



Order of Service
2nd October 2022

TiS 474 Here in this place (verses 1 and 3)

Call to worship

With humble thankful hearts we gather to worship God

May we be united in love and praise

With generous, faithful minds we open our hearts to hear

May we be filled with the knowledge of Christ's teaching

With the trials and temptations of life in our thoughts

May we lay them down and prepare to freely worship God

Opening Prayer

Source of grace and peace, you call us into being;

you keep us in safety; you hold us in life.

Be with us now. Bring us into your presence.

Comfort our pain. Challenge our pride.

Enter into our prayer and our praise, that our worship may be pleasing to you.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of this region.

Welcome

TiS 154 Great is your faithfulness

Prayer of Adoration

Eternal and Loving God, we are in awe as we worship You today.

Your generosity knows no bounds,

and we are humbled by the breadth, length and depth of Your love for us,
which extends to the people of the whole world.

How wonderful it is that you brought variety, colour, vibrancy and beauty to this earth,
for you have been a generous and caring creator who has provided richly for all.

We are blessed with continents, countries and areas that range from the high mountain to the
deep ocean, the small rural town to the bustling city.

All of this has been made perfectly, a loving gift to be experienced and lived to the full.

Creator God, you have showered upon us all the resources we need for a fulfilling life,
including families and friends who love us, work and leisure that inspires us,
and a faith that brings meaning and purpose day by day.

We are truly thankful for all You have done, and continue to do for us, day by day.

Hear our prayers, in Jesus' name, **Amen**



Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, you know everything about us.

The thoughts we have, the desires we fight against, and the words that are spoken that cause distress, worry and fear.

Our faults are many, our failings emerge more often than we would like.

Our minds are influenced by those around us.

We even drift away from the path You have set before us.

We confess the mistakes made, the actions taken, or not taken, and say sorry ...

Sorry because we let others gain the upper hand, instead of turning to You.

Sorry that we have not been as faithful as we could have been.

Loving God, forgive us, assure us and empower us as we move forward in faith, renewed and forgiven, knowing You are with us, urging, encouraging and leading us on.

Amen

Announcements

AN EARLY WORD

TiS 412 God sends us his Spirit

Bible Readings: Lamentations 3:19-26 Luke 17:5-10

Reflection

The lectionary has presented us with some challenging readings in recent weeks and today is no exception. What are we to make of this interaction of Jesus with his disciples in the Luke reading we just heard.

One could almost start feeling a little sorry for these disciples because Jesus has been asking some fairly extraordinary things of them - to give away their possessions, to forgive those who wrong them...many times, to take up his cross, and more. No wonder then, that they ask for more faith. They feel inadequate to the tasks around them, insufficient to the challenges, unable to imagine accomplishing any of what he is asking. And I guess in our own day, when things both locally and internationally feel a little bit out of control, we may feel the same. We may feel as if we need more faith.

In the gospel something interesting happens. When the disciples recognize their need and ask Jesus for help, for more faith, you'd think he would both welcome and grant their request. But he doesn't. Instead, he almost seems to rebuke them. "If you had even a speck of faith..." he begins, implying that they actually don't have faith even the size of a mustard seed. It's not the expected response to the disciples' earnest question.

But what if the question the disciples ask isn't only earnest and heartfelt, but also problematic, even a little miscued. Maybe Jesus' sharp retort was just what they needed— to orient them to the miraculous presence of God all around them and the totally-sufficient faith they already have.

In the second part of this short reading there is a reference to servants. How do we interpret these words of Jesus? Perhaps Jesus is saying something like this: Servants have a job to do, and they are expected to do it well. Generally they are not invited to eat at the table with their master – they eat when their work is done. Nor do they deserve great thanks simply for doing their job; they just do it. So is Jesus saying here: That's what faith is like.... Faith is simply the willingness to do what needs to be done. Faith is not, in other words, some kind of scarce resource that needs to be accumulated, spent, or added to. Faith isn't always heroic - indeed, it usually isn't - but instead is simply and humbly doing what needs to be done, big or small, great or mundane, just because it needs doing.



This isn't the first time in Luke's gospel that Jesus has celebrated the ordinariness of faith in his encounters with people. He has already named as faithful a desperate woman who simply believes that touching his cloak will bring healing; a centurion's concern for a sick servant; and a woman's gratitude at being forgiven. Soon in this same gospel he will also call faithful a Samaritan leper who returns to thank him for healing, and the plea of a blind beggar for sight. So perhaps it isn't so surprising that Jesus would challenge the disciples' perception about faith by pointing them to the very ordinary hard work and service of a servant performing his duties. Faith is found not in the mighty acts of heaven but in the ordinary and everyday acts of doing what needs to be done, responding to the needs around us, and caring for the people who come our way.

Faith is – turning up for work and doing a good job.

listening when someone needs to talk.

volunteering at an opp shop or helping the homeless

writing a thank you note to someone who has shown kindness

cooking a meal for a distressed family or friend.

praying for a neighbour who is having a hard time.

The list could go on - and you'll note that none of these actions is a big deal. Yet it's actions such as these that occupy much of our lives. And they are acts of faith. Somehow, an "act of faith" seems like it needs to be significant or costly or even extravagant to merit God's attention. But no – in actual fact we are living out acts of faith every day. We have sufficient faith – and we use it wherever we are to make a difference however small or large.

You may have noted in last week's church NEWS that the Uniting Church Assembly has suggested acknowledging Older Person Sunday in October. This fits in rather nicely with today's reflections because where would we be without the daily faithful contribution of older people to the life of this congregation??

Our Uniting Church president, Sharon Hollis, has offered the following as an introduction to Older Persons Sunday:

"The Uniting Church's life is enriched by its many older members who remember faithfully and watch hopefully for where God is leading, speak out on issues of injustice and nurture and encourage others across the generations. We give thanks for their worship, witness and service.

More broadly, as a society we are gifted by the many contributions, diverse experiences and loving care we receive from the older Australians in our lives. In the Uniting Church, we believe all people should be treated with respect and dignity."

The disciples plead with Jesus to give them more faith. Jesus' response? You have enough faith, use it well. "Faithfulness" is simply doing what we see needs to be done. Faith doesn't have to be heroic – like going to another country to serve as a doctor or missionary. Faith is being attentive to the needs around us and committing ourselves to doing what we can with what we've got, trusting that God will make use of it.

You, the members of this congregation are very good at doing this.

Well done good and faithful servants, Amen.

TiS 414 There's a spirit in the air

Offering and Dedication

Gracious God, whose steadfast love never ceases

and whose never-ending mercies are new every morning;

how can we make a sufficient offering?

Let our lives, our mustard-seed faith, and these symbols of our daily labours,

be enough for today; in Jesus' name. Amen.



Prayers of the People

TiS 523 Here, Lord, we take the broken bread

The Service of Holy Communion

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through the prophets.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending 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.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.
By his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.



Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice.
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ.
By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honour and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING 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.
Strengthen us in your service that our daily living may show our thanks, through Christ our Lord,
Amen

TiS 473 Community of Christ

Blessing

As we go from here to face the joys and challenges of the coming week,
remember this:

The faithful love of God never ceases; it is inexhaustible!
God's mercy and compassion is new every morning!
Great is Your faithfulness, O God!

**So we go into the week ahead with courage, and with joy, trusting in God,
For we know and God's loving presence goes with us.**

