

Order of Service 27/06/2021 Pentecost 5

Opening verse

Gather us O God

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Ian + Lucy

Ian: (from candle)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And also with you.

Lucy: (from lectern)

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. ... She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

Ian: Come with this woman today,
reaching out in worship to touch the healer.
Reach out from your own need
for wholeness and healing.
Reach out on behalf of a broken world.
Breathe...

Let us worship God and sing our praise.

Song of Praise (Ross Langmead)

*Creator of this great land, we adore you.
Renewer of your people, hear our praise.
Transformer of all life, you often take us by surprise.
Continue to be present in life-giving ways.*

*Descant: Creator we adore you.
Renewer, hear our praise.
Transformer you surprise us,
Be present in life-giving ways.*

*Creator of this great land, we adore you.
Renewer of your people, hear our praise.
Transformer of all life you often take us by surprise.
Continue to be present in life-giving ways, Great God.*

SONG: [Song of Praise](#), Written for the Commission for Mission by Ross Langmead for Synod worship, September 1996. Used with permission

Acknowledgement of Country

Ian

We continue to receive recorded acknowledgements 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.

Meredith and Tim Budge Newcastle Awabakul

Welcome and Introduction

Ian

Welcome in person and online.

Mark story sandwich. Focus on the sandwich filling, the woman who touches the hem of Jesus' garment – a story of healing and liberation.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Ian

In a moment we will sing together the prayer which Jesus taught his people to say. First, let's breathe into prayer.

Let us pray.

Breathe deep...

Our God, Source of Life, Font of Love, Vision of Peace...

We come to you in this crowded world.

Embrace us with your love.

Christ Jesus, Word of Hope, Spring of Healing, Prince of Peace...

We reach out to you.

Receive the touch of our faith, grant us your liberation.

Holy Spirit, Breath of Communion, Fire of Justice, Fragile Fluttering Wings of Peace...

We open our hearts to you, just as we are, in our strength and in our weakness.

Restore us, renew us, make us whole again.

Amen

SONG: 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, as we forgive
those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory
for ever and ever,
for ever and ever.
Amen. Amen.*

SONG: The Lord's Prayer, musical setting by Dave Brown © 2019 used with permission. Words: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Word of Grace

Ian

...the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Jesus, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you, liberated you; go in peace, and be healed."

Siblings in Christ,
that liberating salvation, that healing peace,
is ours in his gracious word to us all:
Your sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Part 1 – Mark 5:21-24

Lucy

Ian invited the children to come and join him with Julie and to notice who was in the story and a significant number ...

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?' " He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

With the Children

Julie and Ian

Ian and Julie talked with the children about the woman who reached out to touch Jesus and shared stories and photos of famous people to explore what it's like to be in a crowd where we might want to get close to a person who we admire.

Lord Jesus Christ, lover of all TIS737

*Lord Jesus Christ, lover of all,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace.*

SONG: [Lover of all](#), by John L. Bell, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins Religious
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Gospel Part 2 – Mark 5:25-43

Kirsty Brown

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and

mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

Thanks be to God

Reflection - The Man with the Flow of Power

Ian

An exegetical reflection on the sandwich filling – an interpretation of what the text actually says in its time and place. And in this reflection, I’m drawing directly on the influential work of scholar Candida Moss via the podcast New Testament Review. I’ll post a link if you want to follow up her work in more detail.

Let us pray...

Friends, how are you going? Are you well? Keeping healthy in month 20 of this pandemic?

I ask because it’s all about health today. Our gospel reading introduces us to a woman who is far from healthy, but through her disease, she teaches us about physical health and spiritual strength, and also shows us something radical about the nature of God. And to help us get to know her, first I want to tune in to the way we understand health and sickness and bodies, and consider how that might be different to the way the ancient peoples who wrote the bible understood them.

So, how do we get sick, what makes us unhealthy? Obviously, there are lots of different illnesses with many different causes, let me just choose one at random: ah, what about... COVID19.

How does COVID19 make us sick? To a layperson like me, at first it sounds a bit like magical thinking – there are these microscopic creatures called viruses, you can’t see them, you just have to trust the scientists that they exist. These unseeable creatures are spread through the air in invisible floating droplets of moisture which we breathe in and out (if we are not wearing a mask). Once inside us the virus gets into our lung cells, multiplies, and fights with our immune system making us sick to a greater or lesser extent depending on various factors like our age.

We know these facts about Coronavirus Disease, depending on the extent to which we trust our scientists. But as well as facts, we also have metaphors which we use to express the vibe of sickness and health – and some of those metaphors are more helpful than others. So, for example, we talk about invasions and battles. When someone dies, we often say something like, “they succumbed after a long battle with their disease”. Other people talk about “living with” an illness rather than “fighting against” it. A person with the virus might be simply contagious, but we sometimes speak of their condition as contaminated or toxic.

I mention this because the woman with the flow of blood in the gospel, lives under the weight of such metaphors. In her world she is impure, unclean, untouchable. She presumably doesn’t have a viral illness, she has a gynaecologic haemorrhage, and doctors among us might be able to give us possible causes of that, and hopefully some efficacious treatments for it, if she lived in our world. But she doesn’t and from the perspective of her world, the cause of her illness actually has some vague similarities to our understanding of viral infection.

Like us, the ancients understood illness as something that comes in from outside, infiltrating the body, and like our understanding of the aerosol droplets that carry infection, for them illness was to do with the flow of moisture in and out of the body. In the ancient world, your health is therefore dependent on the porousness or permeability of your body, the extent to which things can come in and out. Some bodies are dry, hard, bounded and impervious – they are strong healthy bodies which don’t admit illness. Other bodies are soft, moist, and porous, they are

weak unhealthy bodies, unable to regulate their boundaries, they leak and overflow and admit illness.

Now, are you starting to feel the uncomfortable place this is taking us to? This is a highly gendered understanding of bodies and health. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle was clear that male bodies are healthy complete bodies and female bodies are like undercooked bread, moist and squishy. In fact, says Aristotle (and you're going to love this), women are incomplete men, they are bodies without enough heat or dryness, they are porous wet bodies with unregulated boundaries, with no good border protection (to apply a modern metaphor to an ancient situation).

And it is in the sphere of this ancient sexist worldview that we meet an unnamed woman the boundaries of whose body are completely unregulated causing serious disease rendering her untouchable. Mark introduces her to us in a long long sentence that goes through 4 verses. Our translation breaks it into 3 sentences because such a long string of clauses doesn't make good English, but as a result, the flow of her story is lost in translation – because her affliction is also captured by the rhythm of the language in which it is described.

A quick bit of gospel grammar. Every sentence has a subject and a main verb, right? The subject of this long sentence is right at the start and the main verb is towards the end 3 verses later. In between is a string of what they call past participles marked in English by the word "having". It goes something like this: There was a woman – subject – WHO having a flow of blood for 12 years, having suffered much under many doctors, having spent everything she had, having not got better, but having got worse, having heard about Jesus, and having come up behind him in the crowd – Main Verb Alert – touched his cloak. Her tragic history of illness flows into this positive act as she takes initiative for her own healing, as she takes her porous unregulated body into a crowd where she might leak her impurity onto everyone, and reaches out for healing there.

"Immediately her haemorrhage stopped," says our translation in fairly clinical terms, covering up some ancient metaphors. More literally the verse says "Immediately her πηγή her spring, her fountain, her flow of blood ξηραίνω dried out, hardened up. Her healing is the drying of moisture and the hardening of the boundaries of her body, so she is not leaking, not overflowing anymore.

Yes, it's hard to hear, but the way she is portrayed in this ancient text, her body is the epitome of unhealthy weakness, it is porous and flowing. But, see this, out of that place of culturally defined weakness she demonstrates faith as strong as any character in the gospel and stronger than most – certainly stronger than the 12 disciples. In her "weakness" she is strong – crossing the boundaries of purity and gender, going into the crowd in a way we would be very disapproving of if she had COVID19, going to draw from the divine well of healing embodied by Jesus.

And that brings us to the twist. Yes, there's a twist – you didn't see that coming did you? Because normally this little story, this sandwich filling, would be titled, "The Woman with the Flow of Blood", but Candida Moss, the feminist scholar who opened all this up for us, titles her work on it, "The Man with the Flow of Power". And that's because in this story Mark creates a clear and highly embarrassing parallel between the woman and Jesus.

Here is Jesus walking his male body up the street with a crowd pressing in all around him. And there in the crowd the flowing woman touches and draws healing power from him through his skin via his clothes, without his awareness or permission. You see, Jesus has unprotected borders too. His body is porous, permeable, leaking an unregulated flow of power. Like a woman.

And I'm not embarrassed by that – healing like a woman, no shame there as far as I am concerned. But see it in context. In this ancient worldview this is a sign of weakness. Matthew the gospel writer is so embarrassed by it that in his gospel he edits out the part of the story

where Jesus says, “Oh someone touched me. I just feel like power flowed out from me and I have no idea where it went. You know, I’m just a gushing fountain of healing love with no boundaries and I can’t control where it goes. Who touched me?” And his disciples are like, “Come on Jesus, look at the crowd, everybody is touching you. What are you, a girl with open borders? Harden up man.” In Matthew when the woman touches him Jesus immediately turns around and says “Ah ha! You’re healed!” He is in control like a man. But not here in Mark’s original version of the story.

Here he stands in stark contrast to those male doctors, remember them? The woman gave them all her money and her flow only got worse. But here is Jesus like a living spring of abundant healing power gushing up and freely flowing to any and all with no expectation of payment. Flowing for the world, for the needy, for each of us, flowing from the place of perceived weakness.

Now we are going to keep following Jesus through this gospel story until eventually he gets to the cross and we will see lifted up before us there the full implications of this subversive power in weakness. But for now, let’s stay with the healed woman, her body now contained in wholeness, but still flowing with the strength of faith. “Daughter,” says Jesus to her, “Your faith has saved you, has made you well, healthy, whole, it has liberated you, because your faith has brought you to the overflowing well of love. Go in peace.”

And as we flow with her into that peace today, traveling our road through this time and place, with our incomplete and still evolving understandings of health and wellness, of bodies and gender – as we flow with her, how might we be channels of that “healing way of being”, Christ’s way, a way that is weakness in the world’s eyes, but strength in the eyes of God?

NT Review Podcast:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-829560134/36-candida-moss-the-man-with-the-flow-of-power>

Offering

Ian

Touch is a fraught thing in our age, and especially in the church where it has been so badly abused. How do we, the church, make a touching place that is safe for all, that honours the victim-survivors of abuse, that undoes the injustices of sexism and racism? What might Christ’s touching place, that spring of healing love, look like for us?

A Touching Place TIS677

- 1. Christ’s is the world in which we move;
Christ’s are the folk we’re summoned to love;
Christ’s is the voice which calls us to care,
and Christ is the one who meets us here.

To the lost Christ shows his face,
to the unloved he gives his embrace,
to those who cry in pain or disgrace,
Christ makes, with his friends, a touching place.*
- 2. Feel for the people we most avoid
strange or bereaved or never employed.
Feel for the women and feel for the men
who fear that their living is all in vain.*
- 3. Feel for the parents who’ve lost their child,
feel for the women whom men have defiled,
feel for the baby for whom there’s no breast,
and feel for the weary who find no rest.*

4. *Feel for the lives by life confused,
riddled with doubt, in loving abused;
feel for the lonely heart, conscious of sin,
which longs to be pure but fears to begin.*

SONG: [Christ's is the world](#), by John L. Bell & Graham Maule, Wildgoose Publications, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*, Reproduced with permission under One License # 604502

Offering Dedication

We long for the time
when the meek shall inherit the earth
and all who hunger and thirst after justice
shall be satisfied,
and we believe that, despite the persistence of evil,
now is always the time
when more good can be done
and we can make a difference.

***May it be so, through the offering of our gifts
and the offering of our lives. Amen.***

[Source: Prayer for Justice and Peace, Iona]

Prayers of the People

Ray Cameron

with *Lord Jesus Christ, lover of all* TIS737

We offer our prayers for the world, the church and our community. After the prayers I will take the Christ Candle to the chapel space where you are welcome to light a taper for your personal prayers during the final song or after the service. Today as we remember the woman who reached out to touch the hem of Jesus' garment let's sing again 'Lord Jesus Christ'.

*Lord Jesus Christ, lover of all,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace.*

SONG: [Lover of all](#), by John L. Bell, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious* Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Let us pray

Lord Jesus Christ it is your world in which we move.
And so we pray for healing for all the nations
for all people, all creatures, all living things,
all lands, all oceans, seas and waterways.
We give thanks for the many hands reaching out
to offer love, to work for peace, to seek justice.

We pray for world leaders, holders of so much power
Spread your garment of peace over them
that they may offer healing instead of harm,
hope instead of despair, liberty instead of bondage.
We give thanks for the many voices reaching out
to call our leaders to account, saying enough, no more.

Lord Jesus Christ it is your church through which we serve.
And so we pray for your voice of love and longing
to ring loudly through all our actions, all our words,
all our worship, all our caring, meetings and gatherings.
We give thanks for safe spaces offered for people in need
for those who have been harmed, neglected, unheard.

We pray for our church leaders President Deidre
Moderator Denise, ministry team Ian, Peter and Dave,
our church council and all committees.
Spread your garment of peace over them
that they may know your presence moving in them
as they give voice to your love, inspiring and leading us as your body.

Lord Jesus Christ it is your community in which we live.
And so we pray for the people we know and love
for people we don't know yet, for people who are sick or grieving
for people who are weary, lonely, disconnected or afraid.
We give thanks for the many opportunities we have
to be your voice and your hands at work in this space.

We pray for your mercy to flow like liquid sun in our community.
Spread your garment of peace over us all
help us to set aside anger, despair and hopelessness
and inspire us instead to be open to your healing vision.
We give thanks for blessings big and small, love shared
care offered, joys celebrated and griefs held gently. Amen

Let's sing ...

*Lord Jesus Christ, lover of all,
trail wide the hem of your garment.
Bring healing, bring peace.*

SONG: [Lover of all](#), by John L. Bell, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*
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Notices

Ian

Sending Song

God's mercy (Tune In 26)

*Vs 1 Like the sun upon my skin
I can smile and soak it in
and my wounds begin to heal
That's God's mercy*

*Vs 2 Like a fragrance in the air
Scent that lightens my despair
Loving kindness always there
That's God's mercy*

*Ch When I'm feeling lost from all that's good
When I'm failing all the good I would
When I fear that all I ever could become lies wasted
When I can't reach out, accept, forgive
When it's hard to change the way I live
When my need for care, for love, to give, are all frustrated*

*Vs 3 Like a flower opening wide
Glow of love that spreads inside
Humble gift to breach my pride
That's God's mercy*

*Vs 4 Loving gaze upon my soul
Seeing all complete and whole
Healing vision to console
That's God's mercy*

*Vs 5 Gentle breath upon my heart
Warm embrace that takes my part
Place of strength from where I start
That's God's mercy
For me*

SONG: God's mercy, by Sheree Anderson, from Tune In, Brunswick UC, Reproduced with permission

Blessing and Sending

Ian + Kirsty Brown

Kirsty stands at Lectern, Ian in front of table

Kirsty: Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healed..."

Ian: Brothers and Sisters, go in peace

All: **Christ is our peace!**

Ian: Go with hope

All: **Christ is our hope!**

Ian: Go to love

All: **God is love!**

Ian: Go with the blessing of God
the Source of Life,
the Touch of Salvation,
the Spirit of Peace.

All: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Masithi Amen (Tune TIS704)

*(Masithi) Amen, siyakudumisa.
(Masithi) Amen, siyakudumisa.
(Masithi): Amen, Baba, Amen, Mama,
Amen, siyakudumisa.*

(Sing Amen): amen, we praise your name, O God.

(Sing Amen): amen, we praise your name, O God.

*(Sing Amen) amen, amen, amen, amen,
amen, we praise your name, O God*

SONG: Masithi Amen, by S. C. Molefe (Africa), copyright uncertain

Thank You

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Ian Ferguson

Acknowledgement of
Country:
Meredith and Tim Budge

Bible readers:
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Kirsty Brown

Children's time:
Ian Ferguson
Julie McKinnon

Reflection:
Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Ray Cameron

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Glenice Cook
Joel Hallinan
Clare Keogh
Maggie Somerville
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Gather us O God &
Send us out O God:
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Go in peace, and be healed