



## **Sunday Worship Service**

31 October 2021 (Pentecost 23)

Let us have this question again: “What is our identity in Christ?” Again, asking yourself, “Who am I in Christ?” We know this question is the one that we cannot quickly answer. But it is okay because in the Bible Jesus Christ always speaks to his people through stories, anecdotes and encounters that he made purposely on his journey. Let humbly wait for the Lord your God who loves you and calls you by your name.

This worship resource is prepared for those who join the worship service from home. Though some can join with each other in person at church, we are awaiting to come join together as a whole congregation in December. This Sunday worship service will be filmed and accessible from our website following Monday. You will never be missed. May Jesus Christ be here with us because no one can be separated from each other in Him.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR THE FIRST PEOPLES**

We acknowledge the Wallumettagal People,  
the first inhabitants of this place.

**We honour them for their custodianship of the land  
on which we gather today.**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

What does the Lord require of you?  
**To do justice,  
and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with our God.**

What does God command of us?  
**To love God with all our heart,  
and all our soul,  
and all our mind,  
and all our strength,  
and to love our neighbour  
as ourselves.**

God does not call us to ease or to comfort.  
**But to presence,  
and abundance,  
and grace in our struggle.**

Let us worship the God who believes in us,  
and trusts in us, and abides with us.  
**Let us worship the God who will ask much of us,  
but will be beside us every step of the way.**

*Attributed to Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy*

## **HYMN: PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
praise God, all creatures here below,  
praise God above, you heavenly host,  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

*Word: Thomas Ken*

## **THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
be always with you.

**All: And also with you.**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

We praise you, O God,  
for being not only the God of history  
but the God of our story.

You have gathered us here today  
to remind us that although you are the one  
to whom all power belongs,  
yet you care for the weak and powerless.

You care for us.

We praise you  
for joining your story to ours  
in such a special way  
through Jesus, our Lord.

He proved his great love for you  
and for each person  
in the way he lived—  
releasing what was captive,  
lifting up the burdened,  
empowering the powerless.

**God,  
source of lovingkindness and strength,  
we worship you.**

**Jesus,  
foundation of our faith,  
we worship you.**

**Holy Spirit,  
ground of our very being,  
we worship you.  
Amen.**

*Attributed to Moira Laidlaw*

## **BIBLE READING    JEAN BOYD**

First Reading: **Ruth 1:6-18**

### **Naomi and Ruth Return**

<sup>6</sup> Then Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. <sup>7</sup> With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah.

<sup>8</sup> But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the Lord reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. <sup>9</sup> May the Lord bless you with the security of another marriage.” Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

<sup>10</sup> “No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.”

<sup>11</sup> But Naomi replied, “Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands? <sup>12</sup> No, my daughters, return to your parents’ homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what?<sup>13</sup> Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone

else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me.”

<sup>14</sup> And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi.<sup>15</sup> “Look,” Naomi said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.”

<sup>16</sup> But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.<sup>17</sup> Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”<sup>18</sup> When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading: **Mark 12:28-34**

### **The Most Important Commandment**

<sup>28</sup> One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord.<sup>30</sup> And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’<sup>31</sup> The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

<sup>32</sup> The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other.<sup>33</sup> And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbour as myself. This is more

important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

<sup>34</sup> Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **SONG: GREAT IS THE LORD**

Great is the Lord  
And most worthy of praise  
In the city of our God the holy place  
The joy of the whole earth  
Great is the Lord  
In whom we have the victory  
He aids us against the enemy  
We bow down on our knees

*And Lord we want to lift  
Your name on high  
And Lord we want to thank You  
For the works You've done in our lives  
And Lord we trust in Your unfailing love  
For You alone are God eternal  
Throughout earth and heaven above*

Steve McEwan © 1985 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing

### **SERMON SEUNG JAE YEON**

This Sunday, I am leading our congregation's face-to-face worship service which is the first one since last July. I am glad that some of the congregation

members who are fully vaccinated are able to gather together in worship. At the same time, I am holding some of the congregation members in my prayer and thought, who will be able to join in December when the congregation's safety plan allows them freely to join in face-to-face worship. Leading this worship service, I may ask God to bring us all together into his loving and caring presence. I may also ask all of you to withhold our celebration of gathering as whole congregation till Sunday 5 December.

Today, in my sermon sharing, our focus is identity. Who am I? Who are we? What factors shape our identity? What parts of our identity are determined by other people or by society? Identity means purpose, telling each other why we are here. I am not going to talk about our cultural and linguistic identity such as White Anglo Australian, first generation of Korean migrant, speaking of Cantonese or Mandarin etc. We are here today because of God's kingdom identity. Plainly speaking, we are here because of Jesus Christ our Lord who forgives, loves, and calls us. In response, we come and join with each other in this time and space to worship God. So, we can tell that our identity can only be found in Christ.

When one of the scribes asked Jesus about what the greatest commandment is, his answer was the Shema. **“Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.”** Jesus knows the traditional answer to the question that the scribe asks. The answer is very good to the scribe, but only gets him a half mark in the exam of the kingdom of God that Jesus lives with his people. So, Jesus boldly attaches to the Shema a quotation from Leviticus 19, which is the code of justice and peace. This means that to love God is to refuse to abuse one's neighbour. He says, “Love your neighbour as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.” In Jesus' ministry, the first one and the second one is equally important. Imagine that there was a two-dollar gold coin that has a blank tail or head. Did this coin have only fifty percent

value? Could you use this kind of coin at supermarket? No. Collectors might be interested but no one wants it for their use.

In Jesus' theology of God and this world, faith in God, and justice and peace for neighbours cannot be separated. If one of these commandments – either “Love your God” or “Love your neighbour” is only practised, it would not be determined a half mark. It would be meaningless. Jesus clearly teaches us as well as the scribe, saying, “the Kingdom of God is not far from you.” Jesus calls this scribe to join him together to travel to the promised goal in the kingdom, which is Jesus himself. I believe that Jesus calls us now to travel to the promised goal where on the way we may find our identity in him by loving God and neighbour equally.

Yesterday (30 October 2021) my daughter Heather and I had a day trip to Gosford. Our plan was to have a brunch at Brooklyn and then to drive to Gosford to join Sunil Baek's ordination induction service. You may remember Sunil who came to preach upon one Sunday February 2020 when he was a ministry candidate. The lunch we had at Brooklyn satisfied both of us and then cruising on Pacific Highway was just fantastic! Heather and I found more than 10 yellow cars, a pillar of smoke from back burning, and so many trees. On our way home we listened to Heather's number one K-Pop girl group called *TWICE* and their song list. I would like to talk more of topics that we conversed for the duration of our day trip. But I really want to share with you what I learnt from Sunil's ordination induction service at Gosford Uniting Church. I hope you like it.

In the life and witness of the Church, ordination may be one of significant occasions for a person being called and ordained, an ordaining presbytery, and a congregation who calls an ordained minister. The gathered people would anticipate in celebrating God's call in an ordained minister and congratulating each other on their fulfillment in forming a ministry agent for Christ's mission and ministry. I went to join the congregation and solemnly to follow the movement of the Holy Spirit during the service. In



the order of ordination service, there is a section called “The Charge” where the ordaining presbytery delivers the words of what the ordained person should be or can be. Its paragraph 3 clearly talks about how a minister takes care of people in God’s love.

Taking Christ the Good Shepherd as your example, you are called to lead God’s people in worship, witness and service; to equip them for their ministry and mission; and to work with them in building up the body of Christ. You are called to strive for peace and unity among all Christian people, especially among those with whom you serve.

And then paragraph 6 points out the importance of justice and peace for their neighbours.

You will announce the good news of God in Christ to those beyond the community of faith, stand alongside those who suffer, and work for justice and peace in the world.

In response, Sunil answered all questions by saying, “With God’s help, I will.” And those who attended the ordination service responded on behalf of the whole church, saying, “Faithful is God, who has called you and who will not fail you.” All attendees in the service including Heather and myself might find our identity in Christ, re-affirming what factors shape my identity. Through the service of ordination, we, Uniting Church in Australia have had another ordained minister. In this, we have one more opportunity to find out our identity in Christ Jesus. We are called to love our God and our neighbours, which cannot be separated from each other. And this is our mission that we strive to hold the great commandment and pass it on to the emerging generation in us.

One of the readings today is Ruth. Ruth is one of two books in the Old Testament that are named after two women – Ruth and Esther. Esther was

a Jewish woman, who became the first lady of the Persian empire. In comparison to Esther, Ruth was a foreign woman from Moab who lived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi. She lived a lowly life in foreign land, serving and obeying Naomi. But at the end of the book, she became the great grandmother of king David by giving the birth to Obed, the father of Jesse. Then because of this, she became known as part of our Lord Jesus' ancestry.

As I studied about the passage from Ruth, I reflected on Millet's oil painting

"The Gleaners" (picture) that depicts three humble women gleaning a field of stray stalks of wheat after the harvest. What Ruth did in her life in Bethlehem was a few things like gleaning Boaz' fields after the harvest. By doing small and lowly things, Ruth and her name is honoured by the Bible and its



readers. Matthew 25:34-36 says, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me." 'Love your God and love your neighbour' does not require such a huge donation or commitment in ministry. No matter how little that is. If we do it to one of the least of our neighbour, we would fulfil the great commandment in our daily life and be determined by other people as a people of God.

In conclusion, Jesus did not teach this scribe about the strictness of laws in Torah but interpret the great commandment in the centrality of love in the law that all human beings should live for. This story tells us about our identity. Because we, Christian, are determined by other people or by

society that we do not live for the law in the Bible but for the love and justice of the living God with our neighbour. We are here because faith and justice cannot be separated.

Our identity is not commodity that can be exchanged in marketplace. We cannot buy us or our next generation the kingdom identity. Our identity is our integrity that only can be brewed and grow in our heart and our journey together. Jesus' words are encouraging us as we will commit ourselves to living out the great commandment in this coming week. "You are not far from the Kingdom of God."

Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE JENNY KEAST**

Dear Heavenly Father

We are so very thankful to be here today together once more. Life without lockdown will still have its challenges but we pray you will help us to be patient and careful, mindful of the needs of others.

Thank you for the blessings of the last week, for friends and family we have been able to see, for outings not previously possible and for the decline in daily case numbers and hospital and ICU admissions. We pray that this will continue.

We pray for all students and teachers who have returned to school. We pray that disruptions will be minimal especially for HSC students preparing for their exams. We pray especially for Isabella at this time.

We also pray for businesses that are reopening, that they will be soon back on their feet with sufficient staff and safety procedures.

This week in our World Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the United States and Canada. We pray for strong churches who preach your word faithfully and respond to the needs in their societies. We pray you will help heal divisions in their societies without resorting to violence and aggressive behaviour. We pray for the Life Congregational church at Hunters Hill, for all members and ministers to continue serving you each day.

We pray for Seungjae, Grace and their family as they serve our congregation and also manage needs within their family.

We bring before you those known to us who are sick, lonely bereaved or in difficult circumstances that they will know your presence and comfort.

Be with us all as we try to serve you in the next week,  
In Jesus Name  
Amen.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
    我們在天上的父，  
    願人都尊祢的名為聖，  
        하늘에 계신 우리 아버지，  
        아버지의 이름을 거룩하게 하시며，

your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
    願祢的國降臨，  
    願祢的旨意行在地上，  
    如同行在天上。  
        아버지의 나라가 오게 하시며，  
        아버지의 뜻이 하늘에서와 같이  
        땅에서도 이루어지게 하소서.

Give us today our daily bread.

我們日用的飲食 今日賜給我們，  
오늘 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주시고，

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

免我們的債 如同我們免了人的債  
우리가 우리에게 잘못한 사람을  
용서하여 준 것같이  
우리 죄를 용서하여 주시고，

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

不叫我們遇見試探，  
救我們脫離兇惡，  
우리를 시험에 빠지지 않게 하시고  
악에서 구하소서.

For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.

因為國度，權柄，榮耀，  
全是祢的，直到永遠。  
나라와 권능과 영광이  
영원히 아버지의 것입니다.

Amen.

## OFFERING AND DEDICATION

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry in these changing times. Please make your offering through a Bank Deposit or a personal cheque whichever is convenient to you.

**Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church**  
**BSB: 634-634                      Account: 100023784**  
**Reference: Offering**

**Mail to: Mrs. Robyn Harvey**  
**96a Champion Rd. Gladesville NSW 2111**

Please contact Robyn Harvey, Treasurer on 0418 783 290 or  
robyn.49@bigpond.net.au for more information about how to make  
Direct Debit.

**SONG: THE SUMMONS**

Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown?  
Will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean  
and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me?

Will you love the “you” you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In Your company I'll go  
where Your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

John L. Bell & Graham Maule

## **BENEDICTION**

Go now from this service of worship  
to the service of God's people near and far  
refreshed by the healing insight of Jesus Christ.

Listen for the thirsting voices of neighbours;  
search out the hopeless places where may need fresh perspectives,  
and become for them a companion on the road.

And as you go,  
may the blessings of the God of life,  
the Christ of love,  
and the Spirit of grace  
be upon you this day and forevermore. Amen.

The Boronia Park Uniting Church communications team who recorded and edited the videos, ensured all the videos ran as they should and designed the invitation and order of service.

All music reproduced and streamed with permission. CCLI Copyright and Streaming Licence: 260394, 33617.

All English scripture readings in this service are from *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.