



# HOPPERS CROSSING UNITING CHURCH

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

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

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**



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

## **We Gather**

### **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.**

What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me?

**I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.**

I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,

**in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem.**

**Praise the LORD!**

PSALM 116:1-2, 17-19

Let us worship God.

**I See The Lord** <https://youtu.be/8UtpbXuiY3E>

**I Will Rise** <https://youtu.be/C1ZYAqdnsG8>

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

Out of deep need, we enter this time together, O Lord, seeking your presence and your guidance.

Lord, this day we will hear of the miracles that have inspired people to be your disciples. We will hear of Sarah, who in her old age, conceived a son; we will hear of the disciples who are given the mandate to heal, to raise the dead, to proclaim the kingdom and the good news of God's redeeming love. We stand in that long line of those who are called.

We are ready to work for you that this broken world may be healed.

Lord, open our hearts this day to receive your word for us. Give us courage and hope. Amen.

We know too well, our foolishness, our brokenness, our human ways of doing things. But God knows our hearts, our hopes, our desire to be made new. As we offer our prayers of confession, let us open ourselves to God, who loves us, who will forgive us and give us new life. Together, let us pray:

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Loving God, Lord of the Church,**

**we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed:**

**we have not loved you with all our heart**

**or served you with all our strength;**

**we have been blind to the vision of a renewed world**

and deaf to your call to costly discipleship;  
we have been indifferent to the suffering of others  
and unwilling to forgive one another.  
In your mercy, Lord, pardon and restore us,  
that together in the ministry of Christ  
we may serve you with joy all the days of our life. Amen.

### **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit  
that has been given to us and God’s love for us is demonstrated in this:  
while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

ROMANS 5:5, 8

The good news, therefore, is this: in Jesus Christ  
we are loved,  
we are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God!

**Desert Song** <https://youtu.be/c3l1z7bXY9Y>

### **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 18:1-15**

*Sarah Laughed at the Promise of a Child*

<sup>1</sup>The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, “My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that, you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. <sup>9</sup>They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” <sup>10</sup>Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.

<sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. <sup>12</sup>So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" <sup>13</sup>The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' <sup>14</sup>Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time, I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." <sup>15</sup>But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh, yes, you did laugh."

### **PSALM 116:1-2, 12-19**

*I Will Pay my Vows to the Lord*

<sup>1</sup>I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications.  
<sup>2</sup>Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.  
<sup>12</sup>What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?  
<sup>13</sup>I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord,  
<sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.  
<sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.  
<sup>16</sup>O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds.  
<sup>17</sup>I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord.  
<sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people,  
<sup>19</sup>in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

### **ROMANS 5:1-8**

*We are Justified by Faith*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

### **MATTHEW 9:35 - 10:8**

*Labourers in the Harvest; the Twelve Sent Out*

<sup>35</sup>Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then, he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but

the labourers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.”

**10**<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.

<sup>2</sup>These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ <sup>8</sup>Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

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

## **HOMILY**

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The text for this address is taken from Matthew chapter 9, verse 36:

<sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

**MATTHEW 9:36**

The title: What drives you?

Have you heard the story of the frog that fell into a deep hole? Try as he might, he could not get out. Mrs Frog standing at the top of the hole admonished, beckoned and belittled him. “Hurry up and get out”, “Come on, we will be late!” “Get out, come on, and let’s go!” But Mr Frog deep down in the hole said simply that he couldn’t. “I’ve tried everything, and there is no way I can get out of this hole. So, Mrs Frog left him there and hopped on down to the pond. A few minutes later, however, Mr Frog appeared beside her on their favourite lily pad. “I thought you said you couldn’t get out?” she said. He responded, “A big truck came along, and I had to”. Mr Frog was driven by fear and the need for self-preservation and quickly got out of the hole.

**King Duncan**

Everyone’s life is driven by something. Several meanings of the verb drive according to the Macquarie dictionary means ‘to cause and guide the movement of’, ‘energy and motivation’. So, what is energising you? What is motivating you? What is driving you?

## **Selfish Ambition**

Selfish ambition is driven by a self-serving agenda with no consideration of others. Now, don't misunderstand me; it's good to be ambitious. Ambitious people working in many fields such as medicine have discovered vaccinations to fight many diseases such as polio, measles and rabies. Being ambitious in this way contributes to the wellbeing of other people.

A schoolmaster in France was discouraged by one of his students. He wrote in his roll book concerning this student: "He is the smallest, the meekest, and the most uncompromising boy in my class." Half a century later an election was held in France to select the greatest Frenchman. By popular vote that smallest, meekest, uncompromising boy was chosen. His name was Louis Pasteur, the founder of modern medicine.

Apparently, Pasteur was afraid of dogs more than most people. Even a distant bark would terrify him. In his mind, he could still see a mad wolf which raged through his boyhood village, bringing agony and death to many of his neighbours. "I have always been haunted by the cries of those victims," he said time and again. At age 60, he gave up all his studies to concentrate on the cure for rabies. For three long years and despite his own fears, he risked his life living with mad dogs. At last, he came through with a vaccine to cure the victims of rabies. On a July night in 1885 he tried the first injection on a little boy whose life seemed doomed. The boy lived. The remembered agony of his neighbours spurred Louis Pasteur to find a cure for this dreaded disease.

At 73 years of age, a national holiday was declared in his honour. He was too weak to attend the ceremony in Paris, so he sent a message to be read by his son. The message read: "The future belongs not to the conquerors but the saviours of the world."

Louis Pasteur's life was driven by the desire to serve humanity.

Paul writes in his letter to the church in Philippi:

*<sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.*

**PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4**

## **Materialism**

I want you to do an exercise and go through your cupboards and pantry's and wardrobes to see if there are things in there that you really need or will have any further use of, or whether all of those things make you feel good and contented. Be surprised. The need to acquire more and more things is what drives some people. The need to have more things is based on the misconception that more things equate to happiness. Materialism puts you at the centre and ignores others and ultimately God.

Jesus said, seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added. The Message Bible puts it in this way:

*30-33* "If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

**MATTHEW 6:30-33** MSG

*33* But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.

**MATTHEW 6:33** CEV

## **Fortune**

Some people are driven to make a fortune at great cost to their health and relationships.

A rich man complained to a psychiatrist despite his great wealth which enabled him to have whatever he wanted; he still felt miserable. The psychiatrist took the man to the window overlooking the street and asked: "What do you see?" The man replied, "I see men, women and children." The psychiatrist then took the man to stand in front of a mirror and asked: "Now, what do you see?" The man replied, "I only see myself." The psychiatrist then said to the man "In the window, there is a glass, and in the mirror, there is a glass, and when you look through the glass of the window, you see others, but when you look through the glass of the mirror you only see yourself". "The reason for this," said the psychiatrist "is that behind the glass in the mirror is a layer of silver. When silver is added, you cease to see others. You only see yourself".

A rich young ruler came to Jesus, asked what he must do to have eternal life: *21* "If you want to give it all you've got," Jesus replied, "go sell your possessions; give everything to the poor. All your wealth will then be in heaven. Then come follow me."

**MATTHEW 19:21** MSG

It would be appropriate to say a few words about hospitality and leadership.

## **Hospitality**

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

The text from Genesis 18 points to hospitality on the part of Abraham towards the three men (**Genesis 18:2**) who have arrived. Commentators point out these three people (men) as being divine. The unfolding drama asks an important question: Who is providing hospitality? Is it Abraham, or the three figures that symbolise the divine?

Professor Brendan Byrne in his book on Luke's gospel titled 'The Hospitality of God', 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 a 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, Prof. Brendan Byrne St Pauls, Australia 2006 p4*

This idea of the hospitality of God enables us to see the text from Matthew's gospel in a new light. Verse 36 of Matthew, chapter 9 states:

*<sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd.***

**MATTHEW 9:36** NRSV

## **Leadership**

The absence of shepherds in this text, speaks of Israel as being devoid of leadership. It wasn't devoid in the physical sense, it was there; however, it was leadership tainted probably by self-serving agendas and ambition, materialism and fortune-seeking, among many others reasons. Such leadership that cares only for some and not for all, and devoid of moral and ethical decision making contributes to the people's 'harassed' and 'helpless' state, according to the text.

Jesus' arrival signals that salvation, liberation, restoration, reconciliation that God gives, is now at hand. The leadership Jesus provides is undergirded by compassion for all. His preaching, teaching and healing are fulfilling his Father's mission and heralding the visitation of God, the hospitality of God to the world. There is reason to hope.

## **Conclusion**

Importantly, the text addresses us with a charge – an encouragement:

*<sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few;  
<sup>38</sup>therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."*

**MATTHEW 9:37-38** NRSV

We see here that Jesus requires assistance from his disciples, even those disciples in the twenty-first century and beyond to continue the compassionate, caring leadership. These disciples will go out with the authority of Jesus to provide compassionate and servant leadership. In the midst of self-serving agendas, this type of leadership is wanting in all spheres of life, be they religious, political, social, environmental, economic and so on.

What is it that is driving you?

Friends, may we be driven by Jesus' love and enthusiasm for the kingdom of God, to follow Jesus in the service of others and extend God's hospitality to all? Amen.

Let us pray:

Loving Lord Jesus, please help us as we respond to your call to be your labourers in the harvest, to be your vessels for your liberation, salvation, restoration and reconciliation. Sustain and strengthen us so we are not tempted to those things which will consume us and distract us from your calling on our lives. We thank you for the good news of Jesus and the opportunity to know you and make you known. Amen.

### **We Respond**

**Speak** <https://youtu.be/yqHueq55kcA>

#### **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:

### Bank Transfer

**BSB:** 013-915

**Account Number:** 354 439 707

**Account Name:** Hoppers Crossing  
Uniting Church

**Reference:** 'Your SURNAME'

### Credit Card

[www.HoppersUniting.church/offering](http://www.HoppersUniting.church/offering)

**No Longer Slaves** <https://youtu.be/wVExNBwpgqM>

## We are Sent

### **BENEDICTION**

Listen to Jesus' response to what he saw:

<sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then, he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

**MATTHEW 9:36-38**

When you leave, go with confidence in God's gracious love and mercy.  
Go, ready to proclaim the good news and serve our Lord by caring for others.

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 to serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

**The Lion and The Lamb** <https://youtu.be/5iuUFf4LOOE>

**The service is ended.**

#### **Acknowledgments**

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

*Approach/Invocation* – Nancey C. Townsley. Edited in parts

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