



Be Transformed - Shaping the Community

Gathering

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 Christ candle. The candle helps to centre us. Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.

A video of this service can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/464119798/7a298d5579>



Welcome and introduction

Do you like honey on toast or a crumpet or bread fresh out of the oven?

Or some camp damper? (Or whatever the gluten-free equivalent is)

Just imagine you have made yourself some - lashings of honey...

And as you eat it, it drips down your chin, down your hand, onto your plate or the front of your clothes.

The Psalmist says that experience is how much he loves God's law:

Psalm 19:10 says this:

"More to be desired are [God's laws] than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb."

As we worship today, may our heart's desire God's love and God's way just as much as our tummies desire the drippings from the honeycomb!

"Lemon & Honey Chicken Skewers 1of4" by Food Thinkers is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Call to Worship

The sun rises without fail
bringing a new day to Earth
and we rise to embrace this time of worship.
Flowers, trees, grasses, and plants
flourish and give praise with unfolding leaves,
waving blades, and fragrant offerings.

May we join them and praise the Creator with our whole being.

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for 18th After Pentecost, 4 October 2020

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.

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Sing / Listen: The Heavens Shall Declare (from Psalm 19) **(TIS 746)** - see video

Prayer

O planet-weaver, the skies
declare your glory.
O star-spinner, the vault of heaven
proclaims your handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
night to night declares knowledge
yet there are no words,
their voices cannot be heard.
but creation's pure sound reverberates
throughout the cosmos
for in the heavens
you have set a tent for the sun
and on earth a place for us all.

Yet we often forget
that we are creations of your breath,
tenants of your vineyard.
We silence your voice.
We subjugate your land.
We mar your image within and around.
We reject the cornerstone and
kill your son.
Yet you do not shy away.
You meet our hate with love,
our violence with steadfast loving kindness,
our forgetfulness with remembrance.

Remind us this day and this night
that we can kill your love
but we cannot keep it dead and buried.

Redeem us each day and each night

that we might live in tune
with the words of your son,
with the reverberations of your cosmos
thus enabling the words of our mouths
and the meditation of all our hearts
to be acceptable to you,
O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Spill The Beans, Resources for 18th After Pentecost, 4 October 2020

Assurance

When we have no words, God's creation speaks.
When we have lost our sense of purpose, God's creation shouts.
When we have done the wrong thing, God's creation calls to us.
God's Spirit draws us home,
embraces us with grace unbounded and
restores our bodies, hearts, minds and souls.
So take a moment.
Breathe the breath of God's love for you, and know that you are forgiven.
And give thanks to God!

Sing / Listen - God of Creation - see video

Or view here: https://vimeo.com/461406456?fbclid=IwAR2nNCPVyi-sfpahpgoWGV7B6-9hBkn5CR_ZPlmFZok-ThvtGtAyFtgMIR0

Listening for God's Voice

Reading: Exodus 20:1-20

Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸ Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹For six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹² Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³ You shall not murder.

¹⁴ You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

¹⁶ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

¹⁷ You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

¹⁸ When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, ¹⁹and said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.' ²⁰Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin.'

Reading: Matthew 21:33-46

³³ 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' ⁴¹They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

⁴² Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes"?

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.'

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Hear what God's Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God!

Reflection

Holy God, immerse us in the wonder of your word and ways and carry us on a journey of growth as a community of your people. Increase our resolve to heed your loving wisdom and to rejoice in your promise of new life as we do. Amen.

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for 18th After Pentecost, 4 October 2020

Today's readings invite us to think about the way in which our communities are shaped.

What are the guiding principles that provide a framework for our living together?

Ever since human beings have been living together in family groups and communities, we have developed guidelines, laws and cultural norms, that govern how we relate to one another.

As we continue to consider how we as individuals and as a community are being transformed, today's readings give us three lenses through which we might think about how our communities take shape:

1. The *word* of the law - found in the 10 Commandments
2. The *expression* of the law - creation shouts God's praise (Psalm 19);
3. The *Spirit* of the Law - Jesus lives a life that reflects God's intention for humanity

Today, I want us to think about how “rules” work for us as a community of God’s people following Jesus - the “word” of the law.

Just over 25 years ago, I was being shown around my new office as I started a new job with the Attorney-General’s Department in Canberra. I was starting in the Human Rights section of the Department to focus on racial discrimination and aged discrimination. In corner of my office was a filing cabinet. My new boss pointed to it and said, “You’ll need to keep an eye on that too, that’s Aboriginal Customary Law, but don’t worry, we don’t expect too much to happen there”. And so began my journey in seeking to understand more deeply what “law” is.

And our indigenous brothers and sisters have much to teach us in this regard...

Our western legal system has become obsessed by the word of the law that is written down. If it isn’t written into law, either legislation or case law, then we are more likely to exercise our “liberty” to do what we please. And even when it is written down, if it is at all possible, we will argue a technicality in order to avoid its intention.

But for our indigenous brothers and sisters, and perhaps too for the people of ancient Israel, “law” is more than what is written down. A better English word for it is “lore”. That is, rather than being something that is written in stone (like the 10 Commandments), and governs particular behaviour leaving the rest “up for grabs”, it is written in story and culture, perhaps “on our hearts” as the prophet Jeremiah describes (Jeremiah 31:33-34). This law/lore is about more than keeping a set of rules, it is about a way of life, about values and principles that speak to the whole of life.

Today’s reading from Exodus, places before us what must be one of the most famous lists of rules of all time - the 10 Commandments.

There is no doubt that our western legal system takes these Commandments as foundational. In the USA today, there are still court houses that display the 10 Commandments prominently in the entrance space.

But while we often treat the Commandments as a list of rules, as the people of Israel eventually did - the next couple of books of the Hebrew Scriptures expand on the rules and make several hundred more - it is helpful, I think, to remember that is not how God intended them when God gifts the Commandments to the people of Israel in the desert of Sinai (see Jeremiah again).

When God gives the 10 Commandments to the people of Israel, God is giving them a framework that enables them to construct the kind of society, the kind of culture, that God wants them to be.

This is a framework to shape the liberty that God has given them. God has rescued them from slavery and now calls them to live in a way that will keep them free, and will offer freedom for the stranger who happens to encounter them.

It is a framework that reflects the covenant that God has entered into with them.

So this framework asks them to:

honour God;

to establish a rhythm of life and work and Sabbath; and

honour their relationships with one another.

Perhaps, as we look at them now, we might think they could have been worded differently. In the written materials (and posted on the website), I have included a re-writing of the Commandments in positive language - rather than “do not”, “do” - reflecting Martin Luther’s teaching that every negative in the list implies a positive. So “do not kill” can be understood as “support the living”, or “respect the dignity of every life”.

It may be helpful to keep in mind that there are actually two version of the Commandments recorded in Scripture. The other is in Deuteronomy 5 - a fun exercise is to compare them both and have a look for the differences...

Where the Commandments in Exodus is presented through the story of Moses mediating God's instruction for God's people, the version in Deuteronomy is presented as a "remembering". This is a good example of the editing of the Hebrew story that took place over centuries. And some scholars think that some of this editing occurred during the Babylonian exile when these stories were being written down and remembered to strengthen their identity and encourage the people of Israel, reminding them that God would bring them back to the land God had promised them.

So, briefly, what is the shape of this community God intends?

What shape, then, does it call us to?

1. Honouring God

The Commandments begin with God reminding us of who God is: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (20:2)

The God who sets us free, asks us to reject all who would try to impose themselves over or instead of God's way - whether that is a human leader, or money or power or popularity - it is God who is to hold our attention and commitment and faithfulness.

Jesus tells the parable about the tenants who reject the authority of the landowner - unsurprisingly, really, they will find themselves outside the community of God's people
How does your living honour God?

2. Establishing a rhythm of life - of work and Sabbath - that sustains life;

that gives space for refreshment not just for us but for our lands, the earth, God's good creation;

that ensures that we don't get so caught up with the "doing" and the "happening" of the world, that we neglect time with the One who gives us breath and embraces us with Love.

How does your rhythm of life make space for work and rest and Sabbath?

3. Honouring our relationships with one another

holding life as precious;

holding the commitment of two people (and their family) as precious;

speaking the truth without embellishment or half-truths, without gossip or innuendo;

being content with what we have and not desiring or taking more than is ours.

How does your living honour your relationships and the relationships of others?

What could this community be if we could live out that framework in our own living?

What parts do you need to work on - for yourself?

What parts do you think we need to work on together, as a community?

What could the world be if we could live out that framework in our own living?

Let us pray...

May the vision of a world flourishing in love spark our imaginations.

May this vision become the whisper

of the Spirit within us,

giving shape to greater

faithfulness, compassion, and justice.

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for 18th After Pentecost, 4 October 2020

Responding

Prayer for others

Law-Giver, Grace-Gifter, Love-Embracer,
your creation shouts your praise,
yet too many of your people shout in anger.

Be with people all over this world who suffer under the oppression of power, of poverty, of violence.

Give courage to those who speak truth to power and who seek to be peace-makers.

Help us all to learn to choose our words wisely and to ensure that everything we say and do is inspired by your love and grace.

Renew your church to be a tangible example of your intention for the world.

Blow through the cobwebs of inattention and apathy and inspire us once more to the task of sharing and being good news in the world.

Spirit of Life, we pray for people who are hurting:

for people who are sick;

grieving;

unemployed;

homeless;

abused;

financially stretched;

mentally struggling;

carrying the burden of caring for others;

and we call to mind people who are on our hearts particularly at this time...

May the vision of a world flourishing in love spark our imaginations.

May this vision become the whisper of the Spirit within us,

giving shape to greater faithfulness, compassion, and justice.

We pray in the name of the One who points us to Love, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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.

Let's pray...

Generous God, we delight in your ways, we seek to follow the example Jesus has given us. Just as all of creation shouts of who you are, so we offer ourselves to you - our money, our time, and all of who we are. May our living be so transformed that our community may come to know you through our love. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

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.

Sending out

Sing - The Power of Your Love (TIS 685)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz7ymFyiDEw>

Sending and Blessing

As one of God's children you are not cast aside.

God loves you and cherishes you.

You belong and are treasured.

Take this affirmation

and live into it this week.

May you feel God's love,

Christ's inclusion,

and the Spirit's presence as you go,

this day,

this week, and evermore.

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TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt have no other God before me.
2. Thou shalt not make any graven idols
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain
4. Remember the sabbath and keep it holy
5. Honour thy father and mother
6. Thou shalt not kill
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not gear false witness against thy neighbour
10. Thou shalt not covet they neighbour's goods

1. Make God first and foremost in your life
2. Grow your relationship with God on your experience of God
3. Always speak respectfully about God
4. Keep one day a week as a holy day
5. Respect your family
6. Respect the dignity of every life
7. Be faithful in your marriage
8. Respect the rights of others
9. Be truthful in all you say and do
10. Be satisfied and grateful for all you have.

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