

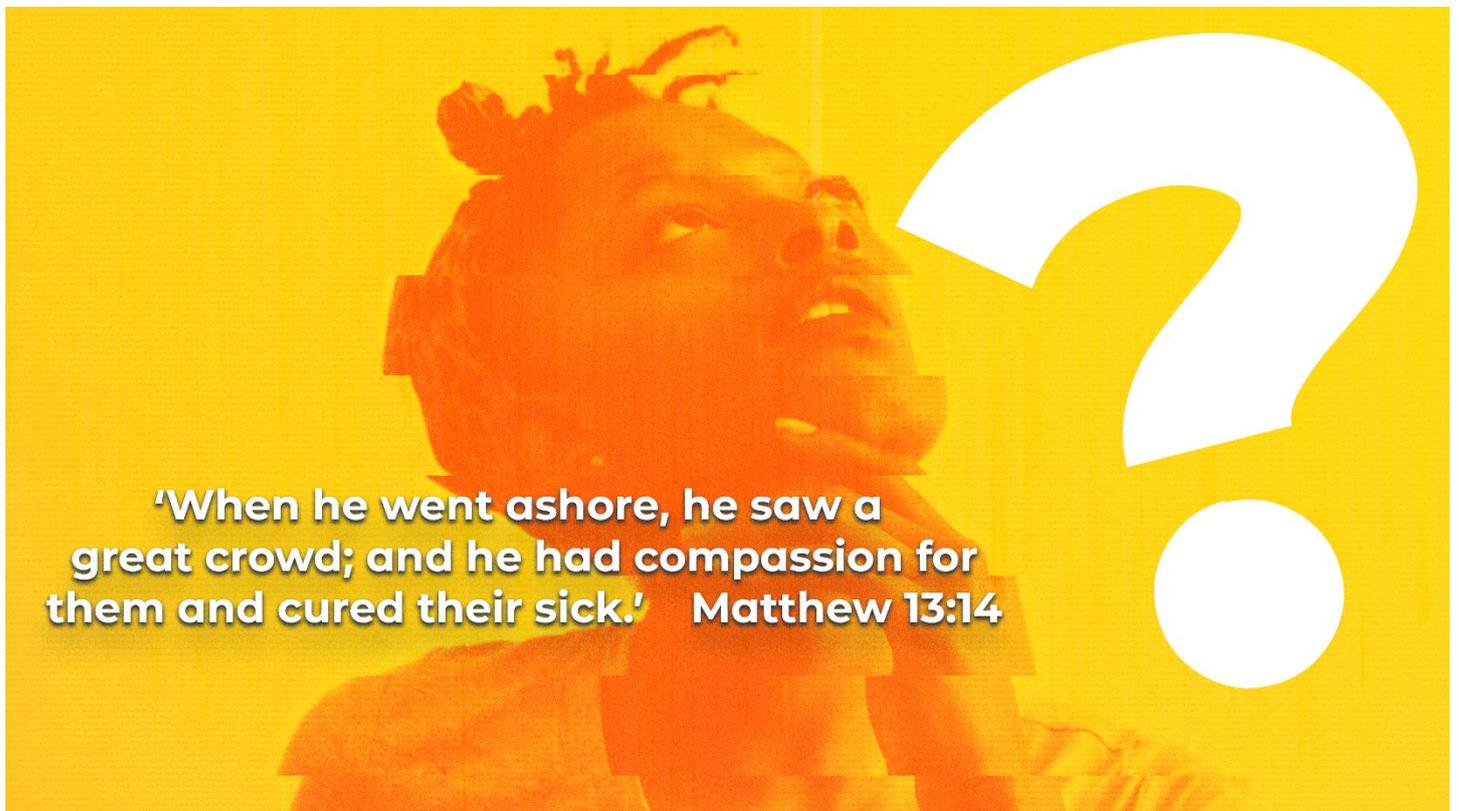


HOPPERSCROSSING UNITING CHURCH

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

**Worship at Home
2nd August 2020**

9th Sunday after Pentecost



**'When he went ashore, he saw a
great crowd; and he had compassion for
them and cured their sick.' Matthew 13:14**



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

We Gather

Only A Holy God <https://youtu.be/Jxn fu6rdCU>

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.

We come to this place with different needs:

**some of us wrestling with problems
that threaten to overwhelm us;**

some of us crying out for healing,
for relevance, for refuge;

**some of us hungering
for what God alone can provide.**

In this time and in this place,
God is here and meets us face to face.

**We worship God whose lovingkindness
and faithfulness endures forever.**

Based on GENESIS 32, PSALM 17, MATTHEW 14

Amazing Grace <https://youtu.be/Jbe7OruLk8I>

Hello My name is <https://youtu.be/GdVZ3JdthFM>

PSALM 17:1-7,15

¹Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

²From you let my vindication come; let your eyes see the right.

³If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress.

⁴As for what others do, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent.

⁵My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped.

⁶I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words.

⁷Wondrously show your steadfast love, O saviour of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand.

15As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Gracious and loving God, you enabled the Psalmist to turn to you in the confident assurance that his cries and prayers would be heard and answered by you. Prayers uttered in the belief that your steadfast love would not permit despair and desolation to have the last word. We offer our prayers in that same belief, and with even greater confidence that we are heard by you, for the wonderful evidence of your love has been revealed in Jesus Christ, in whom we seek refuge time and time again. Through him, our burdens are lightened and our sins are forgiven. Through his sacrificial love, our lives are blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. For these great and glorious gifts, we offer our thanksgiving, our praise and our adoration. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE FIRST WORD

GENESIS 32: 22 - 31.

A dramatised reading by Faama

*Where children/young people are present the reading is dramatised as follows. You will need a **NARRATOR**; **JACOB**, and **GOD**, with large placards around necks identifying them.*

(Introductory words) A long, long time ago, there lived a man named Jacob. Now Jacob doesn't seem to have been a very nice person at all. He had managed to deceive his father into giving him a very special blessing, which would have included the promise of all the silver and gold, the servants, the flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle; the camels, donkeys, everything that should have gone to his older brother Esau. Jacob was a schemer and a cheat and he did all he could to get his own way. You can imagine, Esau was not happy about this at all! They ended up living a long way apart and they did not see one another for many, many years. But Jacob eventually wanted to meet with his brother again - perhaps he wanted to put things right between them. So, with all his family and possessions, he began the long journey to meet Esau - imagine how he felt when he heard that Esau was coming to meet him and he had 400 men with him. Jacob thought that Esau was planning to kill him and his family - so he camped one day beside a river and sent lots of gifts ahead to his brother, then he sent all of his family and his flocks and herds across to the other side but he stayed where he was as night fell - all alone - or so he thought, for Jacob found himself wrestling with someone all night.

Pause here while **JACOB** and **GOD** wrestle...concluding with **GOD** lightly striking **JACOB** on his hip.

JACOB: *Holds on to GOD with one hand while holding his hip with the other hand, crying out loudly in pain - What are you doing? You've just dislocated my hip.*

GOD: Let me go, it's almost morning.

JACOB: I will not let you go unless you bless me.

GOD: What is your name?

JACOB: Jacob.

GOD: You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have struggled with God and with humans and you have overcome.

JACOB: Tell me, who are you -what is your name?

GOD: Why do you have to know what my name is? *Puts both hand's on JACOB'S head saying:* Blessed are you O Israel, from this day forward.

JACOB: I have seen God face to face, and I have lived. *He limps off and he and GOD return to seats.*

NARRATOR: continues: Perhaps Jacob still could not decide whether he was really going to treat his brother kindly - and this struggle with God was part of his struggle to change - to be a better person. Because, in that struggle, he was changed - he was given a new name and - when he did meet up with his brother, they met as friends, not enemies. There may be times in your lives when people at school, or in your peer group - or even a brother or sister might try to persuade you to do something which you know is wrong and you have to struggle between choosing between what they want you to do and choosing what you know to be right. Remember always that since your Baptism, you have had a new name - you are part of God's family and are truly blessed by that fact. That means that you can draw on the strength of Jesus himself, who always helps you to choose to make the right decision because he loves you

and doesn't want to see any harm come to you.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, the story of Jacob shows your willingness to enter into the messiness of our human struggles - into fractured relationships, family differences, difficult situations with people we care about.

You would think that we would welcome you with open arms, yet we confess that too often our fists are clenched because we do not want to loosen our grip on our possessions and our selfish desires.

We fear that our very lives will be dislocated by the steady impress upon them of your kingdom values of justice, mercy and peace.

Help us to wrestle with the conflicting values, desires and pressures that confront us daily so that we can open our hands and open ourselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Only then can we fully embrace others in their pain - and be embraced - in the name of Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed-away; see everything has become new! All this is from God, to whom we have been reconciled through Christ in whom we are blessed and forgiven.

Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice
for in Jesus Christ,
we are known, accepted, loved and forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

The Servant Song <https://youtu.be/-j-JzJcAz4Y>

THE PEACE

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

We Listen

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

MATTHEW 14:13-21

The feeding of the five thousand

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send

the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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

HOMILY

Title: Fussy, Selective, Choosey

'When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.'

Matthew 13:14

Are you fussy? Selective? Choosey? Are you careful about the company or people you keep? Or the kind of produce you buy at the supermarket. How do we choose. I'm extra choosey on the Saturday night before the first Sunday of the month. You know why? Well, the first Sunday of the month is Communion Sunday. On the Saturday before I go and buy bread for the Communion. But it is not just any bread. I have to make sure I buy GF bread. GF stands for gluten free. That means there are particular ingredients in some foods that some people cannot have because it would make them unwell. So instead of having two different types of bread, gluten and gluten free, I just buy the one type, the gluten free loaf and so that way we are all sharing in the one loaf at Communion. The gluten free bread is not cheap and often times when I go to this particular store the gluten free bread has all sold out. I'm amazed at the amount of people there are in the community who choose gluten free bread. Another example of being choosey is when the captains of the football or basketball teams are choosing the players for their teams. The ones who are slow on their feet and hands. They will be the last ones to be chosen or they will not get chosen at all. Obviously, only those who deemed as being really good players and can win games for their team are the ones that will get chosen. Have any of you been in that situation of been overlooked to be on the team because you were not good with your hands and feet? Being overlooked, passed-by or rejected is not a good feeling at all, is it? Did you know that God is fussy, selective and choosey? You probably didn't know that, right? But in a different kind of way. If God was shopping at the

same store as I and came across the last loaves of gluten free bread and knew that I was after them as well, he would probably go to the side hold out his hands to the bread and tell me 'Hey Faama, the folk at Church need the bread more than I do, here you go, there yours". And as for the football and basketball team, well, God would pick all those who were not quick on their feet or good with their hands. But why? Why would God be like this? Because God does great things with rejects. Just think, God chooses Jacob even though he is the greatest con artist this side of the Jordan River. And God chooses David king even though he is a murderer and an adulterer. Jesus chose as his disciples' men with the smell of fish on their breathes and hands!

Jesus shows God is choosey

This brings us to today's gospel lesson is in **Matthew 14:13-21**. It is the famous passage of the feeding of the five thousand. It serves to say some things, although indirectly, about God being choosey. We can find a clue to this at the very beginning of the text: "*Now when Jesus heard this*" (14:13) The first response is to ask what was it that Jesus heard? Earlier on in the chapter (14:1-12), John the Baptist has been executed by Herod while he is in prison. The news of Johns death impacted greatly on Jesus and he felt he needed the time to be alone and grieve for his cousin. The opening lines from today's text states that he heads out on a boat for a 'deserted place'. However, the text then goes on to say when Jesus saw the crowds following him, Jesus felt compassion for them, such that he changed his plans. Instead of heading off on his own, to attend to his needs Jesus instead ministers to the crowds, he heals the sick, tended their needs, and shared with them his presence and later when evening came and they found themselves without food, Jesus fed them. Jesus feeding the crowds in a '*deserted place*' brings to mind Moses leading Israel in the wilderness and feeding on the manna, provided by God, that fell from heaven. Matthew in the context of the 'deserted place' and 'feeding' likens Jesus to Moses. As God was with Moses so God is with Jesus.

The text states 5,000 [men] were fed. Just as aside; some commentators point out the women and children may well have pushed the numbers up another 10,000 people all up. Could you imagine Jesus and his twelve disciples attending to the dietary needs of that many people where it was dark, dusty and with no electricity or running water, no food trucks to serve and buy food and drink and no public facilities to refresh themselves?

However you view it friends, Jesus' chooses compassion for the crowds over his own needs.

Compassion

What is compassion? Henri Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian. After many years of teaching at prestigious institutions

including the University of Notre Dame, Yale Divinity School and Harvard Divinity School, Nouwen went on and chose to work with mentally and physically disabled people at the L'Arche Daybreak community. Nouwen defines compassion from its Latin roots, "*pati* and '*cum*', which together mean '*to suffer with*'". Nouwen goes on to say: "Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."

The call to compassion is "a call that goes against the grain; that turns us completely around and requires a total conversion of the heart...that goes to the roots of our lives"

The crowd

So why does the crowd move Jesus with compassion? While Matthew doesn't state why, the gospel of Mark does. Mark states that Jesus had compassion for the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Maybe it's a bit like a UCA congregation which no minister wants to come to because the church is in a poor neighbourhood, as well, its members are poor, and maybe they are simple people, they have too many needs, they are just too much work and therefore too much trouble. The list of reasons goes on.

And maybe it was a bit like that with the crowd whom Jesus saw. Maybe they were the type no one wanted them around, they are the poor, the simple minded, the homeless, the sick and the diseased, the demon possessed- obviously all these considered untouchables, and maybe they were of the wrong faith or no faith, who knows. They are considered nobodies in the eyes of the powerful elite and the society. In whatever ways they were viewed by the society of their time, Jesus compassion for the crowd(s) shows they are chosen by God.

So what about us?

If we are wanting to be on the same page as God, we have to be serious about regarding those folks who are over-looked, passed over and rejected in our society, the ones who are never chosen and are shunned for no other reason other than being different. Jesus considers them as he did the crowds in today's lesson in Matthew's gospel. So, if we are going to be fussy, selective and choosey, well, let's face it, folks, we have to change the way we tend to be fussy and selective and choosey and turn our attention to how God is fussy and selective and choosey. Let us pray:

Lord, help us to be more like Jesus. To look beyond ourselves, beyond our own concerns and interests, and to see others as you see them. Not to overlook, or bypass, or reject them, but to see them as you see them—people who need to be cared for and to be loved. And so, strengthen us to do so, Lord. We thank you for this, in Jesus name. Amen.

We Respond

I Will Trust My Saviour Jesus <https://youtu.be/SDi-4Gp7By0>

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

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, today we gather in your name, though most of us not in the indoor spaces that have come to symbolize gathering spaces for those seeking community, truth, justice, and faith. Many of us struggle to feel the sacred or even simple connection through a computer screen. And yet, here we are, gathering and struggling and trying to find holiness.

May your kingdom come your will be done,

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you proclaim your truth in every age by many voices: Direct those who speak where many listen and write what many read, that they may do their part in making the heart of this people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous. O Lord, we pray for the countries where COVID-19 cases are

increasing, notably the United States, India, Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, Argentina, Iraq, Indonesia, and Oman and in other nations including our nation Australia.

May your kingdom come your will be done
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, when you came among us, you proclaimed the kingdom of God in villages, towns, and lonely places. Have mercy upon all who live and work in rural areas. May their far-flung health care providers receive the training and resources they need to save lives.

May your kingdom come your will be done
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, behold and visit the cities of the earth. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Enable us to eliminate hatred and violence so that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find with one another the fulfillment of their humanity.

May your kingdom come your will be done
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our Father, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in Jesus' steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you. Even though so many of us around the world right now are never alone, we feel lonely. We miss communing, and we also miss conversations with others. We have sacrificed anniversaries and graduations and weddings and birthdays and birth plans in order to keep our communities safe. May your kingdom come your will be done

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our religious leaders and essential workers. We pray for health care workers and death care industry personnel. We pray for the unemployed. We pray for scientists as they seek to find a cure to COVID 19 Virus.

And finally, we pray for ourselves. As we self-isolate, mourn, or rejoice or celebrate, Lord, you know our lives and we place them in your safe and secure hands knowing that our names are engraved upon your palms. (Isaiah 49:16)

May your kingdom come your will be done
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

And we pray the prayer Jesus taught saying.....

THE LORDS 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>
BSB: 013-915	www.HoppersUniting.church/offering
Account Number: 354 439 707	
Account Name: Hoppers Crossing Uniting Church	
Reference: 'Your SURNAME'	

Please take your weekly offering or a symbol of your offering in your cupped hands as we dedicate it and ourselves, giving thanks for all God's blessings and mercy.

Let us pray:

We offer these gifts to you O God, in response to your many gracious gifts to us. Bless and use all that we offer, both these gifts and our lives, as we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Shine Jesus Shine <https://youtu.be/J3iB30gCqAc>

We are Sent

BENEDICTION

Friends, choose God above all else.

Go where God leads and faithfully obey what God calls you to do.

Go and proclaim the good news to all.

God has chosen you and believes in you.

And the blessing of God

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

be with you always.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Open the Eyes of My Heart <https://youtu.be/idQ1n3cdgfo>

The service is ended.

Acknowledgments

This liturgy was constructed with material from the following sources:

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