



Sunday Worship Service

13 February 2022 (Epiphany 6)

We communicate. At café, supermarket, school, work and home we exchange need, thought, opinion and intention. In communicating you ask questions, and someone may answer them. Someone calls you and you may respond it. Communicating with one another, we build mature relationship and trust. This is very important in human society. Even in God's divine relationship with his people, communication is the key.

How did you respond when you first sensed God's call on your life? If yes, what did the communication look like? And how did it go? Was there someone to guide and help you discern? Imagine what would Jesus say in the communication between you and God, an ear-offering God. In this time of worship and reflection, I hope we will communicate faithfully to God and passionately to the world where we live God's call.

Opening Prayer

Faithful God,
we come into Your presence with thanksgiving,
deeply grateful for the unfailing love and faithfulness
You have shown toward us, Your people.
When we call out to You, You answer.
When we are exhausted, You give us the strength to go on.
When we find ourselves in trouble,
You are there, standing beside us.

And so we come before You gratitude and praise,
offering You the worship of our hearts and lives.
Open our eyes to see and know You here among us;
open our ears to recognize Your voice.
And then send us out from here,
to live and work in the world as Your faithful disciples.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

Attributed to Christine Longhurst

Song: Jesus Calls Us

Jesus calls us here to meet him
as, through word and song and prayer,
we affirm God's promised presence
where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise;
praise the Son who calls us friends;
praise the Spirit who, among us,
to our hopes and fears attends.

Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of Life and Lord of All,
sharer of our flesh and frailness
saving all who fail or fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.

Jesus calls us to each other:
found in him are no divides.
Race and class and gender and language
such are barrier he derides.
Join the hand of friend and stranger;
join the hands of age and youth;
join the faithful and the doubter
in their common search for truth.

Jesus calls us to his table,
rooted firm in time and space,
where the church in earth and heaven
finds a common meeting place.
Share the bread and wine, his body,
share the love of which we sing,
share the feast for saints and sinners,
hosted by our Lord and King.

John L. Bell and Graham Maule

Prayer of Praise and Trust

Holy God,

you are the God above and beyond all things! With trust, hope and humility in our hearts and minds, we gather to praise and worship you,

the God who always hears and answers our prayers. God's promises are trustworthy and honourable, and so with thankful hearts and minds, we praise and worship our God who understands and guides us.

Ever-loving and Faithful God,

you are utterly to be trusted! God's mercy and love does not discriminate between the rich and the poor, the powerful or the humble, but instead, God pours blessings and grace upon all people who respond to God's gracious and generous acts of love and compassion.

Awesome God,

we come in reverent wonder before our God! Every day and night, we have been blessed by the wonders of our God, whose ways are beyond our understanding, but whose mercy never fails; and whose gentle powers are shown through God's unfailing kindness to people who are weak and in need of strength, encouragement and hope for the future.

Ever-present God,

your faithful love endures for ever, and ever. We give thanks with all our hearts to our Listening and Faithful God. **Amen.**

Attributed to Joan Stott (Geelong City Parish UCA)

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:17-26 (New Living Translation)

Crowds Follow Jesus

¹⁷ When they came down from the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of his followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil spirits were

healed.¹⁹ Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone.

The Beatitudes

²⁰ Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,

“God blesses you who are poor,
for the Kingdom of God is yours.

²¹ God blesses you who are hungry now,
for you will be satisfied.

God blesses you who weep now,
for in due time you will laugh.

²² What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man.²³ When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

Sorrows Foretold

²⁴ “What sorrow awaits you who are rich,
for you have your only happiness now.

²⁵ What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now,
for a time of awful hunger awaits you.

What sorrow awaits you who laugh now,
for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow.

²⁶ What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds,
for their ancestors also praised false prophets.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Song: Come As You Are

‘Come as you are: that’s how I want you.
Come as you are; feel quite at home,
close to my heart, loved and forgiven.
Come as you are: why stand alone?’

‘No need to fear, love sets no limits;
no need to fear, love never ends;
don’t run away shamed and disheartened,
rest in my love, trust me again.’

‘I came to call sinners, not just the righteous;
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail to live by my promise,
why do you think I’d love you the less?’

‘Come as you are; that’s how I love you;
come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change the love that I bear you;
all will be well, just come as you are.’

Deirdre Browne

Sermon

Your will be done, on earth,
as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:10

You may have a number of reward and loyalty cards in your wallet. Most major supermarkets have reward card or Flybuys card. And your favourite café may have one like a free coffee after purchasing some drinks. In using them, you can gain points per dollars you spend, and the points of purchase accumulate for your next one to redeem or collect benefits. I do have one loyalty reward card at the local café I drink my coffee. The free drink is always nice and tasty.

How would it look like if we, Christ followers and seekers, have a reward card for heaven or kingdom of God? In our faith, what would be the most important reward to gain? What kind of effort has to be applied in our journey to gain godly reward? Would that be possible to live the reward God prepares for us today? I hope we are able to enjoy God's reward today and the days to come. Of course, in heaven!

Jesus called and appointed the Twelve Apostles on the mountain. Then he came down with them to the plain nearby the sea of Galilee. There they saw huge crowds of people. It would have been impossible to count them all in number and to encounter with all of them in-person! When I was reading this part of the passage, I recalled the moment that I joined thousands of Sudanese Christians hearing a speaker say gospel message in Khartoum in January 2000. The gathering was spectacular so I could not capture by shooting a photo of the gathering in one single photo. Absolutely amazing and unforgettable memory in my youth years! And Acts 1 where Jesus answered, sharing his vision of spreading the good news in and through the power of the Holy Spirit (vv 7-8) came up in my mind.

“The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Luke, who is the canonised author of the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles, uses the similar imagination of the Holy Spirit and its movement in the midst of believers who were captured by the Word of God. The crowd, followers and the Apostles and Jesus gathered all in the plain and formed the kingdom of God there where all can see and touch the presence of God. Heavenly rewards came down and redeemed their weaknesses and lowliness. The reward from God the Father got them benefits that they never had before joining the fellowship in Jesus Christ. Near the sea of Galilee, where Peter

and his partners caught many fish by following his command, and decided to follow their master Jesus, thousands of the meek and the humble coming from near and far ended up living the heavenly reward that they found in Jesus – his teaching, healing and authority to free people from evil spirit. People marvelled at Jesus who sent in the healing power. Everyone tried to touch him. I believe that Jesus gave him away to be touched by the crowd no matter what matters in life they carried on. We know at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry he gave himself up for them and us upon the old cross to touch many lives that are fragile, broken hearted and lost their way and purpose. Jesus sends in the meaning and purpose in life, touching with the power of Holy Spirit. This is such a great reward that we can only find in Jesus. It was a great moment, and it utterly changed many lives nearby the sea of Galilee.

In the Bible, stories of those whose life was turned upside down comprise many chapters. Noah is one of them. Because of the call from the LORD, he built the ark, a really big boat for 120 years. Noah's ark project was backbreaking work. It needed brain and brawn. But even more than that, it took an incalculable amount of faith to build the ark. He didn't just start building the ark. He gave himself up and obeyed every sign of revelation God gave him. "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." (Genesis 6:22) When the flood finished and the ark settled, the LORD showed him a rainbow, the sign of the holy promise between God and all life on the earth. Noah ran and finished the marathon. Never worried about public opinion. Just lived an act of obedience and gave thanks and praises to the LORD in the clapping of nail-scarred hands. His reward saved his family and all animals in the ark. And because of his reward we can live today with the promise of Jesus Christ that he will come again on earth to fulfil God's will – living whole creation in the love of God. Noah found favour in the eye of the LORD. The favour of God is a goldy reward that opens the door of opportunity in life for us to have faith.

Faith is acting as if God has already answered. Acting as if God has already answered means acting on prayer and sending in the power of prayer for our family, friends, colleagues and neighbourhood. In praying and sending in the power of prayer, we communicate. This is how we, Christ followers and seekers communicate with God and this world. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' community that gathered nearby the sea of Galilee had the need and dependence on God. Such dependence is the essence of the kingdom of God. I pray that we depend on Jesus' words and deeds as the crowd did the same in the passage. Jesus' community heard him speak about the beauty of blessing within those who live a life that is changed by God. UK theologian N. T. Wright once talks about the Beatitudes, saying, "This ancient Christian vision, Jesus' vision, of human flourishing and of fact that his human flourishing brings God's strange rule to birth on earth as in heaven." (*The Great Story*, retrieved from ntwrightpage.com on 10 Feb) Wright points that the beauty of blessing is not the result of "what God promises to do to someone. It is primarily about what God is going to do through someone." It is so true. God worked through Noah, Jesus, the Apostles, the crowd and in the same way, he will work through us and many. Jesus' teaching in the beatitudes and the woes did not symbolise God's creation divided. In his communication between God and his creation, he wanted to see that each and everyone will be remedied. The poor will own the kingdom of God. The hungry will be satisfied. The sorrow will laugh. They will all receive great heavenly reward. In Jesus' vision, all come freely to communicate with God and with each other. This is a real friendship in communication. In this, our relationship with God is real and our communication with God and each other brings God's will on earth as in heaven. Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the Sign of unity, symbolising the communion of all God's people in him. For this, he came down from heaven, became a servant in human form, defeated the death and rose again for the life everlasting. Where Jesus was, his presence brought the kingdom and utterly changed many lives. Like him, where we are this moment, our faith in Christ may bring peace and unity and gently ask to follow. Our communication with God begins from that moment.

I have witnessed with respect and privilege the dying – both members of the congregation and locals. I can say that this service is the most sacred moment for both a dying and myself, and family members attending. To be honest, all of the dying who I served confessed that they lived a blessed life and were fortunate to have this life with beloved ones and communities including the church. I could notice that their voices were shaking and diminishing but confirming that they lived very well this life especially in the faith of Jesus Christ and the fellowship with other Christians. All looked peaceful and satisfied. Even they talked with me in the sharing of their stories of faith and family that are full of marvellous works of God. They sought to comfort me and family members when I felt fragile. Some held my hand tight without words. Each and every one from my sacred service with the dying they redeemed my weakness before the presence of death and gave me a significant courage to live faithfully God's call in ordained ministry. There I took consolation. And I humbled myself before the greatness of God who lived and worked in that person's entire life. This is reward, a godly reward given by each great person of faith. God would have shown me how I should live each day during my service for the dying. In God's reward, I truly believe that we are equally loved (I will study about *agape* and share with you next Sunday) and encourage each other to extend the benefit of the heavenly reward to many. This is a call from God today. This call may lead us all to a path that we kindly walk a mile together.

I do all this for the sake of the gospel,
that I may share in its blessings.

1 Corinthians 9:23

Prayer: A Hard, Deep Call to Obedience

You are the God who makes extravagant promises.
We relish your great promises of fidelity
and presence and solidarity,
and we *live* in them.

Only to find out, always too late,
that your promise always comes in the midst of
a hard, deep call to obedience.

You are the God who calls people like us,
and the long list of mothers and fathers before us,
who trusted the promise enough to keep the call.

So we give you thanks that you are a calling God,
who calls always to dangerous new places.
We pray enough of your grace and mercy among us
that we may be among those who believe your promises
enough to respond to your call.

We pray in the one who embodied your promise
and enacted your call, even Jesus. Amen.

Attributed to Walter Brueggemann

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.

Dedication of the Offering

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.

Next Sunday Service Participants

Scripture Reading (Luke 6:27-38): Vivian and Olivia Wong

Kids Talk: Heather Yeon

Prayers of the People: Isabella Lee

Key Dates of NCLS Survey

13-20 February – Official Boronia Park UC NCLS Survey Week Blitz

Sunday 20 February – Hurrah! Everyone has finished their survey and submitted it online or placed it in their return envelope!!

Monday 21 February – Hard copies will be collected from your personal letter box and arrangements made with you if your letter box is not accessible to non-residents

Wednesday 23 February – Last date if you prefer to post your hard copy to **PO Box 3238, Putney NSW 2112.**

Song: **Servant King**

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served, but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours', he said.

This is our God, the Servant King ...

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God, the Servant King ...

So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King ...

Graham Kendrick

Blessing

God, bless those who are in poor spirit,
who feel empty inside and who dread the day.

God, bless those who mourn and grieve,
who ache with loss for someone so much loved.

God, bless the people who are meek,
who do not grasp or shout or demand to be first in the queue.
God, bless the people who are hungry for justice
and who cannot wait for everyone to have their rights.

God, bless all who are merciful,
who have learned to forgive even those who hurt them hard.

God, bless all who are pure in heart,
in whom there is no vengefulness, but only love.

God, bless the peacemakers,
the ones who, by their words and deeds, can change the world.

God, bless the persecuted ones,
and keep them safe from those who would hurt them.

God, so rich in blessings for your children,
we rejoice in your promises and in your boundless and transforming grace.
Amen.

Attributed to Susan Durber

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.

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