

Morning Worship
3rd Sunday of Epiphany
24.01.2021
Judith Moratscheck



Personal preparation before the service begins.

Please take time to remember where you are, and why you are here. Give thanks and become still in the presence of God

PRELUDE

God our Creator

1. God, our Creator, hear us sing in praise,
God, always tender, God who knows our ways.
God, always present, God who really cares.
We offer thanks for all the love you share.
We sing in praise for the great gifts you give:
all of creation, ev'rything that lives,
glories of nature, our own time on earth,
sending your Son among us proves our worth.

Refrain

Loud is our praise as we sing of you,
one with people of faith, ancient and new.
Bless us afresh with your grace, we pray.
Help us witness your love today.

3. Gathered together, sisters, brothers all,
baptised in Jesus, faithful to your call,
we are one fam'ly. May your will be done
and, for all people, may your Kingdom come.
'God who is love', you are Our Father true;
Jesus, our brother, fully human too;
Spirit, your presence, with us every day.
Love is your essence, Love our truest way.

Words: Stephen Eric Smyth | Melody: Traditional Scottish melody

GATHERING IN

Among the poor,
among the proud,
among the persecuted,
among the privileged,
Christ is coming to make all things new

In the private house,
in the public place,
in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,
Christ is coming to make all things new

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the hidden might be seen,
Christ is coming to make all things new

Within us, without us,
behind us, before us,
in this place, in every place,
for this time, for all time,
Christ is coming to make all things new

SoF 357 LIVING LORD

1. Lord Jesus Christ,
You have come to us,
You are one with us,
Mary's Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring Your love and goodness in;
Jesus, our love for You we sing,
Living Lord.

4. Lord Jesus Christ,
we would come to You,

live our lives for You,
Son of God.
All Your commands we know are true,
Your many gifts will make us new,
into our lives Your power breaks through,
Living Lord.

CCLI Song # 3200562
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Let us pray with words from Psalm 128

Blessed are all who fear the Lord,
who walk in obedience to him.
You will eat the fruit of your labor;
blessings and prosperity will be yours.
Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your
house;
**your children will be like olive shoots around
your table.**
Yes, this will be the blessing
for the man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion;
**may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.**
May you live to see your children's children—
Peace be upon Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit,
**As it was in the beginning, is now and shall be
for ever.**

THE COLLECT

Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

GOSPEL READING

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according
to John 2, 1-11

Glory to you, O Lord

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

TALK - An imaginative journey to the wedding

at Cana

Both the readings, Psalm 128 and John's Gospel reflect God's generosity, abundance, blessings, joy and even humour.

I'd like to concentrate today on the Gospel reading from John and take us back imaginatively to the wedding in Cana, a small, insignificant village in Galilee. Let's set the scene first: The bride and groom, whose names we do not know, became engaged a year ago. The bridegroom has been busy preparing for this day for most of the year. Many relatives, friends and neighbors have been invited. It is going to be a HUGE party! A joyous occasion with lots of singing, dancing, an abundance of food and a never ending supply of wine. This party is not just a one day affair – no, it can go on for a whole week.

And it is here in this small village at a local wedding that Jesus performs his first miracle, or as John says, his first sign.



Now why sign? What is a sign? We see road signs every day, some serve as pointers or warnings. A sign can point the way to a destination (1); be a warning for something (2); tell us to watch out for something (3), or make us aware of possible danger (4). We don't dwell on the actual sign, we focus on what is coming ahead, otherwise we'd miss the point of the sign and end up in the wrong place, in the water, crashing into big machinery or blowing ourselves up. A sign is a pointer to things to come. Like the messenger and the message as we'll see later in the story.

So back to Cana and to one of the servants called Ben ...

Ben is serving food and drink to the bride and groom who are sitting under their canopy. Hundreds of guests are present and it is Ben's job, alongside his fellow workers, to ensure the guests have all they need and are happy and joyful. Ben and the other servants are run off their feet as there are hundreds of guests there. Amongst the guests Ben sees

Jesus' mother bustling around, talking with people. Jesus himself and his friends are there laughing loudly and seem to be having a great time. All the guests seem to be very merry. Things are going well. Ben sees Mary inspecting plates of food and the wine jugs, she watches her as she turns with a look of shock on her face. He hears her muttering to herself as she quickly passes him: "There is no more wine! It's run out!! O how embarrassing for the bride and groom and their families." Since her husband's death Mary has relied on her 30 year old son and knows he can do special things. "He can fix this problem", she mutters to herself. Mary goes up to Jesus and says to him quietly: "They have no more wine." Jesus' response is quite curt: "Dear woman, why do you involve me? ... My time has not yet come."

Unperturbed, Mary turns to Ben and the other servants and says to them: "Do whatever he tells you."

Jesus looks reflectively into the distance. If his Father is really calling him now and telling him it is time to reveal his deity publicly, in this little village, with these ordinary people, then the larger plan of God would begin to unfold. There would be no way back. Up to now he had concentrated on teaching and preaching about the Kingdom of God, particularly to his disciples. He had tried to avoid attracting great attraction by performing miracles. He had even warned those like the leper whom he had healed not to tell anyone else. It hadn't always worked, but he was aware of the danger of the messenger becoming more important than the message. But it was up to his Father to decide the timing.

Ben notices Jesus signaling to him and the other servants to come to him. He tells them to fill up the six stone jars that were used for ceremonial purification, as part of the Jewish tradition. Ben wonders if Jesus misunderstood – it's not the water for the guests to wash their hands in that's running out, it's the wine! Apart from that, it will take hours to fill the jars which hold between 20 and 30 gallons of water. That means tripping backwards and forwards

to the well, and they are supposed to be looking after the guests at the same time. But, he shrugs his shoulders and he does as Jesus asks.

When they have finished Jesus tells Ben: “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet”. The master’s face lightens up as he drinks what Ben has given him. This new wine tastes much better than the wine that was being served before. He nods and smiles a hugely satisfied smile. Ben is puzzled, but relieved the master did not shout at him for bringing him dirty water to drink. The master then gets up and heads over to the bridegroom:

“Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

Ben sees that the bridegroom has absolutely no idea what the master is talking about. Ben turns to look at Jesus – did he just wink at me?? Did Jesus really just turn all that water in to wine? In fact, no-one but Ben, his fellow servants and the disciples seem to be aware of the fact that Jesus has just turned around 600 litres of water into wine! Jesus friends are standing mouths agape staring at Jesus in utter astonishment, wonder and awe. This man is really who he says he is – the Son of God, and they believe in him more strongly than before.

The wine is flowing again and the party continues with great joy and exuberance. Ben needs to get back to work!

Jesus takes something ordinary and turns it into something extraordinary. If we place our trust in him, follow him unconditionally, he will transform us and bless us abundantly. Our lives will overflow with his grace, love and blessings. Will we get our timing right? AMEN

INTERCESSIONS – Helen Rose Wilson



God, our Creator,
Jesus has shown us that transformation and new beginnings are possible. Confident in this promise, we bring our prayers to you:

We pray for your church throughout the world, that it may respond with imagination to the new needs but also new opportunities which the Covid pandemic has revealed. With thanksgiving, we pray for the new minister who has been appointed to our chaplaincy, as he and his family prepare for a major change in their lives. Give resilience to the parish he is leaving for the period of interregnum and open us to the new possibilities for our congregation that his arrival will mean.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Thinking of the wider world, we pray for healing and fresh beginnings in the USA now that the new presidential team has been inaugurated. May the efforts there to bridge divisions encourage those who are already working for peace and become an example to be followed wherever reconciliation is sorely needed.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Where there is sickness or sorrow, loneliness or doubt, we pray for your reassurance and comfort. We bring before you especially Margaret and Brian, and others whom we know are suffering. Help us to realise how we can act as your servants in sharing your love and hope.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

God, our Creator,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In the language of our hearts, let us pray as our Saviour taught us



THE PEACE

God is love
And those who live in love
live in God
And God lives in them.
We meet in the name of
Christ and share his peace.

We offer one another a
sign of peace.

SoF 640 THE TREES OF THE FIELD

You shall go out with joy
and be led forth with peace,
and the mountains and the hills
shall break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy
and the trees of the field
shall clap, shall clap their hands.

Refrain

And the trees of the field
shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field
shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field
shall clap their hands,
and you'll go out with joy.

CCLI Song # 20546
Steffi Geiser Rubin | Stuart Dauermann
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THE BLESSING

The power of God be around us,
the love
of Christ enfold us,
the joy of the Spirit be within us;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the

Son and the Holy Spirit, be among us, and remain with us always.

THE CONCLUSION

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
And keep us in eternal life.
Amen

Go in the peace of Christ
Thanks be to God

POSTLUDE

Jesus Turned The Water Into Wine

1. Life for the poor was hard and tough,
Jesus said, 'That's not good enough;
life should be great and here's the sign:
I'll turn the water into wine.'

Refrain

Jesus turned the water into wine,
Jesus turned the water into wine,
Jesus turned the water into wine,
and the people saw that life was good

2. Life is a thing to be enjoyed,
not to be wasted or destroyed.
Laughter is part of God's design;
let's turn the water into wine!

3. Go to the lonely and the sad,
give them the news to make them glad,
helping the light of hope to shine,
turning the water into wine.

CCLI Song # 1080121

Christopher Tambling | Michael Forster

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NOTICES

