

Closing Song/Hymn “Brother, sister, let me serve you” [TIS 650]

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.
2. We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.
3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.
4. I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.
5. When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.
6. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Words: Richard Gillard Arr Betty Pulkingham 1977 Integrity Music (Aust)
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Word of Mission & Blessing

Gathered, renewed, nourished and inspired
in the love of the God who is always with us,
We are now sent out to love and to serve.

Go, daring to share
who you are,
what you have,
and what you dare to dream,
for the healing and transformation of our world.
In the name of Christ.
Amen!

Blessing Song “Father bless us” [TiS 781]

Father, bless us as we go,
Jesus, walk beside us,
Holy Spirit guide us.

Words: Robin Mann 1949-
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Uniting



Loddon Mallee Presbytery Worship — Share Sunday 30 August 2020

A place to call home

Focus on Youth Homelessness



Indigenous Acknowledgement

I acknowledge and respect the Dja Dja Wurrung,
Wemba Wemba, and Latje Latje peoples,
the traditional custodians of this land since time immemorial.
I commit myself to working for justice and reconciliation,
and for care of the earth.

Call to Worship

God calls and gathers us as one people,
uniting us together in a life of loving communion

We come to be renewed and refreshed in our life together

Let's worship the God who calls us, claims us and forms us
to embody and share God's love in our world

**Let's worship the One who empowers, inspires and equips us
for our life of loving service.**

Opening Song “Here in this place new light is streaming” [TIS 474]

1. Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away,
see, in this space,
our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.
2. We are the young, our lives are a mystery;
we are the old, who yearn for your face;
we have been sung
throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty;
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.
3. Here we will take of the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons
and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt of the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.
4. Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven light years away,
but here in this space,
the new light is shining,
now is the kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in, and hold us forever;
gather us in, and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Words and music: Marty Haugen
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Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Welcome & Introduction to the Share Sunday theme

Share Sunday is an opportunity for the whole of the Uniting Church to celebrate the incredible community services being undertaken by our agencies, parish missions, presbyteries and congregations. It is also an invitation to continue to explore how we can partner together as we respond to Christ's calling to serve humanity seeking to create an inclusive, connected and just world.

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
We see your love revealed in your promises to your people:
to be with them as they journey out of the wilderness
toward the hope of a 'promised land',
a land 'flowing with milk and honey',
a place of welcome, respite and nourishment.
As we gather together, renew us in this ancient but ever new hope.
Let it strengthen our faith,
and let it shape our resolve to reach out to those so in need
of that promise of a place to call home. Amen

Prayer of Confession

God of grace,
Out of the abundance of your love you created a world of incredible beauty
as a place for all people to call home.
We confess to you that we are not always the faithful stewards
of this great gift that you have called us to be.

Forgive us God....
When we take more than our share...
When we become so focused on protecting what we have that we forget what we can give...
When we fail to ensure all people find their promised place of refuge and rest...

Forgive us God.
Heal us. Renew us.
Inspire us in your generous love. **Amen.**

Declaration of Forgiveness

Hear the Good News of our shared faith:
God's grace is sufficient for us,
The wide, open, welcome space that renews and recreates us.

Embrace the promise Christ offers to all:
"Your sins are forgiven"
Thanks be to God

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you
And also with you.

and invite people to exchange a sign of peace with one another

Offering

We make our offering for the life and work of our church:
sharing in God's ministry of love in and for the world.

Offering Prayer

***Loving God, with thanks for the welcome place you open for us all,
in your life, your world, your church,
we bring you our offering and pray that it may serve
to bring your promise of place of belonging, nurture and hope to all people.
And today, especially for our young people.
To the glory of you name. Amen.***

Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world, our community and for those in need.

Loving God
We know you through your promise to be always with your people,
leading us ever deeper into hope of new and abundant life.

We pray for the many people who are displaced in our world
for whom the promise of a place to call home seems an impossible dream.
Help us to have the courage to see the need in our world
To listen to the voices calling out for change
To act in solidarity for the transformation of our world

We pray for your church, a community called to be a place of welcome
to all who seek a place to belong
Help us to be faithful stewards of your promises,
A people who because they have received so much
Know that they have so much they can share.

We pray for our community, our families, our friends,
We bring before you those who are struggling,
Those in special need of your presence and your promise of hope.
May they be upheld by a renewed sense of your loving solidarity with them in all things.

On this Share Sunday, we particularly pray
for all who work tirelessly alongside those in our communities
so desperately seeking a place to call home.
We thank you for the gift of the new life they bring to so many.
Inspire us to do all we can to share with them as they bring hope to our young people.

We pray together our shared hope in the words of the 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 from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.**

Promises are about people, they are made to people. Our invitation this Share Sunday, extended through our shared faith, an in particular our reading from Exodus, is to grab hold of an ancient but ever new promise and ask how that might inform our response, not to the **problem** of homelessness, but to the **young people** at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Is there hope for them for that promise of a good and broad land? If not flowing with milk and honey, then at least a warm bed, a well stocked fridge,

and a good internet connection to help them to stay connected to their opportunities for access to education, support, friendship, medical care, employment.

Will we grab hold of that promise and commit our time, talents, and yes, our money, to doing our little bit for that promise to come to fruition?

By way of an answer, please watch these two beautiful stories of what can happen when we see beyond overwhelming statistics; when we see, listen, understand and stand in solidarity with our young people.

Watch:

Janet's story – <https://vimeo.com/423497295>

Jordan's story - <https://vimeo.com/423497980>



Song/Hymn “I, the Lord of sea and sky” [TIS 658]

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*
2. I the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain
I have wept for love of them
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send? *Refrain*
3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

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Thanksgiving Song “Give thanks with a grateful heart” [TIS 717]

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus
Christ His Son.

And now let the weak say “I am strong!”
Let the poor say “I am rich!”
Because of what the Lord has done for us.

(Repeat the second part.)

Give thanks. **(Last time only.)**

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Scripture Reading Exodus 3:1-15

¹ Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” ⁴ When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” ⁵ Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹² He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.” ¹³ But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

Sharing Together (Early Word & Activity)

This an opportunity for an intergenerational activity and conversation around the Question
“What does home mean to you?”

Set the context -

the promise of God to bring the people of Israel to a ‘good and broad land, flowing with milk and honey’ ie a place to call home.

Hand out the **Activity Sheet** [provided at the end of this service]
 and encourage everyone to work together in pairs/small groups
 to complete the activity sheet.

Encourage a mix of generations.

Invite contributions in words, drawings, sculpture, mime!

Share in small groups and report back to whole gathering if appropriate.

Another question for reflection:

What might be some of the challenges if you do not have a home?

Prayer:

Holy God, we give you thanks for the blessing of home:
for most people a place of shelter, of comfort, of protection, of safety.....
and so we pray with hope that all people will find a place to call home.

Song/Hymn "All the sleepy should have a place to stay" [TIS 697]

- 1 All the sleepy should have a place to sleep.
All the hungry should have a place to eat.
All the mourning should have a place to weep.
Does not every child of God deserve a home?

*Make love happen
by God's grace and by God's power.
Let God move you on this day and in this hour.
New creations
will then blossom like a flower
for together we can be the hands of God,
for together we can be the hands of God.*

- 2 All who suffer should have a place to heal,
and compassion to ease the pain they feel.
Talk is easy, but who will make love real?
Does not every child of God deserve some peace?

Refrain

- 3 The forgotten should be remembered too.
Lonely people might need a friend or two.
Who would be there if it were me or you?
Does not every child of God
deserve some care?

Refrain

Words: Rusty (Howard M.) Edwards
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Reflection 'a place to call home'

Our reading from Exodus today provides a compelling context for our Share Sunday focus on youth homelessness. It tells a story of a promise made to a people who had suffered a great deal as a minority people under an oppressive regime, a displaced people on an uncertain journey, with little in their past to encourage in them a sense of hope for what might come to them in their future. In the midst of their uncertainty, and their understandable sense of despair, we hear in our reading an extraordinary invitation to hope – this promise:

"I have observed the misery of my people.....
I have heard their cry.... Indeed, I know their sufferings,
and I have come down to deliver them...
to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land,
a land flowing with milk and honey." (Ex 3:7-8).

It is at once a promise that reveals not only what it is that we, as this people, can hope for, but also the identity of the one who makes the promise.

This is the one who sees, who listens, who knows and understands,
and then who acts, in profound solidarity, to bring healing and hope to a dispirited people.

"I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them...to a good and broad land...flowing with milk and honey..." Exodus 3: 8-9



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Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.



This is the one who 'comes down', to meet the people where they are, in their need, to walk alongside them.

But more than that, to then lead them into that promised place, that 'good and broad land', where they will find sustenance, respite, rest, and relief from those past sufferings – a place they can call home.

As one of the foundational stories of our shared faith, this promise of a home or homeland shapes our hopes for ourselves and indeed for all people. It is a beautiful, persistent, insistent hope: A hope that holds a particular challenge to us as people of faith as we turn our focus to the wicked problem of homelessness in our Australian community this Share Sunday. And it is a wicked problem, in every sense of that word. The numbers are startling and disturbing. Take a few minutes to read some statistics.



Over 195,000 Australians are currently on social housing waiting lists.

Homelessness Week
4 - 10 August 2019

Uniting

The most disturbing statistic is the easiest and most necessary one for us to remember. The sad reality is that **2 out of 5 people who experience homelessness are under the age of 25.**

Over recent months, many of us have experienced – far more intensely than ever before – the centrality and significance of what it is to have a place to call home. While we may have grown a little weary of our far too familiar 'four walls and roof', we, nonetheless, have felt the comfort and security of that place of rest and respite from the viral menace threatening our communities. Our homes have become the places where we work, continue our education or educate our kids, attend our virtual doctor's appointments, connect with our friends, our church. Alongside, of course those more prosaic comforts of a bed to sleep in, a fridge of food to raid (far too often) a bathroom to escape to for privacy as much as those more traditional functions.

We have a new appreciation of all it means to have a home, and a sharper perception too of what it means if you do not. What does it mean for those 2 young people out of every five for whom homelessness is their reality?

Two in every five people experiencing homelessness are under the age of 25.

Homelessness Week
4 - 10 August 2019

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These are indeed troubling statistics. It can be tempting to be overwhelmed by the numbers, by the sheer scale of the problem. But as people of faith, the beneficiaries of a promise more compelling than any statistics, we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed.

We have a promise to live out of and live into – no matter how wicked the problem seems. And promises of course are not in the end about statistics or problems.