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## We Gather

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*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.  
This week, it would be appropriate to find a **green cloth** or scarf to signify that we are now in a  
time of "growing".*

*Start by lighting the candle. The candle  
helps to centre us.*

*Take some deep breaths as you gather  
your thoughts towards God.*

A video of parts of this service can be  
found here: [https://vimeo.com/  
437360658/6d03d6db04](https://vimeo.com/437360658/6d03d6db04)

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We recognise the stewardship of the  
Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal  
nation for the land on which we gather  
today.

From river to ocean  
from campfire to hearth  
may the First People  
who have cared for this land  
be blessed.

From breath to song  
from step to dance  
may those who follow your Songlines  
guide us on the journey  
to living honourably in this place.

From greeting to Amen  
from silence to chorus  
may our worship  
join with the voices  
of the First Peoples  
of this Land.

*(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler*



This image appears on the homepage of a school in Milton-  
Keynes in the UK, Christ the Sower: [https://www.cts.milton-  
keynes.sch.uk/page/?title=Why+](https://www.cts.milton-keynes.sch.uk/page/?title=Why+)

### **Call To Worship**

The seed is sown and the crop is grown.

***Come, Lord, strengthen us as we grow in you.***

The rain hydrates and the sun radiates.

***Come, Lord, quench our thirst in the warmth of your love.***

The land is tilled and the flour milled.

***Come, Lord, refine us by your Spirit.***

Come let us worship the Living God as the seed of the Word is sown here with us today

*Spill the Beans, Resources for 6th Sunday after Pentecost, 12 July 2020*

Abundant God,  
use our senses to open our hearts and minds to the richness of scriptures.  
Help us to receive the gifts you sow so graciously and freely in our lives,  
and inspire us to share such bounty generously with our neighbours. Amen.

*Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for 6th Sunday after Pentecost, 12 July 2020*

### **Sing - Morning Has Broken (TIS 156)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5D3LEjGF8A>

### **Reading:** Psalm 119:105-112

- <sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.  
<sup>106</sup> I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,  
to observe your righteous ordinances.  
<sup>107</sup> I am severely afflicted;  
give me life, O Lord, according to your word.  
<sup>108</sup> Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,  
and teach me your ordinances.  
<sup>109</sup> I hold my life in my hand continually,  
but I do not forget your law.  
<sup>110</sup> The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
but I do not stray from your precepts.  
<sup>111</sup> Your decrees are my heritage for ever;  
they are the joy of my heart.  
<sup>112</sup> I incline my heart to perform your statutes  
for ever, to the end.

### **Listen:** Thy Word (Amy Grant)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6LC8cu03lg>

### **Prayer**

God our Maker, source of all that is,  
in this vast universe, and possibly more besides,  
if we are, as we fondly imagine,  
the pinnacle of creation;  
if everything else is there  
only to make our existence possible,  
then your handiwork is wasteful indeed.  
Much more likely, and more wonderful still,  
is that we are as small and insignificant as we feel,  
and yet you love us, and care about our good.  
And if there are other beings in other worlds,  
they also are held within your loving care.

God, we cannot comprehend the scale of it all,  
far less the mystery of your being,  
but fortunately we do not need to.  
All that you require of us is to take care  
of our tiny fragment of this small blue planet;  
for the miniscule moment of time that we are here,  
and this, we have hopelessly failed to do.

We thought we could improve the earth:  
by making it more efficient,  
Taking and using all that we wanted,  
getting rid of everything that stood in our way.  
Forgive us, we pray: the vanished native vegetation,  
the skies empty of soaring parrots,  
the silence where bees once buzzed,  
over wildflowers on missing native grasses.

Teach us to be less wasteful:  
in our sharing of the earth's resources,  
and in our giving of ourselves.  
Never mind if some of what we sow is lost,  
or grows only for a while.  
Never mind if birds and beasts take their share.  
Never mind if some of the seeds we sow,  
will be for future generations to harvest.  
All of that is as you meant it to be.

God of seedtime and harvest,  
of summer growth and winter rest:  
help us to do our part in broadcasting the seeds  
of your love and goodness  
throughout this good Earth,  
for the blessing of all,  
and to the glory of your name.  
Amen.

*Adapted from Spill the Beans, Resources for 6th Sunday after Pentecost, 12 July 2020*

### **Words of affirmation**

Hear the promise of God.  
in our growing,  
in our brokenness,  
in all times,  
God holds us, God nurtures us, God forgives us.  
***Thanks be to God!***

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## **We Listen for God's Voice**

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**Reading:** Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns

grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!

<sup>18</sup> 'Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>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. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>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.'

In this we find the word of the Lord.

***Thanks be to God.***

### **Reflection**

May the God of all creation turn over and irrigate the soil of our hearts, that we may receive the seeds of truth from God's holy word. May the Holy Spirit, cultivator of all good things, increase our understanding and expand the yield of our faithfulness. May Jesus the Christ, Saviour of all, guide us in his path and remove our weeds of fear and stubbornness. Amen

Julia Seymour,

<https://revgalblogpals.org/2020/07/07/worship-words-for-12-july-2020-seeds-will-be-planted/>

Today's reading takes us into the garden.  
And I know that many of you enjoy gardening.

There is something very special about feeling the soil under your fingernails, planting a seed or seedling, watering it, chasing off the bugs, pulling out the weeds, nurturing the seedling as it grows.

We learn to roll with the joy of the plant bearing fruit or flowers, or sadness when it dies because we have forgotten to water it, or a bug or disease has taken hold, or it has simply come to the end of its life. I have never really liked annuals for that reason - even though I know they are designed to only last 1-2 seasons, I just get really sad when I have to pull them out or dig them in...

These days, mental health experts tell us what all gardeners already knew - gardening is good for our mental health - it is good for the soul!

In today's reading from Matthew's gospel, Jesus teaches the crowd that has gathered around him by telling them stories. Verse 3 tells us that "he told them many things in parables".

Jesus often teaches in parables. But the lectionary skips the part that tells us why. In verses 10-17, Jesus explains to his disciples that not everyone will understand his teaching and that those who do, carry a great responsibility for sharing and for explaining.

Ben Myers, in his article on "10 Rules for preaching on the parables" reminds us that we need to take care in interpreting the parables. They are tools to teach but there is danger in pulling apart the the metaphor or allegory too far. These stories (parables), says Dr

Myers, are not like fables with a moralist interpretation, God is not necessarily one of the characters in the story, the stories are not about heaven in the sense of a place we go to when we die, but they are intended to teach us about the kingdom of God.

Dr Myers also argues that really we should try to understand these stories with some sense of Jesus injecting a bit of humour into his teaching.

<https://www.faith-theology.com/2014/02/10-rules-for-preaching-on-parables.html>

So with that, let's look at the Parable of the Sower - even the name we give this parable, the name Matthew gives the parable (13:18) - directs our attention. What is it about the sower we need to know? And what does that say about the kingdom of God?

I should say, too, this parable appears in each of the synoptic gospels - that is in Matthew, Mark 4 and Luke 8. And in each case, it appears in the context of helping the disciples to understand something deeper than the story itself. The fact that each of the gospel writers included this particular parable and teaching invites us to pay particular attention.

The sower sows the seed.

This is not the precision sowing of farmers in our country today where the soil is analysed, and fertilised accordingly, the seed is planted to a precise depth, and the machinery that does it all is guided to the nearest millimetre by GPS. In today's modern farming, very little seed is wasted or planted where it won't have the best chance of growing well.

The sower in Jesus' story simply scatters the seed leaving it to lie where it falls.

And the story tells us that some seed falls on a path and were eaten by the birds (13:4).

Other seed fell on rocky ground and while they grew quickly, there was no depth to the soil so when it got hot and dry, the plants withered and died (13:5-6).

More seed fell amongst thorns where the new plants were choked by the weeds (13:7).

And other seed fell on good soil where they grew and produced abundantly (13:8).

Now let's turn our attention to the seed. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus describes the seed as "the word of the *kingdom*" (13:19). In Mark's gospel, it is simply "the word" (Mark 4:14) and in Luke's gospel it is "the word of God" (Luke 8:11). But for Matthew, it is the word of the kingdom. And when Jesus refers to the kingdom, he refers to God's way for the world here and now - not a far-off heaven, but a way of living and being right here and now. This is what he spent most of his time teaching about and showing us how to live out.

In Matthew's re-telling of the meaning of this parable, he tells of people hearing the word of the kingdom.

Some hear but do not understand so it is "snatched away" (13:19). [One day we will talk more about how we understand the "evil one" (Matthew 13:19) or "Satan" (Mark 4:15) or "the devil" (Luke 8:12) - but not today...]

Some hear and get very excited but have no depth and so when life gets hard, they "fall away" (13:20-21).

Some hear but the cares of the world choke them (13:22).

But the seed that fell on good soil is the one who hears and understands and so bears fruit - abundantly (13:23).

Now on the one hand we can ask ourselves about whether our lives display evidence of good soil, pathways, rocky ground or thorns.

We have heard already, we probably joined in or broke into song, in the words of the Psalmist (Psalm 119):

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.

Is that true of our lives? really? Do we allow God's Spirit to guide us and to transform us? Or do we sometimes find ourselves exposed, in shallow soil or choked by the concerns of the world around us?

Do we nurture, water, care for the word of the kingdom as it has landed in our lives - so that it might bear abundant fruit?

And we can ask another question - who is the sower here?

In our community, who sows the seed? Who speaks the word of the kingdom, who tells God's story? Is it you?

You see, I think it is you - and me - and every disciple of Jesus - called to tell God's story in the world. And sure, some will fall on paths, rocks and amongst thorns. But some will fall on good soil and produce abundant fruit.

I wonder whether perhaps some of us have grown tired of sowing seed, whether we have become disillusioned because the seed keeps failing before it produces fruit. This parable reminds us to be continuing to sow the seed, the word of God's kingdom, to throw the seed wide, to scatter it extravagantly. Ours is not to measure the field, prepare the soil and to only sow where we think the seed has a chance. Ours is to cast the seed widely, to sow the seed abundantly, without fear, into the world, confident that sometimes it will fall on good soil and it will produce abundantly.

Which leads me to pondering on the way in which God grows, not just individual plants, but whole communities. The theme of abundance and of multiplying fruit appears a number of times throughout the Scriptures. And it brings me to wonder about the community God is growing here at Kiama-Jamberoo. Each one of us is a part of God's work here, each one of us is a part of God's kingdom here. And together we seek to be an expression of God's kingdom in this place and time. So how do we, as a community together, and as each individual part, sow the seed, share the word of God's kingdom with the people we meet? What is the "word of God's kingdom" we seek to share?

I want to invite you to take some time today and in the coming days to see if you can write down your answer to that question: What is the "word of God's kingdom" we seek to share? If you are more an oral person, find someone you trust to talk to and tell them - maybe someone in your Bible Study group. In writing it down, or sharing it with someone we trust, we begin to shape how we might speak or act with people who have yet to hear, we gain confidence in the sharing, so that we might be extravagant sowers of the word of God's kingdom.

Let us pray...

Disruptive God, your ways are not the ways of the world. Challenge us to see the world according to your plan. Help us to seek justice, instead of resting in the comfort of tradition. Guide us so that we too may disrupt the world with your love. Amen.

*Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for 6th Sunday after Pentecost, 12 July 2020*

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## We Respond

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### Prayers for Others

Source of love and mercy, the seeds of your good news pour out on your creation with the intention of accomplishing your will of justice and peace. May these and all your divine intentions bear fruit throughout the cosmos that all may know your glory.

Receive our prayer, O Lord, and in your mercy, answer us.

Source of love and mercy, we pray for people, places, and circumstances that are feel trampled and abandoned. We pray for people who feel hope and patience have been stripped away. Spirit of love embrace them. May Christ's accompaniment be felt tangibly among those who feel most alone.

Receive our prayer, O Lord, and in your mercy, answer us.

Source of love and mercy, we pray for people, places, and circumstances distracted from your call by the real cares of this life. For the hungry, the unhoused, the unemployed, the underemployed, the sick, the defrauded, those struggling with addiction, the wisdom and comfort of scripture and the Living Word can shouted down by pressing issues. May the witness of your truth be a balm to all those aching in mind, body, and spirit. May the witness of your people be a refreshment to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Receive our prayer, O Lord, and in your mercy, answer us.

Source of love and mercy, we pray for people, places, and circumstances distracted by wealth, hope of prosperity, and the idols of possessions. Guide us in deeper understanding that your Word is not window dressing to an ornamented life of our own design. Stir up our faith, Holy Spirit, that we may seek to live more simply and in greater harmony with others, by resisting the things that sow division, create competition, and promote an ideal of false scarcities. In God's economy, there is enough for all. Let us be willing to be investors and invested in that divine system.

Receive our prayer, O Lord, and in your mercy, answer us.

Source of love and mercy, you are the Great Composter - creating new life and nourishment from our trash and waste. We trust in your faithfulness for you have revealed it through creation, through keeping your promises, and through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, through whom we pray. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Julia Seymour,  
<https://revgalblogpals.org/2020/07/07/worship-words-for-12-july-2020-seeds-will-be-planted/>

### **Holy Communion**

Today we shared in Communion via Zoom. If you would like to join us next time, please contact us at [kiamaunitingchurch@outlook.com](mailto:kiamaunitingchurch@outlook.com)

Or you might like to join us in person on Sunday 26 July. For details contact us on the email above, or phone the church office.

*If you would like to share in Communion and are unable to join in communion this way, please let Rev Kath or Rhonda Back know. Now that restrictions have been eased a little, we are able to bring Communion to you in your home at a time that suits you.*

### **Offering**

*In responding to what we have read and how we have heard God speak to us, we commit ourselves to moving with God's Spirit, breathing life in the world around us.*

*If you make a regular financial contribution to the Kiama-Jamberoo Congregation, consider putting that amount aside now and keeping it safe.*

### *Offering Prayer*

Most generous God,  
you lavish your love upon us and all people:  
with no thought to who deserves it,  
and no guarantee that it will be returned.  
You give: it is what you do.  
You love: it is who you are.  
We call ourselves your people,  
and we want to be more like you.  
Help us to cast caution to the wind,  
along with our gifts of substance, love, and action;  
then let us wait to celebrate with you,  
when the harvest comes in. Amen.

*Spill the Beans, Resources for 6th Sunday after Pentecost, 12 July 2020*

### **Notices**

*Keep an eye on the website, facebook page and the e-news for updates.  
If you hear of or notice anyone needing a bit of extra support, please let Kath, Janice, or  
one of the Elders or Pastoral Partners know.*

### **Sing - Tell me the old, old story**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqSIMQaeAds>

As you listen to or sing this hymn, think about how you heard the story of Jesus. And think about the people in your life you would like to tell this story to. Pray that as you have heard, so God will give you words to speak and a heart to share.

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## **We Go**

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### **Sending and Blessing**

Holy God, creation springs forth by the seeds of your word and the nourishment of the Holy Spirit.

The written word plants seeds of truth and understanding in our minds and hearts.

The Living Word, Jesus Christ, is the sower of our salvation and sends us out into your world to work his harvest in love. Amen.

Julia Seymour,

<https://revgalblogpals.org/2020/07/07/worship-words-for-12-july-2020-seeds-will-be-planted/>

Go, then, and sow,  
go and scatter,  
go and spread  
the Word of God is for the world;  
the Word of God is the song of love for all.

*Spill the Beans, Resources for 6th Sunday after Pentecost, 12 July 2020*

And the blessing of God, Creator, Saviour and Spirit is with you always.

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## **Reflective Prayer**

*Inspired by the Dayenu, a Jewish thanksgiving prayer used at Passover.*

One garden would have been fine, Lord, with two people in it,  
some vegetables,

fruit and flowers,

and a small assortment of domestic animals; but, no, you told them to go forth and multiply, and they did!

One world would have been ample, Lord, filled with animals, fish, insects, and birds, people of every tongue and hue; but, no, our tiny planet is one of countless millions, stretching out to infinity and beyond!

One nation would have been plenty to care for, and many have imagined they were the one; but not enough for you, Lord.

You love the world and every person in it: those who believe and those who don't, those who are kind and those who are cruel, you love them all—equally.

It would have been enough, Lord,  
to tell us how much you love us.

You could have inspired a psalmist or two, to praise your love in song; but, no, you came and lived a life of love; and for love's sake you died.

It would have been enough, Lord,  
to set a good example;

to show us how to live more gently on the earth; but, no, you sent your spirit, to change us from the inside out.

Would it be enough, Lord, if we were to meet: one day in seven, just for an hour or so, to read your word and sing your praise?

And if anyone wanted to join us,

they would be more than welcome. No, Lord, thought not!

Help us to be extravagant in our living, and generous in our loving.

Amen.

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