

# ORDER OF SERVICE - Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – Epiphany 3

And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' Mark 1:17

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Saide

Come people of God here and in your homes  
Let us breathe together, breathe in God's love.  
Jesus calls to us from wherever we are  
Calls us to be in community with him and all creation.  
Come then as a gathered community to worship God.

## SONG: A voice is heard, NCYC 99.10

Saide

*Come let us praise our God,  
Come let us sing for joy,  
With a heart of thanks we give honour  
You are a mighty God,  
You are the source of life  
Creator God we give praise*

1. From the deepest seas (a voice is heard)  
From the highest hills (a voice is heard)  
From the rich dark earth (a voice is heard)  
All creation sings! God is heard!

2. Through the darkest night (a voice is heard)  
Through the breaking dawn (a voice is heard)  
Through the heart of life (a voice is heard)  
All creation sings! God is heard!

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SONG: A voice is heard, by Trisha Watts & Monica O'Brien © Willow Connection 1998,  
from It all depends, NCYC '99 Songbook, Uniting Church in Australia, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

## WELCOME

Saide

*Welcome to worship this morning. I'm Saide and it is a joy to welcome Carlynne Nunn as our preacher while our minister Ian is on leave. Carlynne was a member of our congregation before her ordination in 2019. Responding to Jesus call to the fishermen in Mark's gospel Carlynne will invite us to reflect on love, community and evangelism. As we reflect on community we rejoice in the recent release of refugees from places of detention.*

*Across the Uniting Church, we are asked to observe a Day of Mourning on the Sunday before Australia Day. This observance encourages us to pause to remember the violence and dispossession inflicted on our First Peoples, and to lament that as a Church and as Second Peoples, we were and remain complicit. The Walking Together group are planning worship for next Sunday during which we will mark in lament the truth of our shared history and honour the culture of Australia's First Peoples, their families and the next generations.*

*So welcome, welcome to this space and this time we have set aside to worship God together. I'm Saide and together with Carlynne, Vivienne, Claire, Jim, Natalie and the musicians I'll be shaping and leading the worship that we offer.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*Our Acknowledgement of Country today comes from the UCA Assembly and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Day of Mourning worship resource. This image is the front cover of the resource. Grace Williams, Community and Cultural Resource Officer, Leprena - UAICC Tasmania writes 'The meaning behind this art work is interwoven story-telling. It makes a statement of: "no matter what the history, this will always be aboriginal land, our imprint will never be invisible and we will always survive and thrive. Our stories and family lines entwine across seas, lands and skies, forever a united front."*

Today, as we gather to worship,  
we acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin nation,  
the first inhabitants of this place  
from time beyond remembering.

We acknowledge that through this land,  
God nurtured and sustained  
the First Peoples of this country,  
the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

**We honour them for their custodianship  
of the land on which we gather today.**

We acknowledge that the First Peoples  
had already encountered the Creator God  
before the arrival of the colonisers;

**the Spirit was already in the land,  
revealing God to the people  
through law, custom and ceremony.**

We acknowledge that the same love and grace  
that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ  
sustained the First Peoples  
and gave them particular insights into God's ways;

**and so we rejoice  
in the reconciling purposes of God  
found in the good news about Jesus Christ.**

#### PRAYER OF ADORATION

Saide

*We offer our prayers of adoration & confession.*

God of the prophets, we hear your voice  
calling to us down through the ages - repent.  
You created us in love and constantly remind us  
that your love enfolds all people, that you are our home.  
We turn to you, we love you, we praise you.

Jesus, Son of God, we hear your voice  
revealing to us the glory of God's love.  
You call us to follow you, to fish for people  
lighting within us your holy fire of compassion.  
We turn to you, we love you, we adore you.

Holy Spirit, dove descending, we hear your voice  
proclaiming blessing, celebrating God's great love.  
We know your presence in our lives  
calming us, encouraging us, sending us out.  
We turn to you, we love you, we breathe with you. Amen

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of the prophets forgive us for the times  
when we fail to listen to the prophets of our age.  
Help us to listen with open ears and willing hearts,  
to be agents of change, to live in your future now.

Jesus, Son of God, forgive us for the times  
when we stumble as we seek to follow your call.  
Help us to remember that we are not alone  
that we are a community of love working together.

Holy Spirit, dove descending, forgive us for the times  
when we struggle to believe that we are worthy.  
Help us to claim the hope that we have in you  
as we work for peace and justice for all creation.

#### DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Saide

*Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying,  
'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'*

Hear this good news - in the name of Jesus, Son of God, the one who calls us  
'Our sins are forgiven'. **Thanks be to God. Amen**

#### CHILDREN'S TIME

Saide

*Today we are listening for Jesus call to follow him. I'd like to invite the children to come and listen to Vivienne reading our  
Gospel story this morning.*

#### GOSPEL READING: Mark 1:14-20

Vivienne

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled,  
and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they  
were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their  
nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their  
boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and  
followed him.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

**Thanks be to God**

#### CHILDREN'S TIME continued

Saide

This story reminds me of two things - a book that I used to read to my sons when they were much much younger and this  
net of fish. The book is of course 'The Rainbow fish'. I'm not going to read the story now. I'm wondering though if  
anyone can remember what the story is all about? ...

Well the Rainbow fish has beautiful shimmering scales and the other fish think they are amazing. Unfortunately the  
rainbow fish doesn't want to share and ends up all alone. With the help of a wise octopus the rainbow fish realizes that it  
is far better to share the scales so that everyone has one and they all end up happy together. I think this is similar to  
God's love for us. If we keep God's love to ourselves the love we have inside doesn't grow but if we share God's love  
with other people and by caring for creation then that love grows bigger and bigger and changes our lives and the world  
around us.

Now I'm wondering what you notice about this net of fish? ...

They are bright, colourful and quite simply beautiful. I think we are like these fish. We're all different and yet we all have  
something to share. Do you know what that might be? ...

God loves us. Jesus calls us and wants us to be in community, reaching out to people to share God's love. And the great  
thing about a net is that it's full of holes. A net can gather fish in and let them out and there's always has room for more.  
So let's be like the fish - bright, colourful and quite simply beautiful. Let's listen for Jesus calling to us and go out into the  
world to share God's love.

#### SONG: Keep calling me

Saide

Christ you stand before us all  
Christ you come and Christ you call  
leave it all behind and join my journey  
Come with me and find your life  
Live my love and shine my light  
Leave it all behind you  
Come and follow

*And you keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
Come and follow*

*You keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
and I will follow*

*You beckon us to walk your way  
Your kingdom come on earth this day  
To lose our life yet find it in the rising  
Find it in your love for all  
Find it in compassion's call  
to seek the lost  
to whom your grace is calling*

*And you keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
Come and follow*

*And you keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
You keep calling me  
and I will follow  
You keep calling me  
and I will follow*

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SONG: [Keep calling me](#), David MacGregor, © Willow Publishing, Reproduced with permission ONE LICENCE license # 604502

HEBREW SCRIPTURES: Jonah 3:1-5,10

Kirsty

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

**Thanks be to God**

SERMON

Carlyne

Good morning! I am so glad to be here with you all again, after such a long absence! For those who don't know, this church is very important to me; I worked here a while ago, and my years here were some of the best in my life, and it was here I fell in love with the Uniting Church, and here where I heard the call to ordained ministry, in various ways, over a number of months and years, little by little, chunk by chunk. I could tell you the story but truthfully it's a little meandering, and quite hard to quantify exactly. Because actually the way life works, and the ways God speaks to a person aren't always easy to distil and understand and even perceive sometimes.

We've heard two stories today that are sort of call stories; stories of God's interaction with people, prompting them on to a new path in response to God's leading. One is more the conclusion -sort of- of a call to a dude called Jonah, and one a much more seemingly straightforward story of call.

This story is quite simple, and elegant almost in its telling.

We meet some men in their boats, who are going about their business, entirely in their element, doing their absolute thing. They are approached by Jesus who says that if they leave their boats and follow him, they will fish for more than their usual catch, they will fish for people.

And amazingly, shockingly, courageously- they do it! they follow that call to another thing entirely- what a scene! What inspiration! What pluck! What a response!

I am telling you right now if some rando walked up to me on a beach and said he could help me fish for people I'd say "oh thank you so much but I've got brekky plans, and also there's Tinder for that".

So what do we do with this gorgeous little vignette? It offers us something in the way of questions to ask, but mainly it is in the way of offering us an example to follow, right?

And indeed this is what this story has been so often offered to us as, a lesson in how to follow. And more than this, it's packaged and delivered to us as a naming of who we are supposed to be and how we are supposed to behave going forward. We are to follow, to leave everything behind to go where Jesus bids (easy), and we are to go and catch people with our people catching nets for the lord! No worries! We are fishers of people.

We are to lure folks- the fish, if you will- in with our bait- which might be anything from skating to colourful and judgemental pamphlets- and then skewer them on the piercing hook of Jesus' love, and reel them into the net of eternal salvation.

The disciples' call story is ours too; their new vocation ours as well, we have all the info we need, we will fill our nets with wriggling people, trapped and ready for God.

Isn't this passage at least part of the reason a lot of us have grown uncomfortable to say the least with the very word 'evangelism'? Isn't this sort of one-size-fits-all approach to being a follower of the Lord a bit difficult to live with in practice?

This sort of unhelpful and simplistic exegesis has made this passage, something startling and lovely, into a clunky and awkward, very distanced vision that is quite hard to relate to, and simultaneously quite hard to find movement within. There's really only one option for us in response to this passage, interpreted like that, and that's leave everything you know and get as many fish as you can.

Now despite all this, I love this little story, even though I along with perhaps many of you carry a near phobia of the e-word.

Part of why I love it is how simple it seems and how aspirational, but also I love that we don't just get this little opening scene and that's all.

We of course follow the fishermen for a while after this watching them seamlessly move into their new lives as evangelists and apostles and go out and bring fleets of people into the kingdom of God with no fear or problems or mishaps.

Or, more accurately, we follow them as they follow Jesus around  
and stumble  
and wonder  
and question  
and doubt and make mistake after mistake  
and keep on not getting it  
and eventually abandon Jesus a couple of times during the hardest night of his life.

The thing is, we get to see them called from their boats but not from their selves. They remain who they are, for better and of course for worse. I find this enormously comforting.

Because who here who is of a mind to follow Jesus knows exactly what that means and looks like all the time? To attempt to convince ourselves that being a star disciple really is just a matter of 'leaving our boats' and 'following Jesus' is reductive and well, false.

The two call stories we heard could in fact be described as super aspirational but also complicated and very nearly stuffed up by the people involved being people.

In Jonah's quite hilarious case, he has dodged this mission to the extent that he has gotten himself swallowed by a fish- he has said he'd prefer to die than go on a mission of God's mercy to people he was prejudiced against.

We miss an opportunity when we read stories like these as simply a pattern to adapt to – and perhaps viewing Jonah’s story as a fairly extreme what not to do scenario. But what if what Jesus was saying to the men on the beach was not: become fishers of people, go catch them all

But ‘this thing that you do that is in your blood, that you love and know and are good at- imagine if you could do this and be who you are but even more than you’d ever dreamt...’

What if evangelism is actually something beautiful?

And what if when we make a catch phrase out of Jesus words’ we also miss the good news?

The good news that is what that word we’ve learnt to not like is named for, because what are we called to if not something marvellous and exciting and worth talking about?

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

We can get distracted by wondering how we leave our lives to take up the mission of God, or by the word repent and wondering what we need to repent of, or psyching ourselves up to approach strangers on the street and ask if they know Jesus, and miss the tiny, glowing centre of that little passage;

*the kingdom of God has come near.*

*And this is actual, legitimate good news.*

Part of the problem for me when I heard altar calls and commands to be a certain sort of person who saved the other sorts of people, is that it didn’t feel real to me. Part of it was that it was scary and hard to understand and clunky and awkward in practice- but also it felt like a world I wasn’t a part of.

But the kingdom that Jesus casually announces is here. Jesus is saying it’s not something coming in a far off heaven, or when and if you’re good enough to deserve it. He’s not interested in lifting those men on the beach out of the gritty, sandy reality they are steeped in. This other kingdom, this new way, it is here, amongst the sand, amongst the apartment buildings and tram lines, in our homes and lives.

This *is* good news to the fishermen.

This *is* good news to those whom Jesus met who were sick and separate and poor and small and alone.

The Kingdom of love, of Jesus, the Kingdom we are invited to help create and birth, is good news for those who in the last few weeks saw the powers that rule their country spread division, violence and fear and who now might be feeling the first sparks of optimism they’ve felt in a while.

It is good news for the people Australia keeps forgetting about, who languish and live and try to hope in offshore and onshore detention.

It is good news to our country’s first peoples, to whom those in power in our nation have repeatedly shown indifference, contempt and ignorance.

It’s good news for all who live in fear and who are afraid of being who they feel they were created to be. It’s good news for the folks who have heard Christians tell them they are wrong over and over again.

This is not a concept, this is not a ministry paradigm- this is real hope, real love, real life.

And a part of the shocking, actual good news is that we are called into this new thing and given the chance to live a new way, as if this Kingdom- a way of real love, open borders, grace, joy, arms-open-wide-acceptance - is all around us.

We not called to a joyless, carbon copy evangelism. We are not called to convict people of their sin. We are not called to serve God when we’ve finally got it together -the story of Jonah shows us God’s mercy changing the people of Ninevah literally despite Jonah’s best efforts to not do his job- and we are not called to leave this world and live in one that is black and white and in which we are always the good guys.

However we are invited to hear and believe the good news, a part of which is that the kingdom is here and we all are invited to jump in to it, to take part, to be more of who we were made to be.

And we are invited as who we are- not as who we might be if we did it all exactly right, or if we were the perfect prophet, leader, minister, activist, evangelist.

You are called as who you are now, even with all your baggage, your doubts, and your inevitable stuffing it up. Even then.

And this is indeed good news.

OFFERING with SONG: Hail the fisherfolk, Tune In

Saide

*We offer our gifts to God. Today Claire and Kirsty will stand with the offering bowl in the space in front of the table.*

*Please bring your offerings forward or you may like to place them in the bowl after the service. Let's sing of all the people who have followed Jesus' call*

1. Hail the fishermen long ago  
who took their chances on the road  
Bet their futures not lived yet  
and cast aside their fishing nets  
The fishermen

2. Hail the women of Galilee,  
who stood beside a brooding sea  
Watched it all and cried the end  
and were the first to start again  
Hail the women

3. Hail the slaves and the broken ones  
who turned their hearts to the kingdom come  
Wove their drama into song  
and leapt for joy when he came along.  
The broken ones

4. Hail the ones who left us young,  
when their life had just begun  
Pure as innocence can be  
and we bless their memory  
All hail the young

5. Hail the saints and martyrs here,  
in lands and lifetimes through the years  
Prayer and action, joy and tears  
who left a trail to walk through fear  
The martyrs here

6. Hail the old and hail the wise,  
who know the myst'ry of our lives  
Watch the sunset, touch the rain  
and lose their life to be regained  
All hail the aged

7. Hail the fisherfolk of today,  
who hear the call and live the way  
Beside God to make a stand  
for truth and mercy in this land  
The fisherfolk, the fisherfolk, the fisherfolk

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SONG: Hail the Fisherfolk, by Dave Brown, © 2006, from Tune In, Brunswick Uniting Church Songbook,  
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*... Let us pray*

Loving God we are your people

You call us to follow you with all that we are

And so we offer our gifts to you

Bless all that we offer today and every day

Bless us your fisherfolk that we may be  
your voice of love in the world. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jim

Let us pray

Ruach, desert-summer wind: God

Who meanders, then forces, through desert, bush, lives

We pray for the world: may the summer wind of the new year bring rest, hope, joy.

We pray for healing, new beginnings.

May we all be safe from the virus and may a vaccine come, rebuilding lives, families, workplaces.

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe in summer air, we breathe out

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe in summer air, we breathe out

We pray for the church: buildings sheltering us from baking summer heat.

May exhausted congregations looking for direction, seeking inspiration, find ways to lead and inspire.

May the Church observe a Day of Mourning, with insight, warmth and compassion.

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe in summer air, we breathe out

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe in summer air, we breathe out

We pray for those in need.

May those recovering from last year find hope in summer skies, better employment, friendships.

May those who have felt disconnected start to reconnect to family, work, community, spirit.

May they discern which leader to follow, and change their lives if they feel called.

We keep in our hearts those who have been released from detention this week,  
as they settle into new joys as well as new challenges.

We pray for those who remain locked up and in pain –

may they feel strengthened by your love, and may soon know freedom.

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe in summer air, we breathe out

In your mercy, hear our prayers: we breathe in summer air, we breathe out

In the name of Christ, the wind moving waves, blowing desert sand, lifting birds to the sky.

Praise

Amen

*concluding with* 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 for ever. Amen.**

## NOTICES

Saide

*It's time now for notices. Please line up to my right, say your name and share your notice in a sentence or two.*

## SONG: Lord of the Dance, TiS 242

Saide

*Let's stand and sing of the one who call us ...*

1. I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun;  
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,  
at Bethlehem I had my birth:

Dance then, where ever you may be;  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he;  
and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

2. I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,  
but they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me.  
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John,  
they came with me and the dance went on:

3. I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame:  
the holy people said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,  
and they left me there on a cross to die:

4. I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;  
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back.  
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;  
but I am the dance and I still go on:

5. They cut me down and I leap up high,  
I am the life that'll never, never die;  
I'll live in you as you live in me:  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he:

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## BENEDICTION

Saide

And now let us pause for a brief moment and breathe.  
Jesus, the Lord of dance, calls us into community  
and sends out into community to be the voice of love.  
To work for peace and justice, to listen and pray  
to sing, dance and speak, to live abundantly.

Let's go out into the week as God's people,  
into a world where hope is blossoming gently and beautifully.  
And remember that we are enfolded in God's steadfast love  
made bold by Jesus' call to dance with him, and  
sustained by the life giving breath of the Holy Spirit.

THANK YOU

Liturgist:

Saide Cameron

Bible readings:

Vivienne Webb

Claire Foley

Sermon:

Rev. Carlynne Nunn

Prayers of the People:

Jim Kilpatrick

Musicians:

Natalie Sims (co-ordinator)

Jane Allardice

Michael Cameron

Glenice Cook

Anthony Hinds

Bronte Potter

Welcomers

Kirsty Brown

Claire Foley

Michael Foley

Production:

Jane Allardice

Martin Brown

David Cameron

Ray Cameron

Saide Cameron

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' Mark 1:15