



# HOPPERS CROSSING UNITING CHURCH

*Loving God, neighbour and self  
with heart, mind, soul and strength.*

**Worship at Home  
28<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**



*And whoever gives one of these  
little ones even a cup of cold water  
because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you,  
he will by no means  
lose his reward.*

Matthew 10:42



*A candle, symbolising Christ's presence, is lit.*

## **We Gather**

**Forever** [https://youtu.be/gUH\\_NzfRmbs](https://youtu.be/gUH_NzfRmbs)

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
the love of God and the fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**And also with you.**

O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes,

**I trusted in your steadfast love;**

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

**I will sing to the LORD because he has dealt bountifully with me.**

PSALMS 13:3a, 5-6

Let us worship God.

**All the Earth** [https://youtu.be/xv6mD8\\_4YM0](https://youtu.be/xv6mD8_4YM0)

**I Surrender** <https://youtu.be/jqsqfjRslzA>

### **PSALM 13**

*My Heart Shall Rejoice in Your Salvation*

<sup>1</sup>How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

<sup>2</sup>How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

<sup>3</sup>Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

<sup>4</sup>and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

<sup>5</sup>But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

<sup>6</sup>I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.

### **PRAYER OF APPROACH AND INVOCATION**

where human beings experience pain and suffering on a daily basis. All too often we join our cries to that of the Psalmist – how long, O God? How long will you hide your face from those who suffer right now throughout this world? Yet, in saying this, we are forgetting that rather than hiding your face, you have revealed it in Jesus.

Loving Lord, in a world shaped by conflict, where we seem to be slipping back into tribal divisions, you call us to reveal your face through welcoming those with whom we have absolutely nothing in common.

In a culture full of inequalities which only seem to be widening, you call us to treat each person as our sister and brother.

In a time of intensifying injustices which are found in every community, if not in every neighbourhood, you call us to yoke ourselves to your radical hope.

In a lifestyle which idolises the individual to the exclusion of all others, you call us to notice the parent who works three jobs, the dementia-diminished senior, and the refugee family on the corner.

May we offer not just cups of cold water, but all that we are and all we have to those who are in our midst, even as we pray to you;

O God who calls us to give you all our heart, mind, and strength: Grant us the grace to understand what that means for our lives. Help us to follow Jesus with our entire beings but to avoid the pitfalls of fanaticism; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

### **ROMANS 6:12-23**

*The Free Gift of God is Eternal Life in Christ Jesus Our Lord*

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies to make you obey their passions. <sup>13</sup>No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace. <sup>15</sup>What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted <sup>18</sup>and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup>I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. <sup>20</sup>When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup>So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup>But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

### **INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

The idol of our times is personal independence, but in truth, we are bossed around by our faults, our poor choices, the hurts we cause to others. Yet, by God's grace, we are set free from all these passions, so let us join in offering our confessions to the one who welcomes each of us with forgiveness and hope.

Let us pray:

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

It seems so simple, God of compassion, to offer a cup of cold water to a thirsty person, yet we know we worry more about how that might inflate our bill at the end of the month.

**Forgive us, Lord.**

We are to open our hearts to others, but they may need to be careful lest they slip on our icy attitudes towards them.

**Forgive us, Lord.**

People are looking for places to lay their heads, yet our spare bedrooms continue to be the place where only the dust bunnies sleep.

**Forgive us, Lord.**

You did not have to become one of us, but you did, so we might know your love. You did not have to welcome us into your family, but you do, so we might experience unexpected grace in our lives. You did not have to die for us, but in Jesus Christ you did, so we might have life with you forever.

### **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

God loves us and knows our weaknesses. God forgives us and invites us to a life of loving commitment.

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

JOHN 3:17

The good news is this: in Jesus Christ:

**We are loved,**

**We are forgiven.**

**Thanks be to God!**

**Better is One Day** <https://youtu.be/ndVRcqziKWA>

### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you **and also with you.**

### **We Listen**

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet **a light to our path.**

### **GENESIS 22:1-14**

*God Tests Abraham, The Lord Will Provide*

<sup>1</sup>After these things, God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup>He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,

and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.”

<sup>3</sup>So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.

<sup>4</sup>On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. <sup>5</sup>Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” <sup>6</sup>Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. <sup>7</sup>Isaac said to his father, Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” <sup>8</sup>Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. <sup>9</sup>When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup>Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. <sup>11</sup>But, the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>12</sup>He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” <sup>13</sup>And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup>So Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

## **MATTHEW 10:40-42**

*Whoever Welcomes You Welcomes Me*

<sup>40</sup>“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. <sup>41</sup>Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; <sup>42</sup>and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

Lord, may your word live in **us and bear much fruit to your glory.**

## **HOMILY**

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

**MATTHEW 10:40**

**Title:** The Power of Hospitality.

We have spent these last weeks on chapter 10 of Matthew's gospel. Today's very brief text needs to be read in context with the rest of chapter 10 which is about the mission of the twelve, the inhospitality or the persecution they would encounter, the cost of discipleship 10:16-25, 34-39 and then we have these verses 40-42 that touch on the rewards of welcome and hospitality particularly towards those who do God's mission, whom in this case are the twelve disciples.

Hospitality is important to Jesus. If it is important to Jesus, it needs to be important to us. So, first, let us begin with a story:

Several years ago I was on a South Pacific island which had suffered significant damage following a hurricane. Houses destroyed, roads pulled up, trees uprooted, wreckage strewn everywhere. I was on the island to take pictures and write up a report for a company I was working for at the time. To get to this particular island meant catching the early morning boat from the main island and then once there try and get around the island to do what I needed to do and then get back to the wharf in time to catch the last boat back. I would rely on buses to make my way around the island.

As the afternoon wore on, I felt it was time to make my way to the wharf. Rather than wait for a bus, I figured it would be better to hitch a ride which was just as well. So that is what I did. Soon, a white pick-up truck with four others who appeared to be foreign tourists were on-board as well. The truck pulled up next to me and the driver enquired as to what I was up to. I informed him the reasons for my being there and how I was trying to make my way back to the wharf to catch the last boat to the main island. His response stunned me. He advised me there were no more buses running and further the last boat had come and returned. But then the driver said something which surprised me-he said "Best if you hop on board. You all can stay at my place tonight, and I can drop you off at the wharf in the morning."

When we all arrived at the driver's home, I surveyed his house and property; they had suffered significant damage, as well, he had a large extended family. However, this would not keep him from offering hospitality to five strangers. And to cut a long story short, despite their own immediate needs, the family hosted us for the night feeding us with the little food they had and offering up their rooms in their home to strangers to sleep in while the family slept outside under the starry sky. I often reflect on this story, a powerful one about genuine hospitality and reflect if I, in a similar situation, would be able to do the same?

Today we will consider three lessons on hospitality:

1. First, hospitality reveals what God is like.
2. Second, hospitality is a counter-cultural act.
3. Third, hospitality is not a spectator sport.



## **1. Hospitality reveals what God is like.**

When we think about hospitality, it brings to mind images of guests and visitors, strangers, meals and lodgings essentially about making people feel at home. However, there is something more to hospitality that goes beyond those images that easily spring to mind.

Genesis 18 which we looked back a few weeks back is the story of three strangers who visit Abraham and are offered hospitality. Commentators point out these three people symbolise God. The unfolding drama of the story asks an important question: Who is providing hospitality - is it Abraham or, God represented in the three figures?

In his book on Luke 'The Hospitality of God', Byrne says:

"Luke sees the whole life and ministry of Jesus as a 'visitation on God's part to Israel and the world'. Those who receive him find that he brings them into a much wider sphere of hospitality: the 'Hospitality of God'. The one who comes as visitor and guest, in fact, becomes the host and offers hospitality in which human beings and, potentially, the entire world, can become truly human, be at home, can know salvation in depths of their hearts."

The hospitality of God "offers hospitality in which human beings and, potentially, the entire world, can become truly human, be at home, can know salvation in depths of their hearts".<sup>1</sup>

Hold on to those thoughts.

Another point to ponder in the text is a reference to the 'prophet' in verse 41 of Matthew 10. A prophet as we understand in the biblical sense is a messenger who goes about relaying God's message. William Loader, on his reflection on the text, talks about 'envoys'. These envoys were sent ones authorised to act for their senders. They might carry letters from their senders, but they had to be able to represent the interests of the ones they served. Jesus is the envoy of God.

He is God's Son, whom God sent into the world (**ROMANS 8:3, JOHN 3:17**). In the tradition of John's gospel, this became so central that Jesus regularly refers to God as 'The one who sent me' and sending here refers to sending from the heavenly realm to become flesh and dwell among us. The envoy represents the sender so that to respond to Jesus is to respond to God.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus came into this world, to communicate God's message of love, hope and redemption, revealing what God is like. Each one of us are then Jesus' envoys through whom the practise of hospitality reflects what God is like.

## **2. Hospitality is a counter-cultural act.**

It may well be difficult for the western mind to appreciate the cultural norms and practises of ancient Palestine, such as that of a family bond. Now the family bond was very important and seen as integral to one's survival. Claims to honour and prestige, identity and land, economic, religious, educational and social mobility, were seen as only possible through being connected to a family. The resultant mentality was 'our family' against everyone else. Our family and only our family.

When Jesus spoke those troubling words: 'whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me' (MATTHEW 10:34-37) he was actually challenging this way of thinking.

Becoming aware of this context makes us a little more appreciative of the disciples leaving the family bonds and obligations in order to follow Jesus.

With his disciples and many others to come, Jesus was establishing a new family with new values and a whole new way of being. These new values would be characterised through hospitality, that is, caring for others, the stranger, and the outsider in which all regardless of gender, age, religion and background. All would be one – a common humanity.

As Jesus' disciples live out this new way of living characterised by acceptance, generosity, hospitality, ways that are so contrastingly different from the cultural norms they had been raised to believe, they were actually being counter-cultural.

For us in the present, at a time of self-serving individualism and the mentality of taking care and worrying about your own needs first over others, hospitality is indeed a counter-cultural act.

## **3. Hospitality is not a spectator sport.**

This speaks for itself. It means that as followers of Jesus, who is God's envoy, hospitality is and must be an enduring mark of true discipleship. Hospitality doesn't mean we just stand there and do nothing. Doing hospitality involves engaging with the others. It means getting your hands dirty. And it can be difficult as my story of the family on the island earlier on highlights.

I conclude with the words of a hymn written last century by Frederick Herman Kaan titled 'Help us accept each other': [Together in Song 648]. I believe it helps to sum up what we have been looking into today:

*Help us accept each other  
as Christ accepted us;  
teach us as sister, brother,  
each person to embrace.*



Be present Lord, among us  
and brings us to believe  
we are ourselves accepted  
and meant to love and live.  
Teach us O Lord, your lessons,  
as in our daily life  
we struggle to be human  
and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for people,  
for all-not just for some,  
to love them as we find them  
or as they may become.  
Let your acceptance change us,  
so that we may be moved  
in living situations  
to do the truth in love;  
to practise your acceptance  
until we know by heart  
the table of forgiveness  
and laughter's healing art.  
Lord, for today's encounters  
with all who are in need  
who hunger for acceptance  
for righteousness and bread,  
we need new eyes for seeing,  
new hands for holding on:  
renew us with your Spirit;  
Lord, free us, make us one!

Frederik Herman Kaan 1929-2009

So, these three:

1. Hospitality reveals what God is like.
2. Hospitality is a counter-cultural act.
3. Hospitality is not a spectator sport.

And that, friends, is the power of hospitality. Amen.

Let us pray: Loving God, you showed true hospitality through the incarnation, of yourself becoming human in Jesus Christ. He came to show the world what you are like – generous, compassionate, merciful, just, hospitable and more. In the same way also, loving God, you want us to continue Jesus' work on earth by revealing you to the world through the way we love and care for one another, in the way we show hospitality to all and not just some. And so, in this work you have called us to, please sustain and strengthen us to do so. Amen.

**Attribution:**

<sup>1</sup>Byrne, Brendan The Hospitality of God, St Pauls, Australia 2006 p 4

<sup>2</sup>"First Thoughts on Year A Gospel Passages in the Lectionary," Pentecost 2, William Loader, Murdoch University, Uniting Church in Australia]

<sup>3</sup>'Help us accept each other: Together in Song Harper Collins Religious 2005 p 648

## **We Respond**

**10,000 Reasons** [https://youtu.be/DXDGE\\_IRIOE](https://youtu.be/DXDGE_IRIOE)

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Take a moment to pray for one or more of the following:*

- countries and nations of the world
- those who are sick and in need
- the Church and our congregation

*After each prayer, a response may be said such as:*

*Lord, in your mercy,*

**hear our prayer.**

And in the languages of the nations, we pray as Jesus taught...

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us in the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

## OFFERING

You are invited to contribute financially to support the ministry and mission of the Hoppers Crossing congregation using the following details:

<u>Bank Transfer</u>	<u>Credit Card</u>
<b>BSB:</b> 013-915	<a href="http://www.HoppersUniting.church/offering">www.HoppersUniting.church/offering</a>
<b>Account Number:</b> 354 439 707	
<b>Account Name:</b> Hoppers Crossing Uniting Church	
<b>Reference:</b> 'Your SURNAME'	

**Days of Elijah** <https://youtu.be/ca9LnzJnpiQ>

## We are Sent

## BENEDICTION

Jesus said:

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,  
and whoever welcomes me  
welcomes the one who sent me".

MATTHEW 10:40

Let us go to bring hope and healing to the world.  
With a gift as simple as a cup of water,  
we will join Jesus in serving those around us.

And the blessing of God,  
the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be with you now and always.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

**Broken Vessels** [https://youtu.be/61l1zx9Y\\_MQ](https://youtu.be/61l1zx9Y_MQ)

**The service is ended.**

**Acknowledgments**

*This liturgy was constructed with material from the following sources:*

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*Music* – YouTube as linked

*Background Music* – used with permission: CCLI License: 726611