



We Gather

*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 moving through a time of “growing”.*

For worship this Sunday we return to the Lectionary readings. We read about Job, in Job 2:2-10, in his pain and anguish, we read how Jesus wrestled with difficult questions and embraced those society leaves out or behind in Mark 10: 2-16 and then in a letter to the Jews in Rome (Hebrews) we read about our destiny in Christ Hebrews 1:1-4 and then 2:5-12.

*A video of the service can be found here:
<https://vimeo.com/618715068/bb9c0c19cf>*

Introduction

We come together again, together in spirit and heart, if not in person.

Welcome to those following online or on the printed material. You are welcome here, to spend time with God and with each other.

This week we return to the common lectionary readings.

May we worship together in the grace of God, the name of Jesus Christ and in fellowship through the Holy Spirit.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Country
From before recorded time,
the First Peoples (*Nations*) cared for this Land.
We praise the Creator for the beauty of this Land
and honour those who have offered themselves
in tending it.

We acknowledge the Elders and community of the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation,
who have told the sacred stories and nurtured faithfulness to the Creator.

We ask God's blessing on those who continue to work for the healing and restoration of this
Land and Her Communities.

Call to Worship

(based on Hebrews 1:1-3)

Long ago, at different times and in various ways,
God spoke to our ancestors through the Hebrew prophets.
But in these last days,
we have heard God's voice through His Son, Jesus Christ,
who has been given dominion over all things
and through whom all worlds were made.

He is the One who sustains the universe by the power of his command;
the One who gave himself to free us from the grip of sin and death;
the One who, even now, reigns in the heavens, seated at the right hand of God.
This is our God!
Let's worship together.

Opening Prayer

As we gather together but separated from each other, let us hear the word of God spoken to us and for us for today. Let us enjoy the music, delight in the beauty of the images, draw close to God through prayer and hearing His word spoken. Though we aren't together, let us be together as the body of Christ, in unison and in unity with the Spirit.

Let us pray:
Creator God
swirling, formless one,
hovering over creation and bringing new things to life
you speak new worlds into being with language that creates and liberates.
Eternal God
living, limitless one
inhabiting the vast universe with the rich complexity of your being
you reveal yourself to your creatures and invite us to know you.
Friendly God
nurturing, welcoming one
opening yourself wide to the joy and pain of loving your people
you place us in communities and families that echo your true nature

Holy God
We thank you for the ways in which
we have known and understood you;
We thank you for the metaphors
that have opened our eyes to more of who you are;
We thank you for the language that has brought
the transcendent, timeless, mysterious God within our grasp.

Holy God
We are hungry for more of you
We ask you to reveal more of yourself to us
to take us beyond the confines of familiar habits
to free us from the restrictions and distortions of our language
to expand our understanding of you
so that we can love you whole heartedly
we can communicate you faithfully
and we can reflect your full image to a world that needs you
Amen.

posted on the **Fresh Worship** website of Grace Church

Songs – I will wait – David Leonard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6ldvER0Bfo>

In the morning, I will rise up
Shed the darkness, and bathe in Your light
And I recount all, every blessing
The words You've spoken, that bring me new life

I am reminded from where You have brought me
And where You have placed me for today
And I won't forget that Your hand will hold me
Your love sustains me through the wait
I will wait on You, Lord
I will wait on You, Lord

Oh the burdens, that I've carried
They are heavy, oh too heavy to hold
There's a river, there's a sunrise
There's a new day, and it's bringing new life

I am reminded from where You have brought me
And where You have placed me for today
And I won't forget that Your hand will hold me
Your love sustains me through the wait
I will wait on You, Lord
I will wait on You, Lord, oh

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me
I will rise in His love, I'll shout of what He's doing
Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me
I will rise in His love, I'll shout of what He's doing
Oh, of what You're doing, ohh, oh-oh-oh

I am reminded from where You have brought me
And where You have placed me for today
And I won't forget that Your hand will hold me
Your love sustains me through the wait
I will wait on You, Lord
I will wait on You, Lord

[Post-Chorus]

I won't forget all of Your mercy
All of Your grace that is poured out on me
I won't forget all of Your mercy
All of Your grace that is poured out on me

Mysterious ways – David Leonard

You move in mysterious ways
Faithful for all of my days
I am not on my own, 'cause you alone are God

And you move, you make no mistakes
I am grateful, you leave nothing to waste
I am not in control, 'cause you alone are God

You move in mysterious ways
Faithful for all of my days
I am not on my own, 'cause you alone are God

When you move, you make no mistakes
I am grateful, you leave nothing to waste
I am not in control, 'cause you alone are God

No, I am not in control, 'cause you alone are God.

CCLI Song # 7112951
David Leonard | Levi Smith
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We Listen for God's Voice

Reading: Job 1:1, 2:1-10

1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

2 On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

³ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."

4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

9 His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Reading: Mark 10: 2-16

2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied.

4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. 6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

In this we find the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Message

Sunday Oct 3

Today is our granddaughter, Charlotte's, eighth birthday. She's with her dad today, so we won't see her but we'll speak with her. We had a little party for her when she was in our care last week.

She's tall and lean, with very long legs and blond hair and bright blue eyes. She doesn't look anything like Ian or me, she doesn't even look particularly like her mother. We call her Charlie. She loves to draw and make things, she loves to run and is very good at soccer but she can be very temperamental.

Jesus called to the little children, being shunned by the disciples, to come to him. Don't hinder them as they look for the Kingdom of God, instead look at them and realise that the kingdom belongs to them...

But when Charlie is naughty, when she throws her things on the floor and leaves them there for days, when she won't put her dirty clothes in the laundry, when she won't help with the smallest task, when she won't eat her dinner because it's not spaghetti, when she annoys her brother or sister, when she fights and pushes and slaps at them and they at her, when she's mean just for the fun of it...the idea that kingdom belongs to them is sometimes hard to remember.

Over the past couple of weeks we've been caring for Louise and her children after Louise had some urgent surgery. We are grateful that we were able to get exemptions and travel passes to bring them back to Kiama, to care for them all here and then to return the children to their father and care for Louise a little longer. This week's readings from both Job and Mark have hit home, hard.

This time last year Louise was happily married, living in a new home in a new town, with three healthy children. This year is different. At some stage, her husband decided it wasn't working for him, so they parted, thankfully on relatively good terms, and now they live apart and take turns, caring for the children each week. All of this on top of what the Covid years of 2020 and 2021 have been for everyone. Part of me can identify with Job.

One of the things I have missed most during the lockdown, it having my children and grandchildren come to visit, being with them, playing and holding them, giving them back to their parents. It is like a great loss for me, and I know others feel the same. I know I can talk to them and I do but it's not the same as feeling them, having them in the immediate space, having time with them. It is a loss which applies pressure, we often don't know what's happening for them, how they are really coping with all of the current situation, and we don't know if we will miss a key sign or trigger to their wellbeing. That was how it felt when Louise told us about her marriage, none of us had been close enough to see signs of what was to come.

Job was the same, everything was just fine. He had wealth, health, family and friends and then it all quickly changed. He was not from a Jewish heritage or family, yet he still seemed to understand that God was present in his life and in his providence. He had no religious training, he was not a believer, so some say Job speaks of the human condition for and on behalf of all of humanity. It is intriguing to me that there is a parallel story of Job or Ayyub in Islam. A moral tale which needs telling so that all of humanity can benefit.

However, in the reading from Job today, the startling comment for me is that of Job's wife "Are you still holding onto your integrity? Why don't you just curse God and die?" We sometime forget Job's wife was a victim of all that befell Job, she lost her children, the wealth from which she fed and clothed the family, she lost her secure future with only the presence of Job sitting in the ashes scraping the scabs from his sores, remaining. Jewish commentary on Job's wife says she was as afflicted with grief and loss as he, and some suspect it was her harsh words which pushed Job to be more introspective and clarifying about his own faith in God, in later verses to even argue his point with others and also with God.

We can't know how uncontrollable events affect peoples' lives. Some are like Job, stoic, some like his wife, angry, hurt and ready to lash out, some like Job's friends, full of advice without experience of empathy. Sorrow, confusion, loss and hurt are common feelings for us all at this time. Even more so for those who are more vulnerable, those who are alone, those who are ill, those who face an uncertain future or those for whom the future is bleak. How do we express not just devotion but hope in God's love for both ourselves and for others? How are we present to those who struggle, including ourselves, as those called to follow Jesus in this time and place?

Getting back to Charlie for a minute. I see her angry, naughty, rough with others, even mean and I ask myself will the Kingdom ever belong to her? Marie Sabin, in her commentary on the book of Mark, talks about Jesus' instruction, or direction, that we should all be like children. It is not the naughtiness she recommends but rather it is in the simplicity of their relationships that we find the Kingdom, to which we all belong. I watched Charlie in Coronation Park, at the markets, last week befriending a young girl who was doing cartwheels on the grass. Charlie stood nearby, then did her own cartwheel and then these two girls chatted, cartwheeled around the park together and chatted some more. She made it look easy, simple, sweet to watch. Not the cartwheels but the friendship...

Psalms 26 was also on the lectionary this week and it says in v 2 'Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind for your love is ever before me and I walk continually in your truth.' This is a question for us. In all that we've lived through both personally and collectively in the past year, have we held this psalmist's truth close for ourselves? Have we held onto that love that is ever before us and have we walked in that truth? This truth is described in the letter to the Hebrews in v 10 'In bringing many people to glory, it is fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy, are of the same family.' This is the simplest truth. In Jesus we see the one who walked with us, ate with us, listened and taught us as fully human, being raised into glory, being fully divine, and taking us with him through the love that walks before us, you, me, Charlie...

A final word about Charlie, when I was asked to report back to her mother about her behaviour I reported all the mess, the scrapping with her siblings, her naughty behaviour at times and how she is careless when she pronounces words and eats her meals, and hates being corrected.

When Charlie was asked about being here with us she talked only of having fun with her brother and sister, being at the beach and swimming every day, the good food she'd eaten, the craft she'd completed and the games and movies she'd enjoyed. She didn't speak of being in trouble, of sitting in the quiet corner or of childish fights with her siblings. She saw and reported only the good. I've seen that with my grandchildren before and it is very humbling. For me it's a lesson in being childlike.

William Barclay describes the four characteristics of why and how the kingdom belongs to children. It is because of their

1. Humility
2. Obedience
3. Trust; and
4. A short memory

Charlie is all of those things and more. Are we all of those things as Jesus gently draws us into holiness and into his family? I pray that this week we will find those childlike qualities in ourselves and offer them to others as we continue on our journey. Amen.

We respond

Prayers for others - Michele Broad

God of Compassion,

We pray for vulnerable people all over this world, people without power who live in places of terror and violence, fear and oppression.

Protect them God,

We feel so powerless ourselves to help them. Encourage and empower us to work for peace and freedom from fear in our own contexts

God of Grace

We pray for those whose lives have been turned upside down by disasters: war, floods, fires, mud slides, drought, famine.

Bring courage and hope to them;

Through their pain may they remain connected to you in prayer.

Give us deep empathy, moral clarity and persistent courage to be compelled to action and active participants in Your Kingdom here on earth.

God of Hope,

Send your Holy Spirit to relieve the suffering of all who are wounded by domestic and family violence, those who live in poverty and uncertainty and those who suffer because of difference in race, religion or sexuality.

Renew in your people the resolve to protect the weakest members of our society. Lord protect them and enable them.

Let them know your loving kindness and help us to bring healing, renewal and reconciliation.

God of Community,

We pray for our Congregation

May we be a source of hope for our neighbourhood.

Help us to discern needs and to fulfill them .

Strengthen and unify us and show us how we can be the disciples you envision us to be.

Return the sick to wellness and well being and relieve the suffering of those who have lost loved ones, are unable to find employment and those fearing the challenges of old age.

Guide us Great Shepherd

Remind us that you came in vulnerable human form and showed us the way.

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.

Offering Prayer

God, our provider, we take from you and at this time we return to you out of Your generosity. Accept from us our offerings of time, energy, prayer and money that they may all be used to share Your grace and peace, mercy and goodness as we reach out into Your world. **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.

Song: Crown him with many crowns – Songs of Praise

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM

1 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

3 Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified;
no angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends their burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

4 Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

George Job Elvey | Godfrey Thring | Matthew Bridges | William David Young
CCLI Song # 2762582
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Sending Out

Benediction and Blessing

from the *Voices United* hymnal. Posted on Rev. Richard Fairchild's **Kir-shalom** website.

Go in peace, love and care for one another in Christ's name,
Go in the confidence of people who have found mercy through him,
keeping the commandments
and letting go of all that binds you to the ways of this world,

And may God come close to you and keep you safe;
may Christ Jesus reward your faithfulness a hundredfold;
and may the Holy Spirit be your help in time of need.
both now and forevermore. Amen

**We go in peace,
serving Christ and loving each other.**

Meredith Yabsley
3 October 2021