

Sunday Communion Service
Pentecost 13, Sunday 4 September 2022, 9:30AM
Boronia Park Uniting Church

Lead: Rev. Seung Jae Yeon

Acknowledgement of the First Peoples

We acknowledge the Walloomattagal people,
the first inhabitants of this place.

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

Call to Worship

Creating God, we gather in your name to worship you.
We give thanks that there is a small spark of God within us.
Kindle that small spark into a flame of love and service.

Sustaining God, we gather in your name to worship you.
We celebrate the loving presence of God in our life.
May God's loving presence be a strong influence in our life.

Nurturing God, we gather in your name to worship you.
We rejoice that God teaches us about love and forgiveness.
**As we grow in faith, trust and love for God, may our worship,
witness and service bring honour to God's Holy Name.**
Amen.

Joan Stott

Hymn O Lord My God (TIS 155)

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand has made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gently breeze:
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee ...

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, our burden gladly bearing,
be bled and died to take away our sin:
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee ...

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: My God, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee ...

Words and music © Stuart K. Hine

Scripture Reading

Emily Han

Psalm 139:1-18 (Contemporary English Version)

(A psalm by David for the music leader.)

The Lord Is Always Near

- 1 You have looked deep
into my heart, Lord,
and you know all about me.
- 2 You know when I am resting
or when I am working,
and from heaven
you discover my thoughts.

3 You notice everything I do
and everywhere I go.
4 Before I even speak a word,
you know what I will say,
5 and with your powerful arm
you protect me
from every side.
6 I can't understand all of this!
Such wonderful knowledge
is far above me.

7 Where could I go to escape
from your Spirit
or from your sight?
8 If I were to climb up
to the highest heavens,
you would be there.
If I were to dig down
to the world of the dead
you would also be there.

9 Suppose I had wings
like the dawning day
and flew across the ocean.
10 Even then your powerful arm
would guide and protect me.
11 Or suppose I said, "I'll hide
in the dark until night comes
to cover me over."
12 But you see in the dark
because daylight and dark
are all the same to you.

13 You are the one
who put me together
inside my mother's body,
14 and I praise you because of
the wonderful way
you created me.

Everything you do is marvelous!
Of this I have no doubt.

15 Nothing about me
is hidden from you!
I was secretly woven together
out of human sight,
16 but with your own eyes you saw
my body being formed.
Even before I was born,
you had written in your book
everything about me.

17 Your thoughts are far beyond
my understanding,
much more than I
could ever imagine.

18 I try to count your thoughts,
but they outnumber the grains
of sand on the beach.
And when I awake,
I will find you nearby.

Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People Robyn Harvey

Creator God,

Today is the start of the Season of Creation in the UCA. A season for a month where we pray for your glorious and diverse creation that surrounds us with colour and life. May we be attentive to creations cry for renewal and each take actions to protect and help sustain the world around us.

We ask your forgiveness for the way we have used this world for our own benefits and not for the benefits of all humanity. Guide us Lord into appreciating your creation more and making the effort to bring sustainability

and renewal to this world for all creation big and small, long and short, human and animal.

We pray for all those leading and participating in the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly in Germany. May the spirit guide them in their discussions with people from many countries and cultures. May new friendships be formed so that understanding of others joys and despairs in their religious life is guided by you alone.

We give thanks for the open-heartedness of the Uniting Church as we seek to live in communities where all are welcomed and included. May people in the church show their inclusion to all they meet and thereby showing their strong faith by spreading your message throughout the community. We pray for the Uniting Church congregations, faith communities and chaplains in the City of Ryde Zone. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead their ministry agents and lay people and to strengthen the love that you have for them. On this Safe Church Sunday, we give thanks for all the churches that have made their churches a safe place for the young, old and vulnerable people in our community.

We pray for our people here at Boronia Park. We especially pray for Judy and Ron Robinson. Give Judy a peace and love that passes all understanding in these her final days. Sustain and wrap your loving arms around Ron and the family as they support and love Judy.

We pray for Keith, Marie Luise, Elaine Davis and anyone else in our church family who need your healing love in their lives. We will have a time of silence to bring our own prayers to God for these our friends.

SILENCE

In our World circle of prayer we remember Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo
We are thankful for:

- the beauty, natural resources, wildlife and different cultures in these countries
- the produce that small farmers continue to grow amid environmental and other hardships
- the spiritual vitality and growth of the churches and how they are cooperating with each other and those of other faiths and practices

- the relative peace and stability that prevails after long years of civil war and political struggle.

Lord, eternal Father,
creator of the skies and of the universe,
creator of this land of the Ivory Coast,
your intention was to make it a paradise,
like the one entrusted to Adam and Eve.

But the people have strayed from you.
Lord, have mercy on the Ivory Coast.
Look upon the suffering of its people,
the wounded hearts, the families torn apart and destroyed.
Look upon the distressed children,
the young people with nowhere to turn to for help!
Look upon the efforts to restore peace,
and make each one a peacemaker.

We pray for political leaders,
that you will grant them your wisdom.
Raise up men and women
full of love, of justice and of truth,
able to guide your people to complete fulfilment,
courageously, impartially, and generously.
Bless and protect all the inhabitants of this country!

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
to the end of the ages. **Amen.**

Minister's Sharing of a Reflection on Psalm 139

The Psalms in the Bible see us all as a people of God who may have prayers and songs everyday. They allow us to offer prayers and sing songs anytime if we could do. The Psalms invite us to express without hesitation our emotion and feeling whenever and wherever we need. They remind us that we can always come to God no matter what circumstances we face right now. Next five Sundays I will share my reflections on five psalms from the lectionary readings – Psalm 71, 81, 139, 14 and 79. I am so excited to do this commitment for us all because it will be my first attempt to preach on the Psalms that reveal the true character of God in *us*.

Psalm 139: God is still faithful when going through tough time

You may recall earlier this year that in the region of Northern Rivers and Far North Coast of New South Wales there were a couple of horrible floods. The floods had affected many lives, communities and the entire state. And also, the Greater Sydney had got a number of LGA and its suburbs affected by floods due to heavier rains and storms. Then the natural disaster has made people think climate catastrophe impacts their lives no matter where they live. To be honest this is happening all around the world. For instance, Pakistan has recently endured unprecedented floods that took many lives including 416 children. The floods were caused by heavier monsoon rains and melting glaciers that followed a severe heat wave, all of which are linked to climate change. Record heat, floods and even drought span the globe.

Across the world, drought is reducing once-mighty rivers like Loire, Rhine, Po, Danube, Tagus, Tigris, Yangtze to trickles. Driven by climate change, an unusual dry winter and spring followed by record-breaking summer temperatures and repeated heatwaves have left those waterways under-replenished. Ironically, bodies of water have evaporated and history has appeared. Dozens of ancient cities, sunken treasures and grim reminders have revealed themselves for the first time in years and even decades. ‘Spanish Stonehenge’, a 3,400-year-old ancient city called ‘Zakhiku’ in Iraq, a 992-pound World War II bomb in Italy, dozens of German warships in Serbia, and a 600-year-old Buddha statues in China are only examples. And centuries-old “hunger stones” were revealed due to the severe drought in Europe. A ‘hunger stone’ (German: *Hungerstein*) is a type of hydrological landmark common in Central Europe. Hunger stones serve as famine memorials and warnings throughout Europe in the 15th through 19th centuries. These stones were embedded into a river during droughts to mark the water level as a warning to future generations that they will have to endure famine-related hardships if the water sinks to this level again. One famous example is the one in the Elbe River, Czech Republic. One of hunger stones has “If you see me, cry”(German: *Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine*) carved into it as a warning. In August 2022, the warning was revealed, and people would have become known it is time to remember similar drought and hardship in their history that their former citizens and ancestors struggled and frustrated, and to remind each other of what they should do together during the challenging time. What would you see if drought and hardship in your life reveals of who you really are? What is the real faith that you will find

when faced with challenges in your life? I hope that psalm 139 has the Word of God for us all.

The writer of this psalm, King David was not a boy anymore who fought against Goliath with pebbles. He had been to everywhere to flee until his predecessor King Saul's death, to fight against other tribes, to build the kingdom of Judah, and to set up on Mount Zion in Jerusalem to house the Ark of the Covenant. What else he did? We also knew he committed adultery, arranged the death of Uriah and failed to discipline his sons. He was a bittersweet man of faith who experienced of God during his entire life. In Psalm 139, David confessed that God knows him way better than what he knows. And he gave praise and honour to God who is ever-present wherever he goes. No place to hide, for him no place where he could feel absence of God's presence. In every place of honour and shame, God was with him. In every time he committed sinful acts and then he realised he did wrong things, God was there for him. In verses 8-10, David gives his whole heart to God who reminds him of repentance and where he should stand by. He says,

If I were to climb up
to the highest heavens,
 you would be there.
If I were to dig down
to the world of the dead
 you would also be there.
Suppose I had wings
like the dawning day
 and flew across the ocean.
Even then your powerful arm
 would guide and protect me.

When he was praised by the world, when he committed all kinds of evil deeds, and when he obscured the glory of God, God was with him and taught him what he should do. God prepared his hunger stone for David when a drought came. But the message was different to the hunger stones found in Europe during the drought. While they say, "If you see me, cry", God's hunger stone for David would have said, "If you see Me, Yes, I am faithful so that I am still loving you." Even during a dry time, God had never forgotten David. He confessed that his entire life, from the beginning to the present is in the guiding hand of God. So he sings like this(vv. 15-16):

Nothing about me
is hidden from you!
I was secretly woven together
out of human sight,
but with your own eyes you saw
my body being formed.
Even before I was born,
you had written in your book
everything about me.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, remember that God is faithful. The God who fulfilled his protection and guidance in David's entire life is still faithful for us all when we believe. In a drought, God would reveal his hunger stone for us, reminding us of the time when God had shown his faithfulness and steadfast love. Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." How has God been faithful to you? And remember that the Lord is near. Nearer than ever before. When you are broken-hearted, his nearness comforts you. We can be confident that he is near. What has God already done in your life? What blessings has he already given to you? I may ask you to take time in the coming week to reflect and praise him for what he has already done for you. And remember that God has his eye on you. Even during a dry time, God has never forgotten us. Romans 8:28 says, "He is working all things together for good." God sees you now if you see a hunger stone in a drought.

In 2013, particularly the second semester at the theological college, I endured a season of drought, hitting rock bottom. Before hitting rock bottom, I thought that I made a good transition from Korean Christian community to wider church community. I learnt a lot about mission and ministry within the Uniting Church and which direction the Church might journey through. I was confident and filled with energy. But as I worked with homeless people and refugees at Parramatta Mission and Meals Plus, my good-looking spirituality had evaporated, and rock bottom appeared. Ministry wounds and heartbreaks had wrecked me. The loss of confidence had left me empty. Unmet expectations at the placement had hardened my perspective. I was busy hiding my failures and mistakes instead of finding the overflow of a life hidden in Christ. I had lost the joy of God's salvation and vocation in me. I felt like I walk in a dark place.

One afternoon, Grace, Heather and I had a riverside walk along the footpath near the Parramatta River. I must have felt tired of humiliating at work. We walked a mile and had a park bench to sit down for rest. Heather was only 4 years old. And she looked at me. I did too. Then I found a face of God in her smiling face. I don't remember what she said to me. But I do remember that I found the trust and love for me in her smiling face. I found God's presence in the little one, my 4-year-old daughter Heather. In her smiling face, there was God's hunger stone, speaking to me, "If you see Me, Yes, I am faithful so that I am still loving you." Although the season of drought lasted till the end of the semester, I endured it faithfully, discerning deeply where God's vocation is for me. You know what? At the end of the semester in 2013, I was given an interview for ministry practicum placement here at Boronia Park Uniting Church. Then in February 2014, I started the supply ministry. Unbelievable! In verse 17, David says, "Your thoughts are far beyond my understanding, much more than I could ever imagine." It was so true. God's faithfulness has no end for us all when we believe.

Are you in a season of drought? Has God given you a story that is an anchor of your faith? In a drought, perhaps you will find the hunger stone. "If you see Me, Yes, I am faithful so that I am still loving you." Sometimes we have difficulty recalling God's faithfulness in drought. Our eyes are focused on the obstacles and huddles, but God invites us to lock our eyes with him. Our circumstances may change, but God is constant and faithful. This is the most important theology that we should live with and teach our young people how to live and believe in faithful God. Especially today(4 September 2022), we, Boronia Park Uniting Church will observe as Child Safe Sunday. I believe that we are called to build a safe place for our young people to share their faith no matter how it looks like and to promote that the safety of children in mission and ministry comes always first. Ultimately our young people will find that they are never alone, never unloved, never without hope in Christ. And they will draw near to our faithful God who sees them all the time when a drought comes. We pray for this and remember how faithful our God is for us all.

Amen.

Offering and Dedication

Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church
BSB: 634-634

Account: 100023784

Reference: Offering

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

Let us pray:

O Lord, you lift us up and have blessed us with the ministry of this church. We thank you for our minister and our elders and leaders who nurture us spiritually. We thank you for each member who uses their spiritual gifts to bless others. We thank you for the rich fellowship we enjoy with each other and corporately with you. We give our talents and offerings to you now, to support the ministry of this church in our community and worldwide. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Friends, look as you gather around this table,
it is decorated with simple things,
bread and cup,
gifts of the earth that remind us that like them,
each one of us holds within us the fingerprints of God who made us.

At this table,
we are invited to draw up a chair
and dine with the saints and to feed our souls.
Here we sit with the priests and prophets,
prisoners and poets,
whose testaments live in the pages of God's book,
along with all the friends and faithful guides
who live within our hearts.

Here, we remember God as creator,
here we meet Jesus the Christ as our saviour,
and here we are embraced by the Spirit of love.

Communion Song Behold the Lamb

Behold the Lamb
who bears our sins away, slain for us:
And we remember the promise made
that all who come in faith
find forgiveness at the cross.
So, we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of peace
around the table of the King.

The body of our Saviour,
Jesus Christ, torn for you:
Eat and remember the wounds that heal,
the death that brings us life,
paid the price to make us one.
So, we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of love
around the table of the King.

The blood that cleanses
ev'ry stain of sin, shed for you:
Drink and remember He drained death's cup
that all may enter in
to receive the life of God.
So, we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of grace
around the table of the King.

And so with thankfulness
and faith we rise to respond
and to remember our call to follow
in the steps of Christ
as His body here on earth.
As we share in His suffering,
we proclaim: Christ will come again!

And we'll join in the feast of heav'n
around the table of the King.

Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

May God be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!
We lift them up to our God.

Let us give thanks to God our Creator.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

With humble hearts we acknowledge how remarkable it is
that God calls us to gather at this table and become a sacred community;
here the abundant grace of God nurtures us
and liberates us by hope;
here we become people of God's good news
who celebrate Christ's resurrection.

So with this in mind, join with each other now
as we raise our voices together with heaven and earth,
all people throughout all time and in all places,
and all of creation, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy God, of all creation and life,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.
Hosanna in the highest!**

We remember how at a table not unlike this,
Jesus gathered with his closest friends;
even with the full knowledge
that their belief would stumble and they would fail him,
he ate with them.

As the meal came to an end, he took the leftovers of ordinary things,
bread and wine,
and recreated them with a new purpose,
so that they might become tools of reconciliation and forgiveness
for those he loved.

And so we too, take what's ordinary
and make it extraordinary by offering it to you.

We take this bread,
and as we break it we remember Jesus' words:
'Take and eat, this is my body broken for you.'

We take this cup,
and as we raise it, we remember Jesus' words:
'Take and drink, this is my blood,
poured out for you and many for the forgiveness of sin.'
We refuse to exclude or bar anyone from joining us here,
this table is open to all who desire to come and feast on God's love.
Everyone is welcome, everyone is worthy, everyone has equal grace.

Come Holy Spirit,
as we take our place at this table
gather us with all who have gone before us,
all those men and women, our sisters and brothers,
who throughout time have walked your way
and been the living presence
of the God in this world.

Bless us now as we share this meal,
and become benefactors of your goodness.
Re-engage us with our desire to embrace what is wise,
and to stand with those who hunger and thirst.
Shape us into an accepting community
who lives out your compassion and justice. Amen.

So, gathered in this community we pray the prayer Jesus taught us, saying...

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.

Breaking Bread and Raising Cup

We break bread together,
and we become the living body of Christ.
We share the cup together,
and we become agents of God's grace.

Come to the table this meal is ready,
no matter our faith or lack of it,
our courage or fears,
our capacity to love a little or a lot,
God desires our company here.

The Communion

*Together we are becoming the body of Christ.
Eat and drink, and be renewed by the living Christ.*

Prayer to End Communion

God, we have gathered here because you have loved and
continue to love us and we are grateful.

By sharing this meal you have reminded us
that we are one community with many faces,
you have forgiven us our shortcomings and fears,
placed balm on our hurts, and strengthened us
to tackle the challenges that lie ahead of us.

Now, send us out into this imperfect world to be people of hope
who colour the places in which we live, work and play
with your abundant grace. **Amen.**

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

The blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us always.
Amen.

Sung Blessing

We Will Keep Our Faith Alive

Gathered here within this place,
we can share in God's redeeming grace.
There's no room for doubt or fear;
we can feel His presence here.
As we face each passing day
we will serve and honour and obey;
and if hope should start to dim,
we will know our trust is in Him.

*And we will keep our faith alive,
God will always be our guide
Through the darkest night,
we will see God's light.
We will keep our faith alive!*

Words: Don Besig

Music: Don Besig and Nancy Price

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