



St Stephens Williamstown Uniting Church in Australia
Service of the Word for the Gathered at Home
Proper 14 (19) Tenth Sunday after Pentecost / Sunday 9th August 2020

Prepared by Rev S. Juliette Maua'i



Place a cross and Bible on a table (if possible) with a **Green** cloth - today's Liturgical Colour. **If safe**, light a candle **OR** turn on a lamp.
 Open internet: copy then paste link **OR** click on link.

Readings: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Romans 10:5-16; Matthew 14:22-33

We Gather as the People of God

Call to Worship Adapted from Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b; Romans 10:5-16

God of All,
 We sing praises to your name. Praise the LORD!
 Faithful are you, Holy God, whose wonderful works we rejoice in. Praise the LORD!
 On our lips and in our hearts, you call us to your Word.
 How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!
 And we worship the One who saves! Praise the LORD! **Amen.**

Please remain standing as you are able

Song: I sing praises to your name, O LORD - Terry MacAlmon. Sung by Heritage Singers <https://youtu.be/6L4nlA84fXw>

Please be seated

Acknowledgement to Country: I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this Land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. I pay my respect to their Elders: past, present, and emerging.



Greetings / Welcome: The grace of the Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Opening Prayer

Holy God,
 Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and the Gospel news
 many continue to harm us, and we harm ourselves in subtle ways.
 Speak into our modern times and our human hearts
 that we may sing your praises and honour your holy word
 in and through our saving grace, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Sung Prayer of Confession: TIS 635 'Forgive our sins as we forgive' <https://youtu.be/rASh2i3ytLk>

Words of Assurance

For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." *Rom 10:13*
 Hear then Christ's words of grace, 'your sins are forgiven.' **Thanks be to God!**

Young People's Time:

Genesis 37: 12-36 <https://youtu.be/XNKpHrxuGk0> / **Matthew 14:22-33** <https://youtu.be/D0m3DocgFkM>

Since 1988, 4 August was chosen to communally celebrate the birthdays of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people taken from their families at a young age – the Stolen Generations.

This year, Children's Day video features young Wurundjeri and Kalkadoon warrior Jedda with Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Di, and voices of our children from across Australia (refer <https://www.snaicc.org.au>).

We dedicate this time in worship to all Children. Until we right the wrongs of yesteryear, I acknowledge all the young children taken and whom are the "Stolen Generations". View: <https://youtu.be/63dsLW9Pmg8> - Elders of today and tomorrow

Song: TIS 648 Help us accept each other <https://youtu.be/7bqkTMO5fW8>

Please be seated

We Listen for God's Word

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 *Jacob's coloured robe for Joseph divides; Joseph's brothers are angry, and Joseph is sold then taken to Egypt*
Matthew 14:22-33 *Jesus walks on the Water and Peter is the first to walk towards Jesus on the water but falters*

Lord, may we meditate on these words of scripture and come to a deeper understanding of their meaning for our time.

Reflection: Real Families: relations, dreamers, and the underbelly in us we often



ignore... Rev. S. Juliette Maua'i

If you are wondering when will she preach on the Gospel reading? Then the response is to please be patient and let us stay with the Hebrew Scriptures, the Genesis Book, and look for gospel/good news in this intriguing Genesis (37:1-4, 12-28) story that has spanned several weeks in the lectionary. There is a tendency for us to put aside the stories of the Old Testament for many reasons (valid reasons too)! Possible reasons are - a portrayed violent God, patriarchal attitudes and traditions, violent men, and infrequent (or no) women voices, and dysfunctional families (our ancestors) etc. They, are us!

We like to have 'happy ever afters'! But not yet! It will come! Similarly, we will emerge from 'restrictions' but are mandated to 'sit' with what we have!

Today, there is more unrest in the patriarch household of Jacob and his sons. At the heart of the unrest is the youngest son, Joseph – the dreamer! Recently, I listened to a comment made: "the youngest/younger ones should listen to the eldest or older ones, rightly or wrongly"! Without any knowledge of the context in which this comment was made (and to which I listened and retained) and, in the context of today's Hebrew reading, one might quip in suggesting that Joseph's brothers could say the same to their youngest sibling! But this would be irresponsible, and this comment requires 'context' of course, as does today's Genesis (37:1-4, 12-28) reading.

Genesis 37 begins a long cycle of stories (chapters 37-47; and 50) possibly by one author, except chapter 38. Hence, Joseph's story has been looked at frequently as a whole perhaps more than other story cycles in Genesis.

Jacob's family now dwell permanently in the land where Jacob's fathers (Isaac and Abraham) had temporarily lived in the promised land. The promised land!

We step inside the sojourn of Joseph, the youngest of Jacob's sons, born to Jacob's most beloved wife, Rachel. Remember, Rachel, the youngest of Laban's daughters, was the one Jacob had hoped to be his first wife. Jacob, after working so long for Laban, his father-in-law, and Jacob's uncle (Jacob's mother, Rebekah, was Laban's sister), was finally able to take Rachel as his (second) wife.

Just as Rebekah favoured Jacob (rather than Esau), Jacob favours Joseph over his other sons. Note, Jacob's only daughter to Leah (first wife; Gen 29:23), Dinah (Gen 34), is not mentioned in today's Hebrew Scripture/OT reading.

The deceit of Dinah's brothers towards Hamor (Gen 33:18-34:4) and his son, Shechem (Gen 34:13-24), does indicate the violent nature of Jacob's family at Shechem, a city in the land of Canaan (Gen 34:25-31). To this end, we know Joseph's brothers are capable of violence and retaliation.

If we sit with this, we are potentially all capable of retaliating as Jacob's sons did. In such a scenario, are we justified and to what extent? What other approach(es) would make possible another outcome if this happened to you, and arise to the gospel news?

Jacob did not help relational matters asking his youngest son, Joseph, to 'check-up' on the older brothers in the field and report back to him. Growing up in my day we often referred to the 'Joseph' in the family as 'the snitch'! We often found ways to give the snitch the cold shoulder and teach the snitch a lesson by not assisting her/him with their chores.

How did you deal with siblings or those who were like siblings to you over the years, and how is your relationship now? What lessons have you learned? Have you restored and reconciled those faltering moments in your family each time, or are you contemplating a possible step towards restoration?

At each step of the way in this familial story, there is a chance to seek God. There is an opportunity to reflect on God in the journey of Jacob and his sons, and Joseph and the rest of his brothers, in this dysfunctional family. Where? With whom? Is it when we falter that we remember our faith, or is it when adversity calls that we turn towards the faithfulness of God? Be honest!

If Joseph and his dreams revealed his future and the future of his siblings and family, I wonder if Joseph from that moment his brothers decided upon his future at Dothan (Gen 37:17) and when he was about to be thrown in the pit, (v.24) felt remorseful in his attitude and cockiness, before now. Can we relate to being like Joseph – a favoured daughter/son, spoiled by a parent(s) over others, and milking the opportunity to have parental approval to justify our means?

Perhaps we do not wish to recognise the nature within us that mirrors Jacob's sins of the past, Joseph's brothers in the incident they revenged Dinah's rape, and the dream boy Joseph whose attitude to laud over his brothers and parents because he dreamed it! Dreams can come true and dreams may not!

It may well be that we still do not know or recognise the Joseph and sibling jealousies within our families (whichever family context that is real for you). It may well be, that cultures and traditions that follow "the youngest/younger ones should listen to the eldest or older ones, rightly or wrongly", need to be recognised with an ear to listening for God's wisdom and fresh understanding.

I hope you have recognised something in the faltering and dissidence of real families in today's reading. In sitting with Joseph in the cistern pit, and the reality of being taken away, just as we recognise the Children of the Stolen Generations (some, now adults and/or possible deceased), that this realisation and recognition of the real families, is your gospel news for today. That is the good news that has come out of pausing under adverse circumstances.



In our looking for God, for gospel news today we are to stop and take stock in our faltering, (in this wretched global pandemic), in our unfaithfulness to God and our sins towards others, and to call on the God of Abraham and Isaac who saves, as we pause in the pit and, in our being taken away (the Stolen Generations; to Egypt)! **Amen.**

We Respond to God's Word

Song: TIS 658 I, the Lord of sea and sky <https://youtu.be/EcxOkht8w7c>

Offertory Call – We sing of the faithfulness of the Lord and we seek you continually. (*adapted Psalm 105:2, 4*). Your giving helps our St Stephens community for God's mission in Jesus' name. Your offering is gratefully received.



Offertory Prayer - *Offering brought forward*

Eternal God, in faith we know you have saved us, you are saving us, and you will save us.

We offer our whole lives as a living sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Use us; mold us and multiply the gifts we offer for your service and glory to others in community, sisters and brothers who is in Christ Jesus, we pray. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER... (*prayerfully pray the Lord's Prayer in the language/ version of your choice*)

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 for ever. Amen.

We Are Sent Forth into the World

Song: TIS 624 Christ be my leader by night as by day https://youtu.be/sEkStIbCu_k

Blessing/Dismissal

May light come into your eyes,

May hope spring up in your heart,

May peace guide all of your mind,

And keep you in God.

In the communion and blessing of God:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Master Shi Heng Yi - Headmaster Shaolin Temple Europe, 21st Century

"All of our lifetime, all of our lives, are too unique to copy the path from someone else.

To bring meaning to your life, to bring value into your life, you need to learn and master yourself and don't let the hindrances stop you.

If any of you chooses to climb that path to clarity. I would be very happy to meet you at the peak".

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Sunday / Monday (rest day) / Tuesday (work from home) / Thursday

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(can also leave a message, text, or email Juliette)

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