

**The Vine at Home**  
**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year B**  
**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

**Call to worship**

God is here, as we, God's people, gather to praise, to pray and to reflect.  
Move amongst us, by your Spirit, that we might see your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

**Hymn: 20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord -**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDP9pfVNpdc>

**Opening Prayers**

Faithful God, we are thankful for the example of Jesus who showed us how we should live in this world.

Thank you that when we feel overwhelmed by all that life brings to us, you invite us to rest in you. We give thanks to you for your compassion and love to all who feel like sheep without a shepherd, and for whom the brunt of life's disappointments weighs heavy.

Help us too, so that we could offer compassion to others, as well as receive the same when offered. Bring healing and wholeness to all of us so that we can experience life in all its fullness.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

**Let us now say the Lord's Prayer**

**Readings: Ephesians 5:15-20**

<sup>15</sup> Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Psalm 111 - Praise for God's Wonderful Works**

**1** Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

**2** Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.

**3** Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

**4** He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful.

**5** He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

**6** He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the

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<sup>1</sup> Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Ramona Samuel

nations.

**7** The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

**8** They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

**9** He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is his name.

**10** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it[a] have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

### **John 6:51-58**

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup> for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

### **Reflections on the reading**

*[Today's reflection comes from Ali Johnson, the Digital Evangelist at Cliff College. You can watch, download and use Ali's recording of this sermon*

<https://theworshipcloud.com/view/store/twelvebaskets-vine-video-ali-johnson-the-vine-video-15th-august-2021> NB: Ali's video includes him reading the Psalm for today].

Psalm 111 has two key questions and two key themes for us to understand.

The first is who God is. The Psalm tell us who God is: 'glorious and majestic are his deeds...his righteousness endures forever...the Lord is gracious and compassionate'. This gives us some deep theological truths about the God we worship – it takes us out of our self-centred Western mind-set, into the beautiful understanding of who God is. We read about a God who shows love to his people, who is involved in their everyday, in the unexpected and the ordinary. I love this! I love that this Psalm gives us a deeper understanding of who God is, and this invitation to learn more about God.

The second theme for us, is that this Psalm teaches what God has done for us. In Jeremiah 6:16, we read:

‘This is what the Lord says: “stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘we will not walk in it’.”

It is just an amazing thing, that we – like the people of Israel – are constantly invited to look back. To stand on the mountain and look back where God has come from. When times are really hard, when times are difficult, let us remember what God has done for us.

How would you answer the question: who is God? And what has God done for you?

How might you explain your answers to these questions to one of your friends or family-members who doesn't go to church or even believe in God?

This might help you think about the same questions, but without falling back on some of the clichés that we often use in our church-conversations about our faith.

*[You could use these questions to help frame a conversation as a church and/or in small groups].<sup>3</sup>*

### **Prayers of intercession**

Lord God, we thank you for the opportunity to encounter you in the words of Psalm 111, in the reflections of others, and in our own hearts and minds. As we come together in worship, we pray for a better, safer, fairer world.

We pause, today, to hold in mind all who are suffering and in pain today – all who we are worried about and who we wish to bring into the light and love of the Lord this day.

*[Pause].*

Lord, you know our pain, and you know the challenges faced by those on our hearts. You know the sorrow of grief and isolation and illness and tiredness and breakdown and meaninglessness. You know the sorrow that weighs heavily on our shoulders.

This day, as we pray, help us to know how to become an answer for prayer for those most in need around us, and in our world.

Show me what is mine to do, we pray, dear Lord.

And so, too, we pray for our world. Knowing there are so many 'big' issues that seem beyond us which challenge and trouble us.

God who moves in ways we cannot understand, come amongst the conflicts, the poverty, the injustice, the abuse of power. Come amongst the climate crisis, the refugee camps, the rough-sleepers, the burnt-out.

Come, Holy God, by your grace. Amen.<sup>4</sup>

**Hymn:** 465 STF – Guide me O thou great Jehovah

### **Blessing**

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy, Lord of all we have and are, Inspire us by your Spirit to be a part of your mission. Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the Reflection by Ali Johnson

<sup>4</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

<sup>5</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

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