

Sunday, 8 November 2020



BORONIA PARK UNITING CHURCH SUNDAY WORSHIP – Pentecost 23 (Led by Robyn Harvey)

Preparing for Worship

Welcome to our service today where we are looking at the meaning of food in Jesus life as portrayed in the Bible. Prayers in the service come from A Liturgy for Food and Farming by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

Christians follow a Master who was known for eating with others, recognized for his distinctive way of giving thanks for food and who asked to be remembered in bread and wine. Following in his steps we give thanks for our food; following in the steps of the prophets and teachers of Israel we oppose injustice in its production; and we look for a world where every family dwells under its vine and fig tree, where needs can be met without greed and in a spirit of solidarity and sharing.

Acknowledgement for the First Peoples

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, Elders past and present, on which we gather today. We recognize their special relationship with the land and all creation.

Call to Worship

Leader: All creatures look to you in hope,
O God, and you give them food in due season.
Come now all who thirst.

All: And drink the water of life.

Come now all who hunger
And be filled with good things

Come now all who labour
And you shall find rest

Hymn: Sowing in The Morning

Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

*Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves,
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.*

Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest, and the labour ended,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves ...

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Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,
Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;
When our weeping's over, He will bid us welcome,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves ...

Knowles Shaw
CCLI #269394

Prayers of Confession

Let us pray:

We recall what food means in an unjust world.
We remember that one sixth of the world's population
goes hungry each day.
We remember the thousands of children who die each day
for lack of access to clean water.
We remember the labourers, women and men,
denied a living wage.
We remember the farmers in our own country
forced by the operations of 'the market'
to sell their produce for less than the cost of production.
We remember that whether we choose to or not,
we live at their expense.
We acknowledge that we have demanded cheap food
and forgotten the price
paid in unsustainable ways of farming and fishing,
threatening the welfare of others
and the very future of coming generations.
We ask for God's forgiveness and for renewal of the Holy Spirit.

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Period of Silence



Sieger Köder, "The Last Supper"

Asking for Forgiveness and Assurance

Leader: Before God with the people of God

I confess to our brokenness;
to the carelessness with which I buy and eat and
produce our food.

I confess to the ways I wound my life,
the lives of others and the life of the world.

**All: May God forgive you,
Christ renew you and
the Spirit enable you to grow in love.
Amen.**

All: Before God, with the people of God

**we confess to our brokenness
to the carelessness with which we buy and eat and
produce our food.**

**We confess to the ways we wound our lives,
the lives of others
and the life of the world.**

Leader: May God forgive you,
Christ renew you and
the Spirit enable you to grow in love.
Amen.

Bible Reading: Gospel of John 6: 25-36

Jesus the Bread of Life

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Message: How do we see God in our Food?

Robyn Harvey

God reaches out to where you are. He isn't cooped up in church, glued to the pews or detached from what matters most to you. He's walking alongside you through your crowded schedule, waiting for you to notice His presence. He speaks even while you're in the middle of a vegetable-slicing, dinner-prepping, multi-tasking moment.

God is trying to serve you up generous helpings of His love and mercy, seasoned to perfection with His grace. When you are busy running around, know that God is still trying to create a deeper connection with you. The next time you are cooking, reflect on these many ways you can bond with the Lord.

When it comes to our physical fitness, we tend to forget that God had a hand in our bodies design. Most people don't trust God to provide incredibly delicious food that is also healthy. They think eating natural God-designed foods couldn't taste near as good as a stack of pancakes dripping in artificial maple syrup or a McDonald's Big Mac and fries. However, the foods of the Bible, and the ones that come straight from the earth are part of God's fantastic creation. “In the beginning” God gave us plant-based foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans and

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grains. Later in the Bible we see that God identified certain meats that are both healthy and flavourful. In general, if there are only one or two ingredients on a food's label, then you are close to God's food plan. Appreciate the food God has already provided for us on this land and you will draw closer to Him.

Have you ever wondered how to use your skills for God? God created each of us for a purpose and the skills He gave you are not by random chance. He made you drawn to certain tasks for a reason. If you are someone that has a true passion for spending time in the kitchen it might be for a bigger reason. God no doubt gave you that pleasure so you can serve others with your skills. You could volunteer in a small soup kitchen to help feed the homeless or help provide goodies to raise funds for people in need. Jesus used food to give back to His community many times. For example, the Gospel of John reports that five barley loaves and two small fish supplied by a boy were used by Jesus to feed a multitude. There are many people in our congregation that have skills they use for the glory of God. We have Grace and her beautiful piano playing, Justin with his camera, Margaret Maxwell with her embroidery, Isabella with her artistically drawn cards and cooking and Seungjae with his singing voice. God wants you to take the skill He blessed you with and grow with it. Check out new cookbooks, learn a musical instrument, watch and learn from others or join online forums. Through harnessing your skills, you will see how God wants you to use them.

The dinner table is a great place for families to come together and grow in Christ. While the meals are being shared, so are laughs, tears, and memories. You come together to share a blessing over the food God has provided for you and experience God's blessings as a family. Sharing tables is one of the most uniquely human things we do. No other creature consumes the food at a table. And sharing tables with other people reminds us that there's more to food than fuel.

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Today I have put together a simple meal for my guests and as I present them I will show you how God's food can be much more than just food on a plate.

Our bible reading today from the Gospel of John is titled Jesus – the Bread of Life.

Bread has been a part of the staple diet for people for many thousands of years. It has been an essential food for many during times of depression, war and drought. It doesn't need to be adorned with other spices or foods to make it a very palatable food. Do we need to add extra food such as this bruschetta of tomatoes, basil and garlic on golden toasted bread with a balsamic olive oil dressing or serve it in true Italian style of grilled bread rubbed with garlic and topped with olive oil and salt or just plain old slice of bread with nothing added! Which would you prefer? Bread gives us sustenance and life as soon as it comes out of the oven. Is there anything nicer than a piece of newly made fresh bread that is still warm?

At the first communion Jesus chose a small piece of bread to symbolise his body. Each time we eat a piece of bread, do we think of it as a symbol of Jesus's body? I don't think we do – it is usually only when we are celebrating Holy Communion not when we are having a meal with family or friends. However, I don't think Jesus wants us to always think of Him when we are eating. A lot of us have been brought up to say a Grace before a meal where we thank God for the food he has provided. As we grow older, we may often forget to say this grace of thanks – maybe now is the time to try to remember to say it. Just a simple “Thank you Lord for this food” is all that he asks.

We are lucky in this country to have an abundance of good nutritious food available for us to buy or grow ourselves. As you can see, I have couple of dishes here I have prepared for us to eat. I have put some fish in the

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form of smoked salmon, some cheese made from cows and a piece of fresh dill grown in my garden. Then I have made my mango and avocado salad with walnuts and bacon. All lovely fresh food provided by God. Fruit, nuts, herbs, dairy and meat – these are the building blocks of our nutritional needs.

My husband John and I have just been away driving through the Riverina area and looking at unused water tanks and silos that are now pieces of art. (You will see some of our photos at the end of worship.) These water tanks and silos were essential in protecting our food and water from the ground to our plates.

Here we saw many acres of wheat, oats, fruit trees and grape vines growing. All foods necessary for our well-being. We saw cows, sheep and goats grazing. All these food products are dependent on two things – the sun and rainwater. Both of these are provided by God, both very simple things that we sometimes take for granted.



Sieger Köder, "The Meal,"

from the Lenten veil *Hope for the Excluded*, 1996

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Do we take Jesus' message of love, hope and forgiveness for granted? Jesus' message is very simple – it is that the Bread of Life for all people, is in the form of Jesus and if we want to live a happy and eternal life we just need to be fed by Jesus through his word – The Bible. As he says in our reading today:

*“I am the bread of life.
He who comes to me
will never go hungry,
and he who believes in me
will never be thirsty.”*

I pray that everyone will be filled with the bread of life through Jesus.

AMEN.

Affirmation of Faith

We all say this together:

We believe in God,
whose love is the source of all life
and the desire of our lives
whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth
whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all
and whose love, defeating even death
is our glorious promise of freedom.

Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt,
we trust in that love;
and in the name of Jesus Christ,
we commit ourselves, in the service of others,
to seek justice in food and farming as in all things,

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to live in peace, to care for the earth,
and to see that the hungry are fed
to live in the freedom of forgiveness
and in the power of the Spirit of love,
and in the company of all the faithful
past, present, and yet to come,
so to be the Church, for the glory of God.

AMEN.

Prayers of the People Phoebe Kim

Heavenly father,

We know that you alone are God. We know that you are worthy of our adoration and gratitude. LORD, we trust your power and greatness in active guidance of your people.

Hear our prayers this morning as we ask for your guiding hand to hold us in our journey on this world. The world today is different from the perfect one you created. So, give us your strength and your wisdom to keep safe from this unstable COVID-19 situation. It seems much has settled down now but there are still many people facing big difficulties financially, emotionally, and physically. We ask for Your hope, in place of our anguish.

We have ravaged the earth for human greed. We have mistreated each other, not knowing love. Send us your Holy Spirit so we can mend our ways.

We think the prayers all around the world. Listen to the prayers of your people Father. This week, we think especially of Aotearoa – New Zealand, and here Australia. May you bless these nations with wealth, happiness,

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and the knowledge and experience of you. In all their living, may they feel your presence to guide them to do your will on earth.

In our Inter-Church Cycle prayer, we remember and uphold the Gladesville Presbyterian Church and the Kalos Korean Presbyterian Church. We pray for our sisters and brothers in Christ. May the Holy Spirit fill the hearts and minds of the congregation, the ministers and their communities so that the light of Jesus shines in the world.

We think of our own church and beloved congregation here. We remember those who can't join in online worship and ask that you keep them safe. We think of those who are unwell. Especially pray for Heather as she is in serious illness. Please provide your healing hand to comfort her.

We thank you for our minister Seungjae and his beautiful family. Also, we thank you for Robyn who shared your message with us today as well as everyone who contributes to the service. Thank you for beautiful friends and family in Christ whom we get to have fellowship with.

We pray all these things in your name,

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,
hallowed be your name
your kingdom come
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.

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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 glory are yours now and forever.

AMEN.

Hymn: We Praise You O Lord

We praise You, O Lord, for the bountiful harvest
That now has been gathered and garnered with care;
Rewarding the toil of the sower and reaper,
While all in its blessings may share.

Chorus:

*For the bountiful harvest
We praise You, we thank You and bless You, O Lord:
For the bountiful harvest
We praise You and bless You, O Lord.*

We praise You, O Lord, for the bountiful harvest,
We praise You for sunshine, the dew and the rain;
For soft summer breezes so gracefully bending
The bright golden billows of grain.
For the bountiful harvest...

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We praise You, O Lord, for the wonderful token
That shines as it shone on Your servants of old,
The pledge and assurance that seed-time and harvest
From earth You will never withhold.

For the bountiful harvest...

We praise You, O Lord, for Your wonderful mercies,
And while to Your glory our voices we raise,
O You that regard the prayers of Your people,
Accept our thanksgiving and praise.

For the bountiful harvest...

Fanny Crosby
CCLI #269394

Offering

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry including young people and youth 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

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

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Benediction

Christ has come to proclaim God's kingdom,
to feed the hungry,
to give sight to the blind,
to strengthen the weary,
to set the prisoners free.

May God who created enough for everyone's need
fill us equally with love and anger.

May Christ who shared food with the multitude
teach us how to share.

May the Spirit who makes a new world possible
help us to make it real.

Amen.

Closing Hymn: We plough the fields and scatter

We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand;
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft refreshing rain.

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Chorus

*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord
For all his love.*

He only is the Maker
Of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star;
The wind and waves obey him,
By him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, his children,
He gives our daily bread.
All good gifts around us...

We thank thee, then, O Father,
For all things bright and good,
The seed-time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food.
Accept the gifts we offer
For all your love imparts,
With what we know you long for:
Our humble, thankful hearts.
All good gifts around us...

Matthias Cladius
CCLI #269394

Robyn's Photos of Water Tanks and Silos

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