



16th July 2023 – Pentecost 7

Greeter: *Roger T*

Meditation Hymn: *As the deer pants (TIS 703)*
(please remain seated)

As the deer pants for the water
so my soul longs after you;
you alone are my heart's desire,
and I long to worship you.

Refrain:
You alone are my strength and shield;
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire,
and I long to worship you

Welcome:

Greeting:

The Spirit of God be with you
And also with you

Moment of Stillness:

Let's take a moment to be still and aware of the God's presence within and all around us.

Christ Candle:

We light this candle as a symbol of the light of Christ, which is always present,
which shines in each one of us.

Acknowledgement of Country:

As we look upon the hills and valleys, we see the love poured out upon this land by those who have cared for this land since time beyond measure.

We honour those who have gone before and those who are yet to come.

May we be mindful of the calling God places on humanity to care for Creation. May we take the lead from the Gadigal and Wangal people, whose stories are entwined with the stewarding of this place.

May we learn from them and walk with them.

Call to Worship: (based on Psalm 119)

Source of Life, with delight we gather to worship God who teaches us about life.

**Your word is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.**

Source of Hope, with joy we gather to celebrate God who teaches us about hope.

**Your word is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.**

Source of Love, we gather to give and receive love from God who teaches us to learn more about life, hope, trust and love, so that we may grow in God's grace.

**Your word is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.**

Opening Prayer:

Most Loving and Gracious God,

we praise you and we thank you for the guidance that you give us from day to day by your Spirit.

We thank you for choosing to dwell among us and praise you for calling us to be your faithful people.

Bless this time together of worship and of prayer, that those who need comfort may be comforted, those who need challenge may be challenged, and that all of us may grow closer together as your children, as members of the body of Christ in whose name we pray.

Amen

Hymn: When love is found (TIS 654)

1. When love is found and hope comes home,
sing and be glad that two are one.
When love explodes and fills the sky,
praise God, and share our Maker's joy.
2. When love has flowered in trust and care,
build both each day, that love may dare
to reach beyond home's warmth and light,
to serve and strive for truth and right.
3. When love is tried as loved-ones change,
hold still to hope, though all seems strange,
till ease returns and love grows wise
through listening ears and opened eyes.
4. When love is torn, and trust betrayed,
pray strength to love till torments fade,
till lovers keep no score of wrong,
but hear through pain love's Easter song.
5. Praise God for love, praise God for life,
in age or youth, in calm or strife.
Lift up your hearts! Let love be fed
through death and life in broken bread.

Prayer of Confession

'Prayer is an act of openness. When we pray, we participate in the ultimate practice of humanness as we yield to a Power greater than ourselves.

Our best prayers engage in honesty about our lives, practice vulnerability, run risks, and rest in confident trust'.

In this knowledge, let us pray our prayer of confession:

Merciful God,

you plant each of us like seeds in the same field and together we are nourished and nurtured by the sun. We sway in the wind and are refreshed by the rain. We are blessed by the knowledge that you want us to grow towards what you call us to be.

When we deprive others of that same opportunity, forgive us.

When we want to uproot those whom we believe do not belong in our part of the field, forgive us.

When we label others as good or bad rather than accept them for who they are, loved by you, forgive us.

When we are reluctant to acknowledge that we ourselves are a mixture of weeds and wheat, forgive us.

When we are afraid to look into the fields of our own lives to see what is growing there, forgive us.

O God, you know us inside and out.

You search us out and lay your hand upon us.

You know what we are going to say even before we speak.

So we pray that you will help us to reach out to the uprooted and rejected, the lonely and the outcast, and to develop and grow your love in ourselves, in others and in the world.

This we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen

Words of Assurance:

Our God is abounding in love and overflowing with forgiveness

Hear Christ's words of grace to us:

'Your sins are forgiven'.

Thanks be to God

Peace:

May the peace of Christ be always with you

And also with you.

Let's share Christ's peace from where we are seated.

Hymn: The Lord's my shepherd (TIS 10)

1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green, he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
ev'n for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill:
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4 My table thou hast furnishèd
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

Moment for the young at heart: Hector

Bible Reading: Marie

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible reading:

In our reading from Genesis chapter 25, Jacob is not characterised in the most favorable of ways. Jacob is depicted as “grabbing” his brother’s firstborn right which will be continued in the characterisation of Jacob as trickster that in subsequent narratives will mark Jacob’s way in the world. Not only his brother Esau, but also his father Isaac and his uncle Laban will eventually be outwitted by the younger brother. This portrayal makes the election of Jacob by God all the more remarkable. There is nothing in Jacob’s behavior that deserved God’s favour — actually God’s favour comes in spite of Jacob’s actions. This line of interpretation makes a strong case for God’s grace — a God who already is involved with people in their mother’s womb, within the very messiness and conflict of relationships.

Genesis 25: 19-34

¹⁹ These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, ²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹ Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife because she was barren, and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. ²² The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is to be this way, why do I live?”^[a] So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ And the LORD said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples born of you shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other;
the elder shall serve the younger.”

²⁴ When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵ The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle, so they named him Esau. ²⁶ Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau’s heel, so he was named Jacob.^[b] Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. ²⁸ Isaac loved Esau because he was fond of game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. ³⁰ Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!” (Therefore he was called Edom.^[c]) ³¹ Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” ³² Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” ³³ Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to him and sold his

birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ If you have ears,^[a] hear!"

¹⁸ "Hear, then, the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.^[c] ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this^[d] age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³ But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Hear the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflection: Rev Joy

Moment of Stillness:

Prayers of the People: Ron

The Lord's Prayer:

Community News:

Offering Prayer:

As we faithfully give for the life and mission of God's church in this place and in the world, let's pray our offering prayer.

Holy mystery of grace and love,
as the rains urges the growth of the harvest,
so may your Spirit urge the growth of our generosity
in love, to neighbour and stranger.
Use these gifts and us to bring justice in your world.
In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Song: *Jude Doxology*

1. And now all glory to Him,
Who alone is God,
Who saves us through his Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
For he is able to keep
us from falling away.
He brings us into his presence
with love and joy.

Ch: All power, authority,
All splendour and majesty
Are Yours from the beginning
And ever more and ever more.

2: And now all glory to You,
You alone are God.
You've saved us through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
For You are able to keep
us from falling away.
You bring us into your presence
with love and joy.

Ch: All power, authority,
All splendour and majesty

Are Yours from the beginning
And ever more and ever more.
Forever more (x4)

Benediction & Blessing:

Go in peace to bring the news of hope and healing to this world.
Fight for justice knowing that God is with you wherever you go.

And the blessing of God;
Creator, Christ and Spirit
be upon you and remain with you always.

3-fold-Amen

Pastoral Prayers: Chris W

Acknowledgements:

Acknowledgement of Country: National Assembly working group on worship

Image: The Parable of the Sower – Miki De Goodaboom

Call to Worship – adapted from

[http://www.thetimelesspsalms.net/w_resources/pentecost5\[15\]a_2014.htm](http://www.thetimelesspsalms.net/w_resources/pentecost5[15]a_2014.htm)

Opening Prayer – Kir-shalom website. <http://www.spirit-net.ca/sermons/a-or06-99.php>

Prayer of confession - Moira Laidlaw [Liturgies Online](#)

Benediction – adapted from ministrymatters.com