



Living-room Liturgy

Introduction

During this very disrupted season of our life we want to continue to celebrate our faith together.

This document is designed to lead you through a service of worship where you are. You can celebrate this on your own or with your family. You can make use of each of the sections and options or choose a few that suit.

We encourage you to join with this at your normal time of worship to maintain that rhythm in a disrupted world. At this stage the service is very much a work in progress so comments are welcome. Send them to

minister@hibiscuscoastpresbyterian.org.nz

There might be some links in this document to content on YouTube and/or elsewhere on the internet. Those are optional and it is up to you if you want to make that part of your time of worship. To use these click on the link and it will open in your internet browser. Please make sure your volume is turned up.

The service is formed into movements that serve to enable a full sense of worship, take the time to read and respond to as many of the sections as you like. This is your time of worship.

We have our **approach** and the **call** of God to all of his people,
Our **response** through prayer and song,
A reading of **scripture**,
A **message** from that scripture,
A chance to reflect and **respond** to God's word, And our closing **benediction**.

What you might need

Internet connection, if you intend to follow the links to internet based content.

Bible, a pen and this Living-room Liturgy

A candle (if health and safety regulations allow)

A quiet place that is distraction free, perhaps your living/dining room

Something nice to eat and drink once your are finished

Please also silence your mobile phone and other distracting devices for the time that you partake in the HCPC Living-room Liturgy.

Take your time / Be comfortable / Let us celebrate our worship together

Approach and Call

Silence and Intention

Take the time to be silent. It is in moments of complete silence that our senses come alive and we are acute to what is happening around us.

What thought and emotion are you now aware of?

What are the sensations that you are experiencing in your body?

What is your deepest desire in this moment?

Be aware of where you are and what you are experiencing. Become aware thereof that somewhere in a living-room on the Hibiscus Coast others are sitting with their candles, perhaps also thinking of you as they prepare to worship.

Prepare yourself to be open to the presence and the working of the Holy Spirit.

Lighting a Candle

Keeping a sound mind and adhering to all Health and Safety regulations, light a candle (or play a YouTube clip of a candle being lit such as: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-OUvfBEYIQ>).

There is something fascinating in the flickering of a flame and as you see, smell and listen in this moment, be aware that this flame is a visual reminder of the presence of God.

Read or perhaps recite aloud the words of John 1:4-5

'in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. '

Take a moment now to think about this verse and if you are sharing this time with a loved one, discuss your thoughts with each other.

Call to Worship (Ezekiel 37, John 11)

Coming from places that have seen better days,

**God bids us to celebrate this day,
a day full of new possibilities.**

Coming with our breath taken away by grief,
**the Holy Spirit breathes new life within us,
renewing our connection with God
and with one another.**

Coming to worship seeking a hope that will endure,
**Christ unbinds the fetters that hold us in death,
speaking in word and sacrament,
and building community for holy service.**

Response to God's call

Prayer (Psalm 130, John 11)

God of life, present and promised,
you are the One to whom we call:
for you are the One who hears,
and you are the One who acts,
bringing us new life
with your grace and love and power.
Lead us in our time of worship,
that we may be prepared to follow your lead
in places where life is at risk—
places where hope seems far away,
places where dreams die during sleep.
When we leave these walls,
help us live the teachings we proclaim
within this place of worship,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song: Blessed Assurance

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SSJicZO6_g)

Singing on your own might be strange to you, or perhaps you are someone who embraces the reverb of your kitchen to sing often. In this time, be comfortable and worship your God. You may use other songs, you may choose to simply recite the words of this hymn.

***This is our story, this is our song.
Praising our saviour all the day long!***

Words of Assurance (Ezekiel 37, Romans 8)

The God we serve is the God of life,
the God of hope, the God of new beginnings—
even for dried-up bones and shattered dreams.
That rattling of bones in Ezekiel's vision
may be heard as the shackles that once held us down
in fear, sin, prejudice, and guilt.
God defies these deadly entanglements
with the power of life.
This we trust, and by this we live.
Thanks be to God!

Lockdown Response

*Yes there is fear. Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying. Yes there is sickness. Yes there is even death.*

But, They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number through the neighbourhood. So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that

Yes there is fear. But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation. But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying. But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness. But there does not have to be disease of the soul

Yes there is even death. But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic

The birds are singing again

The sky is clearing,

Autumn is coming,¹

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able

¹ Adapted to our context. Originally read "Spring is coming."

*to touch across the empty square,
Sing.*

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM

Scripture Reading

Matthew 4:18-22

Luke 10:38-42

Message from our Scripture Reading

You may want to follow the link to listen to our minister, Rev. Werner Schroeder as he talks through this message. The notes below are from his journal, representing the preparation he had done for this weekend's sermon.

Over the past couple of weeks our parish has been preparing for Easter. Not by following the traditional Lenten fast, but by taking up new habits that will enable us to live intentional missional lives. The base scripture for our series is Titus 2:1-10 where Paul is encouraging Titus to "promote the kind of lives that reflects wholesome teaching"² that will "make the teaching about God our Saviour (the Gospel of Jesus Christ) attractive in every way."³

As such, our series is titled "Get into it ...". The motivation of taking up missional habits being as strong now that we are in lockdown as it was when we had the freedom to walk about, meet with people and gather in groups to worship.

The acronym **B.E.L.L.S** are the flags that marked our journey. An attempt to give each habit a handle to grab onto and remember it by. We have already dealt with the first three of those, but I offer a short recap for those who may not have been part of the series until now.

B: We who are called by His name are vessels of **Blessing**. Like Abraham (Genesis 11:27 - 12:9), we are blessed to be a blessing to all people. This is no simple task and is not something that will happen by accident, it is rather a habit that each of us should intentionally grab onto. I encourage you to still look for opportunity to bless people, perhaps by leaving a note under their door or a chocolate in a mailbox, or a bag with groceries when you are coming from the store. Be intentional about being a blessing in our isolated community.

E: We had a look at the importance of meals in the ministry of Jesus and soon realised that in faith communities, meals are both Sacramental and Missional. Sacramental in that the basic elements of bread and wine point us towards the life, ministry and promise found in Jesus Christ. Missional in that it connects us with

² Titus 2:1 - New Living Translation

³ Titus 2:10 - New living Translation, text in brackets added by Rev. Werner Schroeder

people, creating opportunities for new bonds of friendship, mission and purpose to develop. I want to encourage you to still try and eat with people (don't break the isolation rules) in ways that capture the essence of it all. Perhaps arrange to eat a meal at a certain time and zoom/skype/call/message the other person at that time. Pray together, talk about the same things that would have happened if the table was joined not only in voice but also in location.

We looked at the tremendous impact of some of Jesus' meals reading about Zacheus (Luke 19:1-10) and partaking in a meal representing the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples (Luke 22:17-20). **Eat** together missionary and sacramentally.

L: The first "L" is a habit of **listening**. Taking time, being quiet and listening to what the spirit of God is saying. Here we looked at two very different prophets. A very young Samuel (1 Sam 3:1-11) who did not realise that God was calling his name and thankfully had a mentor in his life who realised what was happening and pointed it out.

The second prophet was Elijah who was running for his life, reached the end of his motivation and simply wanted God to end it all. We saw how God sustained him, called him out to a quiet place and asked of him to search through the earthquake, the wind storm and even the scorching fire to find God in the silence of a whisper.

We need to take up this habit of seeking God, listening, discerning what He is saying. Now that we are in Lockdown, we suddenly have time on our hands. Time to listen and I urge you to seek the Lord.

L: Learn

This brings us to the second last letter in our acronym. This **L** serves to encourage us to learn from Christ. Study His ways and His words so that we can be transformed into His likeness⁴.

To understand the words Jesus spoke to His disciples upon calling them (Matthew 4:18-22), I would like us to get an overview understanding of the Jewish Education system. Like today, Jewish children all started school around the age of 6. The basics of their education and Jewish worldview was built upon the Torah⁵. This foundational level education was called Beit Safir.

It was in Beit Safir that they were taught by a local Torah Rabbi, likely in a local Synagogue so that by the age of 10 most of them had memorised the Torah and could recite it by heart.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:17 New Revised Standard Version - 'And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. '

⁵ Torah is a Hebrew word meaning teachings instruction or "the way" and is used to refer to the first five books of the Bible

After Beit Safir, most children progressed into learning trades and doing business with their families. The very best and brightest children however, would continue their education in what was called Beit Talmud where they would memorise the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures⁶.

The overwhelming majority of people who started Beit Safir and even the majority of those who started Beit Talmud would, by the age of 15, be working and apprenticing with their families and going about general life.

There was also a very small percentage of scholars, who by the end of Beit Talmud, would continue their studies in what was called Beit Midrash. This was where a student would seek out a Rabbi and apply to become one of that Rabbi's disciples. The goal of being such a disciple was not merely to know what the Rabbi knows, but also to mimic him in every way - a student who applied to be a disciple wanted to be like the Rabbi in every possible way.

The way in which a Rabbi would then have determined who was good enough to be such a disciple would then question the applicant (exam style grilling). After the examination he would send most back to their families to continue their apprenticeship there, but to those who he hand picked he would extend the invitation "Follow Me".

So when Jesus finds His disciples doing daily life and extends the invitation to them with the words "Follow Me", it is no wonder that they left everything and did exactly that. "Follow me", was an invitation not merely to go where Jesus went, but also to learn from Him and grow towards becoming like Him.

This is the habit that I encourage you to take up this week. Perhaps the first time, perhaps a renewal of your response to His calling. Jesus is still extending this invitation to you and me, despite of our circumstances and amidst our circumstances the invitation of Christ is drawing us into His arms. Can you hear it? Can you respond to His calling?

I want us to be reminded that Jesus walked the streets of Jerusalem and the neighbouring towns in difficult and strange times. As we follow His movements throughout the Gospels, somehow we find Jesus drawn to the outcast and the lonely, the ill and those who are afraid. His mission had always been to bring hope to those who have become hope-less, to connect to those who were lonely, to teach an understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven that was completely different to the worldview of the day.

This brings me to the second well known reading. This document is already quite hefty and therefore without a deep devotion on the passage in Luke 10, perhaps the following closing remarks.

⁶ Genesis through to Malachi

In times of pressure we tend to grab the task at hand and start doing it, much like Martha. Jesus however reminds Martha that Mary had chosen the better response by not being busy, but sitting at His feet. Thereby highlighting how important it is for us to be the ones sitting at the feet of our Lord, learning from Him, being transformed by Him.

As we take up this habit, may 2 Corinthians 3:17 be our prayer. - 'And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Response & Offering

Questions:

In what ways can you be missional, especially during the four weeks of lockdown here in NZ?

In what ways do you think we can respond to the state of emergency?

What else was there in the passages that caught your attention and how does that add into our habit of **Learning** from Christ?

Prayer for the people

by Gaynor Larsen

Please join with me in prayer

O loving Lord, At this time of Lent we are humbly reminded, of the path Jesus took as He drew nearer to the cross - help us to be mindful of the challenges He faced during His time in the wilderness.

Be with our world, our Christian community and our church family as we too face challenges in our own wilderness at this time of world crisis. Be with us as we march with Jesus to the cross and give us strength as we take up our own crosses at this time.,

We are grateful for the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and for the salvation that came through His great sacrifice. Give us courage to follow our Saviour.

Be with our world leaders, and the leaders of this country, give them wisdom and strength as they are forced to make hard decisions and be with our people, Lord, - our people in New Zealand, in our local community and in our congregation. Help us to be kind and caring, to look out for those in need and to show the love and compassion that we have been taught through your Son, Jesus Christ.

In thinking about our own church family, although we are separated and not meeting to join in worship each Sunday, we are connected by love - we are connected by our love of you, O Lord, we are connected by our desire to care for each other, as you cared for us and we are connected as we join in our prayers to you. At this time, we particularly ask for your comfort and strength to Yvonne and Bill as they face the tragic loss of their beloved grandson, Brad, and we pray for

the family of our lovely, Glenn Hoare as she now sits with you in heaven. Bless them Lord and give them peace.

Be with us Lord through this difficult time help us to care for one another as you care for us, calm our fears, keep us safe and help us to feel the comfort of your loving arms around us all. Hear our prayers Lord, in the name of your precious son, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Offering

At this time of lockdown, giving our offerings it is not as easy as sending our plates around. We acknowledge though, that giving our tithes and offerings, and our contributions to our food bank remain an integral part of our worship. It is these that continue to enable our ministry.

Let us then at this stage in our living-room liturgy, think especially of those who have lost their jobs, closed their businesses and also those facing financial uncertainty as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic. Pray also of those continuing to work as essential services personnel.

Let us bring before God also the many churches who could suffer financial crises during this time. With people's uncertainty of the future of their jobs or having to cut back on costs, church offerings are often the first expense to go. One way we can be the church, especially to our local church, is to continue to give.

Our treasurer has compiled a letter explaining how you can deposit an offering directly into our bank account. If that is not an option for you, consider an envelope into which you place your offering. You can then bring it to our very next worship service to place the envelopes in the offering plate.

Song: Nearer my God to thee

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyxXGdG3-Io>)

Again, singing might be strange. This is a version of one of my favourite hymns by BYU Vocal point - an impressive choir. Sing, speak or pray these words as you spend some time responding to what the Word of God and the Holy Spirit has been awakening in your heart.

***Still all my song shall be,
Nearer my God to thee!***

Prayer

God, help us be calm; when
information comes from all sides,
correct or not, help us to discern;
when fear makes it hard to breathe,
and anxiety smothers us,

slow us down, God;
help us to reach out with our hearts,
when we can't touch with our hands;
help us to be connected,
when we have to be physically distant;

For those who work with the sick For
those who are trying to find a cure, for
those who are sick,
and those who are grieving, we pray,
for all who are affected,

all around the world...
we pray for safety, for health, for
wholeness.

May we feed the hungry,
give drink to the thirsty,
clothe the naked and
house those without homes;
may we walk with those
who feel they are alone,
and may we do all that we can to heal

Help us, O God,
that we might help each other.

by the Right Rev. Richard Bott

Benediction

(Romans 8, Psalm 130)

We are a people loved by God.

We will live as signs of this love.

We are a people blessed with hope.

We will live in light of this hope.

May the love of God, the grace of Christ,
and the courage of the Spirit, strengthen our faith
and set us loose to share God's love with all.

Amen and amen!

Closing

Consider writing a note to a neighbour or even better, pick up the phone and call
someone from our Parish Directory. **Let us stay connected.**

Please blow out your candle and turn on the sound on your phone and other
devices.

Now enjoy the drink and the food that you prepared before hand. Share freely what
you think, feel and experienced throughout this liturgy.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Rev. Werner Schroeder
Hibiscus Coast Presbyterian Church.