

Opening verse on screen:

Isaiah 62:5 '...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall God rejoice over you.'

Good morning!

Please find a place as we prepare to worship.

Pause

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Kirsty

Come to worship God:

Love incarnate

Word made flesh,

living among us

full of grace and truth.

Please stand as we sing and welcome the Word and the light.

Song of praise - TiS 181, Come O God of all the earth

1. *Come, O God of all the earth: **come to us, O righteous One;**
come, and bring our love to birth: **in the glory of your Son.***

*Sing out earth and skies! sing of the God who loves you;
raise your joyful cries; dance to the life around you.*

2. *Come, O God of wind and flame: **fill the earth with righteousness;**
teach us all to sing your name: **may our lives your love confess.***

3. *Come, O God of flashing light: **twinkling star and burning sun;**
God of day and God of night: **in your light we all are one.***

4. *Come, O God of snow and rain: **shower down upon the earth;**
come, O God of joy and pain: **God of sorrow, God of mirth.***

5. *Come, O Justice, come, O Peace: **come and shape our hearts anew;**
come and make oppression cease: **bring us all to life in you.***

SONG: [Come, O God](#), by Marty Haugen, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious WORD OF LIFE*

Acknowledgement of Country

Kirsty

According to the seasons of the Kulin calendar, January and February are Biderap, the Dry Season.

It is a time of hot and dry weather, and low rainfall.

The tussock grass is long and dry,

the female common brown butterflies are flying,

and the southern Cross is high in the south at sunrise.

As we keep our eyes and ears peeled for these seasonal markers ...

Let us 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.***

Welcome and Introduction

Kirsty

Welcome to worship this morning. I am Kirsty and will be leading worship this morning with a large team of people who do a heap of different things to make worship happen. Our minister Ian is on leave and it's terrific that one of our congregation Rev Dr Graeme Garret will be preaching.

Today we are going to a wedding and we will reflect on the love of God: in creation, in our world, in our lives, in the extraordinary and the ordinary.

Now, let us take a moment and pause, breathe, listen. Let us pray:

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God of the wedding feast,
You rejoice in human relationships
You celebrate with us
In the sharing of hospitality and friendship.

Jesus, guest and host,
You are love incarnate
God's love come into this world
And you reveal your glory among us.

Spirit of transformation,
You move among us with water and wine,
Present and welcoming,
Making all things possible.

We adore you.

Forgive us when we do not celebrate the life we have, when we do not offer hospitality and friendship.

Forgive us when we do not act with love, when we do not live out your love.

Forgive us when we are bound by the possible, burdened by what is before us, and do not look to you.

Amen.

Word of Grace

Siblings in Christ,
The Word became flesh and lived among us,
Full of truth and grace.

And so we can say with confidence:

Our sin is forgiven:

Thanks be to God.

Song - The God that I know, Tune In

- 1. He comes with his arms open wide,
a sheltering place I can hide
and my deepest fears, questions and tears
I can face with his strength as my guide.*
 - 2. She comes with a smile on her face,
loving kindness my wrongs to erase
and my company she keeps, for the pleasure it reaps
my life she will renew with her grace.*
 - 3. Both father and mother to me,
more loving than parents can be
the God that I know, is a stranger no more,
but the place where I find myself free.*
 - 4. As I walk this earth on my own,
I carry a promise that I'm not alone
a gift that is mine, for all of my time,
love that lets me know that I am home
love that lets me know that I am home
love that lets me know that I am home*
-

SONG: [The God that I know](#), by Sheree Anderson, © 2004,
from [Tune In](#), Brunswick Uniting Church Songbook. Used with permission

Bible Reading John 2:1-11

Mal

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

With the Children

Joel H

Joel shared a conversation he'd had with Rafa (his son) about the importance of morning tea and the current 'disaster' of not being able to have morning tea. Joel noted that this was similar to the disaster of no wine at the wedding. He explained that offering morning tea after church is like offering wine at the wedding, a way of being hospitable, of expressing love and that in our current times not offering morning tea is also a way of expressing love and care for our community.

Song - Can you see God (Tune In)

Kirsty

We have been hearing about the wedding at Cana. At the wedding we see God at beginning of Jesus' ministry. God is in the ordinary and the extraordinary. Let's sing of some of the places where we see God.

- 1. Can you see God on a clear, starry night sitting down under a tree?
Can you see God on a high mountain top looking out across the sea?
God's been in creation since very long ago.
As seasons pass, to all creatures and plants,
God brings life and makes them grow.*
 - 2. Can you see God in the heat and the noise of a bustling large city?
Can you see God in the faces you pass as you walk down a main street?
God is with the people throughout their busy days.
In ev'ry act showing kindness and love you can see God there always.*
 - 3. Can you see God in a man long ago from a place you've never been?
Can you see God when he teaches and heals and shares meals with the
unclean?
He scared those in power; they nailed him to a tree.
But he lives on, and his message of love has rung out through history.*
 - 4. Can you see God when you get out of bed, go to church on each Sunday?
Can you see God when you're welcomed inside and the people start to pray?
Making some time sacred is just the very start.
Learn to be one with God all through the day 'til you find God in your heart.*
 - 5. Can you see God in a world that's unfair, full of people cold and poor?
Can you see God in a world where the rich are the ones the best at war?
God calls us to change it, to set God's people free.
May kingdom come and may Gods will be done so the world's how it should be.*
-

SONG: [Can you see God?](#), © Matthew Lees, April 2006,
from [Tune In](#), Brunswick UC, Reproduced with permission

Bible Reading Isaiah 62:1-5

Meredith (recorded)

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate;
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.
For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your builder marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

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

Reflection - 'they have no wine'

Graeme

The Gospel of John is easy to read. But its simplicity veils an underlying complexity. The wedding at Cana is a classic case. Admittedly, turning water into wine is startling. But with a bit of imagination, it fits easily enough into the flow of what seems a simple story. Here's a wedding. Family and friends gather. The party's in full swing. Then ... oops! ... the wine runs out. Consternation in the kitchen. Jesus is asked to do something. The wine supply is restored. Everyone is relieved, indeed quite thrilled.

Apart from wondering how he did it, this is familiar stuff. Weddings happen every day, and now and then there's a hiccup in proceedings. What's not to understand here?

John throws us a clue. 'Jesus did this, the first of his *signs*, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory.' A sign is something that points beyond itself to another reality. A red light at a busy intersection isn't just colourful decoration. It signals something: stop! Miss that, and there's trouble.

The wedding at Cana is, yes, a wedding. *But* it points beyond itself to what John calls 'the glory of Jesus'. In his opening chapter, John sets down the most famous words ever written about the meaning of Christmas. 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory ...' (1.14). But what is this glory? And how might *we* see it? John starts his answer to such questions with this wedding. Hidden in this everyday event, he says, is the glory, or part of the glory, of God; God the creator of the universe. *If* we have eyes to see it.

'On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.' (2.1).

The third day after what? After the last thing mentioned in the story so far, which was the calling of Phillip, Peter, Andrew and Nathanael? Yes, perhaps. But anyone with the faintest glimmer of the Jesus' story knows that the phrase 'the third day' is loaded. The climax of Jesus' life is that on the *third day* after his crucifixion and burial, *God* raised him from the dead. This wedding *points* to the cross and the resurrection. Miss that, John whispers to us, and you miss just about everything.

'On the third day there was a wedding in Cana ... *and the mother of Jesus was there.*' Now that's odd, too. This is a report of a wedding. But there is absolutely no mention of the guests of honour. No name for the bride, or the groom. No description of the ceremony. Nothing. Instead, 'the mother of Jesus was there'.

This is the first time in John's Gospel that Mary gets a mention. In John's telling of the life of Jesus, there is nothing about the circumstance of his birth that so preoccupy Matthew and Luke. Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth – they're completely absent. No angels, no birth, no manger, no animals, no shepherds, no wise ones. Nothing. No earthly participants anywhere.

John wants to make a particular point about Christmas. For him everything depends *utterly* on the actions and intentions of *God*. He doesn't start with the birth of a baby. He starts with the birth of the universe. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.' (Jn 1:1-2) It's a deliberate echoing of the opening chapter of Genesis. The only thing that remotely compares to the coming of Jesus into this world, says John, is the coming into being of the universe itself. Christmas is a cosmic event. It is God's new word of creation, spoken in Jesus for the re-creation of all things. If we don't realize *that*, we haven't begun to grasp what is at stake in the Gospel.

But how do we grasp that? It's too big. It's too abstract. It's too other-worldly. So having given us the big picture, John now starts to bring it down to earth. And as in the other Gospels, the mother of Jesus is central to the incarnational process. But now Mary's not in a stable, she's at a wedding. Now Jesus is not a baby, he's a grown man, trembling on the brink of his public ministry.

‘When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “*They have no wine.*” At one level she is stating a simple fact. The party is consuming the available wine at an unsustainable rate. Something must be done. But Mary is *not* asking Jesus to whip down to the local BWS and buy a dozen nice reds. And he *knows* she’s not suggesting that.

Mary is saying to Jesus: ‘here’s your chance! This is the moment to go public with the mission to which – as I know and you know – you were born. *They have no wine.* Now is the time to pour out the new wine of the kingdom of God.’

But Jesus is hesitant. More than hesitant. He’s blunt. ‘Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.’

But Mary is calmly confident. She has pondered this moment prayerfully for three decades. She can read the signs even if, for the moment, Jesus can’t. She says to the servants, ‘just do what he says.’ And we know what happens. New wine *is* poured out. And Jesus’ public ministry *is* under way. Irrevocably.

Can you see what John is saying? He is saying *Mary* is the one who actually births Jesus’ ministry. It is *Mary* who pushes Jesus over the brink of his hesitancy. As thirty years earlier she pushed him out into the world.

What had Mary seen that convinced her, *this* was the moment? It wasn’t that there just happened to be no wine at a party, and she thought Jesus might do some fancy trick to make things better. It was that this was a *wedding* party. ‘On the third day there was a *wedding* in Cana of Galilee ...’ A wedding is a moment in human affairs where the centrality of love; love for the joy and meaning of human life; indeed love for the continuation of human life itself; is manifest, focussed and celebrated. The whole society has a stake in that. It’s our future.

And *that’s* what makes it the ideal launching place for Jesus’ ministry; because Jesus’ ministry is precisely the living out, in the flesh, of the passionate love of God for the whole of God’s creation.

In scripture, one of the most powerful images by which divine love is portrayed is marriage. So our reading from Isaiah. ‘For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder [i.e., Creator] marry you, and as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.’ (Is 62:5). It’s there in the other Gospels. Mark, for example. When Jesus’ disciples were challenged for being too raucous, not fasting enough, Jesus replied, ‘The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they?’ (Mk2:19). Do you think he might have had Mary in mind when he said that?

Mary’s genius was that she saw there were in fact *two* weddings taking place in Cana that day. First, the coming together in love of that unnamed couple. But at another level altogether, the coming together in love of the Word that was in the beginning, with the world which is God’s creation.

And what of Jesus’ response? It’s not that he doesn’t see what Mary is driving at. He does; but balks at the implications. Why? One reason is obvious. The guests at the wedding feast just won’t get it. If he turns water into wine, it’s London to a brick they are *not* going to say, ‘Hey look, it’s the Word that was in the beginning with God, right here, in the flesh!’ No. No. They’re going to say, ‘Hey, that’s good. Give me another glass!’ Which is what happened. When the servant took the cup of new wine to the MC, he was astonished. Not that the Word had become flesh. But that the bridegroom had held back the good wine after serving inferior stuff *first*.

That’s always a danger in religious life. We look only for what has some immediate benefit to us, what fixes some pressing problem for us. We judge the grace of God or the value of prayer by whether the wine turns up when we need it. And in doing so, we fail to see the deep – the *creation-deep* – intention of God’s love to redeem the *whole cosmos*.

But there is another reason. Jesus intuits that once he goes public; once he really starts to enact the love of God in the world – the world of weddings, funerals, synagogues, and court

houses – once he does that, this world-changing, world-challenging love will draw deadly opposition. Once that first cup is on its way to the MC in the wedding hall, it will lead – inevitably – to his anguished prayer in the garden of Gethsemane on the night before his execution. ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me;’ (Mt 26:39). The weight of that troubles him.

Faith lives in the dynamic tension between Mary’s: ‘They have no wine’, and Jesus’: ‘my hour has not yet come.’

Unless we can see what *Mary* saw; that is, see the reality of the love and grace of God incarnate in down to earth situations – weddings, schools, work places, hospitals – the gospel is bound to seem abstract and distant. What does it mean to talk of the Word that was in the beginning with God?

On the other hand, unless we can see what *Jesus* saw, that is, see that God’s love is way bigger than us, indeed as large as all creation; and unless we can see that God’s love is deeply challenging to us, as challenging as the garden of Gethsemane, the hill of Calvary, and the empty tomb, we haven’t even *begun* to know what the love of God is about.

Wedding feasts and new wine without a vision of the truly cosmic intentions of Christmas Day are blind and self-absorbed. But talk about ‘the Word that is with God and the Word that was God’ is empty without the recognition of its real presence in the depths of an ordinary village wedding.

Word without wine is empty. Wine without Word is blind.

True faith always lives between, ‘They have no wine’, and ‘My hour has not yet come.’

Offering with Song: Born in the Night TIS 323

Kirsty

- 1 *Born in the night, Mary's child,
a long way from your home:
coming in need, Mary's child,
born in a borrowed room.*
- 2 *Clear shining light, Mary's child,
your face lights up our way:
light of the world, Mary's child,
dawn on our darkened day.*
- 3 *Truth of our life, Mary's child,
you tell us God is good:
prove it is true, Mary's child.
Go to your cross of wood.*
- 4 *Hope of the world, Mary's child,
you're coming soon to reign:
king of the earth, Mary's child,
walk in our streets again.*

SONG: [Born in the night](#), by Geoffrey Ainger, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502; ALSO Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

Prayers of the People

Tim B (recorded)

Good morning, my name is Tim and I will be leading Prayers of the People this morning. To start, I would encourage you to take a moment to breathe intentionally and to be open to the presence of God, within and around you. So let us just PAUSE.

Loving God, we stand at the beginning of a New Year, a year full of uncertainty but we know that you are here with us. You invite us into your presence and into this year and you remind us

that you are Emmanuel, God with us, God with us, God with us; you hold us in your love. We need your presence to help us face this year ahead, to move past our anxiety and our concerns about current and future events, including the virus, climate change, politics, world affairs and also personal concerns that are on our hearts.

In the spirit of the Lord's Prayer we pray for glimpses of your kingdom in this year, in this world and in our lives. Remind us that yours is a kingdom of love, of renewal, of forgiveness and reconciliation. Help us to notice the unexpected and new ways in which your love continues to break into this world: in new life, in the beauty of creation, in friendships, in creativity, in healing and hope.

Help us to be courageous, to look for signs of your kingdom, and also to work towards it. Help us to use our sense of your presence to be renewed, reinvigorated and open to how you might be leading us in these times. Despite uncertainties and anxieties, may we continue to be unsettled by your holy presence, your love which nurtures both strength and change. May we taste the rich joy of your love and life within and around us. May we draw courage and hope and may we share these qualities with those around us. May we be citizens and heralds of your dawning reign of peace.

For those countries, communities and situations around the world that are on our mind, we pause and pray. PAUSE. May your kingdom come dear Lord.

For friends who are struggling, for neighbours facing ill health, for those affected by Covid and its many disruptions, we pray. PAUSE. May they be aware of your presence, may they know we stand with them and may we find ways to reach out in love.

For ourselves, help us to draw on your presence within and around us. Help us to notice you and to hear you when you speak into our lives. We bring to you our personal heart-felt concerns, that they might be held in your love. PAUSE

The Lord's Prayer

So we bring these prayers, remembering how your son and our brother Jesus taught us to pray:

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.

Notices

Kirsty

Sending Song - Jesus come for we invite you

*1. Jesus, come! for we invite you,
guest and master, friend and Lord;
now, as once at Cana's wedding,
speak and let us hear your word:
lead us through our need or doubting,
hope be born and joy restored.*

*2. Jesus, come! transform our pleasures,
guide us into paths unknown;
bring your gifts, command your servants,
let us trust in you alone:
though your hand may work in secret,
all shall see what you have done.*

3. *Jesus, come! in new creation,
heav'n brought near by pow'r divine;
give your unexpected glory,
changing water into wine:
rouse the faith of your disciples –
come, our first and greatest Sign!*

4. *Jesus come! surprise our dullness;
make us willing to receive
more than we can yet imagine,
all the best you have to give:
let us find your hidden riches,
taste your love, believe, and live!*

SONG: [Jesus, come for we invite you](#), by Christopher M. Idle,
this media is licensed under the terms of *Hope Publishing: one copy*
Sung to WESTMINSTER ABBEY (TiS 432)

Blessing and Sending

Kirsty

We have been to a celebration where God's love for the world is shown in the changing of water into wine, a celebration where God's enduring love is revealed to us all.

Let us go into this week with joy and hope, knowing that this love will be with us.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

Thank you's

Liturgist:

Kirsty Bennett

Bible readers:

Meredith Budge

Mal Rowe

Children's time:

Joel Hallinan

Reflection:

Graeme Garrett

(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:

Tim Budge

Musicians:

Matthew Lees

(co-ordinator)

Mikul Denison

Joel Hallinan

Bronte Potter

Melvin Tan

Shawn Whelan

Postlude Song:

Love divine by Charles
Wesley, from Together in
Song, Harper Collins;
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Musicians: Shawn
Whelan, Natalie Sims,
Daniel Whelan

Editing / Production:

Martin Brown
Michael Cameron
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron

Images:

Ray Cameron

Artwork: Soo Lai Yin
(Ann), photographed
by Ian Ferguson

JESUS MAFA. The

Wedding at Cana, from **Art in
the Christian Tradition**, a project
of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library,
Nashville,

TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48305> [retrieved

January 11, 2022]. Original

source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page:

<https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

Conrad Schmitt Studios.

Wedding at Cana, from **Art in
the Christian Tradition**, a project
of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library,
Nashville,

TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56770> [retrieved

January 11, 2022]. Original

source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_John_Neumann_Church_\(Sunbury,_Ohio\)_-_stained_glass,_the_Wedding_at_Cana.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_John_Neumann_Church_(Sunbury,_Ohio)_-_stained_glass,_the_Wedding_at_Cana.jpg).

Closing verse on screen:

John 2:3 '...the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."