

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church

Parramatta City
Uniting Church

PENTECOST 7



The Parable
of the Sower

16 JULY 2023

WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together
to celebrate the seventh Sunday of Pentecost.

THE PAINTING

A lone peasant in the left foreground scatters seeds on an upland pasture. The seeds he has already sown have multiplied in the fields below him to the right and in the middle distance. Across the river, a small crowd gathers to hear Jesus' preaching.

The Parable of the Sower, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1557

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

May this Christ candle shed light into the rocky heart of chaos and sow the seeds of love and our beauty.

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE LAND

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

OPENING SENTENCES

Into the rocky heart of chaos,
you sowed the seeds of beauty,
Heart's Imagination.

***Into the thorny soil of nothingness,
you cast hope and grace.***

Creation sprang forth,
your goodness bubbling up
in streams flowing down
to crystal clear oceans;

***your compassion planting
all we would ever need to live.***

You sowed life for all,
so we might feast
on your peace and grace!

***Generative, generous God,
we give thanks for your sowing!***

Adapted: Thom M Shuman

HYMN *A man of ancient time* (Tune 'Tallis' Canon', 443 TiS)

1. A man of ancient time and place
with foreign speech and foreign face,
reveals the glory, power and grace
of costly, unexpected love.

2. A rabbi, schooled in Moses' Law,
a male, amending Herod's flaw,
arouses wonder, rage and awe
with costly, unexpected love.

3. By teasing word and healing deed,
a leper touched, an outcast freed,
he bears the fruit and plants the seed
of costly, unexpected love.

4. The cost we barely can surmise
when, lifted up before our eyes,
the face of God we recognize
in crucified, unfathomed love.

5. May faith and hope within us grow,
the way of Christ to tell and show,
and may the Spirit breathe and blow
in costly, unexpected love.

*Brian Wren All rights reserved.
With permission OneLicense A-604457*

PRAYER

When we are convinced

we are only barren soil,
you plant seeds of grace
deep within us.

***When our souls are parched
as arid deserts,
you refresh us with the waters
of goodness and mercy.***

Story Teller,
fill our hearts with your words.
You come into our hearts,
to remove the bricks and mortar
from that great wall of hostility
we have built over the years,
setting us free to play
in the kingdom of peace.

***You help us to let go
of our focus on ourselves,
so we may reach out
to share with others.***

Emancipator,
send us forth to live your words.
God in Community, Holy in One,
with our hearts and with our words,
we lift our prayers to you, ***Amen***

(Adapted: Thom M Shuman)

HYMN *God of unexplored tomorrows* (Tune: 'Marching', 165 TiS)

1. God of unexplored tomorrows,
of today and yesterday,
God of rock and flowing river,
be our refuge, be our way.

2. Guardian rock above, before us,
strong foundation where we build,
landmark through the haze of doubting,

shelter where our fears are stilled,

3. Be the cleansing, quenching water,
irrigate, disturb and move,
stir us from our easy shallows,
current of refreshing love.

4. God of rock and flowing river
now and ever with us stand,
to transform our land of promise
into each one's promised land.

B Jones All rights reserved. With permission OneLicense A-604457

GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-9 (Inclusive Text)

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round that Jesus got into a boat and sat there.

The people all stood on the beach,
and Jesus told them many things in parables.

He said:

'Imagine a sower going out to sow.

As the seeds were sown, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up.

'Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil
and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth;
but as soon as the sun came up

they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away.

'Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

'Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop,
some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

'Listen anyone who has ears!'

RESPONSE In these words God speaks to us!

May they come alive in our living! Amen!

SONG *Canticle of the Turning*

a hymn by Rory Cooney

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7fTuH_0agE

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.

Let the fires of your justice burn.

*Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

2. Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn. *Chorus*

3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn. *Chorus*

4. Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around. *Chorus*

REFLECTION

HYMN

“Mother Earth,” (Tune: ‘Praise My Soul’, Tune 134)

1. Mother Earth, our mother birthing
Ev’ry creature from the ground.
Jesus too was flesh and breathing,
Kin to all that’s green and brown.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

2. Sister Air, our sister lifting
Ev’ry creature born with wing;
Jesus shared the breath of forests,
Breath that makes our spirits sing.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

3. Brother Water, brother pulsing
Deep through ev’ry vein and sea,
Jesus drank the very raindrops
For our wine and in our tea.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

4. Father Fire, our father burning
With the sacred urge to live.
Jesus’ death completes the cycle,
Bringing life beyond the grave.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

(© Norman Habel, 1999)

All rights reserved.

With permission OneLicense A-604457

OFFERING PRAYER

Receive and bless these gifts and our lives, O God,

which we offer in response to your love revealed so clearly in Jesus.

As he planted the seeds of love and life in our lives, strengthen us to nourish others with the fruits of our faith made visible through these gifts, our love and our witness. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Loving God we bring our prayers for others & our world.

God of Isaac & Rebekah, Esau & Jacob you have breathed love & wisdom into places of dispute & disharmony throughout the ages.

God of peace & wisdom - within our world, communities & families there are divisions, tensions & disharmony. We pray for a world where all can feel safe. We pray for fairness, compassion & understanding.

We pray for decision makers - that they consider the greater good, fairness & equity and that their decisions are not based on power, greed or wealth.

Creator God we pray for your Peace - an unconditional peace that is not dependent on compliance to authoritarian power & control. A peace where the environment, animals & people are safe, valued & treated with respect & dignity.

God who is the lamp to our feet we pray for those who are grieving, those who feel lost, sad, alone or helpless. May they find hope & comfort & be aware of your light shining into their darkness.

We pray for those who are unwell, recovering from surgery, coming to terms with new health diagnoses, undergoing difficult & uncomfortable treatments.

We pray for healing, comfort & support as they navigate their health challenges.

Loving God as we spend time in prayer & quiet contemplation help us to see your light & to let your light be the guide to our path bringing hope, love, peace & comfort into our world, into our community, into our family & into each person's life. **Amen**

Source: Margie Gray

HYMN *May the feet of God walk with you (TiS, 779)*

May the feet of God
walk with you,
and God's hand hold you tight.

May the eye of God rest on you,
and God's ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and God's breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and God's love bring you home.

AUBREY PODLICH, With permission One License A6044575 All rights reserved

BLESSING

May God be the light on your path,
the breeze on your back,
the music in your ears,
the song on your lips,
the curiosity in your mind,
the happiness in your heart,
and the peace in your spirit.
Go well.

Amen!

(Source: Bruce Prewer)