**SHARE SUNDAY 2019**

**Sunday 11th August 2019**

**Hearts – beating for others**

**Celebrating Community Service**

Contents:

1. Introduction

2. Worship Service

3. Sample sermon

4. Acknowledgement

1. Introduction

Share Sunday celebrates the amazing range of community services being undertaken by our agencies, parish missions, presbyteries and congregations and provides opportunities to partner together as we respond to Christ’s invitation as disciples to serve humanity seeking to create an inclusive, connected and just world.

These resources include a sample service, including a sermon, (text and video) and suggested hymns. An additional PowerPoint file and video of the sermon accompanies this resource for those congregations who use data projection in worship. These resources are available to download, but not in hard copy. However, if you are unable to download them, you may request a USB memory stick to be posted to you. Please adapt the material to suit your context and congregation(s).

This year’s particular focus and occasion might be the time to have a shared-lunch, invite some local Uniting staff, board members or volunteers along to present in worship or afterwards. If you need a local contact to extend such an invitation, please let Deborah Grace Loh know: P: (03) 9192 8101E: Deborah.Loh@vt.uniting.org.

Our hope is that these resources will enable you to focus on how hearts – beating for others, sustain, support and build up our community echoing God’s heart for those missing out on the fullness of an abundant life.

Based upon the lectionary scripture readings for Sunday August 11th 2019, Pentecost 9

Isaiah 1: 1, 10 -20

Psalm 50: 1-8, 22-23

Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16

Luke 12: 32-40

(These resources could be used on other Sundays or times of worship if departing from the lectionary is permissible in your context.)

**2. Sample Worship Service for Share Sunday 2019**

Acknowledgment of Country

*According to your local custom.*

Call to Worship

We follow in the footsteps of the faithful:

heroes from the scriptures, like Abraham and Sarah, and

women and men of faith, like the pioneers of this congregation,

and all people of faith who turn their hearts toward God.

Let us worship God with thanksgiving, and pray together:

**God,**

**We praise you for showing love toward all your people.**

**We praise you for promising to be here in our midst.**

**We praise you for each life, each one gathered here today.**

**We come together to worship you.**

**Amen.**

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

and the love of God

and the companionship of the Holy Spirit

be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Hymn:  *(Some suggestions)*

 TIS 162 Thank you for giving me the morning

 TIS 474 Here in this place new light is streaming

 TIS 161 AHB 109 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Gather 557 Send down the fire of your justice

Welcome/Introduction to the theme

Welcome to all who are visiting with us.

Today we celebrate our community services as part of Share Sunday. We will hear of how God tires of our devotion and our worship, unless it is accompanied by right living and a heart beating for others, of how God challenges us to reach out to those on the margins and to open our purses.

Prayers of Confession

Let us pray.

In Isaiah 1:18 we hear:

Though our sins are like scarlet,

They shall be like snow.

Though they are red like crimson,

They shall become like wool.

And so God, we approach you:

not satisfied with our efforts,

not full of our own importance, and

certainly not able to earn your love and forgiveness.

God we approach you trusting that in Christ

We can find a way back to you,

a way that is already prepared for us,

if we dare to set out toward your promise of forgiveness

and reconciliation with you and each other.

Let us make our confession in silence.

*Allow a time of silence.*

Declaration of Forgiveness

As we turn our hearts toward God,

Trusting in Christ,

Our sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God. Amen**

*(if your congregation passes the peace, continue with:*

The peace of the Lord be always with you

**And also with you.**

*and invite people to exchange a sign of peace with one another)*

Hymn:

 TIS 452 AHB 379 God of mercy, God of grace

 TIS 52 AHB 115 Let us sing to the God of salvation

 TIS 613 AHB 546 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy

First Bible Reading:

Hebrews 11: 1-3, and 8-16

The wisdom of God:

**God’s Word made new.**

Early Word

Faith

*If children are present and it is your practice, you might consider incorporating the following:*

Do you know anyone who has left their homeland and travelled a long way to start a new life? Someone who has made Australia their new home?

*You may hear stories of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers or tell one of your own.*

It can take a lot of courage and faith to make a journey like that. In the Bible reading today we heard of the story of Abraham and Sarah, who left their home country to follow God’s call to travel to an unknown place.

*You may read the story of Abraham and Sarah from a children’s book, focussing on their courageous journey. Concluding:*

Abraham and Sarah travelled from their home to start a new life because of their faith in God. Not everyone is asked by God to do this, but God often asks us to do things to help others, to step out and make a difference.

And this often takes a lot of faith.

 *As faith is an abstract concept, young children will respond best to a story of a faithful person or a practical situation in which faith is evident.*

Hymn :

TIS 565 AHB 473 Author of faith, eternal word

TIS 690 Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair

TIS 419 Like the murmur of the dove’s song

TIS 619 AHB 552 Have faith in God my heart

Second Bible readings

Isa 1:1, and 10-20

Luke 12: 32-40

The wisdom of God:

**God’s Word made new.**

Sermon (See 3. Sample Sermon)

Hymn

 TIS 674 Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain

TIS 658 I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry

TIS 618 AHB 568 What does the Lord require?

TIS 607 SA 66 Make me a channel of your peace

Offering

Let us make our offering with hearts full thanksgiving.

Offering Prayer

Gracious God,

Christ said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be also.”

So we respond by sharing from all you have given us.

May each loving act and each gift we offer,

make a difference for those who are oppressed and

those on the edge of our community’s life.

**Amen.**

Notices and concerns

*(Here or at the usual place in your worship service)*

Prayers of the People, concluding with the Lord’s Prayer

Let us pray for the world, our community and for those in need.

God, whose heart is always turned toward your people,

We pray for our world,

struggling to find lasting peace,

quarrelling over resources and

denying justice to the oppressed.

Inspire us to work for justice.

God, whose heart is always turned toward your people,

We pray for our community,

being torn apart by greed and self interest

struggling to remain connected,

searching for hope in so many places.

Inspire us to offer hope.

God, whose heart is always turned toward your people,

we pray for those in need,

those who face illness,

those who are confused and

those who have lost faith.

Inspire us to be good companions.

God, whose heart is warmed by our prayers and acts of service,

May our hearts be turned toward your world, toward others, and

May we be sharers in the ministry that will answer these prayers,

In the name of Christ and through the inspiration of your Spirit.

*(If you wish to include the Church’s community services:)*

God, we give you thanks for those who serve this community,

for the programs that we run for your community.

On this Share Sunday, we particularly pray for …

Sustain those who serve as volunteers and increase their joy in service.

The Lord’s Prayer

In the words Christ taught us, we pray:

**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 forever.**

**Amen.**

Hymn

TIS 547 AHB 455 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

 TIS 215 AHB 474 You servants of the Lord, your Master proclaim

 TIS 587 AHB 503 Fold to your heart your sister and your brother

Blessing

May God, our loving parent, shower you with love and grace.

May Christ Jesus, our loving friend, support and challenge you.

And may the Holy Spirit, our comforter and inspiration,

sustain you and bring new life to all you do.

**Amen!**

Dismissal

TIS 772 AHB 577 Worship, honour, glory, blessing

TIS 666 We are marching in the light of God

TIS 779 May the feet of God walk with you

 TIS 781 Father bless us as we go

3. Sample sermon

**Hearts – beating for others**

Have you got a watch or one of those gismos that records your heart rate? Regardless, you can usually feel your pulse, the beats of your heart, if you put your fingers on your wrist, just below your thumb knuckle. Nurses are expert in this.

What does your heart beat for?

Physically, it pumps blood around your body. If you’ve got a pulse, that is your pump, your heart, doing its job as it pumps over 5 litres of blood around your body each minute. If you haven’t got a pulse, well maybe you are already in heaven – fancy heaven being exactly like this wonderfulcongregation in all our glory! *Mrs/Mr …* in the back row, me here up front.

Who’d have thought?

Same question again, but looking for a different answer: What does your heart beat for?

Sometimes in worship, we get caught up. A hymn, a stirring sermon, or perhaps the deep meanings of the eucharist, bring extra beats to our heart. Set us racing. Lift us above the ordinary.

I reckon Isaiah’s heart would have been racing above the ordinary as he caught the vision from God as recorded in the first chapter of Isaiah.

A vision of judgement, of forgiveness. A call to action:

Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean … learn to do good; Isa 1: 16&17

And the hearts of his audience might have been racing. Perhaps with indignation. “What Lord? You don’t like our burnt offerings? You are weary of our festivals and solemn assemblies? We thought this is what you wanted!”

No, what God wants is for us to:

Seek justice,

Rescue the oppressed,

Defend the orphan,

Plead for the widow.   Isa 1: 16&17

This is what our heart should beat for. This is what delights God. Worship without justice is abhorrent to God.

This finds an echo is the Hebrew reading where the faith of the ancestors is championed. And they “Desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.” If our heart beats in response to faith in God, we will always have a sense of being on the way. Longing for a better earth, a more connected community, people living with dignity and hope. So our hearts won’t just beat for themselves. But with a longing for a world where the oppressed are rescued, the powerless are given dignity and their rights upheld.

Again, what does your heart beat for?

Today’s reading from Luke may well get your heart racing and give us insight as to what our hearts beat for.

Jesus has just told the crowd a story about a rich fool. Had his retirement all sorted, but was “not rich toward God.” Lk 12: 21

Jesus reminds us of how God feeds us, clothes us, gives us all we need. We don’t need to worry.

So in the gospel reading we are told not to fear. Our hearts may beat closer to our resting rate on hearing this good news. God has our back. God is looking after us. So stop worrying.

But then Luke follows straight on (Lk 12: 32) with Jesus saying, “Sell your possessions, and give alms.” What? Heart beats somewhat faster.

“Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys” v33.

Hard for we of the first world to hear as privileged consumers of so many goods and services. Hard for anyone used to being told that their life will be complete if only they have the latest and greatest, the newest fashion, the latest shiny technology.

“Sell your possessions and give,” says Jesus.

To bring the point home, Jesus adds: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

If our heart beats to collect possessions, to strive to amass wealth, only to build huge barns, to keep it to ourselves, then our heart is in the wrong place and beating for the wrong reasons.

Jesus is not anti-treasure. But he is questioning our use of it. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Where our heart is, shows when we reach out to the vulnerable and those who are missing out; the oppressed, the orphans, the widows. So many of our Uniting Church congregations provide community meals, financial support, food relief, activity groups, counselling, care in the home so that no one needs to miss out.

It is estimated that Uniting Church congregations support around 100,000 people each year in Victoria and Tasmania. And supporting of the Share Appeal is part of this too.

*You may list other areas of community support specific to your congregation and community.*

Some of these local services have often transitioned into Parish Missions and agencies offering a huge range of services.

Uniting, with a workforce of over 7000 people, touches the lives, in partnership with other parts of the Uniting Church, of hundreds of people each day.

*Include the examples of people being supported by Uniting.*

*If you have invited a guest from your local Uniting community service or have a congregation member who volunteers with them, you might ask them to speak of some examples of local community service initiatives or programs.*

You may think you are hearing an echo, but the same question again: What does your heart beat for?

It is good that our hearts are lifted toward God in worship.

It is good that our hearts are broken as we seek forgiveness.

It is good that our hearts know God’s wonderful provision in our lives.

It is good that our hearts beat as we work and toil.

But if our hearts only beat for these things. If it is all about keeping us righteous, happy, well fed and clothed, if our hearts only beat for ourselves …

However,

When our hearts are motivated by compassion for those who miss out.

When our hearts beat strongly with indignation when people are oppressed.

When our hearts cause us to open our purses and share.

That is when our heart beats in resonance with Christ.

A heart – beating for others.

4. Acknowledgement

These resources have been created and compiled by Uniting with assistance from Glen Waverley Uniting Church for use in congregational worship and made be modified and used according to local custom with acknowledgment.