Order of Service 12/7/26, Pentecost 7

GATHERING

Here, we cross a threshold – we move into a sacred space, and a sacred time, a space and time 'set apart' for the purpose of communal prayer.
During the service the congregation is invited to stand and sit for different parts of the service, however you are welcome to stay seated if you wish.
A sensory friendly space is available for those who need it.
The worship area is wheelchair accessible.
There is a children's corner with books and activities.

Opening Verse – Matthew 13:23a

But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it ...

Greeting — Saide

The leader greets the people in God's name and calls us into a worshipful space and state. The bible is carried in and Christ Candle lit – we usually stand (if we are able and comfortable to do so) while this happens.

Good morning and welcome We stand to welcome the Word and the Light, however if you prefer to stay seated please do so.

Song – The Lord is my light, Iona

We usually stand during the songs.

Let's welcome the Word and the Light singing 'The Lord is my light', a Taize chant. When we have sung it through once try and sing without looking at the screen and instead focus on the Bible being placed and the Christ Candle being lit.

The Lord is my light,
my light and salvation:
in God I trust, in God I trust.

SONG: The Lord is my light, from the Taize Community, from Together in Song, Harper Collins *Religious*, Reproduced with permission: Word of Life

Call to worship — Saide

Come all you people let's worship God together
With our bodies and voices, hearts and souls.
Come let's bring our hopes and dreams,
our sorrows and joys.

Song of Praise – Come all you people, TiS 179

We worship singing 'Come all you people', a song which acknowledges and celebrates the Trinity – Maker, Saviour, Spirit. This joyful song was written for the World Council of Churches in 1986 and concludes with a verse in the Shona language.

Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker,
Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker,
Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker,
Come now and worship the Lord.

Come all you people, come and praise your Saviour…

Come all you people, come and praise the Spirit…

Uya-i mose, tina-ma-te Mwari
Uya-i mose, tina-ma-te Mwari
Uya-i mose, tina-ma-te Mwari
Uya-i mose zvino

SONG: Come all you people, Words: Alexander Gondo (based on Psalm 100), English paraphrase by I-to Loh Words © 1986 World Council of Churches and Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music. Arrangement © 2001 Seasons of the Spirit. Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623.

Acknowledgement of Country — Saide

We acknowledge the people of the land on which we worship

Today concludes NAIDOC Week – 50 Years of Deadly, a milestone and a tribute to the people who built this movement. NAIDOC originally referred to the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee and has now become the name for the entire week-long annual festival. On the NAIDOC Week website, we are reminded that '*NAIDOC has always been more than a week — it's a platform, a protest, a celebration, and a statement of survival'*. Each Sunday our acknowledgement of country is just one way we can we add our voices to this story.

We acknowledge and respect
the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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,

Welcome and Introduction — Saide

People are welcomed, those present and those online. Those contributing are acknowledged and / or introduced and an invitation is issued to morning tea after the service.
The themes of the service are laid out.

Good morning and welcome to worship. It's good to be here and wonderful to know that others are joining us online now or later. Welcome everyone. I'm Saide and am glad to be the liturgist today. We welcome Ruthann Richardson from Act for Peace to share a little of the important work being done with partners overseas and Peter Blair, our Olive Way Pastor as our preacher. Peter will explore what it means to be God's people as we listen to the story of Jacob and Esau and the parable of the sower and the seed told by Jesus.

Our worship is shaped, supported and offered by many people on the roster. There are spaces to move around in, fidget toys in a basket, activities for children and a retreat space over by the chapel space. The images on the title slides this morning were taken for communion services during the lockdown years.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession — Saide

We pray in adoration, praising and adoring God for being God; and in confession, bringing before God the incompleteness and brokenness of the world and our lives. In response we hear God's word of healing grace.

Let's pause for a moment as we prepare to offer Prayers of Adoration and Confession. Breathe, be still, relax your feet and brow and shoulders. Let's pray

God of stillness and waiting
You watch and wait as our stories unfold.
You create and nurture,
providing space for the earth to flourish.
You are the source of all
that lives and breathes and moves.
We lift our hearts to you.

Jesus, sower of seeds,
You speak and your words transform.
You wake us from
our troubled aching slumber.
You call us to follow
and we walk again in hope.
We pledge our lives to you.

Spirit of grace and mercy,
You whisper of joy and peace.
You breathe new life
where dullness lingers.
You inspire us
to work for justice and peace.
We move in rhythm with your breath.
Amen

Into the stillness and waiting
we confess the brokenness of the world
the destruction and our despair.

Into the promise of transformation
we confess our own brokenness
our complicity and lack of hope.

Into the whisper of joy and peace
we confess our heavy heartedness
and our longing to be free.
Amen

Word of Grace — Saide

The psalmist sings: *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* Psalm 119:105
Let's walk together in this light
rejoicing that grace and mercy are gifts given freely to all.
We can be confident then in Jesus' name
that our sin is forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

Passing the Peace — Saide

Passing the peace is a tradition rooted in Scripture that embodies our identity as peacemakers (Matt. 5:9; 2 Cor. 5:20) and trains ours hearts, hands, and tongues in the ways of peace. Passing the Peace is part of the Communion liturgy (first Sunday of the month). On other Sundays we may choose to share the peace in response to the Word of Grace or Prayers of the People

In our rejoicing let's also share the gift of peace with each other now
here in this space and online and with all we encounter in our living.

May the peace of Christ be always with you
And also with you

HEARING AND RESPONDING

We hear the story of Jesus, Wisdom Incarnate (in the gospels); the story of God's dealings with Israel (in the Old/First Testament); and the story of God's people through history (in Acts and the New Testament letters). As we hear this story, we are reshaped and formed by an alternative perspective on life – the perspective of the gospel, the good news. The story is told through proclamation, which may include reading the Scriptures, reflection on Scripture, symbolic action, art, music, multimedia resources and silence.
Hearing the story requires a response. We respond by making an offering (of ourselves, our gifts, our money, and our prayers for others).

Gospel Reading - Matthew 13:1-9,18-23, p794 — Gwen

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. **2** Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. **3** And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. **5** Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. **6** But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. **7** Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. **8** Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. **9** If you have ears, hear!"

18 "Hear, then, the parable of the sower. **19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. **20** As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, **21** yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. **22** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. **23** But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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

Early Word — Saide, Ruthann

It's such a pleasure to welcome Ruthann Richardson to talk to us about the work done by this by Act for Peace. Our congregation supports this work through the Christmas Bowl appeal. We'll talk more about this in the Mission Spot later. For now Ruthann is going to talk about how this parable relates to the model that underpins the support provided by Act for Peace partners around the world.

Song – The seeds of grace, Hannah Brown

Our next song 'The seeds of grace' is a new song for us. Let's stand and sing, listen to the first verse if that helps you to learn the tune.

The seeds of grace are scattered far
by way of wind and hand.
The Sower offers openly
these grains to bless our land.

In weeded plot and wilderness
and busy city street
The seeds of grace are falling free.
What welcome will they meet?

2. The seeds of grace are opening
in water and in fire.
The Gard'ner tends each one in time
to give what they require:
a stream on sun, a mist of rain,
enrichment for the soil.
The seeds of grace are reaching deep.
What promises uncoil?

3. The seeds of grace are rising up,
unfurling shoot and leaf.
The Steward shields them faithfully
to nurture green belief,
to cultivate a tender trust
that strengthens, sweet and slow.
The seeds of grace are flourishing.
What harvest will they grow?

SONG: The Seeds of Grace, Text Hannah C Brown, b,1980; 2023, Licensed to Brunswick Uniting Church

Hebrew Scriptures – Genesis 25:19-34, p19 — Sammy

19 These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, 20 and
Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of
Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife because
she was barren, and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. 22 The
children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" So
she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples born of you shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other;
the elder shall serve the younger."

24 When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. 25 The first came out
red, all his body like a hairy mantle, so they named him Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out,
with his hand gripping Esau's heel, so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she
bore them. 27 When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob
was a quiet man, living in tents. 28 Isaac loved Esau because he was fond of game, but
Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was
famished. 30 Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!"
(Therefore he was called Edom.) 31 Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." 32 Esau said, "I am
about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" 33 Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore
to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he
ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

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

Preaching of the Word — Peter

Sacred Pause

musicians choice

Offering with Song – Cover us with love, Tune In — Saide

We usually remain seated for the singing of the offering song, standing together when the offering is carried forward. Note – the welcomers will come forward to collect the bowls; 'I give by Direct Debit' cards will be on the pews

We offer our gifts in response to all God's many blessings, gifts of money, time and service, the work of our bodies, minds and hearts. You can place an offering of money or an I give directly card in the bowls as they come round. You can also use the account details on the screen. We will sing Cover us with Love, a song from our Tune In collection written by Elaine. I'll invite you to stand when the bowls are ready to be brought forward.

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1. When our ears are closed to cries of need
Selfish ways that crush and hurt and trample
When minds are set and we don't want to know
How others stand to lose, while we look for gain.
Turning our dulled eyes from helplessness and pain. Then . . .

Cover us with love and fill our heart with song
Change our narrow ways, give us compassion strong.
Be our vision Lord, in a world that's filled with greed.
Be our wisdom true, plant in our hearts, this seed.

2. When we fail to see what we destroy
Gath'ring greedily from nature's treasure
Understanding little why we feel the need to take away
The future of us all, hardening our hearts
To the uniqueness of this place. Then . . .

3. When our hearts are cold without Your flame
Believing we can live without your spirit
Convenience when we can ill afford to mould You or contain
Or put you in Your place, though foolishly we try
To limit and restrain, so . . .
Chorus x2

SONG: Cover us with love, © Elaine Loukes, from Tune In, Brunswick Uniting Church Songbook. Reproduced with permission

Offering Prayer — Saide

God of love, bless the gifts that we offer today
Cover us with love, be our vision
as we seek to share the seed of your love
with all those in need, in your Holy Name.
Amen

Mission Spot — Saide, Glenice, Leanne, Natalie

A big part of our support for Act for Peace is through the Christmas Bowl stalls offered over two Sundays in December. We know that many people love them however today we want to talk briefly about our vision for the future of these stalls.

- Glenice to speak about why we love offering them.
- Saide to speak about the challenges.
- Leanne to speak about handing over.
- Natalie to speak about support we can offer.
- Saide to conclude.
- Ruthann to acknowledge BUC's contributions.

Prayers of the People — Ray

We offer prayers for the world, for Christ's people in the world, and for those in need. After the prayer the Christ Candle is taken to the chapel space where people are invited to light a taper for their own prayers at the end of the service.

Good morning, I'm Ray. Responding to all that we have heard this morning, to the daily news and stories we are part of, much that is tragic and thankfully much that is uplifting we offer our prayers for the world, the church and the community.

God we come to you in the stillness and waiting to pray for the world.
With aching hearts we pray for an end to the suffering
caused by unjust wars, violence and destruction.

We pray for people displaced and nations torn apart.
As the impacts of climate change increase
with devastating consequences around the world
we pray for all whose way of life is in peril.

We give thanks for the vision of Act for Peace
working in partnership to build resilience and new life.
And we give thanks for all raise their voices in protest.
Cover us with love, be our vision as we pray.

God of transformation we come to you in hope to pray for the church.
We pray for faith leaders of all traditions bearing witness to your love
in a world where the harms and excesses of the past and even now
can render our words and actions to seek peace meaningless.

We pray for our congregation, for Cath, Peter and our Elders
for the Olive Way, the Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre.
We give thanks for the safety and beauty of this place
and the privilege of being able to offer welcome, care and love.

We give thanks for opportunities to connect and share
and for all who pray and serve faithfully.
Cover us with love, be our wisdom as we pray.

God of grace and mercy we come to you praying for the community.
We pray for all who unwell, grieving, lonely, disheartened,
struggling to find their way in a world that seems not to care.

We give thanks for NAIDOC Week and the ongoing story of resilience
of First Nations People and the privilege of walking alongside.

We pray for the Olive Way guests seeking food and comfort
and for the rough sleepers seeking a place to rest.
We give thanks for emerging partnerships allowing us
to provide increased support for people in need.
Cover us with love, help us to sow seeds of love.
Amen

BEING SENT

Having heard the word and shared the meal together, we are sent forth on God's mission of love. We are again on a threshold, encouraged to go into the world to continue the worship of God in our daily living.

Notices — Saide

We share the life and work of our community with each other as we prepare to be sent out.

As we prepare to go out to morning tea and into the week ahead please come and share a notice if you have one. Someone from Church Council will share news from Thursday's meeting first, then there'll be time for news from committees and about events. Personal notices are welcome after that and let people know how to contact you for further conversation. Please keep your notice brief, tell us where to find more information.

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Sally Douglas will be hosting a live reading of the Gospel of Mark here in the church on Tuesday 21st July, a way of engaging with the gospel beyond selections of verses during worship. Details in the Olive Press and the notice board with booking information.

After worship Ruthann will be hosting a conversation in the Olive Way at 11am. She is interested in learning about how we as a congregation are committed to working for peace and justice.

Judy Rigby will be our preacher next Sunday.

Sending Song – You are the salt for the earth, AoV2.4

I love this song with the joyful call and response in the verses. In his sermon Peter reminded us that we are called to be God's people. 'You are the salt for the earth' is a celebration of this call.

You are salt for the earth, O people: ***Salt for the Kingdom of God!***
*Share the flavour of life, O people****:*** ***Life in the Kingdom of God!***

Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy, Bring forth the kingdom of peace;
Bring forth the Kingdom of justice, Bring forth the City of God!

2. You are a light on the hill, O people: ***Light for the City of God!***
Shine so holy and bright, O people: ***Shine for the Kingdom of God!***

3. You are a seed of the Word, O people: ***Bring forth the Kingdom of God!***
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, ***Grow in the Kingdom of God!***

4. We are a blest and a pilgrim people: ***Bound for the Kingdom of God!***
Love our journey and love our homeland: ***Love is the Kingdom of God!***

SONG: You are salt for the earth, by Marty Haugen, © 1986 GIA Publications, from As One Voice 2, Willow Connection Pty. Ltd. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

Sending / Words of Mission — Saide

The leader sends people out into the world to live out our faith.

We are a blest and a pilgrim people.
Let's go out with love in our hearts
to be a light for the world, salt for the earth
sewing the seeds of mercy and justice.
Amen

Blessing — Peter

The leader gives a blessing to the people for the next stage of the journey.

Thank yous

Thank you for joining us, and thank you to…

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Bible readers:
Gwen Arnold
Sammy Dixon

Early Word:
Ruthann Richardson
(Act for Peace)

Preacher:
Peter Blair
(Olive Way Pastor)

Prayers of the People:
Ray Cameron

Musicians:
Alistair Hunter
(co-ordinator)
Mikul Denison
Anthony Hinds
Deb Langford
Mick Pope
Elaine Potter
Bronte Potter

Mission Spot:
Saide Cameron
Glenice Cook
Natalie Papworth
Leanne Salau

Postlude Song: Come all you people
Musicians: Natalie Sims, Shawn Whelan

Images:
BUC Library

Editing / Production:
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
James Clough
Christine Hornby
Alistair Hunter
Shawn Whelan

Closing verse – Matthew 23:13a

But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it ...