

## Order of Service 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Welcome** to Banora Point UC service 'at a distance' on this Lord's day Easter 6. We celebrate that Jesus was raised from the dead that 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday. He is alive and with us as the risen Lord.

If you are visiting with us online we especially welcome you and hope your time in this service will be warm and blessed

As is our custom here are 3 songs that will lead us to further celebration, prayer, Bible reading and encouragement. Please click on the link

*Immortal Invisible God only wise*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c59R-Ry8q50> traditional

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlbnP4\\_yj18](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlbnP4_yj18) more modern

At the name of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI2rKRCWmOU>

How Great is our God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLQ1td3MbE>

As a call to worship I have chosen Psalm 118:1-9 because it has beautiful words of adoration of our Amazing God, especially during COVID 19.

**Reading** Psalm 118:1-9 NIV

*<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures for ever. <sup>2</sup>Let Israel say: 'His love endures for ever.' <sup>3</sup>Let the house of Aaron say: 'His love endures for ever.' <sup>4</sup>Let those who fear the LORD say: 'His love endures for ever.'*

*<sup>5</sup>When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place.*

*<sup>6</sup>The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*

*<sup>7</sup>The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies.*

*<sup>8</sup>It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans. <sup>9</sup>It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.*

**Opening prayer** Dear God, we do as the Psalm invites us: we give thanks to you for you are good and your love endures forever. May our service today honour your glorious name, may it focus our hearts on following Jesus; and may it help fill us with your Spirit. Amen

I've chosen these next two songs to remind us of Jesus' position and prompt us to praise God for his goodness

Crown him with many crowns

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuMh\\_ept-Js](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuMh_ept-Js)

Be Exalted O God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPtkkUU84rs>

**Prayer – Adoration & Confession** Almighty and merciful God, we give you humble thanks for all your loving-kindness to us. We thank you for our creation, daily preservation, and the many blessings of this life; but above all for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus; and for the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our church.

And Lord, we confess that we not always loved you or each other as we should; we have not always shown forth your kindness, nor given ourselves to your service, by not walking before you as new creatures. We have too often loved ourselves or our possessions or our comfort before you and your work. We should live by the fruit of your Spirit but sadly miss to mark. (Personal Confession)

Merciful Father – forgive us and renew us in the name of Jesus we pray.

**Hear the good news:** The Lord is gracious so that *'if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness'* **1 John 1:9** In Jesus Christ ... our sins are forgiven

**Notices** Please see the Pointer (click on the link)

**Offering** Thank you for setting aside your offering each week. The letter from Neil Rackman may help you in that (see last week's Pointer)

**Prayer** Thank you heavenly Father for you many gifts to us. We pray that our offering will be used wisely for the mission of the Church.

**Song** In Christ Alone

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=in+christ+alone+-+living+stones](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=in+christ+alone+-+living+stones)

**Pass the peace** within your partner/family....

**Bible Reading 2 Acts 7:54-60 NIV** The stoning of Stephen

*<sup>54</sup> When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this (Stephen's words), they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' <sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

*<sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

**Song** Spirit of the Living God – fall afresh on me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYfzcYohWZg>

**Prayer** Loving God – you are our teacher, our encourager and our guide, through your powerful word. As we come to your word now – be our inspiration, and as of old - breathe on us your tongues of fire for our edification and love in the great name of Jesus we pray. Amen

**Bible Reading 3 John 14:15-21 NIV** The Promised Helper.

*<sup>15</sup> 'If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.'*

**Sermon** Jesus Promises Another Helper

<https://youtu.be/V6qSpzGZ7zg>

### **Song**

Breathe on Me Breath of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmkzSjs9eAw>

### **Prayer – Praying for ourselves, others & our world**

O God, we thank you for all your goodness to us as a nation, how you have protected the vast majority of us during the coronavirus outbreak. As our various levels of government ease restrictions help them to be wise. We continue to pray for those who have been hit hardest financially through loss of employment ....

We also to pray for those nations, especially the poorer ones where COVID 19 is still a huge problem – the death-tolls rising. Bring relief and protection for them. ....

Gracious Father – some of our members are in hospital, respite or rehabilitation; some are grieving the recent loss of a loved one; and some are at home with ongoing illness and pain. You know them by name so please send your Spirit to comfort, heal and renew.

Hear our prayers ..... in the wonderful name of Jesus our Lord. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory – forever and ever. Amen

**Song** I know who holds tomorrow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GKNbmYOAow>

**Vesper:** May the Feet Of God Walk With You; – what we can look forward to when restrictions lift.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJ6RaKX4\\_I4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJ6RaKX4_I4)

### **The sermon**

#### **Another Helper - The Holy Spirit: John 14:15-21 (17.5.20)**

We are drawing near to the end of this season of Easter. Next Sunday, we will celebrate the Ascension of Jesus, and the week after that will be Pentecost, the birthday of the church as the Holy Spirit comes on the followers of Jesus.

Today is Easter 6 but also Aldersgate Sunday, the day we remember how John Wesley's heart was "*strangely warmed*" as he became suddenly sure of his own salvation. This event in his own life journey led him to a way of discipleship that would become the Methodist Church and more recently a significant aspect of the Uniting Church here in Australia.

Throughout this Easter season, we have been examining what discipleship looks like through listening to and following Jesus.

We saw how the two disciples on their way to **Emmaus** were awakened to the excitement of a new start after the horrors of Jesus' crucifixion; and a few weeks ago we remembered Jesus at **Holy Communion** - how he gave himself for us; then we were challenged by Jesus as a church family to **make disciples** by going, baptising and teaching in his name.

Finally, last week we looked at that marvellous passage about how Jesus can calm our troubled hearts by reminding us of **'who he is'** – *the way, the truth and the life – being one with God his Father.*

These are all important elements of discipleship. Today, we examine one more, the role of the Holy Spirit in John 14.

## Prayer

Last week we noted how Jesus told us **he was leaving** to go and be with his father – but he promised them this was a good thing for them because he will be with them so they will be able see him and his Father.

But he doesn't tell them how he and his Father will be in them. This week he explains how he will be with them always. This is for us also. 2 points

**1. To Love well: we need a Helper vv.15-17** How do the disciples keep following Jesus after he is no longer with them? The answer is simple, and complex at the same time.

Jesus says v.15, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments,"*. **NB.** Jesus is **not** saying, "If you really love me, you would keep my commands." Rather he is simply saying "Since you do love me, you will obey my commandments." He's anticipating the disciples' future needs. Loving him goes hand in hand with keeping his commands. Living them

And of course, the primary command he gives us is to **love God and love others**. But how? Answer: Jesus tell us how in v.16: *I will ask the father, and he will give you another **Helper**, to be with you for ever.*

The word Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit here is hard to pin down into one English word. The older versions used 'Comforter', newer versions use a variety of words 'Advocate' or 'Councillor' or 'Encourager' or 'Equipper' or (most common) 'Helper'. The Gk word is 'Paraclete' and comes from two words: 'para' meaning alongside (as in parallel) and 'calleo' meaning 'to call' Thus together = **'to call alongside'**.

Jesus is telling us his Father will send the Holy Spirit who will come to be **alongside us**: to help us, comfort us, council us, equip us, encourage us and defend us. Take a moment to reflect on this beautiful word Paraclete.

Let's bring a few of these ideas together: **Comfort and Encouragement** These are strange and wonderful things. When someone is deeply distressed or has suffered great loss or tragedy – there is enormous power in being there with a comforting word or touch. Or think of how many people might have given up under a heavy load if it hadn't been for a word of encouragement or a friendly smile. When the Holy Spirit is called our Comforter or Encourager this is what is meant.

Another set of ideas within this word **Paraclete** are: Advocate, Councillor, Executor – one who comes alongside to speak or act for us – whether in a legal or personal sense. At times we all need a friend to stand with us; act on our behalf or in our defence. When the Spirit is called our Advocate, Councillor or Executor this is meant.

Since Jesus calls the Holy Spirit "**another**" Helper, it's clear that Jesus has also been a Helper himself to his disciples: He has been with them, alongside them, helped them, equipped them, comforted and encouraged them, and taught them – **but** since

he is leaving, he promises his Spirit will do the same for them. The Paraclete is the Spirit of Jesus.

People sometimes say *'if only Jesus were here now to show us the way'* – it's a nice sentiment but as this passage (and others in the NT) tell us, Jesus has promised to be *'with'* his followers – not physically but by his Spirit, his Helper who will be in and among us.

Jesus adds in v.17 that this other Helper is none other than *the Spirit of Truth*. Just as Jesus is *the way, the truth and the Life* so the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, the giver of Life and guide for us on the way.

However, Jesus goes on, *'The world can't receive him, because it doesn't see him or know him. But you know him, because he lives with you, and will be in you v.17.* What a great promise to help us to love as we should.

When Jesus goes to the Father (which we will look at next week) he will go as the world's Saviour and Lord, who defeated death, sin and Satan. Then all sorts of new possibilities open up for us as we live for him each day. But life in this world can be tricky and hard at times – that's where we need help – point 2

**2. To Live well – we need a Helper vv.18-21.** The people of this age can't see Jesus, but they can see us his followers. Non-believers don't know the deep intimacy with God for which we were all created and for which Jesus will give his life. But empowered by his Spirit we can begin to show them.

So Jesus says, *"you know him (the Spirit), because he lives with you."* Living with the Spirit creates real intimacy. Anyone can be in some sort of relationship – just look at Facebook, twitter, Messenger – but true intimacy, living intimacy is what God has always desired for us and what the Spirit will help us achieve. Intimacy with God is the Spirit's role.

That's why Jesus makes the greatest promise he can make, right here at the heart of this passage. He says, *"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you (by my Spirit)"* (v. 18). We are not alone as we follow Jesus in this world. And because we see him and know him personally, intimately, we can show him to the world – in word & deed (love) =

**III - George Muller** (1805-1898) took Jesus' concern for orphans very seriously. Seeing a huge need he built many orphanages at Ashley Down, near the city of Bristol in England, catering for up to 4,000 children. Without a personal salary, he relied only on God to supply the money and food needed to support the thousands of homeless children he befriended and loved in the name of Jesus Christ.

A man of radiant faith, he kept a motto on his desk for many years that brought comfort, strength, and uplifting confidence to his heart. It read, *"It matters to God about you."* Muller believed that those words captured the meaning of 1 Peter 5:7 *'He cares for you'*, and he rested his claim for divine help on that truth. He testified at the end of his life that the Lord had never failed to supply his needs.

Now, nearly two centuries later, the work George Muller began continues to flourish. It currently supports around 160 missionaries and organisations across the world, many of which are orphanages. It sends, on average, about \$200,000 every month world-wide to further the Gospel and help take care of the needy, mostly orphans.

As Jesus embodied the love of God during his time on earth, bringing comfort and help and guidance and healing to the people he met, so the love of Jesus is, like George Muller showed, to be embodied in us today through his Spirit, bringing comfort, help, guidance and healing to us and through us to others. So we can be confident in God's presence with us, always... as it was with George Muller.

You might remember the words of Paul in Gal 5:22-23, where he says, "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*". These are the characteristics that the Holy Spirit wants to create within us and increasingly should become the governing virtues through which we live our lives.

The more we come to rely on the Holy Spirit in our lives, the more we will love God and love others - as Jesus did.

**Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is 'God-present-with-us' in our conversion & baptism. The Holy Spirit is 'God-present-with-us' as we share Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit is 'God-present-with-us' as the Word of God is spoken to us through the sermon and through the Bible Readings.

The Holy Spirit is God-with-us as a Christian community, empowering us and growing us in the faith. As the Holy Spirit increasingly dictates our life, so we will increasingly become obedient to God's will for our lives- loving him and others

And that is how we end our passage. Jesus says this: "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments v.15 ...And they who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father...v.20*"

**Wow** – live that for a moment

The challenge to us is to love and obey Jesus – by living in the Spirit. As Paul also says in Gal 5:25 '*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*' Our role is let the Spirit of Jesus transform and empower us – so we can love – in word and deed.

Jesus is no longer here – he has gone to be with his father: Praise God for that!! Because if Jesus were still with us, we would not know the power of his Spirit in our lives and we would not know what it is to live the Christian life – loving him and others.

Go in his name: Live in the Spirit.