

# Sunday 20 Sept. 2020      Eden Uniting Church

**THEME:** Late-in-the-day-comers

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

God is with everyone. God is in every place. God is in every time.

**God is here, and so we come to worship.**

## **PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Spirit of grace, when we are tardy, Come find us in our idling.

When we are troubled, sit with us in our worry.

When we are happy, come dance with us.

Through all our days, be our constant companion.

We come to worship the living God.

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful God,

we come to prayer in humility and with contrite hearts.

You might well ask us, “Are you envious because I am generous?”

Honestly, God, our answer too often is “yes”.

We have a particular view of who is deserving and who is not.

We get narky at newcomers who impinge on us.

We have things lined up in order according to our own list of priorities and values, and don't want any Johnny-come-lately upsetting the apple cart. We want a queue to be a queue – for the first to be first, and we dislike queue jumpers.

We forget that this thinking leads to the exclusion of the poor and the disenfranchised. We have created a society that makes it hard for them to get anywhere near the front of the queue.

Too often, we have an imperialist view of faith.

We hold that the tradition we come from is the right one, purer and truer than the others. We want to be the granters of your mercy and the gatekeepers of your love. And then the realisation comes.

*We* need to be the recipients of your mercy and love.

Have mercy on us, we pray. Amen.

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

God is generous – full stop.

No one comes too late to receive God's mercy.

God does not withhold forgiveness or impart it to a select few.

It is freely given to us all. Let this knowledge lift us from all our wrongdoings and transform our lives.

**Worship Song - Awesome God**

## **Ministry of the Word**

**Bible Reading 1 - Exodus 16:2-15**

**Kid's Talk - Petra**

**Bible Reading 2 - Philippians 1:21-30**

**Dialogue Sermon - Michael**

**Worship Song - ( I know ) My redeemer lives .**

## **PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING**

God of good things,

we give thanks for your eternal kindness to us.

We praise you for the love and compassion you extend to us throughout our lives. You have been with us from before our birth and journey with us until we return to dust. There has never been a time when you have not been for us. We give thanks for your gift of the earth, the mothering planet that nourishes and sustains us, the beauty and wonder that is ours to behold. We rejoice in the ever-changing sky, the reliable cycle of the sun and moon, eucalypt forest and coastline bush, rock wallabies, cockatoos, and orcas, artesian rivers and coral seas. We are in awe of all of this and your hand by which it is made. You are beyond our imagination and worthy of all praise, thanksgiving and adoration. Amen.

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Gifted God, as you open your arms wide and gather all into your loving embrace, receive the gifts we bring today for the common good. May they be agents of your good news and liberating grace. Amen.

## **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

Christ of grace and goodness,  
we have received your peace and hope in our lives  
and choose to live in such a way as to bring good news to our world.  
With the encouragement of your Spirit,  
may we courageously speak out against all wrongs:  
the destruction of the earth, the propagation of war and conflict,  
the enslavement of workers, the imprisonment of children,  
the stealing of land and the poisoning of water.  
Help us work toward a better future:  
for the restoration of wastelands, economies of shared wealth,  
clean water and air, the elimination of disease,  
and the steady supply of nutritious food.  
May we create a community where no one is excluded,  
one where gifts are acknowledged no matter who holds them,  
and where wisdom is recognised, no matter who speaks.  
This is our prayer. Amen.

## **COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING**

Our world is in need of people of goodwill  
doing acts of kindness.  
As we have been the beneficiaries  
of God's grace in this place today,  
so we are called to be people of goodwill to all.

May God go with us in wisdom and grace.  
May the example of Jesus shape our days.  
May the Holy Spirit hold us in faith and justice. Amen.

**Worship Song** - Amy Grant sings el shadai.

## **Philippians 1:21-30** New Living Translation

For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.

Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.

## Exodus 16:2-15 - New Living Translation

There, too, the whole community of Israel complained about Moses and Aaron.

“If only the Lord had killed us back in Egypt,” they moaned. “There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we wanted. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Look, I’m going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and pick up as much food as they need for that day. I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they will gather food, and when they prepare it, there will be twice as much as usual.”

So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “By evening you will realize it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt. In the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaints, which are against him, not against us. What have we done that you should complain about us?” Then Moses added, “The Lord will give you meat to eat in the evening and bread to satisfy you in the morning, for he has heard all your complaints against him. What have we done? Yes, your complaints are against the Lord, not against us.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Announce this to the entire community of Israel: ‘Present yourselves before the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.’” And as Aaron spoke to the whole community of Israel, they looked out toward the wilderness. There they could see the awesome glory of the Lord in the cloud.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “I have heard the Israelites’ complaints. Now tell them, ‘In the evening you will have meat to eat, and in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

That evening vast numbers of quail flew in and covered the camp. And the next morning the area around the camp was wet with dew. When the dew evaporated, a flaky substance as fine as frost blanketed the ground. The Israelites were puzzled when they saw it. “What is it?” they asked each other. They had no idea what it was. And Moses told them, “It is the food the Lord has given you to eat.

## Matthew 20:1-16 New Living Translation

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work.

“At nine o’clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing.

“At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you been working today?’

“They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.’

“That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. When those hired at five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage. When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day’s wage. When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, ‘Those people worked only one hour, and yet you’ve paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.’

“He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair! Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?’

“So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.”