

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

Introit: 584 (TiS) 'Just as I am, without one plea' verses 1, 4, 5, and 6.

Call to Worship:

In Christ we know the dignity of righteousness and the brave actions needed to bring it into being.

In God we are surrounded by creativity and a profound commitment to all that is.

In the Holy Spirit, we are met by a love which will not let us go and eternal invitation to grow and be transformed.

To walk in faith is to enter new places and to see more clearly the will of God.

Even as the church, we are called to explore who we are and what we do, knowing that we, too, may need to change.

Let us worship God.

Hymn: 602 (TiS) 'O Love that will not let me go.'

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

We thank you, O God, for Jesus Christ, unswerving in his commitment to justice and love and challenging all who resist the will of God.

We thank you for life which is passionate, and which invites in us a rich journey towards new possibilities.

We praise you for setting us free to choose a different path, one of dignity and hope.

In gratitude, we worship you, O God, and pray that we may embrace your vision for our future.

O God, we own that it is often easier for us to take our stands against the sins of others than to face those which are imbedded in our own life. Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ.

Open our eyes to see your truth and warm our hearts so that we respond to you, we pray.

If we lack the courage to speak out for others, afraid that we may not know what to say and could earn the disapproval of others: Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ.

Open our hearts and fill it with courage that we may be bold in proclaiming your good news to your people, we pray. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness:

In spite of our failing to honour Christ's hopes for us, our God never lays aside grace. This eternal love is part of God's passion for goodness and invites the same kindness in us. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

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

Readings: 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25, John 2: 13-22

Service of Baptism

Hymn: 491 (TiS) 'Little children come to me.'

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:*

Taufa and Tenisi Latu have come today to present their daughter 'Atelaite Latu 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:

Taufa and Tenisi, what do you ask of God's church for 'Atelaite?

We ask that she 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)

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 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)

‘Atelaite Latu, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

‘Atelaite, from this day on the sign of the cross is upon you.

‘Atelaite 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:

Taufa and Tenisi, I ask you now to respond to God’s graciousness to ‘Atelaite 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 ‘Atelaite the example of a Christian life, and will you pray that 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 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 she never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

Bless her parents Taufua and Tenisi, may they always show their gratitude for the life you have given them by loving and caring for 'Atelaite.

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: Temple cleansing.

- Jesus goes to the temple for Passover

The Passover was linked to another feast which took place seven days later – the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. The Jews had to make sure that absolutely no leaven was present in their homes. They would search every corner, every cupboard, every cooking utensil to rid their homes of every trace of leaven, the symbol of sin.

- Jesus makes a whip of cords to unravel confusion by upending and disrupting the status quo. Some believe that Jesus only used the whip on the animals, and some say he used it on both animals and people. Nevertheless, the sense is much more a display of Jesus' authority than violence.

- Jesus drives out the moneychangers and sellers of expensive "approved" sacrificial animals. Cleansing was part of the Passover celebration. Removing every speck of anything leavened from the home was a symbol, a picture of cleansing from sin. Why not the temple? The Jesus who earlier sat at the table at a wedding in Cana is now the Jesus who turns tables. The one who worked quietly and privately is now acting conspicuously and publicly. At the wedding feast, the emphasis was on joy. Here, the end result is judgement.

- Jesus desires righteousness in God's house.

The disciples remembered the line from Psalm 69:9 'Zeal for your house has eaten me up' and made the connection between the zeal Jesus had for the purity of God's house and the way worship is practised there. The disciples suddenly realised the passion of Jesus for the physical Temple. So too, Jesus is zealous and passionate about His spiritual temple – us! We are his temple not only individually (1 Cor. 6: 19), but corporately (1 Peter 2: 5). If you are not into the church, if you're down on the church, if you don't have time for church, or if church is something you do if you have any spare time, let me say this: Jesus is zealous for you as members of his church and he is radically in love with His church...

- The church is not a marketplace, it is not a den of robbers, it is a house of prayer and genuine worship. Then the questions may be asked: Why are people not worshipping? Why are people staying away and then the clincher – Why are we here?

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.

You make us your disciples and call us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross and follow Jesus.

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.

Pour out the Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Make us one with him, one with each other, and one in ministry in the world, until at last we feast with him in the kingdom.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, in your holy church, all honour and glory is yours, Father almighty, now and for ever.

Amen.

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:

O God, the fountain of life, you have made an everlasting covenant with your people, and you satisfy your people with good things: hear us when we call on you.

We pray for the peoples of the world, for all who govern or administer the law; for all who have lost their land or livelihood; for all who endure poverty, war or oppression.

We pray for our land, for all who make up the rich tapestry of our nation; for those who experience prejudice, exclusion or neglect; for community leaders, members of parliament and those in local government.

We pray for your church throughout the world, for its leaders and ministers; for teachers and evangelists, for chaplains and pastoral workers; for the people of this congregation and for all who serve you in this community.

We pray for those with whom we share our lives at home, at work or at play; for our families, our neighbours and our friends; for those we dislike and those from whom we turn away.

We pray for all in need, for all whose lives are empty and bleak; for those anxious for the present and without hope for the future; for the broken hearted, the sick and the dying, and for all who care for them.

Let us, with all your saints, drink from your fountain of life, that the longings of our hearts may be satisfied, and we may come to dwell in your presence for ever.

O God hear our prayer. Amen.

Hymn: 349 (TiS) 'In the cross of Christ I glory.'

Presentation of the baptismal candle...

'Atelaite Latu, 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)

Sending out of the people of God:

Let us go in peace to live with the true authority of God's goodness. And may courage be born within us; Christ Jesus be our eternal example and the God of love be with us in Spirit and in truth.

Amen.

779 (TiS) 'May the feet of God walk with you'.