

Sunday 15th August, 2021

Welcome!

From the Ministry Team
Rev Rod Peppiatt & Pastor Jo McKenzie-Crisp

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of GOD,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all...*

We are always in the presence of holiness; embraced in the love we call "GOD".
In this moment we pray not that GOD will be present with us,
but that we will be present to GOD.
May the light of holiness gather us in love today;
nourish our spirits, and renew us for life each day as followers of Jesus' way.



GATHERING PRAYER In the church building, we'll light the Christ Community Candle.

Wherever we are today, let us be together as people of GOD.
Let us take time, apart but together, to remember GOD among us, beyond us, and within us.
In stillness, be nourished and refreshed for our life in this strange and difficult time.



For thousands of years, Indigenous people have walked in this land, on their own country. Their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives. We honour the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, and their Elders; past, present, and emerging, stewards of this land throughout the ages. We offer ourselves afresh to the story of truth and reconciliation in this land, in the name of Christ.

How shall I sing to GOD?

The scripture readings we've chosen for this week invite us into reflection on 'singing our faith'.

They had me (Rod) thinking about the person who apologised on the way out of church a few weeks ago: *"I'm sorry Rod, I had to take my mask off for that last hymn. I couldn't sing it with a mask!"* I can't remember what the hymn was, but I do remember it was one I like to use at the end of worship, for *'a big finish!'*

Music and song is profound and powerful. The experience of singing together seems to me to be up there with consciousness and storytelling as things that define humanity.

I remember the chill I experienced as I watched - and sang along with - a video of 95 000 Liverpool supporters singing *"You'll never walk alone"* at a game in Melbourne a few years ago. And when a young South Sudanese refugee sang to us a song that he'd sung while fleeing his homeland on foot. He sang his song in Dinka, and was overwhelmed when the church sang it with him in English: *"Stand up, stand up for Jesus"*.

More recently, I keep finding myself playing and singing Missy Higgins' song, *"When the machine starts."* It asks a really important question: *are we willing to let our Covid experience change us for the better?* Even more than that, it's so catchy that I can't help but sing along!!

We remember that the Psalms are the songbook of our ancestors in faith. That doesn't always make them easy to read, say, or sing - they reflect different times, situations, and notions of GOD. But they are real, honest, and faith-filled. In them, Jesus' people sang their faith, for their day.

How about us? With our different experiences of life and faith, how (and what) do we sing?

ATTENDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

Psalm 111

Praise the Lord!

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

Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.

Full of honour and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures for ever.

He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are established for ever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant for ever.

Holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practise it have a good understanding.

His praise endures for ever



Ephesians 5:15-20

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to GOD the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the Word of GOD that was in the beginning, for the Word of GOD that invites and inspires, **for the Word of GOD embodied in us, we give thanks.**

You may hear Rod and I (Jo) talking about intergenerational Church a lot-ways in which we connect to the mystery of GOD as a shared experience regardless of age. Giving thanks and 'singing our faith' is a perfect example of this.

Regardless of how 'good' or 'bad' we may think we are at singing, everyone enjoys singing, whether that is in church, in the car, at playgroup, in the comfort of our own home, or at a live concert. Research indicates that singing and practices of gratitude can help with our well-being.

Studies have suggested singing increases pain tolerance; boosts the immune system; can reduce levels of stress; improve breathing, posture, linguistic ability, children's reading, dementia, and respiratory issues.

Saint Augustine said, "To sing is to pray twice." So, let's sing our little hearts out and give thanks to GOD! Perhaps the following reflection by Sarah Webster may inspire you...

Sing and Make Music to God

The verb “to sing” is one of the most commonly used words in the Bible. It occurs over 300 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 36 in the New Testament. Singing is a way of communing with our creator. It is the universal language which has the potential to move, inspire, and challenge the human heart. Singing is central to the life of the worshipping community.

Monica O'Brien

Why do we sing? As a teacher of singing, I am constantly reminding my students that the singer is a musical instrument with an additional “responsibility”; for not only do we have to bring together the pulse, rhythm and melody of a piece of music, like other instruments, we also must bring to life the text. And it is the singer’s responsibility to the words that sets them apart from other musical instruments.

We know music heightens emotion, ignites the imagination, evokes memories of people, places and times; that music both soothes and unsettles. Add words to this experience, and suddenly you have something that is both more human – for it is our words that make us so – and yet deeply emotional and spiritual.

For God’s people, singing may be the closest we humans can come to the Divine: “With all the choirs of angels, we join in their unending hymn of praise...”

But of course, to sing, we need to have songs that interest and inspire us. Not just “new” songs, to shake us out of our complacency and challenge us to new ways of thinking, being and doing; but also “old” songs – songs that remind us of our roots, of the journey so far. And different songs – songs from faraway places, of different peoples, cultures and languages – to remind us that it is a much bigger world that we live in, and so a much wider faith that we share, than we sometimes realize.

So, go now and “sing and make music to God”!

*Sarah Webster in Seasons Songbook, vol. 6,
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TiS 667 *How shall I sing to GOD?*

How shall I sing to GOD
when life is filled with gladness,
loving and birth, wonder and worth?
I'll sing from the heart:
thankfully receiving, joyful in believing.
This is my song, I'll sing it with love.

How shall I sing to GOD
when life is filled with bleakness,
empty and chill, breaking my will?
I'll sing through my pain:
angrily or aching, crying or complaining
This is my song, I'll sing it with love.



How shall I sing to GOD
and tell my Saviour's story:
Passover bread, life from the dead?
I'll sing with my life:
witnessing and giving, risking and forgiving.
This is my song, I'll sing it with love

Words: Brian Wren, Music: Joan Collier Fogg