

Worship Material
Unexpected abundance
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 19th January

Begin with an opening prayer

Like guests at a wedding feast,
we have come from far and near
to join in this family celebration.
The gifts we bring are ourselves –
our hearts and minds and souls and strength,
to share with God and each other in love.
It is a bring-and-share celebration
of God's union with the world.
Let us feast and rejoice together,
in God's abundant love.

Amen.

Read John 2:1-11

Bible notes

Many of us will have heard the phrase 'Jesus himself went to a wedding' (it's part of the marriage service in some churches). But there are other significant ideas at play in this story found in John. It is the first of the 'miraculous signs' in John's Gospel that reveal Jesus' identity as the Messiah. As theologian Marianne Meye Thompson writes, 'His deed calls to mind the Old Testament promises of the feasting and drinking that will characterize the (messianic) age to come.'¹ It is appropriate to link to today's reading from Isaiah (also see Isaiah 25:6-8). In an unobtrusive way, Jesus here declares his messianic intentions. The 'new wine' is the eschatological abundance that we read about in the Old Testament and finds its fruition in Jesus Christ (see Amos 9:13-14). The words of Jesus to his mother (v.4) appear harsh, but Jesus uses the same term ('Woman') to refer to his mother at the cross (John 19:26 – even so we cannot rule out that there was degree of reprimand in his tone here). Jesus here shows that he is not acting in response to the obligation of earthly ties, but according to the designs of the Father, which will happen at the right time.

Prayer

Creator God, we give you thanks for the world's resources,
that feed and nurture, sustain and uphold us.
For the fruits of land and sea, for air, rain and sun.
For all around that inspires, teaches
and brings us to new depths of love and care.
We give you thanks for variety in what we see and hear, feel and taste.
We give you thanks for those we encounter on the paths of life:
for family and friends who guide and teach,

please us and annoy us;
for strangers who welcome us, care for us,
change us and widen our horizons.
We give thanks for your Word, your calling
and the abundance of who you are.
We acknowledge that we do not always repay you
with our loyalty, love and obedience.
Yet you are still our God and we are your people.
Thanks be to you.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

At the wedding at Cana,
Mary saw there was a problem.
She told Jesus about it and he responded
with unexpectedly abundant generosity.
May we have eyes that see the needs of others,
a faith that expects Jesus to help,
and the confidence to pester him in prayer.

Amen.