



The Uniting Church in Australia

**SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH**

**Order of Service for**  
**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

**INTROIT TiS 107 Sing praise and thanksgiving**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (based on Psalm 111)

Come, let us praise God together  
in the company of his gathered people.  
For the works of our God are unparalleled.  
Everything He does reveals his glory and majesty.  
***Our God is full of grace and mercy,  
and his righteousness never fails.***  
So come and worship, all you who revere the Lord,  
for reverence and awe is the foundation of true wisdom.

**OPENING PRAYER**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

*“We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today  
and pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging.”*

**WELCOME**

**HYMN TiS 402 Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly dove**

**Introduction to the theme: “The Getting of Wisdom”**

- *explored through three brief reflections on three readings which make reference to wisdom*

**RESPONSIVE PSALM 111 - Praise for God’s Wonderful Works**

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

<sup>2</sup> **Great are the works of the LORD,  
studied by all who delight in them.**

<sup>3</sup> Full of honour and majesty is his work,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

<sup>4</sup> **He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;  
the LORD is gracious and merciful.**

<sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who fear him;  
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

<sup>6</sup> **He has shown his people the power of his works,  
in giving them the heritage of the nations.**

<sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy.

<sup>8</sup> **They are established forever and ever,  
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.**

<sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant forever.



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Holy and awesome is his name.

**<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.  
His praise endures forever.**

#### *Brief Reflection on the psalm*

A wonderful psalm of praise concludes on a seemingly jarring note: *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*

The main Hebrew words translated as *fear* in the Bible can have several shades of meaning, but in the context of the fear of the Lord, they convey a positive reverence.

The Hebrew verb *yare* can mean “to fear, to respect, to reverence” and the Hebrew noun *yirah* usually refers to the fear of God and is viewed as a positive quality. This fear acknowledges God’s good intentions. This fear is produced by God’s Word, and makes a person receptive to wisdom and knowledge.

So when the Bible refers to the “fear of the Lord,” it means having a deep respect, reverence and awe for God’s power and authority. Rather than causing someone to be afraid of God, a proper “fear of the Lord” leads one to love God.

#### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We would follow Jesus, but sometimes it seems that we do not know how to go out in faith, or come in out of the shadows of life. The One who has sent the Bread of life to us is the God who is just and true, longing to grace us with mercy.

Please join in as we pray together, saying,

**We try to be so careful, Faithful God, yet we make so many mistakes. We think we are so wise, yet do not understand the simple wonder of a child. We spend so little time in your presence, and ask why we do not know your dreams for us. We long to be good, upright people, but find our hearts tripping over the temptations of the world.**

**Have mercy, Covenant Keeper, and be gracious to us. As you continue to teach us of your hopes, your dreams, your love for us, may we practice what we learn, as we follow our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in faith.**

*Silence is kept*

#### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Out of our lives laced with foolish mistakes and unwise choices, God is able to weave a tapestry of grace, forgiveness, and healing.

**God has sent redemption for all, God has fed us with the healing bread of life. At all times, and for every grace, we give thanks to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

#### **AN EARLY WORD**

**HYMN 609 May the mind of Christ my Saviour**

#### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

**1 Kings 2:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. <sup>11</sup> The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three



years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup> So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

### **1 Kings 3:3-14**

<sup>3</sup> Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. <sup>4</sup> The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. <sup>5</sup> At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” <sup>6</sup> And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup> And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup> And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup> Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?”

<sup>10</sup> It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup> God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup> I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. <sup>13</sup> I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour all your life; no other king shall compare with you. <sup>14</sup> If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life.”

#### *Brief Reflection on Solomon's request*

Imagine for a moment that you are the recently appointed King Solomon of Israel. Your father had led the nation for 40 years, and has been loved and revered by the people. Now you must assume the mantle of leadership. What a responsibility!

What do you need? Where do you look for help?

In a dream God interacts with Solomon. “What do you want me to give you?”

Solomon could have asked for anything – but he chose to ask for wisdom.

“Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil”

I wonder what we might ask for if God were to present us with the same question: What do you want me to give you?

#### **Prayer**

Holy Wisdom, you granted Solomon's request for an understanding mind and the knowledge to discern good from evil.

Fill us with such understanding and knowledge that we may act as instruments of your loving desire for creation, working with you to transform



our conceit into concern for others,  
our fear into love,  
our violence into peace,  
and our brokenness into wholeness. Amen.

## **HYMN TiS 626 Lord of creation, to you be all praise**

### **NEW TESTAMENT READING**

#### **Ephesians 5:15-20**

<sup>15</sup> Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

<sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### *Brief reflection on the reading*

Throughout the letter to the Ephesians, new Christians are being reminded of their identity in Christ. They have been given a new, distinct identity so that as Christians they are no longer who they once were. As Paul writes: “You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.”

The letter goes on to remind readers that they must put off their old self and its errant ways of living and put on the conduct of their new self, walking in the light of goodness, righteousness and truth.

Today’s passage picks up on the encouragement to live fruitful lives by calling on Christians to pay close attention to how they are to live wisely.

What does living wisely involve?

First, and perhaps foremost, living wisely is not a matter of doing what comes naturally; what comes naturally is the foolish, contentious ways of the old self, which includes living in reckless abandon and self-indulgence

Rather, living wisely involves discerning and enacting the will of Christ. Wise living flows out of being open to the Spirit which is at work in the lives of individual Christians and in the gathered life of the Christian community

Living wisely also includes being able to make the most of the critical time in which we live.

Furthermore, living wisely calls us to engage in active worship, celebrating all that God has done in Christ through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

This short passage and its surrounding context remind us that wise living is personal but never private. Each Christian is a new self which has been created by God. But this new self does not live in isolation. Rather, each new self exists as a member of the body of Christ, joined to the body’s other members. In this way, we live both with each other and for each other. Similarly, our new self is created to be active by doing good works and not to be dormant or secluded. Living wisely means allowing the Spirit to work the will of Christ in all aspects of life so that who we are as Christians is integral to how we live as Christians.

So – where have our readings taken us today:



- *Respect, reverence and awe of God and God's goodness leads to wisdom.*
- *We can pray and ask for wisdom.*
- *Wise living means a behaviour change – leaving behind foolish words and actions and, led by the Spirit, living with and for each other in worship and community.*

## **OFFERING**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Eternal God, we thank you today for your goodness. You have given us so much. You bless us richly with goodness every day. We thank you and praise you.

We live in a time of considerable confusion. We ask today for your wisdom as Solomon asked for wisdom.

We are often fearful as was Solomon. We live in a time of pestilence, isolation, and world unrest. Different and competing interests strive for our attention and loyalty. Help us, O God, to pray for wise and discerning spirits.

Give us wisdom to know good from evil.

Give us wisdom to assess the clamoring voices and concerns with which we are daily bombarded.

Give us wisdom so that we might learn to be accepting of all the diverse people you have created.

Give us wisdom to be peacemakers and mediators of understanding where there is conflict.

Give us wisdom to discern what is of ultimate value for our souls and to make wise choices.

**O God, give us wisdom.**

**give us discernment.**

**give us the will to be faithful.**

**and give us the power to love. Amen.**

## **HYMN TiS 611 God of grace and God of glory**

## **BENEDICTION**

Go, blessed and filled with the wisdom of God,  
blessed and nourished by the life of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and blessed and directed by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## **TiS 779 May the feet of God walk with you**

