

Extravagant Praise

Gathering

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that we live and worship on land that has been cared for since time immemorial by the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Light candle

Call to Worship

Psalm 24:

- ¹ The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
- ² for [God] has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.
- ³ Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in [God's] holy place?
- ⁴ Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully.
- ⁵ They will receive blessing from the Lord,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.
- ⁶ Such is the company of those who seek [God],
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.



Prayer

Loving God, we gather in this way, once more staying apart to care for one another in the hope that our whole community can be safe, and that together we can stop the spread of the virus.

We give thanks that you are with us where ever we are.

We give thanks for technology that draws us together.

We remember those who are not able to join with us today and we pray that you will watch over them and embrace them in your love.

Together we seek your face.

As we do, we pray that we will encounter you in new ways, that you will inspire us with new understanding, and that you will strengthen us to renewed lives of love and care in the world.

Amen.

Reading

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

Note: The parts in green are not included in the lectionary.

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ²David and all the people with him set out and went from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim. ³They carried the ark

of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart ⁴with the ark of God; and Ahio went in front of the ark. ⁵David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

⁶ When they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. ⁷The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God struck him there because he reached out his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God. ⁸David was angry because the Lord had burst forth with an outburst upon Uzzah; so that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. ⁹David was afraid of the Lord that day; he said, 'How can the ark of the Lord come into my care?' ¹⁰So David was unwilling to take the ark of the Lord into his care in the city of David; instead David took it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹¹The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months; and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

¹² It was told King David, 'The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.' So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; ¹³and when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. ¹⁴David danced before the Lord with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

¹⁶ As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷ They brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt-offerings and offerings of well-being before the Lord.

¹⁸When David had finished offering the burnt-offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts, ¹⁹and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

²⁰ David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, 'How the king of Israel honoured himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids, as any vulgar fellow might shamelessly uncover himself!' ²¹David said to Michal, 'It was before the Lord, who chose me in place of your father and all his household, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord, that I have danced before the Lord. ²²I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in my own eyes; but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honour.' ²³And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

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

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

"David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals." (6:5)

This comes as David and his people bring the ark of the covenant, the symbol God had given them of God's presence with them, built while they were wandering in the wilderness after having been freed from captivity in Egypt.

Now it was time to bring the ark to the capital, so David gathers the chosen men of Israel, 30,000 of them and they put it on a cart to transport it.

The lectionary leaves out the part where we are reminded that the ark is sacred - so sacred that a man dies instantly when he touches the ark to steady it when it wobbled and seemed in danger of falling off the cart (6:6-7). An incident that leaves David angry and afraid, so much so that he decides to delay the rest of the journey for 3 months [presumably while his nerves settled!](6:8-11).

And when they do complete the journey, as the ark is brought into Jerusalem, David offers sacrifices to God and “danced before the Lord with all his might” (6:14). He was “leaping and dancing before the Lord” (6:16).

It seems this behaviour was not expected of the king, certainly his wife seems not to approve (6:16).

[As an aside, Michal, Saul’s daughter, as she is described in verse 16, is David’s wife - one of many. For those who want to look more carefully, we also discover that Saul had given her to David in exchange for the foreskins of 100 Philistine men (1 Samuel 18:27). The Scriptures also tell us, perhaps even emphasise, that Michal loved David (see 1 Samuel 18:20 and 18:28).]

Some questions for reflection:

- what expressions of worship are most meaningful for you?
- Can you tell a story of when you have been moved to praise God - in a way that others could see?
- how do you express your praise and worship of God?
- when we express our joy or wonder in God, are we worried about what other people might think?
- do you think we are extravagant enough in our expression of praise - either as a church or as individuals - why or why not?

Let us pray...

God who calls us to worship

how should we worship you?

Sitting quietly on a pew in solemn reverence?

Gazing at the stained glass window in prayerful adoration?

Dancing down the aisle to exhilarating music?

Following the [Uniting in Worship] prayer book ritually?

It does not matter to you how we worship:

you have created us in your own image;

you have created us to worship you;

you have made each one of us unique;

you have made each one of us different by design.

How should we worship you?

Should we compare and judge other people

who are different to us?

Or should we be humble and celebrate

the differences in our faith communities?

May our worship be productive and honouring to you.

Let it be so.

Amen.

Spill The Beans, Resources for 11 July 2021, p.69

Respond

Listen - When The Spirit Of the Lord Is In My Heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYrNXZtWw4Y>

Take some time this week to listen to your favourite worship songs, go to a place that is meaningful for you, look for ways to express your praise and thanks to God.

Rev Kath Merrifield

11 July 2021