



***Healing Journeys***  
**Sermon Based Curriculum**  
**for Small Groups**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> June to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

## INTRODUCTION

You are invited to pay particular attention to "Healing Journeys" as we continue our lectionary journey this year, exploring amongst other things the healing events of Mark's gospel. We delve into the Gospel of Mark's profound narratives of healing, illuminating the transformative power of Jesus' ministry. Many of the weeks will focus on different episodes of healing as recorded in Mark's Gospel, offering insights into the theology of healing and restoration.

Mark's Gospel portrays Jesus as a compassionate healer, restoring wholeness to individuals marginalized by illness, disability, and social exclusion. The healing events recounted in Mark reveal not only physical healing but also spiritual and relational restoration, reflecting God's desire for wholeness.

As we journey through Mark's Gospel, we encounter Jesus' mission of bringing the Kingdom of God near through acts of compassion and healing. The series title, "Healing Journeys," captures the essence of these encounters, inviting participants to explore the multifaceted dimensions of healing within the context of Jesus' ministry.

This booklet is laid out so that your gathering as a home group each week will follow the four W's rhythm of Welcome, Worship, Word, Works. I hope this helps you and makes the journey meaningful. The times in brackets are a guideline that should help to keep you on track.

## STRUCTURE OF EACH WEEK'S STUDY

### **Welcome (10 minutes)**

This is the time of fellowship, mutual concern and 'catch up' with each other.

### **Worship (10 minutes)**

I will suggest a Psalm for this moment. Ask one person to read it slowly and prayerfully. As you listen to it allow this to be a moment of worship, love, devotion, adoration, thanksgiving and praise. You can do your prayers of intercession for each other and society at this time, or at the end of the gathering.

### **Word (60 minutes)**

Here I guide you through a Bible Study. Then you will reflect on the sermon. Then I give you a simple summary of the theme. I then suggest a number of questions on the theme.

It is up to the group leader to decide whether there is enough time for all of the questions – and to select which questions to discuss if there are too many.

### **Works (5 minutes)**

Here I will suggest an activity that will help you put the lesson into practice in your daily life.

I really pray that this booklet will be a useful tool to make the most of this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John', written in a cursive style.

## Following the Lectionary

2024 is a year of following the Revised Common Lectionary as we did last year. This sermon-based curriculum is designed for home groups and classes and a solo participation guide accompanies it for those who are not in a home group. This is the second of five that will be produced this year.

The Revised Common Lectionary has been running since 1992 and was developed by the ecumenical liturgical body the 'Consultation on Common Texts'. This lectionary is an adaptation of the Common Lectionary that preceded it. The reading of appointed Scriptures throughout the year is a practice that goes all the way back to our Jewish roots.

The Gospel readings each Sunday will follow the important moments in the life of Jesus. This year the readings are mainly from the Gospel of Mark.

We suggest that in your devotional times you prepare for the coming Sunday by reading the passages that will be read that day. It is best for you to design your own rhythm for doing this, but here is a suggestion:

Monday = **Psalm**

Thursday = **Epistle**

Tuesday = **Old Testament**

Friday = **Gospel again**

Wednesday = **Gospel**

Saturday = **Psalm again**

### Here are the lectionary readings for this period:

<b>2 June</b>	1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20) Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18 2 Corinthians 4:5-12 <u>Mark 2:23-3:6</u>	
<b>9 June</b>	1 Samuel 8:4-11 (12-15), 16-20 (11:14-15) Psalm 138 2 Corinthians 4:13 – 5:1 <u>Mark 3:20-35</u>	Family Service
<b>16 June</b>	1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:13 Psalm 20 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13), 14-17 <u>Mark 4:26-34</u>	Youth Day & Fathers' Day
<b>23 June</b>	1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49 Psalm 9:9-20 or 1 Samuel 17:57 – 18:5, 10-16 2 Corinthians 6:1-13 <u>Mark 4:35-41</u>	Local Preachers Psalm 133

<b>30 June</b>	2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27 Psalm 130 2 Corinthians 8:7-15 <u>Mark 5:21-43</u>	
<b>7 July</b>	2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 Psalm 48 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 <u>Mark 6:1-13</u>	
<b>14 July</b>	2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 Psalm 2 4 Ephesians 1:3-14 <u>Mark 6:14-29</u>	
<b>21 July</b>	2 Samuel 7:1-14a Psalm 89:20-37 Ephesians 2:11-22 <u>Mark 6:30-34, 53-56</u>	
<b>28 July</b>	Genesis 8:15-22 Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Ruth 2:1-23 Psalm 65 1 Timothy 6:6-10 Revelation 14:14-18 <u>Matthew 6:25-33</u>	Harvest Festival

### For Further Reading

If you would like to ‘read up’ to help you in your study, or to help you prepare for the Home Group discussion, then here are some resources you could look at:

- <http://www.textweek.com/yeara/yeara.htm> (this is a central resource that takes you to many resources for preachers, worship leaders, Bible Study leaders, individual study)
- [Year B Calendar – Sacredise](#) (This is a South African Methodist Minister, Rev. John VD Laar, who has a brief commentary and hymn and worship song suggestions)
- The following are links that use the very helpful Open and Relational, or Process Theology Perspective:
  - [Year B, 2023-2024 \(processandfaith.org\)](#)
  - [Living A Holy Adventure - Bruce Epperly \(patheos.com\)](#)
- [Lectionary Resources \(billloader.com\)](#) (This is Prof. William Loader’s excellent and up to date Biblical Studies Perspective)
- [Revised Common Lectionary \(vanderbilt.edu\)](#) (This is a beautiful space for those who want to view art that is linked to the lectionary.)

## Healing Rhythms

### Welcome

**Worship** Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18

### Word

1. Read Mark 2:23-3:6 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 2:23-3:6, Jesus challenges the rigid interpretation of the Sabbath by the Pharisees, highlighting the deeper intention behind this sacred day. Jesus' actions and teachings in these verses remind us that the Sabbath is not merely a day for strict rule-following, but a divine gift intended for human well-being and flourishing. Keeping the Sabbath introduces a healthy and life-giving rhythm to each week. As He defends His disciples' actions and heals a man on the Sabbath, Jesus underscores that compassion and mercy are at the heart of God's desire for humanity.

This passage invites us to consider a dynamic relationship with God, one that is responsive to the needs of the moment rather than confined to static regulations. It illustrates how God's love and grace are active, continually shaping and reshaping our understanding of what it means to live in alignment with divine intentions. Jesus exemplifies a relational approach to faith, where the focus is on the flourishing of life and the well-being of people.

We are called to embrace a faith that is alive and responsive, open to the movement of the Spirit, and committed to the healing and restoration of our communities. This story encourages us to prioritize human need and compassion over rigid adherence to tradition.



Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June

## Healing Relationships

**Welcome**

**Worship** Psalm 138

**Word** Read Mark 3:20-35 and answer the following questions:

1. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday?  
How was your faith formed by that sermon?
2. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
3. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 3:20-35, we witness a moment of tension and revelation in Jesus' ministry. Jesus is surrounded by crowds, so much so that he and his disciples cannot even eat. His family, concerned by rumors of his madness, attempts to restrain him. Meanwhile, the religious authorities accuse Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebul, suggesting that his power to cast out demons comes from an unholy source. They believe Jesus has unholy connections – or relationships with unholy spirits. Jesus counters this accusation with a powerful metaphor about a divided kingdom, illustrating that his works of healing and liberation are indeed acts of God's Kingdom breaking into the world. Jesus asserts his relationship with God – and that this is a truly healing relationship.

In this passage, Jesus challenges conventional understandings of family and loyalty. When told that his mother and brothers are outside seeking him, Jesus redefines family, stating, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." This radical inclusivity emphasizes the relational nature of God's Kingdom, where bonds are forged through shared commitment to God's transformative mission. Jesus' words invite us to see each other not through the lens of societal constructs, but through the expansive and loving vision of God's community.

In our current context, this passage calls us to reflect on our own relationships and allegiances. Are we open to expanding our understanding of family to include those who join us in seeking justice, compassion, and peace? Jesus invites us into a dynamic, ever-growing family bound by love and a shared journey towards God's vision for the world. This is an ever-widening circle of healing relationships.

4. Discuss these questions:

1. How do you understand Jesus' redefinition of family in this passage? How does this challenge or affirm your own views on family?
2. In what ways do societal norms and expectations conflict with the inclusive community Jesus describes?
3. How can we apply Jesus' teaching about family to create more inclusive and supportive communities in our own contexts?
4. What does Jesus' response to the accusation of being possessed teach us about discerning true from false sources of power and authority?
5. How does this passage inspire you to participate in God's work of healing and liberation in your community?

**Works**

Can you nurture a healing relationship this week?

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## Healthy Growth

### Welcome

### Worship Psalm 20

### Word

1. Read Mark 4:26-34 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 4:26-34, Jesus uses parables to illustrate the Kingdom of God. In life, plants that grow in a healthy way are good metaphors of the Kingdom. He begins with the parable of the growing seed, depicting a man who scatters seed on the ground and, without understanding how, watches it sprout and grow. This growth happens independently of human intervention, signifying that God's Kingdom unfolds in ways beyond our comprehension, often in hidden and mysterious manners. Jesus emphasizes that the growth of God's reign is certain and inevitable, even if the process remains a divine mystery.

The parable of the mustard seed further illustrates this concept. The mustard seed, known for its minuscule size, grows into the largest of garden plants, providing shelter for birds. This transformation from the smallest seed to a large plant symbolizes the unexpected and transformative power of God's Kingdom. What begins insignificantly can grow into something mighty and encompassing, offering refuge and hope to all.

These parables encourage us to trust in the process of God's work in the world and in our lives, even when we cannot see immediate results. They remind us that the Kingdom of God is dynamic and ever-expanding, inviting us to participate in its growth through acts of faith, hope, and love.



## Healthy Confidence

### Welcome

**Worship** Psalm 9:9-20 or Psalm 133

### Word

1. Read Mark 4:35-41 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 4:35-41, we encounter a powerful story that speaks to the very heart of faith and trust in Jesus. As evening falls, Jesus suggests crossing to the other side of the lake. A great windstorm arises, and the waves crash into the boat, threatening to sink it. Amid the chaos, Jesus sleeps peacefully on a cushion. The disciples, gripped by fear, wake Him, crying out, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus awakens, rebukes the wind, and commands the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Immediately, the wind ceases, and a great calm settles. He then questions the disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Overwhelmed, they marvel, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"

This passage reminds us that Jesus is present with us in the midst of our storms, even when He seems silent. It challenges us to move from fear to faith, trusting that God is actively working for our good, even when circumstances seem dire.

5. Discuss these questions:
  1. How do you react when you face "storms" in your life, and where do you find Jesus in those moments?
  2. What does Jesus' ability to calm the storm reveal about His nature and authority?



## Healing Faith

### Welcome

### Worship Psalm 130

### Word

1. Read Mark 5:21-43 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 5:21-43, we witness two intertwined healing stories of desperation and faith. Jairus, a synagogue leader, urgently pleads with Jesus to heal his dying daughter. Jesus agrees, but on the way, a woman suffering from chronic bleeding for twelve years secretly touches His cloak, believing she will be healed. Immediately, her bleeding stops. Jesus, aware that power has gone out from Him, seeks her out. The Greek word for the “power” that goes out of Jesus here is *dunamis* - which is a lively inner energy. It is the energy that gives life, birth, and blessing. We can even imagine this as the energy of the universe, the power that gave birth to the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago. In this moment there was a leap of this universal energy from Jesus into the woman and her whole being, body, mind, and spirit was transformed.

Meanwhile, Jairus receives devastating news: his daughter has died. Jesus, undeterred, encourages him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” At Jairus’ home, Jesus bars the door to everyone who assumes the situation is hopeless. There is something important here.

These narratives highlight the power of faith and Jesus’ compassionate response to human suffering. They illustrate that even in our most desperate moments, Jesus meets us with healing and hope. The stories invite us to trust in His presence and power, transcending fear and despair. Through these encounters, we see that



## Healing Missions

### Welcome

### Worship Psalm 48

### Word

1. Read Mark 6:1-13 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 6:1-13, we see Jesus returning to His hometown, only to be met with skepticism and rejection. The locals cannot reconcile the wisdom and miracles of Jesus with their familiarity with Him as a carpenter. Despite this, Jesus continues His mission, undeterred by disbelief.

He then sends out the Twelve in pairs, empowering them to preach repentance, cast out demons, and heal the sick. Jesus instructs them to travel light, taking only essentials, emphasizing trust in God's provision and the hospitality of those they encounter. This mission of healing and liberation extends the work of Jesus, multiplying His presence and compassion through His disciples.

The mission highlights the relational nature of Jesus' ministry, emphasizing connection and reliance on God and each other. The disciples' success is not solely in their actions but in their faith and openness to God working through them. Their mission becomes a living testament to the transformative power of God's love, challenging us to embody similar faith and compassion in our communities.

These healing missions invite us to trust in God's provision, to step out in faith, and to become vessels of healing and hope in a world that often doubts and dismisses the divine.



## Deadly Power

### Welcome

### Worship Psalm 2

### Word

1. Read Mark 6:14-29 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 6:14-29, the narrative shifts to the story of John the Baptist's death at the hands of King Herod. This tragic event is more than a historical account; it reveals the clash between the Kingdom of God's values and the corrupt power structures of the world.

John's boldness in challenging Herod's immoral relationship reflects a commitment to truth and righteousness, even at personal cost. The story illuminates the consequences of unjust power wielded by Herod, highlighting the contrast between worldly authority and divine justice. In the midst of many healing things to focus on in Mark's Gospel, here we have the focus on the opposite – Deadly Power.

This passage invites reflection on the role of human agency in shaping history and responding to injustice. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of our choices and the unfolding drama of God's ongoing creation. It prompts us to confront the realities of power and injustice, urging us to embody courage and integrity in our pursuit of God's justice and truth.

5. Discuss these questions:
  1. How does John the Baptist's courage in confronting Herod challenge our understanding of speaking truth to power today?
  2. What role does integrity play in the face of corruption and immorality?



## Healing Presence

### Welcome

**Worship** Psalm 89:20-37

### Word

1. Read Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Mark 6:30-34, 53-56, Jesus demonstrates profound compassion and openness to those seeking healing and wholeness. He recognizes the human need for rest and reflection, yet remains attentive to the needs of the crowds. This passage underscores the relational aspect of Jesus' ministry—meeting people where they are, responding to their suffering, and offering hope.

Jesus embodies God's responsive presence in the world. His ministry illustrates the interconnectedness of divine and human agency, emphasizing the significance of relational encounters in the unfolding story of creation.

In this passage, Jesus models a balanced approach to ministry—making time for rest and reflection while remaining attentive to the needs of others. His response to the crowds reflects the values of compassion and openness that are foundational to the Kingdom of God.

The healing encounters highlight the importance of embodied, relational care in addressing human suffering. Jesus' presence brings healing and restoration, inviting us to consider how we can extend compassion and grace to those around us. He also reminds us to take time out and place ourselves intentionally in the healing presence of God.



Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July

## Harvest Festival

### Welcome

**Worship** Psalm 65

### Word

1. Read Matthew 6.25-33 and answer the following questions:
2. Which of the Sunday services did you attend or watch this past Sunday? How was your faith formed by that sermon?
3. Which part of the message touched you on a personal level?
4. Here are some further notes on the theme:

In Matthew 6:25-33, Jesus invites us to consider the providential care of God amidst concerns about material needs. This passage speaks to the heart of trusting in God's provision, even in times of uncertainty. Jesus points to the natural world as a testament to God's faithful provision, encouraging us to prioritize seeking the Kingdom of God above all else.

This passage resonates deeply with themes of gratitude and stewardship – which is appropriate for a Harvest Festival service. As we celebrate the harvest, we are reminded of our interconnectedness with creation and our responsibility to care for it. The state of creation, strained by human activity, challenges us to reevaluate our relationship with the Earth and our consumption patterns. What if creation is no longer able to provide for us all?

5. Discuss these questions:
  1. How does Jesus' teaching on worry intersect with our environmental concerns today?
  2. What are practical ways we can prioritize seeking God's Kingdom while also caring for the Earth?
  3. In what ways can gratitude for the harvest shape our attitudes towards sustainable living?
  4. How can we cultivate a deeper trust in God's provision amidst ecological challenges?

