

Sunday 31 May 2026 Cooma Anglican HC 3

Hymn: TIS 459(ii) - In Christ there is no East of West

**In Christ there is no East of West
In Him no South or North
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth**

**In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere
Their high communion find
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind**

**Join hands then people of the faith
Whate'er your race may be
Who serves my Father as his child
Is surely kin to me**

**In Christ now meet both East and West
In Him meet South and North
All Christlike souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.**

Sentence of Scripture

So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. Genesis 11:8

The Great Commandments

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 'This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in us the power of your divine majesty to worship the Unity; keep us steadfast in the

faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, for you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Genesis 11:1-9 (NIV)

¹ Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ² As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

³ They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

⁵ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building.

⁶ The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

⁸ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel —because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

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

Psalms 115 (NIV)

¹ Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.

² **Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?”**

³ Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

⁴ **But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands.**

⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see.

⁶ **They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell.**

⁷ They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats.

⁸ **Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.**

⁹ All you Israelites, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield.

¹⁰ **House of Aaron, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield.**

¹¹ You who fear him, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield.

¹² **The LORD remembers us and will bless us: He will bless his people Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron,**

¹³ he will bless those who fear the LORD—small and great alike.

¹⁴ **May the LORD cause you to flourish, both you and your children.**

¹⁵ May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

¹⁶ The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind.

¹⁷ It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to the place of silence;

¹⁸ it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD.

Acts 2:1-13 (NIV)

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

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

Matthew 12:15-21 (NIV)

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹⁵ Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. ¹⁶ He warned them not to tell others about him. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸ "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. ²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope."

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - Genesis 11 - The Tower of Babel

The Nicene' Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

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

Scripture Sentence

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1 Corinthians 11:26-28

The Confession

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, saying together:

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.

By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **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 156 - Morning has broken

Morning has broken like the first morning

Blackbird has spoken like the first bird

Praise for the singing, praise for the morning

Praise for them springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from Heaven

Like the first dewfall on the first grass

Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden

Sprung in completeness where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning

Born of the one light, Eden saw play

Praise with elation, praise every morning

God's recreation of the new day

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

The Great 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.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your son, our saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered

the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore, we lift our voices to 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, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and his blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.

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

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying 'Drink from this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' We eat this bread and drink this cup **to**

proclaim the death of the Lord. We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and united in the body of your Son. Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise.

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever. Amen

The Holy Communion

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.

After Communion

Gracious God, thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are living members of Christ's body.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Notices

Hymn - TIS 609 - O worship the King

Come, let us to the Lord our God
with contrite hearts return;
our God is gracious, nor will leave
the desolate to mourn.

His voice commands the tempest forth,
and stills the stormy wave;
and though his arm be strong to smite,
'tis also strong to save.

Long has the night of sorrow reigned;
the dawn shall bring us light;
God shall appear, and we shall rise
with gladness in his sight.

Our hearts, if God we seek to know,
shall know him and rejoice;
his coming like the morn shall be,
like morning songs his voice.

As dew upon the tender herb,
diffusing fragrance round;
as showers that usher in the spring,
and cheer the thirsty ground:

So shall his presence bless our souls,
and shed a joyful light;
that hallowed morn shall chase away
the sorrows of the night.

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

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

Sermon - Genesis 11 -The Tower of Babel

I studied engineering for 4 years and spent more than 30 years working as one. My wife will tell you that I am forever taking things apart to fix them, although when I do eventually get around to them, they don't always work as well as they should after the repairs... I think she is looking forward to a heaven where things don't wear out, but more importantly where there aren't piles of things waiting for me to get to fix!

As we have been working our way through the book of *Genesis*, we have seen God establishing covenants with mankind, and then re-establishing them when they are broken. Today's reading from *Genesis* looks at how the covenant God made with Noah following the flood was broken, and what God did. As we heard last week, the covenant wasn't just made with Noah and his family, it was made with all humanity and with every living creature on earth and all their descendants.

Firstly, by way of definition, biblical covenants are binding agreements or solemn pledges established by God with humanity or specific individuals. You can think of a covenant as a contract, or an agreement, obliging parties to act in particular ways. They carry divine authority and are integral to understanding the overarching narrative in the Bible. They are all important, because each covenant reveals something about God's character, humanity's response, and the ultimate plan of redemption. So far in *Genesis* we have seen three covenants - the covenant in Eden, the covenant with Adam and Eve following the fall, and the covenant with Noah. Other notable covenants are yet to come including the covenants with Abraham, Moses, King David, and the new covenant through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Each of the Biblical covenants usually include a number of common components. Each covenant is between two parties, God and an individual or God and mankind in general. The actions that each side agrees to do are usually a promise that God will fulfil, and a commandment that the person/ humanity agrees to. In many covenants there is also some form of physical sign that the covenant is binding. While not technically part of the covenant, there is also usually a reason the covenant has been made, such as a previous covenant being broken.

That's the theory behind covenants, so let's see how it works with the 3 covenants so far.

As I mentioned, the first covenant is in the garden of Eden. Since it is the first covenant, there are no previous covenants that have been broken to justify

establishing a new one, so the reason for it is to set the relationship with God and the newly created humanity on a solid basis. The parties to this covenant are God and the whole of humankind, including Adam and Eve. God gives mankind land to work, and rivers to water that land. He promises that mankind will be sustained by every green plant that he gives them for food. The obligation on them, or the commandment, is to not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or they will surely die. There does not appear to be a specific sign associated with this covenant.

The second covenant follows Adam and Eve disobeying the first covenant. The parties are God and humankind. There are no specific further commandments for mankind mentioned in this covenant, but God promises to redeem humanity, when Genesis 3:15 says "...He (the offspring of the woman) will crush your head, and you will strike His heel."

The third covenant is God's covenant with Noah, which we can read in Genesis 9: 8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. "

The parties are God, Noah, his sons and every living creature with them and all generations to come (as I spoke about last week and described in the Table of Nations in Chapter 10). God promises never again to destroy all life, and the obligations on humankind are never to shed human blood, and to be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on earth and increase upon it. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow, that will remind God of this everlasting covenant.

This covenant is the background to the Tower of Babel. The account tells us that the whole world had one language and a common speech, and they moved eastward. This is actually a good start for the people, they were moving and increasing upon the earth - to start with. The problem was, they didn't keep it up. No sooner had they found this plain in Shinar (modern day Iraq) than they settled there. This wasn't increasing to fill the earth like they had been commanded. Also, the people contrived to build themselves a city, with a tower that reached to the heavens. They did this so they could stay together in direct disobedience of God's command to spread out over the earth, but also so that they make a name for themselves.

Naming things was seen as a way of having dominion over them. Remember that God commanded Adam to name all animals that they may rule over them. By making a name for themselves, mankind was seeking to give themselves God's authority, the authority to have dominion and to make commandments, to have dominion over all of mankind as well as other living creatures. We have authority only because God gives it to us, it is not right for us to take it to ourselves. So, in one fell swoop, mankind had usurped God's authority. They had disobeyed his command to spread out over the earth, and they had taken upon themselves a name, the authority that only God was supposed to have.

How was God to respond to this wanton violation of his covenant? When Adam and Eve broke the first covenant by eating of the tree, he responded with mercy - they didn't die straight away, but were banished from Eden and had to toil in order to eat. His judgement also included their ultimate salvation, the promise of the serpent's head being crushed by the woman's offspring, which we know to happen in Jesus, and in which mankind should worship him.

When they broke the second covenant, God sent the flood to destroy all living creatures, but again showed mercy, saving Noah and his family, and the living creatures in the ark. In doing so, God rescued people that obeyed him and had faith in him, and they worshipped him as they experienced his mercy in saving them.

So, how did God respond when the people after the flood were just as disobedient as they were before the flood? God could have completely destroyed creation as he did in the flood and started again from complete scratch this time, but he had promised that he would not do this, and the rainbow would always remind him. Instead, he again shows mercy and he merely frustrated mankind's sinfulness by dividing them by language and nation. The people wanted to gather together rather than fill the earth, and he allowed them to gather in cities, separated by diverse languages.

God, in his dominion, from before he created mankind, had been fully aware that mankind would rebel, and continue to rebel in this way. He knew exactly what his response to it would be. He always planned that the world would be divided by nations and languages. This division is his judgment on their sin, but at the same time it has a higher purpose. Man became divided for his glory and for the global glory of Jesus Christ.

The divisions actually magnify the authority and power of Jesus because he doesn't just lay claim to people of one nation and one language like many false gods do. All other gods of that time were regional, only worshipped by the

people in a specific area. It highlights the glory of the God who is of all nations. Whose power is all the more glorious because it breaks into so many different languages and peoples to bring salvation. Also, since the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, it too is not provincial. If the sin of Babel had not happened with its specific judgment, the global glory of the gospel of Christ would not shine as beautifully as it does in the prism of thousands of people groups and languages. Ultimately, God not only responds with mercy when mankind breaks the covenants he had made with him, he responds in ways that increase his worship and that of his son Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost, the gospel was so much more significant because everyone heard it in their own language, and in heaven, the worship will be so much more beautiful because it will harmonise the voice and languages from all nations.

In his perfect plan, God was fully aware that man would violate the covenants that God made with them, and that God would need to work to re-establish the covenants. Unlike me when I seek to fix the numerous gadgets around my house that have been broken, and usually they are in worse shape than they were before, God planned for his covenants to be broken, knowing that in re-establishing them that they would be so much better, and lead to mankind doing what he was always intended to do and doing it so much better.

When God re-establishes covenants through Noah, and Abraham, and David and ultimately through the new covenant through his one only Son Jesus Christ, he shows his ultimate mercy, but also leads to mankind worshipping him as they never had before, and worshipping his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who died and rose for us. God's new covenants do not simply make temporary repairs to faulty covenants that could resist the stresses of humanity, they demonstrate God's glorious plan to save his people to worship him for eternal life, to the honour of his glorious name in his great, unfailing plan of salvation. We have seen that plan come to partial fruition in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we only wait for its complete perfection in heaven where the great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, will stand before the throne and before the Lamb. And we will cry out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." and fall down on our faces before the throne and worship God, 12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Revelation 7:9-12

This will be the perfect fulfilment of God's covenant with mankind. Amen