



St Stephens Williamstown UCA - Service of the Word at Home - during Coronavirus Lockdown 6.0
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost 15th August 2021 (Proper 15B / Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time)
 Prepared by Rev S. Juliette Maua'i

Place a cross and Bible on a table. GREEN is today's Liturgical Colour. Suggested hymns, on YouTube. Copy & Paste Links to listen.

Readings: 1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14; Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-20; & John 6:51-58

Song: Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me... <https://youtu.be/JYfzcYohWZg>

Gathering of the People

Call to Worship inspired by Psalm 111

Holy God from whom all wisdom comes.

We praise you Lord and give thanks that we live to praise your name.

Though lockdowns are hurdles, we trust in you to overcome this season of life.

So, we welcome and call on you, Holy God.

For your Spirit dwells in us and we Praise the Lord!

Greetings/Welcome: The Lord be with you. **And, also with you.**

Acknowledgement to Country



We acknowledge that we gather on the land and waterways of the Yalukit-willam and Bunurong Peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of this country. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

Opening Prayer Let us pray...

God of Wisdom draw us together in your Holy Spirit.

We hunger for your sustaining bread of life more so in our living apart from our worshiping community.

Let us not be distracted by what keeps us apart. But grant us your wisdom to focus in faith on Jesus, the Bread of Life. In the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Song: TIS 611 God of grace and God of glory... <https://youtu.be/LYaj1CYbn1c>

Prayer of Confession

God full of grace,

we thank you for daily bread and bread that sustains eternal life.

We confess that we fail to wholeheartedly believe that you have control over all that this world is facing.

We fool ourselves into believing that by our own human knowledge we might master all in this world.

Though we say we want to hear your Word and live according to your covenant, sealed by our baptism in Jesus, we often fail to truly see that we are in your loving and protective presence.

Forgive us gracious God!

Feed us with the living bread of Jesus.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit

that we might live wisely with conviction according to your will and plan in this world.

Help us to discern your wisdom that we might live eternally with you and Christ. Amen.

Assurance: Be filled with the Spirit! Hear Christ's words of grace: "Your sins are forgiven". **Thanks be to God!**

Song: TIS 535 I am the Bread of life... <https://youtu.be/GhdFESRoy5k>

Read/Listen for God's Word

Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path.

Old Testament – 1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14 The death of David and Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

Gospel: John 6:51-58 – Jesus, the Living Bread that came down from heaven

Lord may your Word live in us; and bear much fruit to your glory.

Reflection: 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14 - "Living wisely in a climate of uncertainty..." – Rev S. Juliette Maua'i

One of the glaring failures from the Lectionary today in the Old Testament reading (1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14), is the fact that unless you read the chapters before, the verses in between, and the chapters just after today's chosen scripture, you will only hear (or read) the selective verses chosen. What we are left with in today's verses from 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14, is a brief feel good narrative.

However, the truer picture is in the context of reading from the first chapter of Kings and through to the eleventh chapter, we get to piece together that the rise of Solomon's reign, reflects his now dead King David's, his father, and whose road to Solomon's kingly reign comes out of a controversial, politically motivated, and complex pathway to the monarchy.

Reading the narrative in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings from beginning to end also enlightens a better understanding

and a clearer sense of familial unrest, sinfulness, and violence, that steered the monarchy in Israel (and division). The need for a king was the focus of Israel which was not what God had in mind. God said kings were a bad idea.

Our passage is preceded by David's deathbed, in which he instructs Solomon to do away with David's enemies. Also, in between today's lectionary Old Testament segments is where Solomon takes the opportunity to have his older brother Adonijah (the rightful heir to the throne), killed.

Solomon's brother Adonijah though, through Bathsheba (Solomon's mother / King David's wife / widow of Uriah) whom Adonijah sought, was to ask for King David's late-in-life foreign wife, Abishag, who was chosen and brought to the old king (David), to keep him warm.

In this biblical model of marriage, wives were property, of course, so Abishag belonged to Solomon now. But I do wonder how Abishag felt being a pawn in the familial relations of the monarchy of David, Solomon, and Adonijah? Even kings were not beyond God's wrath. Moreover, even flawed kings with a past and in the uncertainty of Israel as a kingdom, were also within God's grace and mercy, and called!

In this underlying political tension, familial tension, killings, the abuse of women for hire, and flawed leaders governing a kingdom, we see that they often fail to exercise wisdom and right relations.

Where then is the good news?! I suppose the hope lies when they/we recognise that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10) and return to God!

There is an assurance in the eternal wisdom of God who calls them/us and God who grants more than they/we deserve. There is a recognition of the prophets of faith, those 'called' to rule over a kingdom, or called to lead, and the despair of those whose faith is waning and who struggle at times to maintain 'faith' in volatile and uncertain times such as we are living in with covid19 lockdowns, the flooding and fires around the globe, the resurgence of the Taliban, and covid19 protestors, and death!

Friends in Christ, I encourage you to remain hopeful in God's promises, to continue to pray, read the Word of God, worship with songs of praise and live a life towards the kingdom of God that is partially here and yet to come. Be kind to one another, bear courage to keep on believing in the Lord, loving God and loving others. Amen! **Thanks, be to God!**

Song: TIS 670 Jesus put this song into our hearts... <https://youtu.be/qCYdLA8qR5c>



Offertory - Your offering may be made through direct debit or send your cheque to the Treasurer.

Offertory Prayer – Holy God, you call us to be wise with our time and to know your will. Guide us that we may be giving with our offerings, time, money, prayerful life. Receive now our offerings, seen and unseen, for your onward blessings for others. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Song: TIS 474 Here in this place new light is shining... <https://youtu.be/kTbOxrlQ0zo>

Benediction

May you live a life of love and mercy for God.

May you discern the will of God, sharing your time wisely.

May you sing and make melody to the Lord in your hearts.

And be filled with the Spirit that guides you God's strength and wisdom.

And the blessing of God: Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit remain with you, eternally. **Amen!**

May the Peace of the Lord be always with you! Go well with God into another week!

Acknowledgements: Prepared by Rev S. Juliette Maua'i | CCLI License No. 5062286

Free Prayer & adapted Prayers from UiW2 | New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible translation.

Other resources www.ucc.org | bible odyssey.