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Sunday 14 June 2026 – Pentecost 3

Our Service today has been prepared by Jane Garrick one of our Lay Preachers

Welcome to our service this morning.

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusiveness, Justice, Sustainability.

Humility: we recognise we do not have all the answers but are prayerfully journeying together as we try to seek them.

Welcome and Introduction

As Richard reminded us last Sunday, we are in Ordinary Time in the church calendar. Ordinary Time emphasizes the fullness of Christ's life and ministry, rather than focusing on a single event or mystery. The Gospel readings during this season often feature parables, miracles, and the teachings of Jesus, guiding us to apply the Gospel to daily life. It is a time for spiritual growth, reflection, and living out our faith in ordinary, everyday moments. As we look into our Scripture readings from Romans and the Gospel of Matthew, we will explore the commandment that Jesus gave His disciples: "Freely you have received, freely give" and what that might look like in the context of our own lives.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, as we come into Your Presence this morning, we settle our hearts before You... Help us to leave the cares and concerns of the world at Your feet... Thank You for the gift of life You have so freely given us. Thank You for all Your gifts to us. Help us to embrace all the opportunities You give us, so that we may learn from them and grow in our faith in You...

Bless our gathering and guide our thoughts, words, and actions. **Amen.**

Mission Statement: Sharing God's love, creating hope, working for justice.

Call to Worship

Come, let us gather with grateful hearts, for the Lord has been good to us.

We give thanks to God, whose love endures forever.

He has carried us through seasons of joy and seasons of trial, never letting us go.

We remember His faithfulness and give thanks.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, God's mercies meet us anew every day.

Great is Your faithfulness, O Lord.

When we called, Lord, You heard us. When we stumbled, You lifted us. When we lacked, You provided.

For all that You have given us — we give You thanks, O God.

Let us enter His presence with thanksgiving in our hearts and come into His courts with praise.

We bring our gratitude, our worship, and our whole selves to You, Lord.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

With thankful hearts, we worship the God who has done great things for us. Amen.

Hymn MP50: [Be Still for the Presence of the Lord](#)

(Lyrics and Tune: David J. Evans)

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| 1. Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy one is here
Come bow before him now
In reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on Holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy one is here. | 2. Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with Holy fire
With splendor He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around. |
| 3. Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place. | |

Prayer of Approach

Loving God, we come as we are

Gather us again in your grace

We bring our weariness and distractions

Gather us again in your grace

We bring our fear of not being enough

Gather us again in your grace

We bring our longing to be useful, faithful, and kind

Gather us again in your grace

You call us not to control, but to trust

Gather us again in your grace

You send us not alone, but together

Gather us again in your grace

You ask for open hearts more than full hands

Gather us again in your grace.

Words of Assurance

God has not abandoned this world.

In Christ, we are loved, called, and accompanied.

Grace meets us before we feel ready.

We do not go alone, and we go knowing we are loved. **Amen.**

[The Lord's Prayer](#) *(sung version, please remain seated)*

Our Father, which art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
and 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. (repeat)

Story

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch watchmaker, author, and Holocaust rescuer whose family sheltered around 800 Jews and resistance members from the Nazis. Arrested in 1944, she was sent to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. Her father and sister perished in captivity, but she survived.

Corrie tells the story about when their barracks were infested with fleas. Her sister Betsie insisted they should obey the commandment to “*give thanks in all circumstances*”. They should thank God even for the fleas. Corrie thought it was absurd — until they discovered the guards refused to enter the barracks *because* of the fleas. That meant the women could pray, read Scripture, and encourage one another freely. A tiny, miserable nuisance became a shield of grace.

It’s a reminder that God can work through the smallest, most unlikely things. He cares about the details. He is at work in our daily lives, whether it is in times of great trial, or otherwise.

Hymn AA 94: [Loving Spirit](#)

(Lyrics: Shirley Murray, Tune: Colin Gibson)

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| 1. Loving Spirit, loving Spirit,
you have chosen me to be;
you have drawn me to your wonder,
you have set your sign on me. | 3. Like a father you protect me,
teach me the discerning eye,
hoist me up upon your shoulder,
let me see the world from high. |
| 2. Like a mother you enfold me,
hold my life within your own,
feed me with your very body,
form me of your flesh and bone. | 4. Friend and lover, in your closeness
I am known and held and blessed:
in your promise is my comfort,
in your presence I may rest. |

Readings

Romans 5:1-8 *(page 1750)*
Matt 9:35 – 10:1, 5-8 *(page 1514)*

Sermon/Reflection - Freely you have received, freely give.

Gifts. We all give them. We all love to receive them. Here is a gift for... (give to someone). It’s for you. Please open it.

I wonder what could be in it?

[The person opens the gift, only to find that the box is empty.]

What is going on? It's a gift but the box is empty! What is the message we can receive from this object lesson? It is that sometimes **the most important gifts we can give, or receive, cannot be wrapped.**

Think about gifts of love, kindness, encouragement, friendship and peace.

Jesus is our great example here. The Bible tells us that He went about doing good. Wherever He went He gave. He gave multiple gifts to multiple peoples – gifts of healing, the sharing of the Good News, friendship, hope and so much more.

In the 9th chapter of Matthew we see him giving, giving, giving... Firstly, He gives healing and forgiveness to the paralytic, the man whose friends let him down through the roof. Then He gives Matthew the tax collector the call up of his life. Jesus gives His friendship and fellowship when He eats with the tax collectors and sinners. A ruler then comes to Him to beg Him to come and heal his daughter who is gravely ill – in fact while they are talking, the message comes that she has in fact, died. And then, on the way, He gives healing to the woman with the issue of blood, who has spent all her livelihood over a period of 12 years. Two blind men have their sight restored and a man who is mute and demon possessed is delivered from bondage. Yes, Jesus is very busy, giving, giving, giving. His whole nature is to give. As it says in the gospel of Mark "**the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.**"

So we have multiple stories from the Bible about Jesus the Gift Giver. We also see Him at work in people's lives outside of the Bible. The story of Corrie ten Boom, reveals His giving nature through His provision in difficult and trying circumstances. Corrie received what seemed to be a most unwelcome gift – the gift of fleas, but God worked it out for good.

This reminds me of the life of George Müller who, in spite of caring for thousands of orphans in 19th-century England, never asked anyone for money or food. He preferred to pray and put the children's needs into God his Father's hands. He knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that his Heavenly Father was a giver of good gifts. One morning he sat the children at an empty breakfast table. No food. No money. He simply prayed: "Father, thank You for what You will give us to eat." Moments later, a baker knocked — he had felt compelled to bake extra bread. Then a milk cart broke down outside the orphanage, and the milkman offered all the milk before it spoiled. Breakfast arrived, right on time. This is a lovely picture of God's provision.

A similar story much closer to home happened recently and this has been shared in multiple churches... A young mum in Northland reached the end of her week with almost no food left. Her partner's hours had been cut, and she was trying to stretch what she had for her kids. She prayed a simple, tired prayer while washing dishes:

"Lord, I don't know how to make this work. Please help."

That afternoon, she heard a car pull up. When she opened the door, no one was there — but three full bags of groceries sat on the porch. Bread. Fruit. Nappies. Even the exact cereal her kids loved.

Later she learned that a woman from her church had felt a sudden, persistent nudge from God: "Go now. Buy groceries. Take them to her house."

She didn't know why. She didn't know the need. She just obeyed.

A small act. A quiet street. A God who sees.

Back to our Matthew passage, we see Jesus going about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. Because He knew that He was on a journey to the Cross He needed to teach and equip His disciples to do likewise. They were given "power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease." He told them to preach the gospel, telling everyone that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

And what is the reason they should do this? "**Freely you have received, freely give**" says Jesus.

This is the whole point of my reflection this morning. We have received so much from God. What are we doing with all that He has given us?

Matthew tells us that Jesus gave the disciples power to do the same things that He did. We cannot do His work in our own strength but need the Holy Spirit to enable us. Yes, any one of us can go to the supermarket, buy some bags of groceries and drop them off to a poor family, but He is calling us to so much more than this.

There is no such thing as a part time Christian. This means that when I am tired and grumpy, grieving or sad, I am still full of His gifts. All it may take is a smile or an encouraging word to make someone's day. Perhaps it is the prayer you pray in the car while driving to town when you see a scruffy person sitting at a bus stop. Perhaps it is taking the time to write that letter or make that phone call that you have been putting off for a while.

I remember many years ago feeling an urge to pray for a woman I knew. It was a Saturday morning, and I was busy so I thought I would do it later. Sound familiar? Well, to my shame I didn't pray, and I heard later that day that she had been involved in a very serious car accident in which someone had died.

Ever since then I have tried to immediately obey those promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Notice that Jesus uses the word "freely". Everything that God gives us is free. There are no strings attached, no hidden clauses, no expected returns even. We have all freely received. Every breath we take is a gift from Him. His gifts cover all aspects of our lives – not just the physical but also the spiritual, relational, intellectual and emotional. Love is a gift from Him. Our ability to love others is a gift from Him. Our ability to forgive and choose kindness over hate is a gift from Him.

And when things go wrong? Where is God then and where are His wonderful gifts, you might ask? What about those who are suffering? I don't have all the answers, but I do know that Romans 8:28 is the foundation of my faith. This verse says

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose."

The fleas in the concentration camp barracks, the lack of food on the table for the orphans, the accidents that happen, the sicknesses and diseases we are prone to, will not go away. We live in a fallen world. But if and when these things happen, we can be assured that, if we are His, He will work it all for good. God always gives grace. His mercy always triumphs over His judgement.

The word disciple comes from an Old English word meaning learner or pupil; a follower. We have not arrived or are perfected in any way. But we are on that great journey of life, walking with Jesus, and growing in the knowledge and love of God. It is love that must be our motivation; not duty or obligation. If God so loved that He gave – He gave us His only Son – so it is with us: we love because He first loved us.

There is a beautiful harmony between the two parts of Jesus' words "freely you have received, freely give." They go together. Imagine what it would be like to only receive good gifts for yourself and never give anything out. Conversely, only giving out to others and not being able to receive. Both are very important if we are to be whole people. Learning to receive is hard – we don't want any limelight or attention on ourselves – but we need this grace very much. It blesses the giver when we receive. It adds richly to our own ability to bless others. If this has been an area of difficulty for you, as it has been for me over the years, put it in God's hands and ask Him to change you. He will do it!

Robert Louis Stevenson said "[You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving.](#)"

In our everyday lives, in the ordinariness of our going out and our coming in may love – the love of God and our love for Him – always be our motivation. Amen

Hymn AA59: [He Came Singing Love](#) (Lyrics and Tune: Colin Gibson)

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| <p>1. He came singing love,
and he lived singing love;
he died singing love.
He arose in silence.
For the love to go on
we must make it our song:
you and I be the singers.</p> <p>2. He came singing faith
and he lived singing faith;
he died singing faith.
He arose in silence.
For the faith to go on
we must make it our song:
you and I be the singers.</p> | <p>3. He came singing hope
and he lived singing hope;
he died singing hope,
He arose in silence.
For the hope to go on
we must make it our song:
you and I be the singers.</p> <p>4. He came singing peace
and he lived singing peace;
he died singing peace.
He arose in silence.
For the peace to go on
we must make it our song:
you and I be the singers.</p> |
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Offering

Thank You Lord that we have freely received so much from Your Hands. Take, this our freewill offerings and use them to multiply Your truth, Your grace, Your justice, Your love in all the earth. Amen

Community Thanks, Notices & Concerns.

Prayers of Intercession

Dear Lord

We lift up those who are sick and suffering, asking for Your healing touch.... Fill them with peace and faith as they trust in You.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Strengthen the faith of all those who trust in You and those who are struggling to believe. Open eyes, ears and hearts to Your wonderful grace and goodness.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

In a world filled with chaos and conflict, we pray for true peace to prevail, not just the cessation of conflict, but changed hearts renewed in love. May Your love and truth overcome hatred and unity replace division.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Step into all those situations and people who are on our hearts... Do what only You can do and let your peace, healing and help be near.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Hymn: [Dare to Live the Dream God Gives You](#)

(Lyrics: David Bjorlin; Tune: [Hyfrydol](#))

1. Dare to live the dream God gives
you

Seek out paths as yet unknown
For the Spirit leads you onward
And you never walk alone.

Chorus:

*Go in courage, walking humbly
Bearing love none can destroy
Doing justice, loving mercy
Go with God, and go in joy.*

2. When the dread of doubt assails
you

And the road remains unclear
Yet our faithful God will guide you
Through the doubt and dread of fear.

Chorus

3. Journey on with true companions
Joining hands and sharing bread
For we share a common journey
And in friendship we are fed.

Chorus

4. Dare to live the dream God gives us
Brave the path, and face the fear
For the Spirit will unite us;
Christ Himself is always near.

Chorus

The Blessing

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Go with His love in your hearts:

A love that forgives

A love that faces and conquers fear,

A love that overcomes the power of apathy,

A love that shares gifts in community,

A love that is not overcome by loss,

A love without limits of time or space.

A love made human and understandable in Jesus the Christ.

Thanks be to God for His wonderful love. Sung Amen

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