

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE 7TH FEBRUARY 2021 – Shepparton Uniting Church and Shepparton Rural Congregations

Introit: 52 (TiS) 'Let us sing to the God of Salvation'.

Call to Worship:

The Body of Christ is the womb-space of love, conceiving new life day by day, and holding us in unconditional grace until we are ready to be born afresh, carrying the labour and pain of our birthing in an energy of kindness which stands forever waiting for us.

This is our God; this is the Christ.

From the earth the songs of praise arise, from the skies the rains of greening gently fall
and our lives pause in awe as we lift our hearts this day.

Let us worship God.

Hymn: 452 (TiS) 'God of mercy, God of grace.'

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

Eternal God, Lord of heaven and earth, we praise you for your greatness. Your wisdom is seen in all your works. Your grace and truth are revealed in Jesus Christ your Son.

Your presence and power are given to us through the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, O blessed Trinity, we worship and adore you for ever and ever.

Amen.

In penitence and faith, let us together confess our sins to almighty God.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed: we have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins.

Father forgive us.

Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness:

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1: 15)

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:

Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Doxology: 772 (TiS) 'Worship, honour, glory, blessing.'

Readings: Isaiah 40: 21-31, Mark 1: 29-39

Service of Baptism

Hymn: 494 (TiS) 'In water we grow.'

Presentation *The elder who would be responsible for the care of the family brings the parents, the child to be baptised and any brothers and sisters forward, and introduces them to the congregation – the elder concludes the introduction with these words:*

Manuel and Marife Gandionko have come today to present their son Gabriel for baptism.

Scripture:

Hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. (Mathew 28: 18-21)

The meaning of baptism:

Obedying the word of the Lord Jesus, and confident of his promises, the church baptises those whom he has called.

Baptism is the sign of new life in Christ Jesus. By water and the Spirit, we are brought into union with Christ in his death and resurrection.

In baptism we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, made members of the body of Christ, and called to his ministry in the world.

Renunciation and Affirmation:

Manuel and Marife, what do you ask of God's church for Gabriel?

We ask that he be baptised into the faith and family of Jesus Christ.

In the light of the covenant promise and of your request, I ask you now:

Do you believe that the gospel enables us to turn from the darkness of evil and to walk in the light of Christ?

We do.

Let us confess the faith into which we are baptised. *(The people stand)*

Do you believe in God, who made you and loves you?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ your Saviour and Lord?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, and the continuing work of our salvation?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

(The people remain standing)

The Prayer of Thanksgiving:

(The elder pours water into the font and the child is received by the minister)

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 is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eternal God, we thank you for the gift of water: in the beginning you moved over the waters to bring order out of chaos; from the great flood in the days of Noah you saved those on the ark; through the Red Sea you led your people to freedom from slavery in Egypt; across the river Jordan you led Israel to the land you promised; in the waters of the Jordan our Lord was baptised by John and anointed by the Spirit.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, bless this water and this child who is to be baptised in it; that he/she may be born anew of water and the Spirit, be raised to new life in Christ, and continue to be his faithful disciple; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.

(People remain standing for the act of baptism)

Gabriel Gandionko, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Gabriel Gandionko, from this day on the sign of the cross is upon you.

Gabriel Gandionko is now received into the holy catholic Church according to Christ's command.

(The child is taken through the congregation and when the child is returned to the minister, the Aaronic blessing is sung)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

(The child is returned to the parents and the people sit)

Responses:

Manuel and Marife, I ask you now to respond to God's graciousness to Gabriel by making these solemn promises:

Will you provide for your child a Christian home of love and trust?

With God's help, we will.

Will you set before Gabriel the example of a Christian life, and will you pray that he/she will learn the way of Christ?

With God's help, we will.

Will you encourage your child to grow within the fellowship of the church, so that he/she may come to faith in Christ?

With God's help, we will.

I charge you, the people of this congregation, to maintain the life of worship and service, that this child and all the children among you may grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the knowledge and love of God.

(The people respond)

With God's help, we will live out our baptism as a loving community in Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one another in prayer, and encouraging one another in service.

Post Baptismal prayers:

Loving Father, you have filled the world with joy by giving us your Son. Bless this newly baptised child; may he/she never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

Bless his parents Manuel and Marife, may they always show their gratitude for the life you have given them by loving and caring for Gabriel.

Bless your faithful people; unite us in the peace of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Presentation:

(Gift from the congregation including the certificate of baptism)

Message: 'Raise to serve'.

- Straight after casting out the demon from a man possessed in the Capernaum synagogue Jesus returns to Simon Peter's house.
- In Simon Peter's house is a woman, said to be Simon Peter's mother-in-law in the grip of a fever.
- A valued member of the household and a family member who is unable to be up and about her work.
- Jesus simply "raises her up", the "fever left her, and she served them".
- The healing of Simon Peter's mother in law uses the verbs "raise" and "serve", the same words (verbs) used about Jesus himself in the resurrection story and his own ministry.
- The heart of Jesus ministry is to serve rather than being served (Mark 10:45). The followers of Jesus are called to serve, the church is raised (built) to serve.
- The healing of Simon Peter's mother in law is also a 'restoration'. Because illness bore a heavy social cost: not only would a person be unable to earn a living or contribute to the well-being of the house hold, but their ability to take their proper role in the community, to be honoured as a valuable member of a town, or village, would be taken from them.
- Simon Peter's mother in law was cut off from her role and from doing that which integrated her to her social world. Jesus restored her, and by raising her restored her back to a life of value free from fever. A restoration of her role and her life.
- It is a mistake to think that Simon Peter's mother in law exemplifies the pathetic, un-liberated woman for whom serving men is her whole life rather, she is the first character in Mark's gospel that exemplifies true discipleship.

- As Greta Ortega writes, “her service cannot be understood as a woman’s menial work under the domination of lazy males, but as a true messianic ministry.” (Greta Ortega, *Feasting on the Word, Year B Volume 1*, 334)
- One can say that Simon Peter’s mother in law is the first deacon that Jesus called (raised).
- The church of Jesus Christ is called and raised to serve, to find its proper place outside the walls of its own buildings, it is restored to that proper place where she contributes to the welfare of the whole household of God (the whole creation).
- And like Simon’s Peter’s mother in law, the church finds its true identity in serving! The church always lives in relationship to the world and with the world, and if that relationship which is built on serving is broken, then the church needs healing.

Hymn: 511 (TiS) ‘Let us break bread together with the Lord’.

Holy Communion

Narrative of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper:

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

We give you thanks through your beloved child Jesus, whom you revealed to the whole world as Saviour and Redeemer, the light of all the nations.

And so, we praise you with the faithful of every time and place, joining with the choirs of angels and the whole creation in the eternal hymn:

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 thank you that you called a covenant people to be a light to the nations. Through Moses you taught us your law, and in the prophets, you cried out for justice.

In the fullness of your mercy you became one with us in Jesus Christ, who gave himself up for us on the cross.

You make us alive with him, that we may rejoice in his presence and share his peace.

By water and the Spirit, you open the kingdom to all who believe, and welcome us to your table: for by grace we are saved, through faith.

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.

The breaking of the bread:

The Communion:

Prayer after Communion

We thank you, God our Father, that through word and sacrament you have given us your Son who is the true bread of heaven and food of eternal life.

So, strengthen us in your service that our daily living may show our thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notices and Concerns

Offering

Prayers of the People

Praise to you, faithful God, for you set the stars in the heavens, and all the world was shaped by your hands. We pray for your creation, for a sense of wonder and delight at its beauty, for wisdom and justice in the use of its bounty.

Praise to you, faithful God, for you feed the hungry, lift up the downtrodden and set the captive free. We pray for all peoples, for an end to violence, exploitation and oppression, for peace and harmony among nations.

Praise to you, faithful God, for you have called us by our name and brought us into the company of all believers. We pray for your church, for a community open to the movement of your Spirit, for a passion to proclaim your gospel in the world.

Praise to you, faithful God, for you welcome the outcast, bring strength to the weary and your love for your people is steadfast and sure. We pray for all who live and work in this place, for the building up of community, for the sharing of resources and for the care of those in need.

Praise to you, faithful God, for you heal the sick, bind up the broken-hearted and bring life and wholeness to your people. We pray for all in anxiety, pain or grief, for comfort for the sorrowing, relief for the suffering and peace for the dying.

Praise to you, faithful God, for you have broken the bonds of death and promise to your people the joys of everlasting life. We give you thanks for all who have followed your way of love, for those from these congregations and all whom we hold dear, and we pray that we may share with them a joyful resurrection to life eternal.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Hymn: 531 (TiS) 'Sent forth by God's blessing.'

Presentation of the baptismal candle...

Gabriel Gandionko, you belong to Christ, the light of the world.

Let your light so shine before the world that all may see your good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven. (Mathew 5:16)

Blessing:

Go forth with open eyes to see a different world. Go in prayer and hope to heal the ones who wait for a gentle touch.

And may God carry us beyond where we have been, Christ Jesus travel with us into the unknown and the Holy Spirit light a flame of courageous life before us.

Amen.