

## SUNDAY 28 July 2024 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am - HC 2.5 and Baptism

### Introduction

#### Hymn TIS 122 - What shall I do, my God to love

What shall I do my God to love, my loving God to praise?  
the length, and breadth, and height to prove, and depth of sovereign grace?

Your sovereign grace to all extends, immense and unconfined;  
from age to age it never ends, to reach all humankind.

Throughout the world its breadth is known, wide as infinity;  
so wide it never passed by one, or it had passed by me.

My trespass was grown up to heav'n; but far above the skies,  
in Christ abundantly forgiv'n, I see your mercies rise.

The depth of all-redeeming love, what angel tongue can tell?  
O may I to the utmost prove the gift unspeakable.

Come quickly, gracious Lord, and take possession of your own;  
my longing heart be pleased to make your everlasting throne.

### Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

### Sentence of the day

When God saw what the Ninevites did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. Jonah 3:10

### Baptism Introduction

This morning we welcome Clara Sims, her parents and godparents, for Clara's baptism.

There is one Body and one Spirit; **there is one hope in God's call to us.**

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, **one God and Father of all.**

Baptism is the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he had risen from the dead, he commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We have come together today to obey that command.

Baptism with water signifies the cleansing from sin that Jesus' death makes possible, and the new life that God gives us through the Holy Spirit. In baptism, the promises of God are visibly signed and sealed for us. We are joined to Christ, and made members of his body, the Church universal.

Children are baptised in response to God's all-embracing love. Parents and godparents who have responded to that love come now to bring their children for baptism. Before this congregation they must express their own trust and commitment to the promises of God, and their intention to bring up their children in the faith and practice of the Church. In due time these children should make their own response to God, and be prepared for confirmation.

In confirmation those who have been previously baptised come to confirm their baptismal promises and join with the other candidates to receive the laying on of the bishop's hand with prayer. We

pray that those who are baptised and confirmed will be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry and service to which God shall call them.

So we welcome you, Clara Daphne Sims, with your parents and godparents. We give thanks for you, and pray that you may know God's love and faithfulness for ever.

Now, let us affirm our trust in God's mercy, and confess our need of forgiveness.

Lord God, you created this world, and made us in your own image. Forgive us when we turn away from you.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**

Lord God, through your Son you overcame evil and death. Rescue us from slavery to sin.

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord God, by your Spirit, you restore us to fellowship with you and with one another. Breathe your love and freedom into our lives.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and keep you in life eternal. **Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God, You have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth; grant that, believing in the one you have sent, we may know him to be the true bread of heaven and the food of eternal life, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be glory and honour for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **The Presentation**

We welcome Clara who comes to be baptised.

I invite her parents, Kaleb and Jamie, and godparents Ethan and Lucy, to present her now.

**[Sponsors] We present Clara Daphne Sims to be baptised.**

Will you accept the responsibilities placed upon you in bringing Clara for baptism?

**[Sponsors] I will.**

Are you willing to answer on behalf of Clara?

**[Sponsors] I am.**

By your own prayers and example, by your friendship and love, will you encourage Clara in the life and faith of the Christian community?

**[Sponsors] I will, with God's help.**

### **The Decision**

Before God and this congregation, you must affirm that you turn to Christ and reject all that is evil:

Do you turn to Christ?

**[Sponsors] I turn to Christ.**

Do you repent of your sins?

**[Sponsors] I repent of my sins.**

Do you reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust?

**[Sponsors] I reject them all.**

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

**[Sponsors] I renounce all that is evil.**

Almighty God, deliver you from the powers of darkness, and lead you in the light of Christ to his everlasting kingdom. **Amen.**

Will you each, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

**[Sponsors] I will, with God's help.**

You have heard Clara's parents and godparents respond to Christ on behalf of Clara's.

Will you support them in this calling?

**[Congregation] We will.**

Let us pray

Grant, merciful God, that Clara may be so buried with Christ in baptism that the new nature may be raised up in him. May the fruit of your Spirit grow and flourish in him. **Amen.**

Give to Clara's parents and godparents the desire to share with him what you have revealed in your holy gospel. **Amen.**

May she know Christ's forgiving love and continue in the fellowship and service of his Church. May she proclaim, by word and example, the good news of God in Christ. **Amen.**

We thank you for the ministry we have in your world and to each other in the household of faith.

Hasten that day when the whole creation shall be made perfect in Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We give you thanks that at the beginning of creation your Holy Spirit moved upon the waters to bring forth light and life. With water you cleanse and replenish the earth; you nourish and sustain all living things.

**Thanks be to God.**

We give you thanks that through the waters of the Red Sea you led your people out of slavery into freedom, and brought them through the river Jordan to new life in the land of promise.

**Thanks be to God.**

We give you thanks for your Son Jesus Christ: for his baptism by John, for his anointing with the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

We give you thanks that through the deep waters of death Jesus delivered us from our sins and was raised to new life in triumph.

**Thanks be to God.**

We give you thanks for the grace of the Holy Spirit who forms us in the likeness of Christ and leads us to proclaim your kingdom.

**Thanks be to God.**

And now we give you thanks that you have called Clara to new birth in your Church through the waters of baptism. Pour out your Holy Spirit in blessing and sanctify this water so that those who are baptised in it may be made one with Christ in his death and resurrection. May they die to sin, rise to newness of life, and continue forever in Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we give you praise and honour in the unity of the Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**The Affirmation of Faith**

I ask you now to affirm as yours the faith of the Church.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in God the Son?

**I believe Jesus Christ, God's only Son, Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

This is the faith of the Church

**This is our faith: We believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

## **The Baptism**

Clara Daphne Sims, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

Clara, I sign you with the sign of the cross to show that you are marked as Christ's own forever.

Live as a disciple of Christ: fight the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith.

**Confess Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, look for his coming in glory.**

God has brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

**Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.**

God has called you into his Church.

**We therefore receive and welcome you as a member with us of the body of Christ, as a child of the one heavenly Father, and as an inheritor of the kingdom of God.**

In baptism, God has made us one in Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in baptism you make us one family in Christ your Son, one in the sharing of his body and his blood, one in the communion of his Spirit. Help us to grow in love for one another and come to the full maturity of the body of Christ.

Most loving God,

**you send us into the world you love.**

**Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage in the power of your Spirit.**

All who have been baptised are called to study the Bible, to take part in the life of the Church, to share in the Holy Communion, and to pray faithfully and regularly.

We are called to share with others, by word and example, the love of Christ and his gospel of reconciliation and hope.

We are called to love our neighbours as ourselves, to honour all people and to pray and work for peace and justice.

I invite all of you to commit yourselves anew to this calling.

**We will gladly do so, in the strength of the Holy Spirit.**

## **The Ministry of the Word**

### **Jonah 3**

<sup>3</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: <sup>2</sup>"Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." <sup>3</sup>Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." <sup>5</sup>The

Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. <sup>6</sup> When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. <sup>7</sup> This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. <sup>8</sup> But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." <sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

### Psalm 85

<sup>1</sup> You, LORD, showed favor to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> **You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.**

<sup>3</sup> You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.

**4 Restore us again, God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.**

<sup>5</sup> Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations?

<sup>6</sup> **Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?**

<sup>7</sup> Show us your unfailing love, LORD, and grant us your salvation.

<sup>8</sup> **I will listen to what God the LORD says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—but let them not turn to folly.**

<sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

<sup>10</sup> **Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.**

<sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.

<sup>12</sup> **The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.**

<sup>13</sup> **Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.**

### Philippians 1:9–14

<sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. <sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup> And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

### John 3:16-21

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one

and only Son. <sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

This is the gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

## **Sermon - Jonah 3 - Jonah Presents, Nineveh Repents, God Relents**

### **Question Time**

#### **Prayers**

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Gracious God, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to 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 for ever. Amen.**

#### **The Confession**

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

**Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **Greeting of Peace**

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

#### **Hymn TIS 413 - Holy Spirit, Come Confirm Us**

**Holy Spirit, come confirm us  
in the Spirit Christ makes known  
we have faith and understanding  
through your helping gifts alone.**

**Holy Spirit, come console us  
come as advocate to plead,  
loving Spirit from the father  
grant in Christ the help we need**

**Holy Spirit come renew us,**

come yourself to make us live:  
holy, through your living presence  
holy, through the gifts you give.

Holy Spirit, come possess us,  
you the love of Three in One  
Holy Spirit of the Father  
Holy Spirit of the Son.

### The Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you. He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you. He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us. Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen**

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**



## The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord.

### After Communion

Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. **Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.**

### Hymn TIS 153 - God Is Love, Let Heaven Adore Him

*God is love let heaven adore Him*

*God is love let earth rejoice*

*Let creation sing before Him*

*And exalt Him with one voice*

*He who laid the earth's foundation*

*He who spread the heavens above*

*He who breathes through all creation*

*He is love eternal love*

*God is love, and gently enfolding*

*all the world in one embrace,*

*with unfailing grasp is holding*

*every child of every race.*

*And when human hearts are breaking*

*under sorrow's iron rod,*

*then they find that selfsame aching*

*deep within the heart of God.*

*God is love, and, though with blindness*

*sin afflicts our human hearts,*

*God's eternal lovingkindness*

*holding, guiding, grace imparts.*

*Sin and death and hell shall never*

*o'er us final triumph gain;*

*God is love, so love for ever*

*o'er the universe must reign.*

### Notices

### Dismissal



Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; give honour to all; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## Sermon

This morning we are looking at the 3rd chapter of the book of Jonah. In the first two chapters God told Jonah to preach against Nineveh because they were so evil that God planned to wipe them off the planet. Jonah went the completely opposite direction, and ended up being swallowed by a great fish for his trouble. The fish vomited Jonah onto dry land, and Jonah made his way to Nineveh, where we find ourselves today.

Nineveh was a huge, cosmopolitan city for its day, taking the days to walk across. Scholars believe it housed approximately 120,000 people. Nevertheless, Jonah preached against it. He proclaimed "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

Now, this is not my preferred evangelistic approach. I can't say I have ever preached that if Cooma didn't repent it would be destroyed in 40 days, let alone a cosmopolitan city like Canberra or Sydney. I haven't even preached it to individuals, although I often wish that people understand that this is the choice they have to make.

Nevertheless, Jonah did use this rather blunt approach to preaching to the Ninevites, and he obviously struck a chord. The Ninevites knew that their behaviour was not acceptable to God, and that they fully deserved judgement, to be overthrown. That is why the king declared a fast - giving up eating to ensure the people were focused on worshipping and obeying God rather than eating. They took off their comfortable fancy clothes and put on sackcloth, sackcloth that was so itchy that the irritation would constantly remind them of how much their behaviour, their evil ways and their violence, irritated God, and reminded them to constantly call on him to relent from the destruction he had threatened. Even the king put on sackcloth and sat down in the dust, abasing himself in humility before God, praying for mercy.

Jonah notes that the king thought to himself: Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." There was no doubt to the Ninevites that due to their evil ways and violence that they deserved everything that Jonah threatened them with,

and this was probably a major reason Jonah didn't want to go there. They were just too evil, and in Jonah's mind, so unlikely to repent.

Yet the power of guilt in human hearts can be very strong. The Ninevites' actions demonstrated that they were committed to turning their lives around, turning back to God, and God did in fact relent. When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. God did not destroy Nineveh, and the great city was saved.

One preacher described this as: Jonah presented, Nineveh repented, God relented.

- Jonah presented the word of God to the Ninevites - he proclaimed the truth, and the consequences for the Ninevites continuing in the direction they had been going.
- Nineveh consequently repented - they turned their lives around from evil and violence to following God, and
- God relented - he did not inflict on Nineveh the judgement they deserved, and they avoided destruction.

This is also what happens when people become Christians today.

Firstly, the gospel is presented - people hear the good news of the salvation that Jesus offers. Secondly, they repent - they turn away from their old way of life in rebellion against God, and finally God relents - he does not bring upon them the judgement they deserve, but instead grants them eternal life in the perfectly restored world he is bringing about, the new heaven and earth where there is no sin, no suffering and death, and when the relationships between God, humanity and the rest of creation is restored to the perfect harmony that God intended when he created it.

This is symbolised in Clara's baptism this morning - the gospel was presented, Clara's parents and sponsors were called to declare their repentance and their intention to bring up Clara that she might make that decision for herself when she is of understanding, and God relented, saving Clara to eternal life, as symbolised by drawing Clara out of the waters of death to life.

We all have to make the same decision as the Ninevites, as Clara's parents and sponsors, and eventually that Clara herself will have to make. Each of us has to answer:

Do you turn to Christ? Do you repent of your sins? Will you each, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

Will you respond as the Ninevites, as Clara's parents and sponsors have done, and accept the life that Jesus offers?

Or will you reject God, and reject the life you are offered?