

**PENTECOST 6**  
**30/6/24**  
**CAVES BEACH**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Touch us with your presence, O God!

**We will respond with worship that is joyful and free.**

Touch us with your presence, O God!

**We will hear the Word, spoken for us and for our faith community.**

Touch us with your presence, O God!

**We will experience the revealing, healing, power of the Spirit.**

Touch us with your presence, O God,

**and we will be your compassionate presence to others.**

**Opening Prayer**

For your creative glory, which shines from every flowing stream and sings out from every bird,

**we give you thanks, most gracious God.**

For the joy that is ours at work, within the family circle, and when we relax with our friends,

**we give you thanks, most gracious God.**

For your presence in the rough and tumble of life and when the pressure is on,

**we give you thanks, most gracious God.**

For the peace of Christ which this faith community extends, as it reaches out to our town/city, and to communities far from here;

**we give you thanks, O most gracious God. Amen.**

**HYMN 164** The great love of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sdMssEBQoI>

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING & CONFESSION**

God, you have made your name known to us in Jesus and we are truly thankful.

Jesus lived close to you.

He knew you and knew you loved him,  
and were with him in everything.

And because of Jesus, we too can live close to you,

experience your love and live the lives we were born for.  
We thank you that a deeper relationship with you is always open to us and  
that you are always inviting us into deeper communion with you.  
We thank you that we can never exhaust your love for us and all you have  
created.

**God**, we know it is true,  
that you reach out and lift us up,  
over and over again,  
in every moment,  
and yet, we have not lived our days  
dancing in joy and gratitude.  
We have not sung in full voice  
and invited all around us to join in.  
Too often, we live as if  
we had never felt your touch,  
never heard your promises of peace,  
of abundance, of love, of life.  
We sleepwalk through our lives  
when we could be fully awake.  
We long to be different  
but are afraid to trust  
your promise of renewal.  
We are too often like the prince  
in the fairy story who has amnesia  
and does not know he is a prince  
and so wanders the world lost  
sensing there is something more  
but having no clue of what it might be.  
We need to remember.  
We need to awaken.  
Amen.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Sleepers, awake!  
Dreamers, rouse yourselves!  
Your God is at your side.  
Your life is waiting for you.  
All that you hope for,  
all that you need,

is here, now.  
Reach out your hand!  
God welcomes you.  
God forgives you.

## READINGS

- **2 Corinthians 8:7–15**

7 Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am, by mentioning the eagerness of others, testing the genuineness of your love. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my opinion: it is beneficial for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something. 11 Now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. 13 For I do not mean that there should be relief for others and hardship for you, but it is a question of equality between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may also supply your need, in order that there may be equality. 15 As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much,  
and the one who had little did not have too little.”

- **Mark 5:21–43**

21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23 and pleaded with him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.” 24 So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years. 26 She had endured much under many physicians and had spent all that she had, and she was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she said, “If I but touch his cloak, I will be made well.” 29 Immediately her flow of blood stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Immediately aware that

power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my cloak?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." 35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the synagogue leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the synagogue leader, "Do not be afraid; only believe." 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the synagogue leader's house, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha kum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl stood up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.

**HYMN 236** Jesus hands were kind hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7oAg1wZ3Rc>

## **SERMON**

As I have said before Mark intertwines many of the stories in his Gospel. Each story is a separate episode but when they are read together we get a deeper understanding of where Mark is leading us.

In both stories today we have women who are seen to be ritually unclean by Jewish religious laws. One woman has a distressing issue with persistent bleeding. This would have stopped her from having any social contact and she would have been specifically prevented from joining in any Jewish religious ceremonies.

In the other story we hear of a girl for whom her father is seeking help and then she dies before Jesus can reach her. Having touched a dead child's

body Jesus would have been seen as ritually unclean. The fear was that unclean people would contaminate anyone who they accidentally touched.

If we start out with the little sick girl who just died, we know that her father, Jarius, was a prominent and religiously devout leader in the local community. He was living a privileged life. Like any parent, Jarius would do anything that he could to save his child. His desperation is such that he reaches out to the itinerant Rabbi called Jesus begging for his daughter to be healed. Here we see this prominent figure bowing before this wandering Prophet in front of a whole crowd, including his neighbours.

It is interesting to note here that Jarius is the only prominent Jewish religious leader in the New Testament to acknowledge who Jesus was.

As the crowd keep milling around them Jesus made His way to the home where this girl lays dying. While on His way to help Jarius's daughter a woman in the crowd brushes His cloak. Jesus would have been used to the jostling of a crowd but still He realises that a person has touched his cloak drawing on His healing powers. Jesus simply says: "Who touched me?"

This is where we need to recognise the clever story telling gifts which we see in Mark's Gospel. Jesus is following Jarius when the other story interrupts the journey. But, hold on! Jesus is in a milling crowd how many people could have bumped into Him or brushed His cloak? Why would Jesus notice a woman just touching His cloak?

Following Jesus question the unclean woman comes forward. Here we discover the full story. It is a woman who has been suffering for many years with a persistent discharge leaving her an outcast. Once again Mark's story telling skill comes out as this woman falls to her feet in complete surrender. She has exhausted all the medical help available and is desperate.

It is interesting to reflect on some of the cures offered for her condition in those days. One involved her being frightened in some unexpected way. Another involved her eating the undigested grain from mule dung! Yuck!

For 12 years now she would have been excluded from joining others in the local Synagogue or visiting the Temple in Jerusalem. Even more isolating

was the prohibition on mixing socially. It was believed that being in contact with a menstruating woman could easily cause death.

For over 12 years this poor woman had been ostracised and left out of normal society. There is no mention of her family either. Even being present in the crowd that day was taboo for this lady and could have resulted in her being stoned to death. The simple act of touching the robes of the travelling Rabbi would have left Him being ritually unclean. That poor woman must have been very desperate and afraid.

For some reason this desperate woman believed that all she had to do was touch His cloak so that she could be healed. Then everything goes wrong for her.

She had not bumped into Him like everyone else did. Compounding this is Jairus who is such an important man who has just prostrated himself begging for his daughter's healing is waiting impatiently. How dare she slow his progress. It was already hard enough with this mob milling around Jesus. Now there was yet another thing diverting Him from getting to the sick girl as soon as possible.

Jesus stands his ground and no one is going anywhere until the person who touched His cloak is identified. When the lady does come forward, probably trembling in abject fear, Jesus simply connects with her calling her His daughter. Instead of humiliation Jesus gives her words of peace and reconciliation.

At the same time Jairus' world comes crashing down as he is told that his precious daughter is now dead. Without engaging with the crowd or the poor woman any further Jesus simply restarts His journey to the girl, ignoring the sad news about her death. Brushing aside the grieving family and all the professional mourners He simply takes the little girl's hand and encourages her to get up from her bed. Not even death can prevent Jesus from His healing mission.

I want to pause here and reflect on what has happened in the middle of all the good news. Jesus has in the space of a few verses broken some of the most important taboos in Jewish society. He has had contact with an oozing woman and then He touched a dead body. The purity codes of

Leviticus and Numbers have not just been ignored, they have been shattered.

As Christians we understand that we are not burdened by the old purity demands of Jewish Laws. We are even encouraged not to be too heavily restrained by human laws. Jesus is the source of our guidance on the road to righteousness, not some outmoded purity laws.

Looking back on these two stories there are in fact several points that come to me:

- Jairus is a father seeking healing for his daughter as her death would have shattered his privileged life.
- The woman in the crowd is seeking healing from a condition which renders her constantly impure and has left her a destitute outcast.
- Jairus is a man of privilege who has everything to lose.
- The other person is a woman who has lost everything and has everything to gain.
- Jairus is an outstanding member of the community.
- The other lady has been ostracised by her family as well as the religious community, an outcast.
- He has wealth with a big home and servants.
- She is destitute as she has spent everything on seeking a cure.
- Jairus comes striding forward very formally asking for help.
- She discreetly pushes through the crowd hoping not to be recognised for who she is just do she could gently touched his cloak.

The connections are obvious when we stop to think. Each story intertwines.

- The woman has been suffering for 12 years.
- The girl is 12 years old.
- The father expresses his faith in Jesus.
- The woman is driven to seek healing through her faith in Jesus.
- Both Jairus and the woman fall at Jesus' feet to seek His graceful healing.
- The woman and the girl were both ritually unclean but Jesus ignores this outdated belief system.
- Their healing allows them to fully rejoin society.
- In both cases He treats them like His precious children.
- In their healing is salvation and there is no competition between them. They are in fact forever linked.

How would we reimagine this story for today?

- Would it be a refugee father begging for the life of his child after suffering through the horrors which forced them to flee their homeland?
- Perhaps the struggles of a single middle-aged woman to find a cure for a persistent cancer with no more financial backing for the expensive treatment she so desperately needs?
- Maybe there is the spouse of a military service person in the middle of conflict?
- Is it a person shattered and homeless from a psychiatric illness?

Any of these people caught up in modern day situations would willingly prostrate themselves before Jesus seeking his attention. They would be desperate for relief from their suffering.

As different as our times and medical systems are there are still people desperate for Jesus to offer healing. Whether we come as someone with dignity and social status or we are destitute and begging, the call is the same as in Mark's Gospel. Even today Jesus can look into the eyes of these desperate people and offer hope like a loving parent with His children.

A few years ago I heard of Lilla Watson, an Aboriginal artist, who is an activist and academic who is also recognised as an elder by her home mob in western Queensland. While she does not claim to be the author of the following phrase she used it at a United Nations conference on women in Nairobi. "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Jesus walks the liberation journey with each of us.

The stories in Mark's Gospel need each other. *Our* stories today needed each other to fully convey the message. In Luke 4:18, Jesus quotes Isaiah to describe the purpose of His ministry. He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberation to the captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free."

Sometimes when our world seems so divided, it can start to feel like my healing and your healing are at odds, like your liberation is an interruption of mine. But as we can see in our stories today, Jesus shows us that as different as we are, our liberation is bound together.

This brings out the point of the passage as I see it today. May we all look around at our world with crowds of people bumping into one another and people in desperate need of healing and acceptance. Some might be different from us. Some might even challenge our quietly held attitudes. Some seem to have an orthodox approach to life, others completely against our grain. Jesus does not call out loudly in the marketplace about his achievements. Jesus simply says that His children are healed in His presence.

Let us be like Jesus in our world today and quietly give healing and acceptance to those who are suffering in the crowded world around us, in Jesus' name.

**HYMN 629** When I needed a neighbour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7a7LdgRh-k>

### **PRAYERS FOR THE OFFERING**

Keenly aware of the extravagant love that enfolds us,  
may we reach out to the suffering of our world with generous acts of love.  
We give thanks for the love we have known,  
the seasons of goodness and wellbeing,  
and the great goodness that upholds all that is.  
May this offering extend love in every direction,  
increasing the godly realm of love in our world.

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Good morning my brothers and sisters in Christ!

I have adapted the hymn Beauty for Brokenness into a prayer as I feel the whole hymn is a prayer within itself, Enjoy.

Father in Heaven you are our God of the poor, our friend of the weak.  
Give us your compassion, melt our cold hearts and let our tears fall like rain.

Come, Lord change our love from a spark to a flame.  
Lord, you are our hope in despair and our suffering.  
You are our refuge from cruel wars, our haven from fear.  
Lord, you are our shelter for fragile lives, our cure for our ills.  
You give rights of the weak, for voices who can't speak.  
We pray for rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams  
which are plundered and poisoned.  
Lord, end the madness, carelessness and the greed.  
Help us be content with things that we need.  
Lighten our darkness, breathe on your flame until your justice  
burns brightly again.  
Lord, we pray for bread for the children.  
For justice, joy, peace from sunrise to sunset as your kingdom increases!  
Until all the nations learn of your ways, seek your salvation  
And bring you their praise.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

This week's Hunter Presbytery Prayer Diary is for The Maitland -  
Rutherford Uniting Church.

Rutherford Uniting Church is a small congregation with a big heart.  
We meet for worship every Sunday and during the week we have a variety  
of groups which meet for fellowship, exercise, painting, sewing and Kid's  
Bible Study.

We are a part of the newly developing Maitland Area Uniting Churches  
Mission and 3 of our members are lay worship leaders who serve  
congregations from Tarro to Dungog.  
We have been gradually growing over the last ten years, but most of our  
members are retirees  
and our current leaders are tiring.  
Our church is ideally placed adjacent to the Rutherford shopping precinct  
and our vision is to eventually become a "shop front for God" to the  
community.  
Let us pray, We pray that you God will bless our congregation and enliven  
our faith and  
witness by the power of his Holy Spirit to draw more people into the faith  
and love of our fellowship.  
We pray that God will strengthen and sustain our current leaders and raise  
up new

leaders to take over their responsibilities. And ask God to bring ordained ministry agents with passion and vision to lead the Maitland Area Uniting Churches into our new future.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Amen.

Last but not least from Hebrews 12: 3

Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

We say this with grateful hearts and thanksgiving

In the precious name of your beloved son, our Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus. Amen.

Please join me in singing the Lord's prayer.

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.

**HYMN 537** Let us talents and tongues employ  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYnF86ZzHH8>

## **COMMUNION**

Hear the words of institution of this sacrament as recorded by the apostle Paul:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had

given thanks, he broke it and said: "This is my body which is for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, for the remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

With this bread and this cup we do as our Saviour commands: we set them apart for the holy supper to which he calls us, and we come to God with our prayers of 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.**

It is right that we should always offer thanks, O God, because you have created and sustained us and all things.

And so we praise you  
with the faithful of every time and place,  
joining with choirs of angels and the whole creation  
in the eternal hymn.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise you, O God,  
that in your mercy you gave your only Son, Jesus Christ,  
that whoever believes in him  
should not perish but have eternal life.

We give thanks for his humble birth,  
for his life of ministry and love,  
for his sufferings and death on the cross,  
for his glorious resurrection and ascension,  
and for the promise that he will come again.

O God, by your word and Spirit  
bless and sanctify this bread and this wine,  
that they may be for us  
the communion of the body and blood of Christ,  
and that he may ever live in us  
and we in him.

God, accept us,  
as we offer and present ourselves, our souls and our bodies,  
to be a holy and a living sacrifice;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be all honour and glory, now and forever.  
AMEN

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.  
The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ.  
The gifts of God for the people of God.

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Receive this holy sacrament  
of the body and blood of Christ,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

## ̄ **DISTRIBUTION**

### **AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray:  
We thank you, God our Father,

that through word and sacrament  
you have given us your Son  
who is the true bread of heaven  
and food of eternal life.

So strengthen us in your service  
that our daily living may show our thanks;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**HYMN 531** Sent forth by God's blessing  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNg\\_mZu0HXw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNg_mZu0HXw)

### **BENEDICTION**

Go to be energy for goodness and healing.  
When a hand in need reaches toward us may we respond with loving  
kindness in the Spirit of Christ for we are the Body of Christ alive in the  
world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzpJ0rLtufA>