



REACHING OUT

Sunday September 17, 2023

9:00am at Emmanuel Anglican and Uniting Church
Uniting tradition led by LouAnne Stabb and Carol Harris
11:15am at Kergunyah Uniting Church

Bible Readings for Sunday September 24 Pentecost 17

Exodus 16: 2-15; Psalm 105: 1-6, 37-45; Philippians 1: 21-30; Matthew 20: 1-16

The Labourers in the Vineyard



‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in

the market-place; and he said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.” So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, “Why are you standing here idle all day?” They said to him, “Because no one has hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard.” When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.” When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, “These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.” But he replied to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?” So the last will be first, and the first will be last.’

Matthew 20:1-16

Bible Readings for Sunday October 1 Pentecost 18

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2: 1-13; Matthew 21: 23-32

WHO AM I?

Rev Leonie Findlay

PRAYER

Lord God, you know us inside and out, through and through.

You know our past and our future.

There is no way to escape you, no place to hide.

Lord, your ever present being covers our every move.

Your knowledge of our every thought is beyond our comprehension.

Lord may your all-knowing and everywhere present Spirit continue to search out our feelings and thoughts.

Protect us from all that would harm us and guide us along the paths of love and truth.

AMEN

SOME THOUGHTS

At some time in our lives we all face challenges that seem insurmountable.

This is a question that we are faced with at different times in our lives.

It is a question that confronts us for a variety of reasons.

It could be that we are confronted with health or relationship challenges.

Emotional or spiritual issues may present themselves.

Whatever the circumstances, questions around our nature and purpose emerge requiring our attention.

I am a unique creation of God, having value to Him and others; sounds like a good answer to the question of our relationship with God and others.

I am part of the human race and my human nature shares the common struggles between right and wrong seeking always to do the right. Again, an adequate answer.

But who am I really? What is my purpose here on earth?

As year rolls into year, questions that were mostly theoretical or intuitive become grounded in practical realities.

Particularly realities of health, finance, relationship, and spirituality.

The journey of personal discovery, though not complete till the end of one's days, can be exciting, enlightening, sometimes threatening, often painful and never without some heartache. Wherever we find ourselves on the journey of life, life begins afresh every day. Consequently, at any stage the answer to the question of our purpose takes on a fresh meaning. Particularly if we will open our eyes and hearts to the profound purposes and the sustaining power of God.

As we each emerge into consciousness and then self-consciousness, we search for meaning.

A search which eventually leads to God where we discover that there is more to us than meets the eye. **'Indeed, we discover that as we look into our souls, we are a deep wonderful mystery of God-likeness.'** (Lewis B Smedes)

To look honestly at oneself takes tremendous courage. It requires that we have some ability to step outside ourselves and consider the reality of who we are **'warts and all.'**

God has given us the capacity for self-reflection. As a child of God, we are called to review

who we are and who we want to be. What God has given us is not to be regarded as a static endowment.

Our character can be refined. Our behaviours changed. Our convictions matured.

We are always able to be different, by God's grace and for His glory.

SELAH

BENEDICTION

May we seek to know ourselves as only God knows us.

May we come to accept ourselves as God accepts us.

And may the wisdom and peace of God be ours as we live out our unique identity and calling for His glory.

AMEN



Lectionary Comment – Matthew 20:1-16

The landowner appears to be unfair, but note that the passage begins "... the kingdom of heaven is like ..." and that the wages stand for God's grace. God chooses to give (v. 14) the same to all: the landowner pays "whatever is right" (v. 4) – there is no hierarchy in heaven. God is generous to all who believe. Many who seem less deserving (in the story, those hired "about five o'clock", v. 6, at the end of the day) will be treated generously too: this is God's (free) choice. All true disciples are equal in God's eyes, however and whenever they come to faith. What matters is God's call to us, and our response. V. 16 is unexpected: those who were hired last are paid first (v. 8); those who have worked all day expect, but do not receive, a bonus. In Jesus' day, opportunity and privilege were far from equal; he goes against contemporary thinking and action: we are all dependent on God's mercy. A scholar has defined a parable as a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought. It is strange that the landowner miscalculates his need for help three times – but to emphasize this is to miss the point.

Chris Haslam of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton

Praying For One Another 2023

In the Uniting Church Presbytery of North East Victoria.

Many Congregations are in the habit of deliberately praying for one another each time they meet. By naming each other in prayer we enhance our pastoral support with each other, in God's company. This invitation builds our faith linkages every year. We invite our congregations to pray whenever they meet.

For the Uniting Church in the Presbytery of North East Victoria, this week we pray for the congregations of **Mansfield and Tolmie** commencing Sunday September 24.

Emmanuel Roster

September 24

Elder on Duty: Ted Stabb

Reader: Ted Stabb

Prayers: LouAnne Stabb

Early Word: Carol Clutterbuck

TV Screen: Harold Cover

Usher: Harold Cover

Pianist: Betty Bjorksten

October 1

Elder on Duty: David Robinson

Reader: Carol Clutterbuck

Prayers: Karen Robinson

Early Word: LouAnne Stabb

TV Screen: Harold Cover

Usher: Ted Stabb

Pianist: LouAnne Stabb

Coming Events

Wed September 27	9:00am	Grounds and Maintenance
	10:30am	Morning Tea and Fellowship at Emmanuel
Fri September 29	9:30am	Craft Goup at Emmanuel

Ministers of the Word & Other Contacts

UCA: Rev. Leonie Findlay

0419 990 358

lfindlay03@bigpond.com

Anglican: Fr Jacques Jefferies

02 6024 2129 or 0434 063 069

stjohnsw@bigpond.net.au

[weekly RDO: Friday]

Emmanuel Pastoral Care:

Speak with an Elder or Warden

Emmanuel Prayer Chain:

Give requests to Betty Saggars on 0427 761 044

Address:

PO Box 435, Wodonga 3689

Office Phone:

Emmanuel Meeting Place: (02) 6059 5460

Reaching Out:

Items to Harold Cover 02 6024 7929 hcover@bigpond.com

or LouAnne Stabb 0419 644 769 stabb@iinet.net.au by Wednesday.

Prayer of the Week

World Council of Churches

Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru



Carrying a child, a woman walks along a raised sidewalk in Islandia, a town in the Peruvian Amazon.

Photo: Paul Jeffrey/Life on Earth

We are thankful for:

- the distinctive rhythms, music, dance, food and natural medicine in this area
- the beauty of the region, forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, and ocean coastlines, and especially indigenous peoples' relationship with, and care for, the natural environment
- churches who witness and work both ecumenically and with those of other faiths to build relationships of trust and commitment amid ongoing injustice and oppression
- the diversity of languages and cultures flourishing in the region despite disruptions that have occurred through colonization, and political and economic turmoil.

We pray for:

- Christians to have the courage, imagination and energy to build bridges of peace and understanding against conflict and division, and to pursue justice for the poor, marginalized and dispossessed
- an end of corruption in all levels of the society, including economic exploitation which impoverishes and hinders economic growth from benefitting all.
- immigrants and refugees seeking a new home, and those who accompany and support them
- coca farmers to find sustainable incomes from other crops, for an end to drug trafficking, and effective assistance for those who are addicted.



A problem at the first Christmas as Mary and Joseph could not find accommodation at the inn.

It was fully booked with no room at all.

Then the kindly and generous inn keeper offered them a place in the stable, warm, comfortable and safe for the night.

We are facing a housing crisis at the moment, with accommodation stretched and rentals high.

Many are homeless in the community and some are forced to live on the streets.

Institutions which offer care and accommodation are stretched to the limit.

The answer lies in the duty of governments to build accommodation for the homeless and for the generous modern inn keepers to provide space for more residents.

No one should be without a place to live in our land of Australia, and in mission we should give generously to organisations helping those who are homeless and poor.

Jesus said on one occasion foxes have holes and the birds of the air have their nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

This surely is a challenge for generous discipleship and stewardship in every circumstance of life.