**29th September 2019 Pentecost 18 (Proper 21)**

**A short but structured service**

*(other suggestions and alternatives are below)*

**Gathering**

**Call to worship**

Fellow children of God,

for any of you who despair because they fear that life no longer has meaning,

for any who cling to anger because it seems the only thing that keeps them going,

for any who are so lonely that their hearts feel withered and desert-dry,

for any who have turned to self-pity rather than to repentance and healing,

and for all those who come here today contented and thankful for many blessings—

**this house of prayer is filled with**

**the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**the love of God,**

**and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.**

**So,**

**lighten up, will you?**

**Prayer of Approach**

Glorious are you, Creator of heaven and earth;

***Your handiwork is all around us.***

Glorious are you, Saviour of the lost,

***Your words and deeds are our light and salvation.***

Glorious are you, loving Spirit of Truth,

***You renovate and enlarge the lives of your people.***

God most wonderful, we worship and adore you.

***Amen!***

**Hymn**

**Prayer of confession**

Come my sisters and brothers, come with me in prayer to the God who has mercy and will abundantly pardon. Let us pray.

Merciful God, we are not very good at making an adequate confession of our sin. Sometimes we don’t feel particularly repentant about anything. At other times we can get guilty about trivial matters, yet miss seeing the larger picture and our more grievous faults.

Yet we realise that everything we think, feel and do, becomes contaminated by the foolishness and evil around us and the folly and evil within us.

***Loving God, you have been very patient with humanity.***

***Please continue with that saving patience.***

***Look upon and within each of us as we bow before you.***

***Uncover and reprimand everything that is evil and all that is second best.***

***Create in us a spirit of honest repentance.***

***Enable us to get rid of self justifications, and to make room for your forgiveness and renewal.***

Dear Saviour Christ, please enlarge the healing work you have commenced, and bring us nearer that hour when our liberation shall be complete. For your love’s sake.

***Amen!***

**Word of Assurance**

It is time to lighten up!

It is written for our encouragement and peace: “The love of God is shown to us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” My friends, believe this remarkable Gospel and live with the liberty of Christ.

***Amen!***

*(often the Psalm may be used for the prayer and/or the word of grace)*

**Service of the Word**

**Psalm for the day – PSALM 91: 1-6 & 13-16** *© B.D. Prewer 2000*

You who live with the highest Friend,

***and rest in the shade of God’s love,***

shall say to the most Holy One:

***“My Home, my Triune God in whom I trust.”***

For God shall free you from cunning traps,

***and save you from threats to your soul.***

 White feathers of grace shall cover your sins,

***and divine wings shall give you safe rest.***

God-shielded, the night shall not frighten you,

***covered by grace, no arrow shall pierce you.***

No midnight stalker shall harm your soul,

***no midday threat shall ever destroy you.***

You shall stamp on beastly temptation,

***you shall trample the devil under your feet.***

God shall save those who cling closely,

***and lift up those who call God’s name.***

When we shout for help, you God, hear us,

***when under pressure, you will be with us.***

You will make us content with a full life,

***and display your wonderful love.***

**Epistle or Old Testament/alternate reading: 1 Timothy 6: 6-19 OR Jeremiah 32: 1-3a & 6-15**

**Gospel reading: Luke 16: 19-31**

**Short reflection and discussion** *(see links below)*

(Hymn)

**Prayers for others**

**Sharing of concerns**

**Sharing of notices**

**Prayers** *© B.D.Prewer & Open Book Publishers.*

A poet once wrote: “No man is an island.” Our lives intersect with a host of others.

Lovingly, let us pray for them.

We pray, loving God, for the blessing of your Spirit

on all kinds of people with their widely diverse needs.

Your blessing, please,

on the sick and those who nurse them,

on workers and those who employ them,

on the unemployed and those who stand by them,

Your blessing, please,

on the hungry and those who feed them,

on refugees and those who welcome them,

on drug addicts and those who treat them,

and the sorrowing and those who comfort them.

Your blessing, please.

Pour your Holy Spirit on these folk for whom we have prayed,

and also on the many who never catch our eye

or make it into our prayers.

Through Christ Jesus our Divine Brother.

***Amen!***

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Sending forth the people of God**

**Offering** (a sharing of our gifts and the call to bless others as we have been blessed)

**Hymn**

**Blessing and commissioning**

It time to lighten up.

Continue your journey with confidence.

Keep faith with God, for God keeps faith with you.

***The Christ who has called us***

***is able the complete that which he has begun.***

May God shield you in every steep place,

May Christ steady you on every rough path,

May Spirit go with you through every dark pass.

***Amen!***

 *(Ancient Celtic blessing)*

\*Note: all prayers and litanies above, are courtesy ©B D Prewer. It was Bruce’s intention that the prayers and litanies be adapted by each user to their own situation. This material can only be used for worship with acknowledgement and not otherwise reproduced without permission. Thank you to the estate of Bruce Prewer for allow us to publish his material here. Contact <http://www.bruceprewer.com> for details.

**A shorter prayer service**

*(may include some of the above material in the following format. Hymns may be included if desired and music is available)*

Greet each other

Prayer (may include invocation, adoration, confession and recognition of grace)

Reading: Psalm 91:1 – 6 & 14 - 16

Gospel reading: Luke 16:19 – 31

Sharing and discussion of the readings

Sharing of concerns

Prayers for others (see above, may involve one or several people praying; may involve the use of symbolic actions as part of the prayers)

(Conclude with the Lord’s Prayer)

Blessing

***Howard Wallace suggests*** *(see****:*** [*http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/*](http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/)*)*

Verses 1-2 naturally make a good **call to worship** as they are.

Verses 14-15a could be adapted as a congregational response in the **prayer of intercession**:

***Those who love you, deliver them; protect those who know your name.***
***As they call to you, answer them.***

Finally, the end of the psalm can be adapted for the **final blessing**:

You who love the Lord, the Lord will deliver;
the Lord will protect you who know God’s name.
When you call to God, God will answer you;
God will be with those in trouble,
and rescue you and honor you.
With life God will satisfy you, and show you salvation.
And the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
will be with you,
now and forever.
***Amen***

Howard often uses the NRSV but other versions can be used such as Nathan Nettleton’s paraphrase (found at <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>), The Message, Bruce Prewer’s adaptations (both paraphrases) or the New Living Translation. The Message and New Living Translation are accessible via [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

**Songs which may bring deeper reflection are** – lots to consider:

TIS 690 Beauty for brokenness

DMAC Do justice

TIS 179 Praise with joy the world's creator

TIS 48 On eagle's wings

TIS 647 Comfort, comfort

TIS 111/AHB 28 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation

TIS 65O Brother, sister let me serve you

TIS 629/AHB 558 When I needed a neighbour were you there

TIS 674 Inspired by love and anger

TIS 618/AHB 568 What does the Lord require

TIS 288 Not the powerful, not the privileged

TIS 547/AHB 455 Be thou my vision

TIS 595/AHB 514 O Jesus I have promised

TIS 143/AHB 80 Immortal, invisible, God only wise

TIS 730/SA 55 Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom

David MacGregor has a range of contemporary songs that go really well with the celebratory tone. You may like to select one to learn. He often provides a downloadable mp3 file, music and lyrics for songs that are his own. His site is at: <https://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>

**Other Creative suggestions:**

* Visuals are very appropriate for most services. Art works can be used to draw people into the stories. <http://www.textweek.com/yearc/properc21.htm> has links to artworks and movie suggestions related to the themes arising from the Bible readings. Some of these are by some of the greats and others by world class contemporary artists.
* Ann suggests a film clip with discussion questions. The film clip is from **Chariots of Fire** Chapter 19: The conversation between the discontented Harold and his friend, Aubrey. The first listening song is Peacemaker by Maire Brennan on her album, Whisper to the Wild Water. The discussion questions for **Chariots of Fire:**
1. Describe a time when you felt contentment.
2. How often do you feel this way?
3. How do you find contentment?
4. What desires, besides the desire for more money or more possessions, keeps a person from feeling contented?
Why not use these questions as a starting point for deeper exploration?
* Ann suggests a couple of response activities focusing on contentment **Response Activity 1:** Ask people to form small groups and give each group a few textas and a large sheet of paper with the words: "Real contentment is found...". When they have finished, stick the sheets up around the worship space and give people time to walk around and read all the sheets.
**Response Activity2:** Ask: If you had a chance to tell somebody how to find real contentment in this life, what would you say? give people a chance to think about this and then ask them to tell three other people what their answer would be.
* The topic today encourages exploration of what makes someone truly wealthy and what brings contentment. You may have seen recent reports that Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, urged governments to consider death and wealth taxes.
* Geoff Shrowder suggests when the Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 reading is the focus:*In a dark and hopeless time for Israel, Jeremiah expresses his vision of God's faithfulness in the purchase of land. Accompanied by an appropriate litany the group/congregation could plant a tree/shrub as an expression of your vision of God's faithfulness. (When Martin Luther was asked what he would do if he was told the world would end tomorrow, he replied, "I'd plant a tree".) If this is not possible/appropriate for your situation then perhaps you could have some property deeds or similar 'instruments' gathered/displayed on a table in the worship space. Pictures or posters of farmland and/or vineyards being worked could also be displayed around the worship space.*
* Seasons of the Spirit is a resource package available through Media Com. They have weekly resources available that can be purchased. They have great resources for all ages, creative ideas and thoughtful suggestions for reflection and sermon development. If you want to check it out, speak to Rev Peter or contact our Romsey congregation who use the material often.

**Other resources**

* See the Resources page of our web site for an extensive list of links and other resources.
* Our Romsey congregation has access to Seasons of the Spirit materials. Contact Jay for details as to what is available.
* Bruce Prewer’s web site has sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>.
* Nathan Nettleton’s site has paraphrase versions of the readings, sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>.
* Ann Scull has some great suggestions for creative worship. Go to <http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/>.
* Sacredise is a great web site that has a huge range of resources. Go to <http://sacredise.com/>.
* David McGregor has some great suggestions for contemporary music and songs. Go to <http://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>
* Geoff Shrowder has suggestions for the use of the Psalm, often a thoughtful piece and suggestions for hymns. Go to <http://thebillabong.info/>.
* Many other resources are available on the web site