



The Uniting Church in Australia

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

Order of Service for

Sunday 1st August 2021

INTROIT TiS 477 (verses 1 and 3) Jesus calls us here to meet him

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Bread of Life has come among us.

What is this Bread of Life?

It is none other than Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son!

We hunger for the true bread that will nourish our souls.

Come, then, to Christ who feeds us with his very life!

We come, needing sustenance and nurturing. AMEN

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, the eyes of all look to you in hope;
and you give them what they need.

You open your hand
and satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

We, too, turn to you again, longing to be filled -
to eat of the Bread of Life,
to drink from your life-giving streams,
to taste your goodness and live.

May the time we spend together in your presence
nourish our hearts and minds;
may it strengthen our relationship with you,
and renew our commitment to live in this world as your faithful disciples.
For you alone are God, the source and sustainer of life.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*"We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today
and pay respect to their elder's past, present and emerging."*

WELCOME

HYMN TiS 474 Here in this place, new life is streaming

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

PSALM 51:1-12 (offered as a Prayer of Confession)

God, be merciful to me because of your faithful love.

Because of your great compassion, erase all the wrongs I have done.

² Scrub away my guilt. Wash me clean from my sin.

³ **I know I have done wrong. I remember that sin all the time.**

⁴ I did what you said is wrong. You are the one I have sinned against.

I say this so that people will know that I am wrong and you are right.

What you decided is fair.

⁵ I was born to do wrong, a sinner before I left my mother's womb.

⁶ **You want me to be completely loyal, so put true wisdom deep inside of me.**

⁷ Remove my sin and make me pure. Wash me until I am whiter than snow!

⁸ **Let me hear sounds of joy and happiness again. Let the bones you crushed be happy again.**

⁹ Don't look at my sins. Erase them all.

¹⁰ **God, create a pure heart in me, and make my spirit strong again.**

¹¹ Don't push me away or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² **Your help made me so happy. Give me that joy again.**

Make my spirit strong and ready to obey you.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Do you not know? It is Jesus Christ who is the Bread of Life!

Come to him and feed on his love for you. Find healing in his presence.

Know that this is given freely for you, out of his great love. **AMEN.**

AN EARLY WORD

HYMN TiS 610 God you touch the earth with beauty

BIBLE READINGS: John 6:24-35
Ephesians 4:1-16

REFLECTION

In today's gospel reading we find Jesus surprising people again - not by what he does, but by what he says. They have already participated in the surprise of their lives - being fed by a simple offering of five loaves and two fish. Then, after this miraculous feeding of the large crowd, Jesus leaves. The crowd naturally wants more of him, and they follow him, eventually finding him on the other side of the lake. What they hear comes as a different sort of surprise.

First, Jesus accuses them of opportunism: "Ah, you're only here because you want another free meal," he scolds. And, he was probably right. He goes on: "Do not work for the food that spoils, instead, work for the food that lasts for eternal life."

That gets their attention. "Okay," the crowd says, "we'll go with you on this one, what kind of work do we have to do to get this food?"

"Just believe," Jesus says, "just believe that I am the One God sent." At this point the crowd balks, wondering just who in the world this person thinks he is. He is, after all, offering the bread of life.

But what if he's wrong? What if they believe, and don't receive?

This promise of the bread of life is both frightening and comforting, for it raises expectations.

So, naturally, they ask "what miracle will you perform so that we may see it and believe you?"

In other words, “Prove yourself, Jesus.” How much easier faith would be if God would just do what God’s supposed to do and give us a miracle.

And Jesus response? I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

God is a God of surprises, of upheavals, of reversals. And so rather than do what God is supposed to do - like another bread- breaking miracle - God does the unexpected: instead of pronouncing judgment, God offers mercy; instead of justice, God loves; instead of condemnation, God forgives, instead of coming in power, God came in weakness; and instead of giving us a miracle, God gives us God’s own self. For as Martin Luther would remind us, the whole of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection are summed up both succinctly and eloquently in the two words we hear when coming to the communion table: “for you.” *This is Christ’s body, given for you. This is Christ’s blood, shed for you.*

We will shortly share the sacrament of holy communion today, a special meal which reminds us of the faith we are privileged to proclaim: that the Eternal Word who was with God and is God from the beginning and participated in the creation of the heavens and the earth is the same Lord who cares so desperately for us that he gave his life for ours on the cross, and gives himself still in the bread and wine.

Both the sacraments which we practice in the Uniting Church – Communion and Baptism - contain God’s unexpected, surprising, unforeseen gift of God’s own self.

So today – we, the body of Christ with different gifts and abilities, but one in Christ, have the privilege of receiving the surprise of our lives. Soon, we will be invited to partake of the bread of life, and as we do, let us remember this awesome promise - that those who come to Christ will never be hungry, and those who believe in Christ will not thirst. Thanks be to God. Amen

OFFERING and DEDICATION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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HYMN TiS 538 Feed us now, Bread of Life

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

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.

.....

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices, here and now,
with the faithful of every time and place, saying:

**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 pray in the name of Jesus, 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 for ever.
Amen.***

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

LAMB OF GOD

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS:

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

HYMN TiS 531 Sent forth by God's blessing

BENEDICTION

Filled to the brim with the goodness of God;
the nourishment of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life,
and the power of the Holy Spirit,
go now in peace to serve God in all that you think, do and say.
God's peace will always be with you. AMEN.

HYMN TiS 782 Go now in peace