



30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – Pentecost 9

**Greeter:** *Alison*

**Leader:** *David*

**Meditation Hymn:** *A new commandment (TIS 699)*

*(please remain seated)*

A new commandment I give unto you  
that you love one another as I have loved you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.  
By this will others know that you are my disciples  
if you have love one for another;  
by this shall all know that you are my disciples  
if you have love one for another.  
(repeat)

**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 105)***

Give thanks to God and call on God's name.

**Sing to God; sing praises to God!**

Make known God's deeds among the people.

**Sing to God; sing praises to God!**

Seek God's presence and God's strength.

**Sing to God; sing praises to God!**

Let us worship God, for our God is faithful.

## **Opening Prayer:**

Gracious and ever loving God,  
we come to you today looking for refreshment.  
We rest in the knowledge  
of the wonderful works you have done for us,  
and of the deep and abiding love you have for us  
and for all people.  
Search our hearts.  
Fill our soul with your indwelling Spirit

who whispers to our soul  
of your love and faithfulness.  
Shine your light before us,  
that we may see our path to you  
and to your kingdom on earth.

**Amen**

**Hymn: Now thank we all our God (TIS 106i)**

1 Now thank we all our God  
with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things has done,  
in whom his world rejoices;  
who from our mothers' arms  
has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
to keep us in his grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
of this world in the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son and Spirit blest,  
who reign in highest heaven  
the one eternal God,  
whom heaven and earth adore;  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.

**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:

We pause this morning, O God, with heavy hearts.  
We live in the midst of your great and abiding love,  
and yet we are often ungrateful and unfaithful.  
When we don't speak truth, forgive us  
When we fail to live lives of love, forgive us.  
When we look for you in the spectacular  
and miss you in the ordinary, forgive us.

May we see the many inbreakings of your kingdom  
in the everyday, ordinary things of life:  
in mustard seeds, yeast,  
treasures in fields, and fish gathered in nets.

**Amen**

**Words of Assurance:**

'Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God'.

Hear then 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: Jesus call us here to meet him (TIS 477 to tune TIS 517)**

1 Jesus calls us here to meet him  
as, through word and song and prayer,  
we affirm God's promised presence  
where his people live and care.  
Praise the God who keeps his promise;  
praise the Son who calls us friends;  
praise the Spirit who, among us,

to our hopes and fears attends.

2 Jesus calls us to confess him  
Word of Life and Lord of All,  
sharer of our flesh and frailness  
saving all who fail or fall.  
Tell his holy human story;  
tell his tales that all may hear;  
tell the world that Christ in glory  
came to earth to meet us here.

3 Jesus calls us to each other:  
found in him are no divides.  
Race and class and sex and language  
such are barriers he derides.  
Join the hand of friend and stranger;  
join the hands of age and youth;  
join the faithful and the doubter  
in their common search for truth.

**Moment for the young at heart: Brian**

**Bible Reading: Rick**

### **Introduction to the Hebrew Bible reading:**

Our reading from Genesis 29 is the story of the Mothers and Fathers of Israel and their descendants, the people of Israel. Rebekah and Isaac have sent their son Jacob to his mother's brother Laban, with instructions to marry one of his daughters. This story demonstrates that "love is not enough." Even if Jacob's love for Rachel is not based on her appearance or the fact that he was limited in his choice to Rachel and her sister Leah, his love does not translate into a happy, healthy family.

### **Genesis 29:15-28**

<sup>15</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" <sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> Leah's eyes were lovely, <sup>[a]</sup> and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. <sup>18</sup> Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." <sup>19</sup> Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with

me.”<sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.”<sup>22</sup> So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast.<sup>23</sup> But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her.<sup>24</sup> (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)<sup>25</sup> When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?”<sup>26</sup> Laban said, “This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn.<sup>27</sup> Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”<sup>28</sup> Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

### **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

<sup>31</sup> He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup> it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

<sup>33</sup> He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with<sup>[d]</sup> three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

<sup>44</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup> on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup> when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup> “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup> And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of

heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Hear the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Reflection: Judith Townsend**

**Moment of Stillness:**

**Prayers of the People: David**

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

**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 in the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours.  
Now and forever.  
Amen**

**Community News:**

**Offering Prayer:**

***As we faithfully give for the life and mission of God’s church in this place and in the world (either online or in the plate), 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: May our homes be filled with dancing**

1. May our homes be filled with dancing,  
may our streets be filled with joy;  
may injustice bow to Jesus  
As the people turn and pray.

*Chorus:*

From the mountain to the valley,  
hear our praise rise to you.  
From the heavens to the nations,  
hear our singing fill the air.

2. May our light shine in the darkness,  
as we walk before the cross;  
may your glory fill the whole earth  
as the water o'er the seas.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! (repeat)

***Benediction & Blessing:***

As we leave this place,  
remember that nothing in all creation  
can ever separate us from God's love.  
So, go from here with joy  
to love and serve the Lord.

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

**3-fold-Amen**

**Pastoral Prayers: Alison**



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*Call to Worship – ministrymatters.com*

*Opening Prayer ~ ministrymatters.com*

*Prayer of confession - adapted ministrymatters.com*

*Benediction – adapted from <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>*