to our human shame, loving God, that some lives are being wasted today, without employment and any realistic hope for work today.

***Please aid victims, and bring humanity to a new passion for justice and mercy.***

It is to our churchly shame, loving God, that there are people who have never seen the Gospel lived or brought to bear on their despair.

***Please aid victims, and bring your church to a new passion for the ways of Jesus.***

Merciful God, please enable all people faith and love to treasure and practice that love which includes all who come asking for help, and even searches for those who are too weary or despairing to ask.

In the name of Christ Jesus.

*Amen.*

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Sending forth the people of God**

**Offering** (a sharing of our gifts and the call to bless others as we have been blessed)

**Hymn**

**Blessing and commissioning**

We are loved by a God who calls us to spread

***love wherever the poor are neglected,***

**justice wherever the meek are humiliated,**

***hope wherever the merciful are despised,***

**peace wherever the church is divided,**

***and grace wherever the lost seek mercy.***

May the God of seeking bless you,

May the Christ of gracing bless you,

May the Spirit of safe-keeping bless you.

***Till you see the land of joy;***

***Till you see the land of joy.***

***Amen!***

*(*adapted from a Celtic blessing)*.*

\*Note: all prayers and litanies above, are courtesy ©B D Prewer. It was Bruce’s intention that the prayers and litanies be adapted by each user to their own situation. This material can only be used for worship with acknowledgement and not otherwise reproduced without permission. Thank you to the estate of Bruce Prewer for allow us to publish his material here. Contact <http://www.bruceprewer.com> for details.

**A shorter prayer service**

*(may include some of the above material in the following format. Hymns may be included if desired and music is available)*

Greet each other

Prayer (may include invocation, adoration, confession and recognition of grace)

Reading: Psalm 65

Gospel reading: Luke 18:9 – 14

Sharing and discussion of the readings

Sharing of concerns

Prayers for others (see above, may involve one or several people praying; may involve the use of symbolic actions as part of the prayers)

(Conclude with the Lord’s Prayer)

Blessing

***Howard Wallace suggests*** *(see****:*** [*http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/*](http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/)*)*

Several verses in the psalm can be collected either as a **call to worship**:

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;
and to you shall vows be performed,
O you who answer prayer!
To you all flesh shall come.

or as a **prayer of adoration**:

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,
O God of our salvation;
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas.
By your strength you established the mountains;
you are girded with might.
You silence the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
the tumult of the peoples.
Those who live at earth's farthest bounds
are awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning
and the evening shout for joy.

Verses 1-4 can also be adapted as an introduction to the **declaration of forgiveness**:

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;
and to you shall vows be performed,
O you who answer prayer!
To you all flesh shall come.
When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,
you forgive our transgressions.
Happy are those whom you choose
and bring near in the words of Jesus:
‘Your sins are forgiven!’
***Thanks be to God.***

Howard often uses the NRSV but other versions can be used such as Nathan Nettleton’s paraphrase (found at <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>), The Message, Bruce Prewer’s adaptations (both paraphrases) or the New Living Translation. The Message and New Living Translation are accessible via [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

**Songs which may bring deeper reflection are** – lots to consider:

TIS 47 Gather us in

TIS 677 A touching place

TIS 659 The servant song

TIS 256 The servant king

TIS 681 Lord let me see

TIS685 The power of your love

TIS 90/AHB 44 I’ll praise my maker while I’ve breath,

TIS 547/AHB 455 Be thou my vision

TIS 405/AHB 318 O Spirit of the living God

TIS 583/AHB 496 Take up your cross, the Saviour said

TIS 590/AHB 165 What a friend we have in Jesus

TIS 407/AHB 320 Breathe on me, breath of God

TIS 131/AHB 65 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty

TIS 729 Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy upon us

TIS 584/AHB 497 Just as I am, without one plea

David MacGregor has a range of contemporary songs. You may like to select one to learn. He often provides a downloadable mp3 file, music and lyrics for songs that are his own. His site is at: <https://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>

**Other Creative suggestions:**

* Visuals are very appropriate for most services. Art works can be used to draw people into the stories. <http://www.textweek.com/yearc/properc25.htm> has links to artworks and movie suggestions related to the themes arising from the Bible readings. Some of these are by some of the greats and others by world class contemporary artists.
* Ann suggests 2 listening songs. The first is *Follow the Word*, by Maire Brennan on her album, Whisper to the Wild Water. This song goes very well with the Joel reading. The second is *Worlds Apart*, by Jars of Clay on their album, Jars of Clay. This song is the prayer of the tax collector but it is also the prayer of the repentant Pharisee.
* Ann suggests 2 video clips. The first is from *Mr Deeds.* She says she showed the clip where John Deeds goes out to dinner with New York's influential businessmen. She found this clip at Wingclips.  This goes really well with the gospel reading - see service idea below. Watch this clip at: <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/mr-deeds/good-manners>. The 2nd clip is available on Ann’s site and on the UCA’s Vimeo site. It is about the Mapoon Appeal. She says, “e*ven though this film clip is now just on three years old, the story behind this appeal is a great story reminiscent of the Joel locust story.  The people of Mapoon always dreamed and hoped to return and they have lived up to their dreams and visions. And if your church could help them out a little, that would be even better.”* To access the video on the UCA’s Vimeo site, go to <https://vimeo.com/unitingchurch>.
* Ann also suggests a possible drama that can be used, discussion questions and a service idea. Some great reflective questions and creative ideas. Have a look.
* Geoff Shrowder suggests when the Joel 2:23-32 reading is the main reading: *The dominant image is one of “plenty”. Posters on the walls of the worship space and images projected overhead could illustrate this.
Symbols of plenty such as a jug of water, a small jug of oil, a pile of grain could provide a visual focus on the worship table.
Think of ways to illustrate/represent prophesy, dreaming, visions and the pouring out of the Spirit on the people.*
* Seasons of the Spirit is a resource package available through Media Com. They have weekly resources available that can be purchased. They have great resources for all ages, creative ideas and thoughtful suggestions for reflection and sermon development. If you want to check it out, speak to Rev Peter or contact our Romsey congregation who use the material often.

**Other resources**

* See the Resources page of our web site for an extensive list of links and other resources.
* Our Romsey congregation has access to Seasons of the Spirit materials. Contact Jay for details as to what is available.
* Bruce Prewer’s web site has sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>.
* Nathan Nettleton’s site has paraphrase versions of the readings, sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>.
* Ann Scull has some great suggestions for creative worship. Go to <http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/>.
* Sacredise is a great web site that has a huge range of resources. Go to <http://sacredise.com/>.
* David McGregor has some great suggestions for contemporary music and songs. Go to <http://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>
* Geoff Shrowder has suggestions for the use of the Psalm, often a thoughtful piece and suggestions for hymns. Go to <http://thebillabong.info/>.
* Many other resources are available on the web site