



Order of Service
16th October 2022

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We acknowledge the Traditional owners of this land on which we meet and worship. We pay our respects to the elders past present and emerging. We thank God for them and their care of this wonderful land.

Call to worship: Jesus Christ is the light of the World.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it.

Hymn: TIS 246 Christ is the world's light

1 Christ is the world's light, he and none other;
born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
glory to God on high.

4 Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son and Father;
give God the glory, God in man my brother;
glory to God on high. Frederick Green 1993-

Prayer of Adoration and Thanksgiving.

Eternal God, Lord of heaven and earth,
we praise you for your greatness.
Your wisdom is seen in all your works.
Your grace and truth are revealed
in Jesus Christ your Son.
Your presence and power are given to us
through the Holy Spirit.
Therefore blessed Trinity,
we worship and adore you forever. Amen (UIW2)

God our Father, we thank you that you call us your children,
children with a future. Made in Your image you have given us
hearts and minds to love and praise You, hearts to love each
other – hearts to love our neighbour as ourself.

God we stand in awe of you and praise you!

God who has come to us in Jesus Christ, the Word made
flesh, we thank you that you came into our darkness with
the light and life that flow from your presence – and have
given us the precious gift of eternal life.

God we stand in awe of you and praise you!



God who walks with us by your Spirit – who dances with us through the days of laughter and joy and who carries us through our hardships and sadness. God who sends forth your Word and we are healed, we thank you!

God we stand in awe of you and praise you!

Creator God, Father Son and Holy Spirit! Be with us today as we worship. Open our hearts and minds to hear You, and to know You. Lead us in the way of Jesus Christ. Strengthen us as we worship. We ask that we may become vessels of your peace, life and love in our world.

God we stand in awe of you and praise you! Amen.

Prayer of confession - Silent reflection.

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1John 1:9)
Hear then Christ's word of grace to us – Our sins are forgiven!

Response: Thanks be to God.

Early Word (Based on 2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:5)

Where will I find God's Word? (Where do we find out about God and what he wants to say to us?)

These days when I have a question I often Google it on my phone. (internet) It seems to be able to tell me just about everything I need to know. If I'm cooking I just Google it and follow the recipe. With moderate success? When I Googled the question 'Where will I find God's Word?' what answer do you think I got?

It surprised me! It gave me a map and the names of some churches in Victoria. Not what I expected but a good answer. One of the main reasons we come to Church is to hear God's Word so we can get to know God and his Son Jesus more. A bit further on was the answer I had been thinking of. We find God's Word in the Bible. One of the verses we will read today is about a man named Timothy. Paul wrote him a letter to remind him to read the Bible because it will help him come to know Jesus more and also show him and others how to live the right way. I've brought one of my favourite Bibles today, it's 'The Beginner's Bible' You can have a look at the pictures later, but first I want to read you one of my favourite stories. It tells us how much Jesus loves children - 'Jesus and the children'. (Luke 18:17-17.)

Hymn: TIS 229 Jesus loves me this I know

Jesus loves me this I know,
and the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong,
in his love we shall be strong
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
the Bible tells me so.



Psalm 119:97-104.

Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all day long.
Your commands make me wiser
than my enemies for they are ever with me.

*How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to the mouth.*

Bible Readings: Jeremiah 31:27-34 God's law written on our hearts.
2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:5 All Scripture is inspired by God.
Luke 18:1-8 The parable of the widow and the unjust judge.

Message:

Jesus tells the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to encourage his disciples to pray and not lose heart. It fits the context of Jesus' teaching in the preceding verses on the coming of the Kingdom which the disciples had expected in their time. For Luke's community who are still looking for the coming of the Son of Man - Jesus' return at the end of the age - it is an encouragement not to give up their faith in what may have been difficult times for them, but to pray! This parable speaks to Christians in every age including our own. It addresses the need to pray and not lose heart in the face of many injustices in the world. It is also an encouragement for us to pray in the context of our everyday living as we bring our needs and those of our neighbour before God. It is easy to get discouraged when we don't see our prayers answered straight away. Jesus' Word for us is pray and not lose heart, not give up! (In Luke chapter 11:5-11 you will find another encouragement to persevering prayer that you may like to read. It is about the man who perseveres in getting his friend out of bed at midnight.)

The Judge in the parable is a particularly unwise and uncaring character. Not like the judges we put our confidence in today who are usually wise and compassionate. Barclay in his 'Daily Study Bible' believes such a judge would be an example of those appointed by the Romans. They were notoriously corrupt and sought bribes over justice. They were sometimes known as **robber judges**. A widow would not have the power, that is the family support and financial means, to get a fair hearing from a judge like this. This judge doesn't fear God or perhaps even believe in God. I am reminded of words from Psalm 14 which was part of our lectionary readings just a few weeks ago- 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, their deeds are vile'(verse 1.) This judge is blinded by his own importance. **God is of course nothing like the unjust judge**. Some beautiful verses in Deuteronomy give us a picture of God's justice and compassion for those who are like the widow in our parable... "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, **who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the aliens... Deut 10:17,18)**

Apart from not fearing God, which is a terrible place to be in, **this judge has no respect for people** either. This is a reversal of the commandment Jesus gave us to love God and our neighbour. For me having no respect for people is a significant part of the parable. Standing and praying for justice for ourselves and others is important. So is the way we live out the love commandment in the ordinariness of our everyday lives. Can we make time for the neighbour who needs a chat (Probably we love that) or for lonely and sometimes broken people who just need to be appreciated for who they are. The unjust judge couldn't be bothered giving the widow the time of day. He fobbed her off as somebody else's problem. For us just stopping and giving someone time and a listening ear can be lifegiving for them, and for us too.

The judge's attitude reminded me of some words that are the opposite and sometimes appear on our television screens. From the Fred Hollows Foundation. 'Every eye is an eye. When you are doing surgery there, (poorer countries) that is just as important as if you were doing surgery on the prime minister or a king'. As we read earlier in Deuteronomy **God shows no partiality** between people and that is a wonderful way for us to live also.

The judge's uncaring attitude to people is also the opposite of what we have been hearing about Jeremiah in our Old testament readings over the last few weeks. As Joan pointed out last week sometimes Jeremiah was in danger of his life because of his unpopular message, a message which was from God. Even though he was tested severely

he didn't give up. He had concern, love for his people. We heard that he is sometimes referred to as the weeping prophet. Did he weep for himself? Probably he wept for the people of Jerusalem who were turning away from God and now heading into exile. The reading from Jeremiah today is a positive one. It is about hope and the promise of a future restoration. It also includes a promise that God's law will be written on our hearts. This promise is something that we share in through Jesus Christ.

The widow in our parable is bold and persevering, so much so that the judge is worn out and in some fear of her. There is meant to be some humour here. The term for wear out is taken from boxing terminology and literally means something like to give a black eye. She would not give up and lose heart because she believed that justice was on her side. We may not be as feisty as this widow appears to be, I know I am not, but our concern for others and sometimes ourselves calls us to pray and not give up. In our Churches we are gifted with some who are up front and bold like the widow. But the quiet continued prayers from the rest of us are just as important. As an example of praying and not losing heart I think of the many of you who continued to pray for the Sri Lankan family from Biloela who were in danger of being deported. Many of us saw their treatment as an injustice. The prayers and perseverance of many in the face of what seemed to be almost an impossible situation was rewarded with a change of heart from a new Government.

Jesus concludes his parable by reminding us that God always hears the prayers of those who cry out to him night and day and he grants them justice. He grants them justice quickly! Some suggest the quickly is in God's own time, others that Jesus grants justice quickly at that time of his return. When God answers our prayers is out of our hands of course. What is in our hands though is to remain faithful to pray, and not loose heart.

TIS 590 1 What a friend we have in Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus
all our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer:
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Offering. Loving God, in love we offer our gifts along with our lives for the work of Your kingdom. Through them may Your church be strengthened and further enabled to reach out to our communities and the World. May they become a sign of Your love and blessing for them. Amen.

Prayers of the People. God we thank you that you are present with us in the world and that you share our concerns we have for others, and sometimes for ourselves as well.

We pray for all who are being adversely affected by the weather during this time of heavy rain falls. We pray especially for those in flood prone areas. We ask that they and their homes will be kept safe.

We pray for the Nations where there is great need of peace. Especially for peace between Russia and Ukraine.

Grant our own leaders wisdom to deal with the challenges of our pacific region, wisdom in building peaceful relationships with our neighbours and in tackling climate change.

We ask your blessing on all of our congregations in this Presbytery and other churches as we each seek to hear your Word and to work in our own specific areas.

We ask that you open our eyes to the needs around us and help us to love others as ourself. We pray for the struggling -including the homeless and those suffering from broken relationships.



We lift before you those of our own congregation who need your healing and help in other ways. We ask that they may know you present for them.

We ask your healing for Rev Loni. We thank you God for your strengthening love and the love of this congregation for them during this difficult time.

We pray your blessing for Rev Kerrie and her husband Don as they settle into the Shepparton area and prepare for life and ministry among us.

We conclude our prayers with the Lord's Prayer.

TIS 655 O let the Son of God enfold you, (John Wimber 1934-97.)

O let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love,
Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul; O, let him have the things
that hold you and his Spirit like a dove, will descend upon your life and
make it whole.

Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill our lives;

Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill our lives

Grace and peace to you in Jesus Christ!

Blessing. TIS 778 Shalom to you now (Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942-)

Shalom to you now, shalom my friends. May God's full mercies bless you my friends.

In all his living and through your loving. Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.

