

Remembering to say thanks!

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 moving into “ordinary time”.*

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

Acknowledgement of Country

We stand and watch the waves rolling in, shaping the coastline. We look out and see the Dharawal trees standing tall in field and bush. We walk this land that holds the footsteps of countless generations and we acknowledge the traditional custodians, the Wadi Wadi people and their care and connection to this Country.



Call To Worship – Look around, the world is full of wonder!

Listening for God's Voice

Bible Reading

Jeremiah 29:1-7 - Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles in Babylon

These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem. The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It said: Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Luke 17:11-19 - Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they

called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'

Reflection

It can be easy to take God's grace for granted. We are often among the "other nine" who forget to offer thanks. This story is about gratitude, and also privilege. The one who does return to give thanks is a Samaritan—one of the bad guys. The more privilege we're given, like by being white, middle class, well-educated, straight Christians, the easier it is to assume we're the center of the world, and that we deserve good treatment from life. Tragedy happens to other people. Privilege engenders entitlement. But those who are routinely marginalized know not to expect such privilege, and are more acutely grateful for every blessing. Though we can't deny our privilege, as we can be mindful that everything, even what society says we "deserve," is actually a gift. Sometimes we just forget to give thanks. This story asks of us the same question the Psalm does: How have you been healed? Are you grateful?

Gratitude is not a feeling. It's a practice. It's the action of taking stock of what we've been given; letting go of all our sense of entitlement; and receiving those blessings as unearned, unwarranted gifts, the overflowing of God's delight. Truly beholding them as unearned sometimes leads us back into deeper repentance of our sense of entitlement, which deepens our gratitude. It's not that blessed people are grateful. It's that grateful people are blessed. The more grateful we are, the more we experience things as gifts, and discover deeper joy.

The other nine are, of course, going to show themselves to the priest, as both Jewish law prescribes and Jesus has told them to do. The one Samaritan has departed from what he was instructed to do. Maybe sometimes our true heart leads us to step aside from prescribed religious paths to a more direct encounter with Christ.

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This week in the bulletin there's a list of things you might look for and give thanks for each day this month, let's be those who recognise our blessings and remember to say thank you.

Responding

Prayer for Others

God you are our safe place to hide.

You are our mighty fortress.

You are our ever present help in time of need.

We can and do turn to you
in the midst of our troubles.

And Lord our world is full of difficulties.

Lord we may feel afraid,

but it does not overcome us

Because we know we can put our trust in you.

Your love and grace are like
streams of water in the desert.

Your joy comes splashing down
upon us.
*Your refresh and renew us like rain
coming down on the earth.*
Bring your water of life
to those who are thirsty
and living in a dry and weary land.
Where there are wars, bring your peace.
Where there is starvation,
fill the empty bellies.
Where there is despair,
bring your hope.
Where there is animosity,
bring your reconciliation.
Where there is abuse,
bring your tender mercies,
Where there is poverty, bring your charity.
Where there is illness,
bring your healing.
Where there is grief,
bring your gentleness.
Where there is injustice, bring your justice.
Lord you are mighty fortress,
our strong deliverer.
In you we put our trust
and release ourselves
into your hands. Amen.

Offering

Can we bring an offering of thanks and praise this day? That may be your usual contribution to the work of the Church throughout the world, today it may be a special prayer of thanks and commitment prompted by something you've read.

Loving God, today we have been thinking and reflecting on our many blessings, prayers answered, growth and renewed faith brought out of struggle and difficulty. Sometimes 'thank you' just doesn't seem enough. You have given us all, we want to bring our gifts with open hands and thankful hearts.

Sending

Go in love, peace and joy to bless the world.

Marion Haigh

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