

ORDER OF SERVICE - Sunday 20th August 2021 – Pentecost 4, Refugee Sunday

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." Mark 4:35

GREETING

Good morning please take a seat as we prepare to begin worship.

...

Please stand as we welcome the Word and the Light.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Restless God, we know that you never rest
in your love and concern for all of creation.
We know that you ceaselessly search us out,
calling us to be here together in prayer and song and word.

We are your people, your community, your family.
Today we open ourselves to your restless Spirit,
God of all creation we live in expectation of your work in our lives.

Amen Rev. Paul Turley, Clayton Wesley UC, Synod Refugee Advocacy Group

SONG: Draw the circle wide, MV 145

*Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.*

1. God the still point of the circle,
'round whom all creation turns;
nothing is lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms.

2. Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call.

3. Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.

SONG: Draw the circle wide, by Gordon Light, from More Voices, United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc.
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WELCOME

Saide

Welcome to worship from all the places and in all the different ways you have travelled today and through your lives.
I'm Saide and with Ian, Dave, Matilda, James, Simone and the musicians will be leading the worship that we offer in this space and in our homes online.

This coming week is Refugee Week and so today we pay attention to the theme of Unity, a theme which seeks to promote harmony and togetherness, to unite individuals, communities and organisations from many different backgrounds behind a common cause, to move forward together as a unified cohesive community.

Our call to worship and Prayer of Confession are adapted from a resource prepared for Refugee Week by Rev. Paul Turley from the Synod Refugee Advocacy Group.

In our Bible readings today we encounter Jesus and the disciples in the midst of a storm and the psalmist singing out their praise for God's steadfast love.

So welcome today where ever you are from, we are God's people called into unity to love and be loved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Saide Cameron with Kirsty Brown

We continue to receive recorded acknowledgments of country from all around Australia from places where our members live or travel. As we gather here on Wurundjeri Country and acknowledge the original custodians of this place, let us remember all the peoples of this land now called Australia. Today we hear from Kirsty Brown on Bundjalung Country, Broken Heads.

We acknowledge and respect the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, the traditional custodians of this land since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land is not ours to own, but to look after; and that if we listen, we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

Responding to this call, we commit ourselves to work for justice, reconciliation, and care of the earth.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION

Saide

Let's take a breath now as we settle into our prayers of adoration & confession. Let us pray

Restless God in the beginning you brooded over cosmic chaos
And breathed love and life in wondrous beauty and abundance
A home for all people, all creatures, all living things to abide in unity.
You are our God, breath of life, love and harmony. We adore you.

Wind whisperer, Jesus, son of God, you rebuked the wind
And breathed peace and calm before the storm to come
Gathering your disciples then and us today to follow you.
You are our Teacher, story teller and truth giver. We adore you.

Dream maker, Holy Spirit you inspire us in our living
Singing joy, bringing hope, raging against injustice
Opening our hearts and drawing us out into the world.
You are the fire in our hearts and poetry in our souls. We adore you.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

with **SONG:** Our God who weeps

*See our God with the tear-streaked face
With words that heal
And arms that embrace,
See him now with his nail-scarred hands
Your Kingdom come, Lord, The Promised Land.*

1. When people plead in far-off lands
And no-one heeds their out-stretched hands
Yet in the poor we shall find you,
Help us work in the world for you
Fill us now with your love anew.

2. They lock up the weak behind barbed-wire fence
And too few speak in their defence
Yet in the prisoner we find you,
Help us work in the world with you
Fill us now with your love anew.

3. When death has taken those held dear
When faith is shaken, despair draws near,
May those who mourn find strength in you.
Let us weep for the world with you
Fill us now with your love anew.

SONG: Our God who weeps, by Kate Scull, © 2006, from Tune In, Brunswick UC. Reproduced with permission

Truth telling and truth giving God,
we confess that very often we hide from truth.

You call us to stand straight and tall in the sunlight,
when we would prefer to crouch and stumble in the dark.

You call us to open our eyes wide and to see your world
as it truly is, in all its complexity and confusion,
all its shades of good and bad.

We confess that we often know you are calling us
in the big and small moments of our day
and yet we live as if this were not true,
as if you were not offering us abundant life in every moment.

Forgive us God for preferring a quiet life to a full life,
a half-truth to the full truth of your love for us and all creation.
Amen.

Rev. Paul Turley, Clayton Wesley UC, Synod Refugee Advocacy Group

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Sisters and brother, friends of God.

Do not despair, you are precious to God
and God never tires of calling and inviting you
into the full life God has in store for us all.

Rejoice! You are called! Rejoice! You are loved!
We can be confident then that in Jesus Holy name
Our sins are forgiven

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Rev. Paul Turley, Clayton Wesley UC, Synod Refugee Advocacy Group

CHILDREN'S TIME INTRO

Dave to invite children down to listen to the Bible reading. And we can re-create it a bit as we are listening.
So, let's listen to Matilda reading the story, and we might pause it in one or two spots.

Already set-up the boat with cushions

Props: cushions to create the boat at appropriate time, jacket for Jesus – from pageant box, black cloth for wind, spray bottle for misty water (the sea).

GOSPEL READING: Mark 4:35-41

Matilda

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' *(a child volunteers as Jesus)* And leaving the crowd behind, *(children wave to the congregation)* they took Jesus with them in the boat, just as he was. *(we get in to the boat)*. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, *(Ian and Dave billowing the black sheet)* and the waves beat into the boat, *(rain sticks and whirlies)* so that the boat was already being swamped. But Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; *(kid playing Jesus asleep)* and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, *(kid playing Jesus takes the black cloth)* and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!'. Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. Jesus said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

CHILDREN'S TIME

Dave, Ian

While in the boat, Dave to read Anh Do's *The Little Refugee*.

So, any similarities with the story Matilda just read about Jesus? I wonder where Jesus was in Anh's story (mum, soldier who gave a water bottle). Link back to Jesus in the boat, early church feeling swamped, refugees in the Roman empire.

SONG: Put your hand

Put your hand in the hand of the man
who stilled the water.
Put your hand in the hand of the man
who calmed the sea.
Take a look at yourself
and you can look at others differently,
By puttin' your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee.

SONG: Put your hand, by Gene Maclellan, Published under License from EMI Music Publishing.
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MELANESIAN PRAYER

Offered as the SMP groups prepared to go out for their activities
O Jesus, be the canoe that holds me up in the sea of life.
Be the rudder that keeps me in the straight road.
Be the outrigger that that supports me in times of temptation
Let your Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day.
Keep my body strong so I can paddle steadfastly on in the voyage of life
We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BOOK OF PSALMS: Psalm 107:1-3,23-32

James

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
those he redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south...
Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty waters;
they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.
For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.
They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their calamity;
they reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.
Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress;
he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.
Then they were glad because they had quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.
Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word
Thanks be to God

REFLECTION - "LET US GO ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE."

Ian

(At Bible) On Refugee Sunday Jesus says, "Let us go across to the other side." And they get in a boat.

I wanted to get a refugee perspective on this "apocalyptic boat ride from hell," as theologian David Jacobsen calls it – I wanted to get a refugee perspective on the literal and metaphoric storms of it – so I approached one of our members who came to Australia by boat seeking asylum. He was very happy for his story to be shared today, but he didn't want to speak in front of the church and he preferred to remain anonymous. Instead, he suggested that I write down his words and share them with you. So, with his permission and in his words, I want to tell one man's story of crossing to the other side with Jesus.

I have also been in touch with others among us who came here by boat just in case hearing this story might be retraumatising for them. Because, warning, this is not an easy story to hear. We've heard a version of it already from Anh Do, now here is the experience of one of our members.

Part 1 – getting into the boat.

(At Lectern) Our friend says:

When I arrived in Indonesia I didn't know where to go, didn't know who I should see. I was by myself, I didn't know anyone else there, I couldn't speak any English, nothing. At the airport, when I showed them my passport they took me to a room and said, "Give us money, we'll let you go." They took all my money from my bag, leaving me with maybe \$50 in my pocket. I spent 5 days walking around, scanning everything. And I found a couple of people, Iranians, who were working taking people from Indonesia to Australia. I paid them by contacting with my older brother back home, and he transferred money to their family in Iran. I stayed with them for a month in a room with 40 other people – sometimes food, sometimes no food. I didn't see outside for a month, no sun, nothing. I didn't have a shower for all that time. There was nothing in that room – for sleeping you just had to put something under your head. One night some Indonesians came inside, some of them had big knives, and some of them had a gun. They came inside just pointing the gun at you, talking Indonesian, I couldn't understand. They wanted money, and I didn't have money, but I didn't worry. I only had one passport, one bag, with one pair of jeans inside and one t-shirt, that's all, that's all I had, and that's it.

A couple of days after that gun night, the person taking us to Australia came and said today is the day and we are going to go. I said, alright we go. He took my passport. He said, "We need it, you don't need it anymore." I had only one option to give it or stay. So I gave it away.

It was night.

They took us to the ocean.

(At Bible) On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.

Part 2 – the storms

(At Lectern) They took us to the boat. There was a guy, another refugee, he was really Christian – he'd been in Xnty maybe 15 years or more. We had a conversation about Jesus and things like that. In the first couple of days there was a really bad storm coming. And the guy talked to me, he said, "Come" and we sat there and we started reading the prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 the main one, you know, the main praying, Our Father. And we both slept after that, we put our heads down and we closed our eyes and we woke up early in the morning and we saw, we are still alive. He was a good man, he told me more about Xnty, how to be kind and things like that. We were sitting back next to the captain talking and watching the ocean, watching the dolphins, birds, fish, some of the fish were flying on the water, it was good, you know, it was good. Everyone on that boat vomited up whatever they ate, except me...I had no sickness.

There were two really bad storms, God saved me a couple of times. I think it was like the 5th or 6th day a big storm came from the North, and the boat was going to the side really bad. I was standing next to the Captain, and there was a piece of wood, I don't know what it was for. I just hugged the wood and didn't let it go. The storm got worse and my face was like that far from touching the water [indicates a few centimetres with fingers]. Amazing – the boat is maybe 4 metres high but my face nearly touched the water. The boat was going like that [indicates side to side movement] for maybe a couple of hours, and then we broke down. And we were trying to just take the water out with buckets and plastic bags. And there was a person from the south of Iran – they know how to repair the boats because it is the Persian Gulf you know, many boats. And he did actually fix it and we started going again. We had only one engine left and we were going at 5 kms per hour.

The next day was terrible. You know how the water it just turns and goes in? Yeah, a whirlpool. We went into one and the boat went like one circle then the guy took us out from there. We were really lucky because if he didn't do that there was no way to live, we would die, and it was really big, really scary...that's the last thing you want to see.

After that, food was going low, really low. We asked the Indonesian people to give us fish. They caught fish and gave them to us, but first thing first, we cooked that fish and gave it to the families and kids. There were like 70 or 80 people on the boat with maybe 4 or 5 families with children. We were on the boat for 12 days. The last 5 days no food. We were starving, you know we were like dying. It was really painful, a couple of times people started fighting because everyone was angry. They had no hope – you're dying, you know? We tried to just be positive, but there wasn't food, we had heaps of water, but no food.

I wasn't scared. I said, look, I was going to die there at home, I die here instead, I die by myself here and I don't mind, I try to just be positive, and try to tell people to be positive.

(At Bible) A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

Part 3 – calm in the storm

(At Lectern) When we finally came to Ashmore, they caught us. First thing first, they gave us food [laughs], and then they gave us a number, they called us with a number, they took pictures of everything, then they took us to the navy boat. And I saw our boat from the outside for the first time, I saw it was blue, I didn't know that because it was night when I got on it. Then we sat in the navy boat, and after 10 or 15 minutes no one was in our boat so they exploded it, they blew it up, and everything was gone. Then they took us to Darwin. When I got to Darwin, I had a good bath there...

(At Bible) Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

Part 4 – storms and faith

(At Lectern) You know, Jesus called me to come, God gave me new life and Jesus saved me from any kind of danger. When I sat in the water on the boat, I knew I'm gonna be alright, I knew. He was telling me, you're gonna be alright don't worry, ...and I was, and I was, even after the detention in Darwin when they let us to get to the city, to Brisbane, they forgot me for two months, even in Australia for two months, I was eating someone else's food from the ground, sleeping in the park for two months... two months in Brisbane staying outside on the street. Didn't know where to go honestly. With one bag, one pair of jeans, one t-shirt, sleeping in the park and for food I was going to Maccas seeing people and begging, begging. Most of the time in Brisbane I was just walking around because of no money, you know, just walking around. I walked a lot, my legs were getting sore and sore and sore. Brisbane was really bad actually, first few months, really hard. Sometimes I tell to my God, I think this is enough for me, just change the card, I don't know maybe I'm on a test, I don't know when these things are going to go better.

I came to Melbourne, because of the people who were in detention with me in Darwin. I learnt a lot of things and got more experience. All people have different ways of living, ways of communicating, I learnt that I can communicate with people. I came to this church after being in Melbourne for a couple of months.

I thought about how I got here, I thought about it... Jesus took me here. I didn't know anything about Australia, not any word of English, didn't know about the people living here. Never thought about it, but Jesus took me here, Jesus gave me new life, Jesus gave me everything, you know. To be kind with people that's the main thing, to be respectful, he gave me a lot of things. I'm happy, I'm happy, I never get sick of Jesus.

(At Bible) And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

OFFERING with SONG: O God of mercy, Bob Faser, (Tune TiS 138), *A song for boat people*

Let's stand and sing 'O God of mercy'. This song was written by Bob Faser in 2014 in response to news reports of a boat of asylum seekers being in distress off the coast of Christmas Island and of the inaction of the government in response to this tragedy-in-the-making. In her blog Natalie writes 'these words are still very timely today as our nation's leaders deny access to Australia to those who come by boat'. If you have brought an offering of money please place it in the bowls near the baptismal font in the Gathering Space during this song. The welcomers will bring the bowls forward at the end of the song.

O God of mercy, at whose call
the ocean waters rise and fall,
protect the people on the sea
who from oppression seek to flee.
O hear us as our prayers we speak
for those who safe asylum seek.

They come from lands where tyrants reign
to seek a refuge from their pain.
They look to us to give them scope
to build a life of peace and hope.
O hear us as our prayers we speak
for those who safe asylum seek.

Yet politicians mock their plight
and commentators whip up fright.
Now let their noise and lies depart:
convert each demagogic heart!
O hear us as our prayers we speak
for those who safe asylum seek.

God bless this nation, "girt by sea",
with broader hospitality.
May gen'rous hearts around this land
obey with love your great command.
O hear us as our prayers we speak
for those who safe asylum seek.

SONG: [O God of mercy](#), *A song for boat people*, Robert J. Faser, 29th June 2014,
Tune: Melita, 88.88.88 (TiS 138) Used with permission. PUBLIC DOMAIN

OFFERING PRAYER

Saide

God of mercy accept these gifts we bring today
the gifts we share and offer every day
as we seek always to be people of love and hope
living in unity and harmony with all people from all lands.
Bless all that we offer in Jesus Holy Name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Simone

Mother God

Sit with us, we pray
As our heads whirl with the news of the week
The stories of cases, and lockdowns
Borders and restrictions
Storms and power cuts
Chaos and suffering

The stories that hit close to home
And the stories that make us grieve for elsewhere
Help us to find the calm centre
To steer a clear path
Of hope and kindness

Give us the strength
To reach out to others instead of folding into ourselves
To choose openness, even when our borders are closed

On this refugee Sunday
Let us celebrate the generous gifts and talents
Shared by those who have sought a home with us
Let us remember our own migrant pasts
As we journey towards a new wholeness

As Jesus reached out to the outcast
We pray for those whose refugee journeys are incomplete
For those seeking asylum who have been locked up indefinitely
For those in the Park Prison and in MITA
Help us to support them, and support those who advocate for their freedom
To become part of our community

We pray for leaders to show bravery and kindness
To lead with generous spirits

We pray for strength for our churches
Doing important work of reaching out and building connections

We pray for our community
For all our members
Those who feel happy today
And those who feel despair
We are all part of a great whole

We thank you for the gift of community
Of all our diverse members
And hope that we may continue to grow
And change

Amen

NOTICES

How good it is to be back on site to share the news of our community. If you have a notice or story to share please join me out the front, take off your mask and tell us your name and what we need to know in a sentence or two. =

SONG: Stand by me

When the storms of life are raging,
Lord, stand by me.

When the current pulls me under,
Lord, stand by me.

When the rising waters toss me
like a ship upon the sea,
You who rule the wind and water,
Lord, stand by me.

Stand by me, stand my me.

Lift me up from the restless sea.

*When I am lost, when love can't be found,
when no one cares, Lord, stand by me.*

In the midst of persecution,
Lord, stand by me.

When my enemies surround me,
Lord, stand by me.

When the tyrant wields his terror
and the armies wage their might,

when the darkness overwhelms me,
Lord, stand by me.

Stand by me, stand my me. ...

Inspired by "Stand by Me" by Charles A. Tindley, 1851-1933. Text and music ©2001, Tom Kendzia.
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BENEDICTION

Saide

We have gathered here and online in prayer and song and word
the people of God, a community shaped by love, hope and joy.

As we go out into the week may all your words be words of truth
reminding the world that God is at work creating peace
through love given and received.

May you follow the way of Christ with his nail scarred hands
reminding you that love and compassion is costly
and beautiful and life giving and real.

And may you always feel a certain restlessness in your soul
reminding you that the Holy Spirit is dancing the tune of love
through the soles of your feet. Amen

SONG: We will walk with God

Sizohamba naye, wo wo wo, sizohamba naye. Repeat
Ngomhla wenjabula, (*pn Goom-shla wen-jah-boo-la*) sizohamba naye. Repeat

We will walk with God, wo wo wo, we will walk with God (x2)
We will go rejoicing, 'til the Kingdom has come (x2)

SONG: We will go with God, Swaziland & South Africa traditional song, translation by John L Bell, © 2002 WGRG,
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THANK YOU

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Call to Worship,
Prayer of Confession:
written by Rev. Paul Turley

Acknowledgement of Country:
Kirsty Brown

Bible readers:
Matilda McClintock
James Tapueluelu

Children's time:
Dave Hall (Pastor:
Children, Youth and Young Adults)
Ian Ferguson

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)
Thank you to the anonymous refugee
who gave us the profound gift of his
story.

Prayers of the People:
Simone Alesich

Musicians:
Elaine Potter (Co-ordinator)
Jane Allardice
Michael Cameron
Hannah Denison
Anthony Hinds
Nicole Lowe
Shawn Whelan

Prelude: Gathered here
Saide Cameron, Natalie Sims, Daniel
Whelan, Shawn Whelan
Postlude: Peace, Salaam, Shalom
Shawn Whelan, Natalie Sims,
Steph Gesling & Josh Whitty,
Dave Miller,
Maxine, Clementine & Harriet Loynd,
Jess and Anya Kvensakul,
Kate Scull, Elaine Potter,
Glenice Cook, Ian Ferguson

Images:
Boat photo by Greg Grzegorz
Sobieraj - used with permission
from www.pexels.com
Anh Do's The Little Refugee
Melanesian boat -
[https://www.heritage-
expeditions.com/blog/traditional-
navigators-duff-islands/](https://www.heritage-expeditions.com/blog/traditional-navigators-duff-islands/)

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'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?', Mark 4:41b