

8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - *With a baptism*

ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA

Sunday 19th July 2026

Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur

Readings:¹ Genesis 28:10-19a / Psalm 139:1-11, 23-24 / Romans 8:12-25 / Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

Series Title: **Called to Discipleship, Who Me? How?**

Today's Theme: ***"Called by Grace, Sent in Hope"***

Genesis 28:10-19a

Jacob's Dream at Bethel

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a stairway set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel.

Psalm 139:1-11, 23-24

The Inescapable God

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

¹ O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

³ You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

¹ All scriptural quotations are lifted from New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. (NRSVUE) Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
 Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
 if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
 and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me fast.
¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 and night wraps itself around me,"
¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
 the night is as bright as the day,
 for darkness is as light to you.
²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
 test me and know my thoughts.
²⁴ See if there is any wicked way in me,
 and lead me in the way everlasting.

Romans 8:12-25

¹² So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³ for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.
¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

²⁴ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did

these weeds come from?’²⁸ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’²⁹ But he replied, ‘No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.’³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one,³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

SERMON

What inspires Christian mission in the everyday realities of life?

Today, that question becomes especially tangible as we celebrate Liam's baptism. Baptism is not simply a family tradition or a religious milestone. It is a sign that every human life is held within the love and purposes of God. As we welcome Liam through the waters of baptism, we are also invited to reflect on our own journey of faith and discipleship.

In Genesis, Jacob is alone, uncertain, and on the run. He falls asleep in what appears to be an ordinary place and awakens to a startling discovery: “Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!”². Jacob learns that God is already present before he becomes aware of it.

That is one of the profound truths symbolised in baptism. Long before Liam can understand theological ideas, long before he can make sense of faith for himself, God is already present. God is already at work. Baptism is the Church's way of declaring that divine grace always comes before our response.

Many of us have experienced moments like Jacob's. A crisis, an act of kindness, a birth, a loss, or an unexpected encounter can suddenly reveal that life is deeper and more sacred than we imagined. The life of discipleship, a theme we have been reflecting on recently, begins when we learn to notice what God has been doing all along.

Psalms 139 continues this theme. The psalmist asks, “Where can I go from your spirit?”³. The answer, of course, is nowhere. God is present in every stage of life.

² Genesis 28:16

³ Psalm 139:7

Today, Liam stands at the beginning of a journey. Yet the promise of this psalm is that wherever life takes him—through joy and disappointment, success and struggle—God's presence goes with him. The same promise is offered to each of us. We are known fully and loved completely.

This matters because Christian mission does not begin with achievement; it begins with belonging. We do not serve others in order to earn God's love. We serve because we already live within it. Baptism announces that our deepest identity is not found in success, possessions, popularity, or even failure. It is found in being children of God.

Paul develops this idea in Romans. Through the Spirit, believers become “children of God” and heirs with Christ⁴. Yet Paul is realistic. Life is not free from suffering. Creation itself, he says, is “groaning” as it waits for renewal⁵.

Even today, the world is groaning. We live amid uncertainty, loneliness, environmental concerns, social division, and growing pressure on individuals and families. Into such a world Liam is being baptised. Into such a world we are called to live as disciples.

Yet Paul's emphasis is not on despair but hope. Baptism places us within God's future while commissioning us to serve faithfully in the present.

This is where mission becomes practical. Mission is not reserved for clergy or missionaries. It is lived daily. It is the teacher who notices the struggling student. The neighbour who checks on someone living alone. The employer who treats workers fairly. The young person who refuses to join in bullying. The family that makes room for those who feel excluded.

As Liam grows, our prayer is not simply that he will become aware of his baptism. Our prayer is that he will discover what it means to participate in God's mission through such ordinary acts of compassion, justice, generosity, and love.

But that raises an important question for all of us: **how do we support Liam's discipleship?**

We do so not merely by remembering his baptism today, but by modelling the faith into which he is being baptised. We support him by praying for and, in time, with him, welcoming him into the life of the Church, sharing the stories and values of Jesus, and demonstrating compassion, forgiveness, and service in our daily lives. As Liam grows, he will learn as much from the faith he sees lived out around him as from anything he is taught. In that sense, his baptism is not only a commitment for Liam and his family, but also a calling for this congregation.

Jesus' parable of the wheat and weeds reminds us that discipleship unfolds in an imperfect world (Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43). Good and evil grow side by side. Progress can seem slow. Yet Jesus encourages patience and trust. God remains at work even when we cannot yet see the final harvest.

⁴ Romans 8:14–17

⁵ Rom 8:22

Let us pray.

Loving God, whose presence surrounds us and whose Spirit gives us hope, we thank you for calling us into the life of discipleship. As we now welcome Liam for baptism, renew in us the promises of our own baptism, that together we may grow in faith and share in Christ's mission in the world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**