

**Whitehorse Uniting Church**  
**Sunday 6 August 2023**  
**Pentecost 10<sub>A</sub>**



**Introit – Father I Adore You**  
**Melissia Hogston 2012**  
**Maranatha music, Terrye Coelho Strom**  
<https://youtu.be/Ph-ZBiETB0>

**Welcome**

May the Worship Bless you

**Acknowledgment**

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place.  
 We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.



**Call to Worship**

From UIW

The World belongs to God.  
**The earth and all its people**

Love and justice come together.  
**Justice and peace hold hands**

How good and lovely it is.  
**To live together in unity**

Lord, open our lips.  
**And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.**

**Prayers of adoration**

From UIW

Ever-living God, you are infinite, yet compassionate,  
 in you we live, and move, and have our being.  
 One with us in Jesus Christ, you share our life and our death  
 flowing through us as living water, you quench our thirst.

Holy One, we adore you.  
 Holy Wisdom, we adore you.  
 Holy Spirit, we adore you.  
 Accept the praise we bring today and for ever. Amen.

### invocation

Come to us, O God of surprising grace.  
 Break into the places in our lives!  
 which we think are not worthy of your entry,  
 and show us the measure of your love for us.  
 Break through into newness, in all our life together, O God,  
 in the wonder of your transforming presence. Amen.

Come upon us today Holy Spirit  
**Come Holy Spirit Come**

### Confession

Lord, these are challenging times yet here we are willing to make a commitment  
 to share and care for one another as one united family in Christ.  
 If there is anything we have done in the past to hurt another, forgive us Lord.  
 Transform our hearts and help us make a fresh start and a new beginning, with Jesus' help and guidance.  
 Lord, in this moment of silence we come before you with all that's on our hearts, as we seek your forgiveness.

### *Silence*

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us  
*"Your sins are forgiven".*  
**THANKS BE TO GOD**

**Hymn 152 Joyful, Joyful, we Adore You**  
**At Royal Albert Hall London**  
**HLMaachen 2013**

<https://youtu.be/eMY3ivdNzwE>

### Readings - NRSV updated

#### **Genesis 32:22-31**

<sup>22</sup> The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. <sup>24</sup> Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." <sup>27</sup> So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." <sup>28</sup> Then the man<sup>[a]</sup> said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel,<sup>[b]</sup> for you have striven with God and with humans<sup>[c]</sup> and have prevailed." <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel,<sup>[d]</sup> saying, "For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved." <sup>31</sup> The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

#### **Matthew 14:13-21**

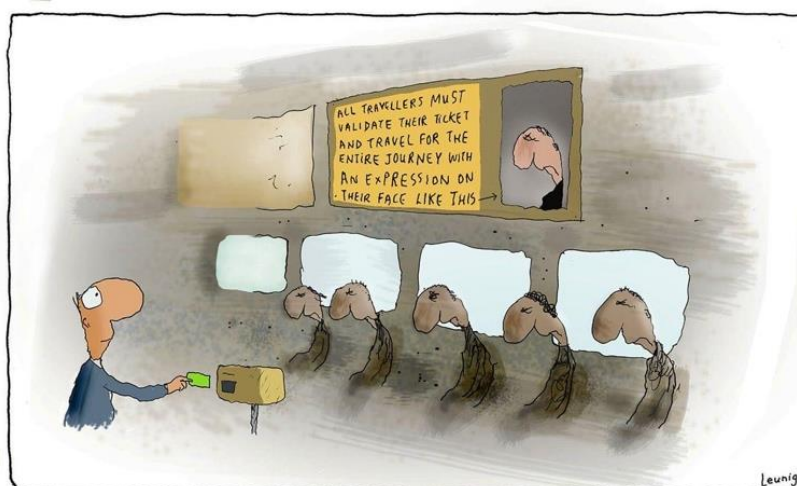
<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup> When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." <sup>17</sup> They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." <sup>18</sup> And he said, "Bring them here to me." <sup>19</sup> Then he ordered the

crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup> And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup> And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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## Young at heart

There are two ways of journeying through life.



*Leunig, used with permission.*

Leunig's cartoon shows travellers on a train. They don't look happy. I'm not sure which train he travelled on. Most of the ones I've been travelling on have people on their mobile phones. The point is they don't seem very enthusiastic or joyful about life. That's what Leunig is portraying in his cartoon.

Jacob in the Old Testament story needs to wrestle with God to be blessed and ends up with a damaged hip. How often do we wrestle within ourselves? I know I have at times when I've wanted to explore my relationship with God and draw closer so I can be blessed. That's not easy.

In stark contrast we have Matthew's gospel which is about the abundant blessings of God where Jesus asks his disciples to share those blessings with the people. Perhaps Jesus asks us to share his blessings with others too.

I watched a YouTube clip during the lockdowns when everyone was feeling dreary, and a couple of people got on a train and encouraged all the passengers to sing the well-known song – *Somewhere over the Rainbow*. They went from looking like the people in Leunig's cartoon to joyful happy people who were being blessed by singing. Maybe we can have a Big Sing next time we have a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday service and celebrate life's blessings. Music can bless us. It's a wonderful way of sharing God's blessings.

**Somewhere over the Rainbow – passengers on train sing this inspiring song.**

<https://youtu.be/xctzp0dp9uc>

**Sermon - God's abundant generosity – Rev Tina**

*In the name of the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.*



There is a Bretton Fisherman's prayer that goes something like this:  
*"Be good to me O God for your sea is so great and my boat is so small."*

Herod has just executed John the Baptist after his stepdaughter did a dance and requested his head. All Jesus wants to do is go to a deserted place to grieve the death of his cousin. He gets in a small boat and sets out to sea. But the crowds seek him out and when he sees them, he has compassion for them and comes ashore to heal them. It gets late and perhaps out of concern for him, his disciples suggest sending people onto nearby villages to find food and shelter. We are not talking about a small group of people. There are five thousand men and their families.

Instead of sending them away Jesus tells his disciples: *You give them something to eat.*

I don't know about you, but if I had to feed thousands of people, I would be feeling a bit overwhelmed, especially if I only had five loaves of bread and two fish. It's not enough.

During the past week I've encountered two ways of looking at life.

The Bretton fisherman's prayer, *"Be good to me O God for your sea is so great and my boat is so small."*

The disciples had a serious problem. Not enough food for thousands of people. Some of them were fishermen. There was no way they could catch enough fish to feed all those people and do it quickly. It looks like they were realistic, and focused on limitations and lack of resources, on what they did not have.

I had an insight into another way of looking at life last Sunday when we were having a cuppa with the congregation from Canterbury Uniting. What abundant generosity for us, that they came to share what they had, their fellowship and their gifts for music. I was speaking with one lady, I will not say her name. She is a woman of prayer and she told me about Canterbury Uniting's prayer chain. I don't know if you remember that during the Black Saturday bush fires people were praying for rain to put the fires out. She was praying with members of her congregation for rain, and sure enough that weekend it rained so heavily the fires were extinguished and all that remained was steam rising from the parched burnt land. It rained so hard. Everyone was amazed and said: Wow! What an answer to prayer. She has never forgotten that moment.

But the disciples were not thinking about prayer at this time. They were thinking *O God for your sea is so great and my boat is so small."*

They forgot to add the first bit *Be good to me O God.*

We may say something similar when faced with problems so large we cannot solve them, like climate change.



I've been to the place where the thousands were fed by Jesus and there is a church built on the spot and this mosaic is built into a rock under a solid stone Lord's table set outside the church. When I was there a starving white kitten came up to us and I held it and wept for it. I knew it would die if no one fed it and I couldn't take it with me. I felt helpless. I prayed for it and hoped someone would rescue it and feed it and give it home. Then I would have felt like saying:  
*"O God for your sea is so great and my boat is so small."*

There was nothing I could do to change the situation, but pray: Be good to this kitten, so small in a big world. Perhaps the disciples felt the same way.

But that's not the end of the story.

Jesus takes the five loaves of bread and two fish and asks the people to sit on the ground. Like Moses and manna from heaven where God provided for his people, Jesus looks up to heaven, blesses the bread and fish, breaks the bread, and gives the food to the disciples to give to the crowds. He doesn't give it to the people, the disciples do, and they share God's abundant blessings with the people. Thousands are fed and there is so much left over, which would have been shared with the needy.

So, what does Jesus do?

He goes the extra mile for people.

He heals people.

Looks to God and prays for God's abundant blessings.

He asks his disciples to share those blessings.

It's important for us to share God's blessings.

I have a favourite reading from the Old Testament (II kings 7:3-9) which I've simplified. The rest of the story goes in a different direction.

There are four lepers at the gates of a city under siege by an army of Syrians. They say to one another, 'Why sit here and wait to die. If we go in the city there is famine, and we shall die. If we sit here, we shall die. Let us go and surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we will live and if they kill us, we will die. So, they set off at twilight to the camp of the Syrians and when they reached it no one was there. The Lord had caused the Syrians to hear the noise of a great army of chariots and horses and they fled in fear, thinking the king was being helped by other kings and armies. The lepers entered the empty tents and found silver and gold and clothes and hid them. Then fearing they would get into trouble; they had a discussion: Do you think we should tell them? The people in the city.

The moral of the story is siege mentality locks out the potential for being blessed. We need to open our hearts and minds and sometimes take risks like the lepers did, who thought they had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Jesus's actions in the feeding of the five thousand revealed there is a stark contrast between focusing on limitations and a lack of resources and focusing on prayer and God's abundant blessings.

Let us take the risk to trust prayer and God and step out in faith.

*"Be good to me O God for your sea is so great and my boat is so small."*

### Quiet moment



### Hymn: We are Your People

Music John Wilson, Words Brian Wren

First Presbyterian Church Oneonta Virtual service  
during the lockdowns

Kim Paterson 2020

<https://youtu.be/8o4S5FGPsLg>

### Offering prayer

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom  
all for transformation through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen

## Prayers of the People – Margot Kemke

Dear Heavenly Father, we come together today to pray for all the people in our world. For all nationalities with many different cultures, religions, and beliefs; for all Australians, young and old; for our neighbours, our friends, and our families.

We thank you for the privilege of living in this beautiful country and promise to care for our environment, the water, the soil, and the wildlife.

We thank you for the security of a stable government, an education and health system which caters for all the needs of the community, and especially for the carers who deliver these services to us all. May we be mindful of others around us who may need love and care too.

In our world prayer cycle today, we pray for the people and governments of Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a parliamentary democracy established in 1947 and is home to more than 243 million people who live mostly in rural areas and face many challenges of illiteracy, poverty, corruption, and terrorism. Education is not compulsory, and many educated people are moving to other countries for employment.

Islam is the state religion and 96% of the people are Sunni Muslims and Islamic ideals and practices suffuse virtually all parts of Pakistani life. There is quite violent persecution against religious minorities, even other external Islamic influences. The population is increasing rapidly resulting in a growing middle class. O Lord, we pray for a balance between a theocratic state and those determined to pursue a more liberal progressive agenda. We pray also for social and economic reforms.

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, an island country with a population of 22million people, is made up of three main ethnic groups – namely Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim. Civil war, from 1983 -2009, triggered an economic crisis of increasing foreign debt, banishment of the Tamils, and suppression of human rights. The majority live in rural areas and work on plantations growing rubber and coconut trees, tea, coffee, and rice. However, there is free education and health care, and 98% of young people are educated to year 9 standard, although this is not compulsory. Also the mining of high value gemstones, tourism and textiles are adding to the economy. O Lord, we pray for free speech and social and economic reforms for Sri Lanka also.

Here in Australia, we pray for our governments, federal, state, and local. Guide them in all the decisions made for the economy, environment, and welfare of all Australians.

Locally we pray for the Stairway Church, Whitehorse, its leaders, and congregation; the minister and members of the Uniting Churches in Emerald, Gembrook, and Tecoma, and for the community at the Nangare Independent Living Units. We ask you to bless, guide and encourage these communities and their leaders as they reach out and serve with love and care.

We pray for our own leaders, Rev. Tina, and Rev. Peter. Be very near to them, guide and sustain them in their everyday devotion to you and to the congregation in their care. We pray for and ask for blessings for all who take on small responsibilities within our parish. We pray for any of our members who are coping with medical problems, family responsibilities or anxieties, loneliness, or disabilities. Comfort and embrace them, O Lord, and encourage us to be your servants, to share your love and concern with our neighbours and offer a helping hand where needed.

Heavenly Father, you know our needs and prayers – hear us, we pray. We say together.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

## HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It right to give our thanks and praise.**

In Jesus of Nazareth, in compassion for the outcast,  
 forgiveness for the fallen, hope for the poor and hungry;  
 in his life poured out for others and broken in rejection and disdain  
 you have made yourself known.

We proclaim your power in goodness  
 and your might in compassion, as we say:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
 God of power and might,  
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Nurture us with your brokenness,  
 renew us with your poured out life,  
 empower us with your powerlessness,  
 that we may take root in your risen life and bear fruit in your world.

**You are our life;  
 you are our hope;  
 you are our peace;  
 and we praise you. Amen.**

The bread of life is offered to us. **We feed on the bread of life with gratitude**

The cup of the newness of life is offered to us. **We drink of the cup with gratitude.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.  
**May we who share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us.**

*(People come forward for communion and receive both the bread and grape juice.)*

YouTube - Incarnation Anglican Church 2020  
 Painting The Last Supper Julia Stankova (Bulgaria)  
 Musician Jamie Floyd. Music & Words Jacques Bethier, Taizé, France  
[https://youtu.be/\\_9Vlo2vU\\_u8](https://youtu.be/_9Vlo2vU_u8)

### Prayer after communion

God of truth and love who calls us and leads us into the future, make us a blessing for others  
 Help us to see creation as being in the future and to love it into being.



May we hold on to the hope You have planted in us,  
believing the unbelievable,  
reaching for the unattainable,  
trusting the things beyond seeing and the things beyond hearing,  
loving and living with compassion, offering hospitality and hope,  
until the people who walk in darkness see the great light and are glad and free.

**Hymn 530 Now let us From this Table Rise.**

Fred Kaan 1964 (Droles 94, 2012)

<https://youtu.be/BMUCmn7Madc>

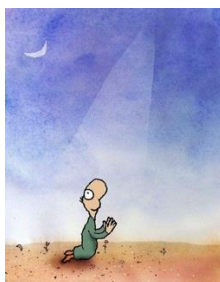
**Blessing**

We go in Peace  
in the love of God  
in the Power of the Spirit  
May the Lord Bless and Guard us  
May the Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us  
as we bring Christ's love and peace to the world. **Amen**

**Hymn 779 May the Feet of God**

Robin and. Dorothy Mann 2015

<https://youtu.be/WfOFIWxGaP8>



**Pastoral care tips – Rev Tina**

**A Sabbath Rest.**

Even God took a Sabbath after creating the world. He set aside a day of rest for us all.

**Genesis 2:1-3**

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. <sup>2</sup> On the sixth<sup>[a]</sup> day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.*

I do remember a man at my church weeping because Sunday trading was introduced and as a chemist, he was worried that he couldn't keep his shop closed because he wouldn't be able to survive in business. But keeping it open meant working long hours and not being able to come to church. In the end he chose to come to church as much as possible and take that Sabbath to spend time with God and family.

In case you haven't noticed ministers are not the Messiah. They are ordinary people who need a Sabbath rest like everyone else. In fact, the Code of Ethics for ministers has a whole section on self-care.

*Ministers shall take responsibility to:*

*(a) address their physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health needs and, where appropriate, seek assistance from a qualified professional.*

*(b) participate in supervision.*



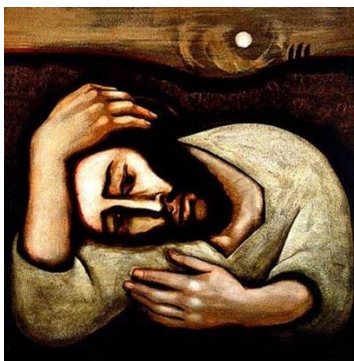
- (c) *give adequate priority to their relationship with their family.*
- (d) *nurture personal relationships which assist them in their wholeness.*
- (e) *take appropriate and regular leave, and time off from work for recreational activity.*

I've been reminded several times that I need to take proper leave and set an example to others and that working myself to the bone is not setting a good example. Recently I was praying and reflecting on how I began my placement with three colleagues and how for the majority of this year I've been at .8 carrying the load and recently after having Covid for the second time, feeling it. I'm sure all of you are aware of this and thanks for your support and kindness and help.

You may have seen the notices where I've said I'm taking five weeks off to be with family who need me, here and overseas. It's also to rest. If I keep going, I risk burnout. If I rest now, I will be able to return to ministry and keep going. Self-care is my responsibility. I would like to continue to work for as long as I possibly can, like my husband, who is much older than me.

If anyone of you is working yourself to the bone, stop, before you do yourself an injury. We must love our bodies.

I've known people in the legal profession, friends who have behaved like they are giant brains walking around full speed without any care for their bodies and some have medical issues from overwork. Our soul and the Holy Spirit dwell in our bodies, which means our bodies are sacred.



A tired Jesus resting.

There are so many stories of Jesus resting and seeking isolated places to pray and find refreshment. He also was invited to lots of meals and went fishing. He set a good example of good work life balance.

I'm doing my final psychology subject for my Graduate Diploma and the research project is about AHA moments. Trying to solve a problem and experience an epiphany by staring at a blank wall or looking out the window at nothing in particular. I tend to go for a long drive in the country and will be doing so during my Sabbath to pray for you and myself and spend time in solitude in isolated places. Some of you may prefer walking along the beach or bushwalking or sitting and staring out the window at nothing in particular. The point is we all need a Sabbath from time to time. It's good for our body and it's good for the soul. It helps us reflect on our life and put things into a healthy perspective.

I've done my best to delegate to people and you will be in good hands with our church council, worship leaders, pastoral teams and a minister providing supply.

Please pray for me as I will pray for you and take a Sabbath rest when your body and mind tell you to.