



The Uniting Church in Australia
SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

Order of Service for
Sunday 20th June 2021

Introit: 13 (AHB) 'Let all the world'.

Call to worship:

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name. O Most High.

When my enemies turned back, they stumbled and perished before you.

For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgement.

(Psalm 9: 1-4)

Acknowledgement:

I pay my respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which I live, work and worship.
To the elders and members of the Yorta Yorta nation past, present and emerging.

Let us worship God.

Hymn: 148 (TiS) 'All things praise you, Lord most high'.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

Our thanks to you, O God, stream forth from all creation, resounding from the hills and rising from the valleys of life. Our thanks sound in hymns of praise and prayers which trust you with our days.

There are no words to tell you, O God, of the grandeur of the hope which lives in us because of your kindness.

Loving Christ, we know all too well that we find it hard to live with those who are different. We are often disturbed by unpredictable behaviour or cultures and customs different from our own. It sometimes seems easier to keep away from such people or to speak of them with disapproval.

We are sorry when we love people less than you love us, O God.

Gather us in towards your grace, we pray.

It is often hard, O God, for us to move from the familiar and the reassuring. It is disturbing to stay with those who bear the signs of disability or illnesses which separate them from the mainstream of society.

We own our anxieties and tendencies to keep away.

We are sorry when we love them less than you love us, O God.

Gather us in towards your grace, we pray.

Then we face today, Jesus Christ, the reality of our lack of trust in your love for us. We know that sometimes we push to the margins things we don't want to face about ourselves, fearful that you will not understand or forgive us.

Gather us in towards your grace, we pray, for we know that there lies the transforming love for all people. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness:

God in Jesus Christ never turns away from us or from any vulnerable person. The love of God is endless and eternal. It is offered to us now.

We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

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

Young Church: 'Stormy seas' (Based on Mark 4: 35 – 41)

Readings: 1 Samuel 17: 32 – 49, 2 Corinthians 6: 1 – 13, Mark 4: 35 – 41.

Hymn: 607 (TiS) 'Make me a channel of your peace'.

Sermon: (Mark 4: 35 – 41)

- 'On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. (vv. 35 – 36)
- In those two verses, we get a glimpse of what Jesus's mission and ministry is all about.
- We are not told by Mark as to why Jesus wanted to go across the Sea of Galilee. But we are told that it was evening on that day when Jesus told them "Let us go across to the other side.
- Here we see the beginning of ministry and mission. It always begins when evening comes, when the world is darkened, when people are living their lives in the dark. It may be grief, it could a lack of faith or loneliness. People can lose hope in the dark and they panic.
- On the way to the 'other side' the heavenly shore, we encounter danger in the dark. Stormy seas can overwhelm us. Stormy relationship, stormy family issues, stormy personal weaknesses etc.
- It is in the evening; even experienced seamen can encounter stormy weather and Mark mentioned it was a 'great storm' and these seasoned fishermen thought they were going to perish.
- Christ's ministry requires a kind of 'leaving behind'. They left the crowd behind. We are often asked or called to leave behind what is popular and manageable, to leave behind the familiar and the predictable, leave behind our crowded ways.
- There is also a kind of urgency in ministry as Jesus demonstrated by leaving 'just as he was'. We often put off the opportunity to serve or to respond to God's call to 'go

across' to the other side for fear of not being properly equipped or trained or even resourced.

- As we find out in this story, to have Jesus in our boat is enough.
- The storm of life may come and will come so what will be our response? The disciples at least knew that Jesus was in the boat. To their credit they woke him up for he had slept on a cushion in the stern of the boat.
- They woke him up not to ask for help but to accuse him of his lack of care and indifference. The disciples had already figured out what is to become of them even with Jesus in the boat.
- We do this too when God seems to be asleep when we encounter difficulties. We accuse God of not caring, at caring enough about our predicament whether it is a terminal illness or an abusive behaviour that threatens our well-being and our life.
- Yet, there is good news in the end. Jesus woke up and rebukes the wind just as he had done with the evil spirits in Mark 1: 25. "Peace! Be still!"
- "Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm". The Christ will always be present, Christ will always offer God's peace. Christ who rebukes the storm and evil spirits is always available even if he seems to be asleep.
- One more detail that Mark decides to put in this story is "Other boats were with him".
- I believe that the people in those 'other boats' were as afraid about the storm as the disciples did but they didn't have a sleeping Jesus in their boats – the good news, and I believe that we can see that the calming of the storm benefits all.
- There are times when we are so preoccupied with the 'other boats', whether they deserve to be saved or not – there is no discrimination here, no institutional or doctrinal arguments. When Jesus calms the storm, all at sea find peace. Jesus need only to be in one boat, Jesus need only to hear our desperate cries and all will be saved.
- To have faith is to trust that Jesus who is amongst us will save us and all people if we take our concerns to him in prayer. Amen!

Hymn: 159 (AHB) 'All hail the power of Jesus name'.

Notices: Joys and Concerns:

Offering:

O God, we know that there are more people than we can ever serve who wait in need in the world around us. Give to us your wisdom as we try to serve them and receive the gifts of your people offered to you in faith.

Amen.

Prayers of the people:

God our deliverer, you rescue your people from danger, and your care for your people never ends. Hear our prayer for the world and for the church.

We pray for the peoples of the world: for those whose lives are engulfed by misery; for those threatened by famine, disease or war.

When we are overwhelmed by helplessness and fear, when we face disasters beyond our control, calm our terrors and still our souls, that we may know your presence and your power.
God our deliverer,
hear our prayer.

We pray for your worldwide church: for those in peril of persecution for their faith; for those whose faith is in danger from lethargy and neglect.
When we are overwhelmed by unbelief or guilt, when we cry to you and you do not seem to hear, calm our terrors and still our souls, that we may know your presence and your power.
God our deliverer,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the people of this community: for those whose livelihood is lost or hopes are dashed; for those swamped by demands of work or responsibilities of care.
When we are overwhelmed by loneliness or loss, when we are tossed about without direction, calm our terrors and still our souls, that we may know your presence and your power.
God our deliverer,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are in trouble or distress: for those whose lives are filled with suffering; for those assailed by panic or despair.
When we are overwhelmed by hopelessness and grief, when our pain seems more than we can bear, calm our terrors and still our souls, that we may know your presence and your power.
God our deliverer,
hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have died: for those whose death has been violent or untimely; for those who have died unlamented and unloved.
When we are overwhelmed by the storms of life, when we come to face our own death, calm our terrors and still our souls, and by your power bring us into the joy of your eternal presence.
God our deliverer,
hear our prayer. Amen.

Hymn: 582 (TiS) 'Lead, kindly light'.

Blessings:

Do not be afraid. Let us go into the world together in faith, holding on to each other and our God.
And may the peace that calms the storms in the world, be found again in us, and the grace with which we live be a gift to those who wait in hope, and God the loving parent, Christ the human One, and the Holy Spirit be our company in each day.
Amen.

Recession: 749 (TiS) 'Send me Jesus'.