**Opening Prayer**

In stillness and in action, in quiet and in noise, in abundance and in need – always there God your presence infuses all life. We pause in your presence and breathe in your peace releasing into your care all that burdens us. Re-member, refresh and restore us to your praise and for your good purposes. Amen.

**Hymn: I will sing the wondrous story (STF 323)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/hDPCFbAysBc>

I will sing the wondrous story

of the Christ who died for me,

how he left the realms of glory

for the cross on Calvary:

*Yes, I’ll sing the wondrous story*

*of the Christ who died for me,*

*sing it with his saints in glory,*

*gathered by the crystal sea.*

I was lost; but Jesus found me,

found the sheep that went astray,

raised me up, and gently led me

back into the narrow way:

Faint was I, and fears possessed me,

bruised was I from many a fall;

hope was gone, and shame distressed me;

but his has pardoned all:

Days of darkness still come o’er me;

sorrow’s paths I often tread;

but the Saviour still is with me,

by his hand I’m safely led:

He will keep me till the river

rolls its waters at my feet;

then he’ll bear me safely over,

where the loved ones I shall meet:

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**Prayer**

God of all, comforter and healer, seeker and creator, we worship you;

Living Christ you who calm our fears, nourish the hungry and bring wholeness to our woundedness, we worship you;

Mothering Spirit never subdued, teeming with gifts, uniting all, illumining our way, we worship you;

As we worship you may we encounter you afresh as Good News and may we willingly share what we receive with others. **Amen.**

**God’s word:** Read one or more of these passages and allow time and space for God to speak though his word: Isaiah 55: 10 - 13, Psalm 65: 9 – 13, Romans 8: 1 – 11, Matthew 13: 1 – 9, 18 – 23.

**To savour:** Read the following slowly and linger over the questions. Be attentive to God’s accompanying you.

Like Jesus in the parable of the sower, in the scarcity and threat of winter we hold close what was given to us in the summer: the memory of a time we were loved; the security and calm of companionship; our lives as they tick along. Perhaps these are our golden seeds, remnants of an abundance that has passed us by.

* *Where are you in the scene? Are you the sower? An observer?*
* *Notice how the ground feels under your feet as you walk the rows. What warmth does the light bring?*
* *Notice the sower’s face as he pulls the sun-burnished seeds from his purse. What do these weightless kernels mean to him? How does he feel as they fall from his hand?*
* *How do you feel? What seeds do you hold? What have you held close to protect it from the cold?*
* *Can you pull those seeds from your purse?*

It can feel impossible to let go of what we have been given, to release into the crusted ground what has brought us life. It requires an outrageous courage, an irrational trust in a still-dead world to believe that what dies produces fruit.

Even more, the frosted skin of the soil must be slashed for the seeds to be planted. They must enter the wound.

* *How does it feel to imagine turning over your hand?*
* *Do the seeds carry the golden light as they fall?*
* *What is it like as they enter the furrowed ground?*

But perhaps it is not we who sow. Perhaps it is the Lord who sows and we who are the field.

* *How has God prepared this cold ground for the gift of these seeds? What is God placing within us?*
* *How does it feel to be warmed be the setting sun? Is there any opening to what God is attempting to give?*
* *Are there wounds that you would like the Lord to plant seeds of hope within?*
* *Can you ask for what you desire?*

Ours is a God who sows before the setting sun, who sows before night falls. Speak with the Lord now about what has happened in your prayer. Whether you have felt drawn to watch or to sow or to be a recipient of the good seed, speak with the Lord about what has happened, as one friend speaks to another.

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**Look and think:**

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Where have you seen growth in unexpected ways?

What helps you to continue growing as a follower of Christ?

In what ways is God inviting you to partner with Him in sowing His seeds?

**Prayers of intercession** (from Roots)

God of all seeds and all stories,
we pray for the wisdom to apply the truth of Jesus' parables
to our own lives
and to our life together in this place where we worship you
and this community where we serve you.
**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

In the world, we pray especially
for places where climate change has brought drought…
for the places where it has brought floods …
for those whose crops have been scorched…
for those whose livelihoods have been washed away.
We pray for the people of Japan –
for those caught in the heavy rains there –
and for the people of Australia
and their wildlife endangered by the forest fires.
We pray too for those in our own country
who face continual upheaval and heartache through repeated flooding.
**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

We pray for those whose life's seeds
are being choked by anxiety, poverty and hardship…
for those who have lost their jobs…
for those unable to feed their families
or to pay their mortgages and rent…
for those living without basic facilities.
We pray for those given hope by the emergency budget
and for those who feel hope-less
and for foodbanks and charities that try to help all who are struggling.
**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

We pray for those unable to thrive because of illness…
and those denied the opportunity
to plant the seeds of their dreams in fertile soil...
for those hospitalised with Covid-19…
for those whose journey to recovery is long , slow and painful…
for those who nurse them…
for those who love them…
for those whose treatment has been put on hold…
We pray for those robbed of the opportunity to go to school,
for children in war zones, those in refugee camps,
those who have to work to find their daily food.
**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

And we pray for those whose seeds are watered by their tears...
those grieving the loss of someone close to them…
those who feel forgotten…
those who are neglected…
those who are victims of injustice, abuse, or cruelty…
**May they – and all in any kind of need today – see you, may they hear you,
and may know you care. Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

**Listen & Sing:**

For the beauty of the earth <https://youtu.be/JVQFEgT7E6c>

Seek ye first the kingdom of God <https://youtu.be/4FuurRAJkZY>

Amazing grace <https://youtu.be/Jbe7OruLk8I>

In Christ alone <https://youtu.be/JWiFYJMGas0>

**Family worship for Sunday** (for family worship: [**www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome**](http://www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome)**12july**)

**Blessing:**

May the God of Grace who in Christ knows you and welcomes you restore, strengthen, equip and bless you as you grow in grace, sow seeds of hope and envelop all in love. Amen.