

**THE COMMUNITY  
PLANS  
FOR ITS CHILDREN**



**Australian Church Women**

**Fellowship Day 1979**

PRELUDE – “FINLANDIA” – Sibelius – 48, A.H.B.

**WE APPROACH GOD AS HIS CHILDREN**

**Call to Worship Psalm 100**

**Leader:** Sing to the Lord, all the world!

*People: Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him, singing for joy.*

**Leader:** Never forget that the Lord is God.

*People: He made us: and we belong to him;  
we are His people, we are His flock.*

**Leader:** Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving,  
go into its courts with praise.

*People: Give thanks to Him and praise Him.*

**Leader:** The Lord is good.

*People: His love is eternal and his faithfulness  
lasts from generation to generation.*

**Hymn**

**Leader:** Let us pray together a Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

*People: O'God we thank you that we are your children. We give thanks that you are  
mother and father to us in your all-surrounding and sustaining love.*

*We give thanks for the children of our world: for new life, for the joy, the  
tenderness, the sorrow and richness of experience children bring as they grow  
May we learn from them as we love and care for them. Grant us the gift of  
trust which is theirs already.*

*Most merciful God, we admit that we need your help. We have done wrong and  
have often failed to do what we know is right. You alone can save us. Have  
mercy on us;*

*wipe out our sins and teach us to forgive others. Bring forth in us the fruits of the Spirit that we may live as disciples of Christ. This we ask in the name of Jesus our Saviour. AMEN.*

**Greeting:** We greet each other with a handclasp and the words: "The love of God be with you today."

## **WE EXPLORE GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR CHILDREN**

### **Introduction to Reading:**

Our reading is from the prophet Hosea, Chapter 11, verses 1 to 9.

This passage was chosen from Hosea to suggest to us that whether our children accept or reject our ways, our love for them should be indestructible – just as God's love is for his people.

Hosea was a prophet in the northern Jewish Kingdom of Israel. The Jews survived in the southern kingdom of Judah, but the northern kingdom was later destroyed.

Here God speaks of his love for his people Israel, speaking as a parent of his or her child.

Yet Israel had turned away from God, and the middle section here tells of the consequences.

But though God punishes, he cannot give up or destroy his child – his love is too strong.

Centuries later, in Jesus, God showed the same love for the mixed race descendants of Israel, the Samaritans, and many turned to him as Hosea had prophesied – 'The time will come', he said, 'when the people of Israel will once again turn to the Lord their God, and to a descendant of David their king. Then they will fear the Lord and will receive his good gifts.' (3:5)

So too, children who rebel from their community have the opportunity to return, if the community has love for them.

**Reading:** Hosea Chapter 11:1-9

**Hymn**

**Address/Discussion**

**Hymn**

**Prayer of St. Francis**

*Make me a channel of Your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring Your love.  
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord.  
And where there's doubt, true faith in You.*

*O Master, grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of Your peace.  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, only light,  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.*

*Make me a channel of Your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
In giving to all men that we receive,  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.*

**Offering**

**Prayer –Leader:** All that is good comes from you, O Lord. We dedicate these gifts and offer ourselves for your service. AMEN.

**The Winifred Kiek Scholarship**, supplied by offerings of Australian Church Women on Fellowship Day each July, provides supplementary training, in Australia or overseas, for a Christian woman who has already received her basic training. It is intended for those who give leadership in church life, and for those who need strengthening as Christians for their work in the world. Fourteen women from Asia and the Pacific have so far benefited by this Scholarship, each then making a vital contribution to the welfare of their own country.

### Responsive Meditation

Allow a pause for reflection after each congregational response. References cited are not to be read out.

**Leader:** Do we show the same love to our children as God does to us?

*People: The Lord says: Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you.  
I have written your name on the palms of my hands. (Isa. 49:15,16)*

**Leader:** Do we accept children as people, with contributions to make now, and not just when they grow up?

*People: Jesus says: Unless we change, and become like children,  
Unless we humble ourselves,  
we will never enter God's kingdom. (Matt.18:3)*

**Leader:** Do we judge those who physically harm children, or who kill children? Yet do we hurt children with words, do we harm them emotionally ourselves?

*People: Moses said: Do not commit murder, or you will be brought to trial.  
Jesus says: If we are angry with our brother we will be brought to trial,  
If we call our brother 'good-for-nothing', we will be brought before the council.  
If we call our brother 'stupid idiot' we are in danger of hell fire ( Matt.5:21,22)*

**Leader:** Are children at home in the church and with Christian people?

*People: Whoever welcomes a child in Jesus' name, welcomes Jesus.  
For God's promise was to us and our children.  
(Matt.18:5, Acts 2:39)*

**Leader:** Do we set the boundaries of discipline wisely for our children?

*People: Paul tells us: We must not irritate our children,  
we must not make them bitter*

*We know God corrects those he loves.  
He disciplines us for our own good.  
We sometimes discipline children, not for their good, but for ours. (Col. 3:21,  
Heb. 12:6,10).*

**Leader:** Sometimes bringing up children in today's society seems to ask for more wisdom and strength that we have.

*People: James tells us: If any of us lack wisdom we should pray to God who will  
give it to us.*

*Isaiah tells us: If we trust in the Lord for help, we will find our strength  
renewed.*

*(James 1:5, Isa. 40:31)*

**Leader:** Do father and mother, and other relations and friends, and teachers, share as they ought in bringing up children?

*People: We must treat all people as neighbours, and children are people too.  
We must love our neighbour as ourselves.*

**Leader:** Our world is changing very quickly. Do we teach our children to have firm roots, and to be flexible to meet change?

*People: God is our refuge and strength.  
Therefore will we not fear though the world should change (Ps. 46:1-2)*

**Leader:** Do we know that children think differently from adults, and that they think differently at different ages?  
Do we adapt to help them where they are?

*People: When I was a child, my speech, feelings and thinking were all those of child.  
When we talk with children, when we play with children, when we share with children, we should be at their level, for they are not yet adults. (1 Cor. 13:11)*

**Leader:** Do children see God's love in our love for each other?

*People: Jesus prayed that we might be one.  
He gave us the same glory that God gave him, so that we might be one in him,  
so that the world may know that God sent him, and so that the world may know  
that God loves us as he loved Jesus. (John 17:21-23)*

### **Hymn or Choir**

### **Reflections**

**Leader:** Outside of the Christian community – both in the home and church – lies the secular community; Australia, the world. Our children live in the world and are exposed to its life and values. The church seeks to relate the children creatively to the world in which they find themselves. The church communicates the gospel to them where they live. Christian nurture cannot be limited – to make a difference it must make a difference where the children are. Our witnessing cannot stop at the door of a church or the door of our homes. There can be no near and far in the Christian fellowship. We have the responsibility of being the church and the church – through us – must speak to all children all day, every day.

Wherever one Christian is, there is the church. Whenever any child comes into contact with a Christian he is being taught the meaning of the faith according to that Christian.

## **WE COMMIT OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN TO GOD'S CARE**

### **Prayer**

**Leader:** Let us stand and commit ourselves and our children to God's care.

*People: God, Our Father in Heaven, we thank you for your constant love to us. With joy in our hearts, we accept the challenge of being recognised as your disciples,*

*by the love which we show to one another. We think especially of the children in our community, the children with whom we come in contact each day; the children within our special care. We pray for the gift of your Holy Spirit working within us, so that love, joy, and peace shall be our constant witness to them. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.*

**Hymn**

All remain standing

**Prayer**

Leader: We acknowledge your presence among us here;  
We see you working in your world.  
Send us into your world  
In the power of your Holy Spirit,  
To love, in thought, word and action,  
To your praise and glory.

People: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
The love of God,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
Be with us all.*

Leader: The Lord is with us.

People: *We rejoice in His presence, now and always. AMEN*

POSTLUDE – "HYMN TO JOY" – Beethoven – 92, A.H.B.

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**Suggested Hymns**

1. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
(Australian Hymn Book, No. 109 – Tune: Woodlands)
  
2. O love of God, how strong and true,  
(Australian Hymn Book, No. 75 – Tune: Eisenach)
  
3. O breath of life, come sweeping through us,  
(Australian Hymn Book, No. 322 – Tune: Spiritus Vitae)
  
4. Kneels at the feet of his friends  
(Australian Hymn Book, No. 561)  
Extra verse to follow verse 2:  
  
*Children and young people too,  
All of them ones we should love.  
Children are neighbours to us and you.*  
  
Tune: Kneels at the feet – 779 and refrain – Ghana folk melody  
(May be sung by choir and soloist)
  
5. A New commandment I give unto you  
(Australian Hymn Book, No. 571 – Tune New Commandment  
– irregular)

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The service was prepared by a group from the Armidale congregation of the  
Uniting Church in Australia, for Australian Church Women.

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1. 1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the promise of his word;  
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.
  - 2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;  
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;  
his holy name—the Lord, the Mighty One.
  - 3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,  
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.
  - 4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children and for evermore!
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3. 1 O love of God, how strong and true,  
eternal and yet ever new,  
uncomprehended and unbought,  
beyond all knowledge and all thought!
  - 2 O wide-embracing, wondrous love  
we read you in the sky above,  
we read you in the earth below,  
in seas that swell and streams that flow.
  - 3 We read you best in him who came  
to bear for us the cross of shame,  
sent by the Father from on high,  
our life to live, our death to die.
  - 4 We read your power to bless and save  
ev'n in the darkness of the grave;  
still more in resurrection light  
we read the fullness of your might.
  - 5 O love of God, our shield and stay  
through all the perils of our way;  
eternal love, in you we rest,  
for ever safe, for ever blest.
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5. A new commandment I give unto you,  
That you love one another as  
I have loved you,  
That you love one another  
as I have loved you,  
By this shall all men know  
that you are my disciples,  
If you have love one to another,  
By this shall all men know  
That you are my disciples,  
If you have love one to another.
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2. 1 O breath of life, come sweeping through us  
revive your church with life and power,  
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,  
and fit your church to meet this hour.
  - 2 O wind of God, come bend us, break us,  
till humbly we confess our need;  
then in your tenderness remake us,  
revive, restore: for this we plead.
  - 3 O breath of love, come breathe within us,  
renewing thought and will and heart;  
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
revive your church in every part.
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4. 1 Kneels at the feet of his friends,  
si-lent - ly wash-es their feet:  
mas-ter who acts as a slave to them,  
*Ye su, Ye su, fill us with your love,  
show us how to serve the neighbours  
we have from you.*
  - 2 Neighbours are rich men and poor,  
neighbours are black men and white,  
neighbours are nearby and far away.
  - 3 Children and young people too,  
All of them ones we should love.  
Children are neighbours to us and you.
  - 4 These are the ones we should serve,  
these are the ones we should love;  
all men are neighbours to us and you
  - 5 Loving puts us on our knees,  
serving as though we are slaves:  
this is the way we should live with you.

Questions for discussion as an alternative to an address or to follow the worship service in a study session.

1. It has been suggested that the following are necessary for the growth of a child to its fullest potential. Discuss.



2. What are our aims for the children of the community?  
Do we really know what they need and want?
3. What are the ingredients necessary for the development and growth of the whole child?
4. How does this church/community provide for the growth of the whole child? What can we do to improve the situation?
5. Can we as adults learn from children?

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