

**WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT.
PENTECOST 7
10:45am Liturgy
Sunday, July 7th, 2024**



Peter Bruegel the Elder's "Peasant Wedding Feast" (1567) has been used as an artistic image for the Kingdom of God, in keeping with biblical thinking that portrays the Kingdom *as a feast for the masses*, which looks forward to a world without oppression and bread for all, not just some.

One of the defining traits of Mark's Gospel is his theological, philosophical and ethical world view concerning oppression and suffering. Probably written within the context of persecution of Rome, the issues that Mark focuses upon include first the identity of Jesus – remembering that the debate about his person and relationship to God the Father, really did not take place till after his death – second, living the faith in the face of suffering, and hope for the coming of the final age, or the kingdom.

These last couple of weeks, we have heard from Mark about the fact that we do not live in a neutral, nor benign world. Mark's way of making this point is through the image of demons: the readings of the past two weeks have included the demons of nature such as storms – 4:35-41 – demons of illness and social rejection – 5:21-43 – and today we read of the demons grounded in the rejection and persecution of Jesus' followers – 6:1-13). In Mark's Gospel, alienation is common to the human condition.

For the next several weeks we will hear Mark drumming away at this idea. Next week, Pentecost 8, we will read the story of the beheading of John the Baptist – 6:14-29 – an example of the political demons at work, and the week after, Pentecost 9, we will return to the healing of the sick and rejected.

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude:**News and Notices****Introit: Lord God, We Worship Thee**

Ahasuerus Fritsch (1629-1701), adapt. from J.S. Bach, words by Johann Franck (1618-77), trans. Catherine Winkworth (1829-78)

Lord God, we worship thee! In loud and happy chorus,
we praise thy love and pow'r. Whose goodness reigneth o'er us;
To heav'n our song shall soar, forever shall it be
Resounding o'er and o'er; Lord God, we worship thee!

Lord God, we worship thee! We pray thee, who hast blest us,
that we may live in peace, thy grace be always with us.
O crown us with thy love and heed our cry to thee;
O Father, grant our prayer; Lord God, we worship thee!

Acknowledgement of First Nation's People

Let us acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,
The first inhabitants of this place,
part of God's good creation.
We honour them for their custodianship of the land,
on which we gather today.

A Safe Space

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God,
and so we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit

Collect

Remove O God, the veil from our eyes,
and give us the light of the Spirit;
so that we may learn to see you,
to recognize you in Jesus' rejection
and experience in the weakness of our own human nature
potency of his resurrection.

the

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 who lives and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever.

Call to Worship

Friends, when we feel unable and incapable, God calls to us...
your heart to your weakness and my strength.

Open

When we persist in the false belief that we should and must do everything on our own,
 God calls to us...
**Open your heart to your
 weakness and my strength.**

When we feel shame because we need help, and
 the deep vulnerability of our need, pierces our self-awareness. God calls to us...**Open
 your heart to your weakness and my strength.**

Listen! God calls to us in our weakness
 not to humiliate us, but to empower us,
 not to assail us, but to reaffirm us.

**May we receive the goodness of our weakness
 power in the strength of God's love. Amen.**

and

Lighting the Community Candle from the Christ candle

Hymn: 134, Praise my soul, (Henry Francis Lyte, 1793-1847 *alt*, based on Psalm 103)

A Prayer: "And They Took Offense at Him"

In this prayer we focus on the Gospel reading for today. In contrast to the Hebrew reading where David is anointed as King of Israel and Judah – in effect the head of the powers with power, who rejects the blind and the lame – Jesus is the opposite. He is the one rejected by the powers and power, who accepts the blind and the lame. The implication in the Gospel reading is a question: with whom do we really identify? The powers, the dominant ideologies and currents of thought, who when push comes to shove, reject Jesus Christ, because they consider they have a lot to lose, or the beneficiaries of Jesus' work, who receive his healing with grace and gratitude.

Forgive us for being suspicious

son of

Mary:

of change and new ideas – we're rather wary.

It's not that you defy our expectations
 (although it seems you do).

Our hesitation
 comes from the fact that old ways fit so well
 with our viewpoint on the world that to sell
 us on a realm of grace and change will necessarily be tough.

Love must be earned in our monetarist world – did you
 forget?

which may be rough,
 but that's always been our way in this town.

Who knows
 where we get the notions that we've grown to accept.

Visit us again some time.

So glad you came.

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Let us be still and listen to the voice of God

Silence

Let us confess

That we claim to follow Jesus Christ,
 but our worldview and values fail to conform to a life that lives generously and
 graciously.

That we claim to follow Jesus Christ,
 but our relationships are limited to those who are just like us: who look
 like us, who live like us, who think like us.

That we claim to follow Jesus Christ,
 but through the years it has become a habit,
 more than a real catalyst for change.
 Oh, how as the years grow, life becomes just a habit...little more.

**O God, forgive us and create in
 us a new heart to build
 communities founded on
 mutual acceptance:
 where we do not say everything that we think;
 where we constrain our words and actions for the community.
 where we learn to allow our mind and heart to be re-trained.**

(Sung) Kyrie

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.
 Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy.
 Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Declaration of Forgiveness

all beggars.
 members of a species that is not sufficient to itself.
 creatures plagued by unending doubts,
 compensating for and deluding ourselves.

We are
 We are all
 We are all
 restlessly

But the good news is this: we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

(Sung)Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
 and peace to God's people on earth.
 Lord God, heavenly King,
 almighty God and Father,
 we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
 Lord Jesus Christ,
 only Son of the Father,
 Lord God, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us;
 you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
 receive our prayer.
 For you alone are the Holy One
 you alone are the Lord,
 you alone are the Most High,
 Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit,
 in the Glory of God the Father, Amen. Amen.

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD**All Age Story****Readings:**

2 Samuel 5: 1-10, pp. 243-244.

5Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. ²For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my

people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.”³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.⁵ At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

⁶The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, “You will not come in here, even the blind and the lame will turn you back” —thinking, “David cannot come in here.”⁷ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, which is now the city of David.⁸ David had said on that day, “Whoever would strike down the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, those whom David hates.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.”⁹ David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards.¹⁰ And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

Hymn 674, vs 1,2,4&6, Inspired by love and anger (John L. Bell 1949- and Graham Maule, 1958-)

2 Corinthians 12:2-10, pp. 943-944

²I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows.³ And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat.⁵ On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.⁶ But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me,⁷ even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me,⁹ but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Gospel: Mark 6:1-13, p. 817.

⁶He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.² On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands!³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.⁴ Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not

without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.”⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them.⁶ And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching.⁷ He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.⁸ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts;⁹ but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics.¹⁰ He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place.¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.”¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent.¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

The Gospel of the Lord
you Lord Jesus Christ

Praise to

Anthem: Glorious the Day When Christ Was Born
Berkeley Hill, words by F. Pratt Green (b. 1903)

Glorious the day when Christ was born
To wear the crown that caesars scorn,
Whose life and death that love reveal
Which all men need and need to feel.

Glorious the day when Christ arose,
The surest friend of all his foes;
Who for the sake of those he grieves
Transcends the world he never leaves.

Glorious the days of gospel grace
When Christ restores the fallen race;
When doubters kneel and wav’ers stand,
And faith achieves what reason planned.

Glorious the day when Christ fulfils
What man rejects yet feebly wills;
When that strong Light puts out the sun
And all is ended, all begun.

Homily

Prayers for the Church and World

Today we pray for the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia. We dare not forget in our hearts and minds the peoples of Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, the people of Sudan and Dafur,

the people of Ukraine as they continue to live under the imposition of war, and the people of Russia as they themselves live under repression.

We offer the Bidding: Lord...**Hear our prayers.**

Offering

The congregation stands as the offering is received by the minister and prayers are offered over the gifts.

EUCCHARIST

The Peace

We greet each other with the words, "The peace of the Lord be with you" with the response "And also with you", or if from a distance, the hand over the heart, or the hands clasped.

Hymn 578, vs 1,2,3&5, sung to St Denio 143, How firm a foundation (Author 'K - ' (?Richard Keen) in John Rippon's *Selection of Hymns*, 1787, alt)

Invitation

This is the table of the Lord.

It is to be made ready for those who love him and who want to love him more.

So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been for a long time, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed.

It is our Lord who invites you.

It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

Gratitude, praise, hearts lifted high,

voices full and joyful,

These you deserve O God.

For when we were nothing you made us something.
 we had no name and no faith and no future,
 You called us to be your children.
 When we lost our way or turned away,
 you did not abandon us.
 When we came back to you,
 your arms opened wide in welcome.

When

You loved the world so much
 that you sent your only Son
 to bring us life eternal.
 Dying he destroyed our death.
 Rising he restored our life.

And so we praise you
 with the faithful of every time and place,
 joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation
 in the eternal hymn

(Sung) Sanctus and Benedictus

Holy, holy, holy Lord
 God of power and might.
 Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.

Lord God, as we come to share the richness of your table
 we cannot forget the rawness of the earth.
 We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry.
 Your world is one world and we are stewards of its nourishment.
Lord, put our prosperity at the service of the poorest of the earth.

We cannot take wine and forget those who are thirsty. The ground and the rootless, the
 earth and its weary people cry out for justice.
Lord, put our fullness at the service of the empty.

We cannot hear your words of peace
 and forget the world at war.
 Or, if not at war, then preparing for it.
**Show us quickly, Lord, how to turn weapons into welcome signs and the lust for
 power into a desire for peace.**

We cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our divisions. We are one in
 Spirit but not in fact; history and hurt still dismember us.

Lord, heal your church in every brokenness.

Institution

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up to death,
He took bread, gave you thanks,
broke it and said:
This is my body given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

When the meal was ended, he lifted the cup,
and again giving you thanks,
gave it to his friends and said:
this cup is the new covenant
sealed by my blood.
Do this, whenever you drink it,
for the remembrance of me.

And so, in remembrance of all you have done for us,
we take this bread and this cup,
and offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
made worthy by the perfect offering of Christ,
our great high priest.

The Blessing of the Bread and Wine

With this bread and this cup
we do as our Saviour commands:
we celebrate the redemption he has won for us.

(Sung) Acclamations

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

By your Word and Holy Spirit,
bless these gifts that we may truly share
Christ's body and blood,
and become by grace, his body given
for the sake of the world.

(Sung) Acclamations

Blessing and honour
and glory and power
are your for ever and ever.
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.
 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 the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Look, the bread of Heaven is broken for the life of the world.
 Christ coming to us in bread and wine.
 gifts of God for the people of God.

Here is
 The

(Sung) Agnus Dei

Jesus, Lamb of God have mercy on us.
 Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
 Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

The Distribution

*The elements are distributed to the congregation: initially the bread and then the 'wine'.
 We hold the elements and take together.*

Prayer after Communion

Open our eyes. Open our hands.
 Free our hearts to see and respect your presence
 in all and through all.
 We will respond with gratitude, joy, and grace.
 We will give our lives to the promise of Easter Love and friendship always rising up in
 our midst.
May it fully be so.

SENDING OUT

Sending Hymn 103, A mighty fortress is our God (Martin Luther 1483-1546,
 composite *tr.* David Armstrong Schubert 1942-)

Commission and Blessing

Friends, go from this place
 that in all things,
 crucified and resurrected Christ dwells in you.

persuaded that
 the power of the

The blessing of God almighty,
Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
you and remain with you always.

the
Be upon

Our service has ended.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
of Christ.

In the name

Postlude: Mvmt. II from the Haydn Trumpet Concerto
Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Liturgist/Preacher: Rev'd Dr. Geoff / Rev'd Dr. Bruce Stevens

Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul

Organist: Mary Anne Neilsen

Wesley Music Scholars: Jesse Hill (trumpet)

Reader: Christie & Femi Idowu