



REACHING OUT

Sunday April 7 – Easter 2

9:00am. at Emmanuel Anglican and Uniting Church

Anglican tradition led by Fr. Jacques Jeffries

No Service at Kergunyah Uniting Church

Bible Readings for Sunday April 7

Easter 2

Acts 4: 32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1: 1-2: 2; John 20:19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples



When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:19-31

Bible Readings for April 14

Easter 3

Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

PRAYER AND COMPASSION

A Reflection-Rev Leonie Findlay

PRAYER.

Lord as you draw us closer into your heart, may we discover the depth of your love for us. In your compassionate heart Lord, we realise there is room for all, no one is excluded.

Lord in your love and grace you often lead us to unfamiliar places for a reason that we may not understand.

Yet in spite of this we have confidence in your purposes as unknown as they may be.

Lord, speak to us gently in our silence.

Speak to us when the loud outer noises of our surroundings and the inner noises of our fears

keep pulling us away from you. Help us to trust that you are near and let your voice be our guide.

Lord in you we trust.

AMEN.

SOME THOUGHTS.

WITH OPEN HANDS.

To pray means to open our hands and hearts before God.

Slowly relaxing the tension which holds us captive to our anxiety, doubts and fears. To pray is to accept the call of God on our lives.

Prayer is a way of life which enables us to find a stillness in the midst of a world of complexity and confusion.

While communicating with God in prayer whether it be listening to the still small voice, the soft gentle breeze, or the ongoing throb of the city streets.

The word of God cuts through it all.

This comes as a comfort to the lonely heart or a divine strength empowering our fragile souls.

Prayer is the breath of our own hearts which point out the way to a new land.

It is not simply some necessary diversion in the daily schedule of the Christ centred life or a source of support in a time of need. Praying is that which pervades every aspect of our lives. Prayer is the unceasing recognition that God is wherever we are.

Always Inviting us to come closer and to celebrate the divine gift of being alive.

In the end, a life of prayer is a life surrendered to God with open hands and willing hearts.

There are as many ways to pray as there are moments in life.

Sometimes we seek out a quiet spot in an attempt to be alone.

Sometimes we want to sing aloud with hundreds and at other times to whisper with a few.

In all these moments, we gradually make our lives more of a prayer as we allow ourselves to be led by God even to places we would rather not go.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

So that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console to be heard as to listen.

For it is in prayerful listening with compassion that your word is heard and understood.

SELAH

BENEDICTION

'It is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning we are pardoned.

It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.'

AMEN

Praying For One Another 2024

In the Uniting Church Presbytery of North East Victoria

Congregations in the Presbytery are called to pray 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. This week we pray for the congregation of **Mathoura** commencing Sunday April 7.

Coming Events

Wed April 10, 8:30 am Grounds and Maintenance
 10:30 am Morning Tea and Fellowship at Emmanuel
Fri April 12, 9:30am Craft Group – no meeting on this date

Emmanuel Roster

April 7

Elder on Duty: Rod Clutterbuck TV Screen: Harold Cover
Reader: Rod Clutterbuck Usher: Carol Clutterbuck
Prayers: Rod Clutterbuck Organist: Betty Bjorksten
Early Word: Carol Clutterbuck

April 14

Elder on Duty: Ted Stabb TV Screen: Harold Cover
Reader: LouAnne Stabb Usher: David Robinson
Prayers: David Robinson Organist: LouAnne Stabb
Early Word: LouAnne Stabb

Ministers of the Word & Other Contacts

UCA: Rev. Leonie Findlay
(currently unavailable)

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 Sagers 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

Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania



Residents of near and far gathered in a small village of Bărbătești in Romania to celebrate the consecration of a new Orthodox church, a significant sign of hope in the region recently confronted with economic emigration.

Photo: Ivars Kupcis/WCC

We give thanks for

- the blending of Christian traditions and practices, from the West and East
- the faithful witness of churches amid political changes
- those working for more democratic governance in these countries
- those who welcome newcomers and provide for them and others in need.

We pray for:

- better relationships among different ethnic groups and traditions
- respect for the rights of children, women, the young and the elderly, so they can receive adequate education, jobs and health care
- economic developments that serve all people
- ending practices that harm the air, soil and forests, and installing instead measures to protect the environment.

Presbytery Chairperson's letter of encouragement

March 2024

At the latest meeting of our Presbytery, the guest speaker for the day, May Harry, got my attention when he said we are often told we need to change, but we are not told what that change is, or should be. For Mat, it was probably a throwaway line, but it grabbed my attention, and I have been wrestling with it ever since, so for what it is worth, here is my understanding of some of the change that I think is being asked of us. Like all thoughts of this nature, what I have to say is open to, and indeed demands, collective discernment - coming together, invoking the Spirit of God amongst us, seeking clarity, asking is this so?

In the current climate our task, I believe, is to stand firm for the idea of the sacred and not just to stand firm, but to publicly proclaim the idea that there are things that are sacred and that human beings need the boundaries, the *no-go zones* that sacredness proposes. On the whole, our culture has set aside the idea of God (the sacred or the holy) and the consequences of this are becoming increasingly clear. We human beings have come to believe that we have licence to do anything, that nothing is, or should be, beyond us, that everything is about and for us. If you read the story of Adam and Eve, this is hardly a new idea, but the size and scope of what we now can do is thought by many to threaten our very existence. So what has to change for us?

Consider this, the Uniting Church, since its inception, has been consumed with being the Uniting Church. Broadly speaking we have been focused inwards. With the best of intentions, we created a system that demands a great deal in time and effort. Much of our energy, some would say most of our energy, has gone, and still goes, to maintaining the system. How many hours do you think we spend in meetings? Does this ring true?

My first thought is that the change being asked of us is a change of focus from inward to outward and that the task being given to us is to be both proclaimers and defenders of the sacred. To do this we would need to take whatever steps are necessary to streamline our systems so that our focus can turn more outward, so that against the tide we become public proclaimers, public defenders of the sacred, accepting all the while that this will not be an easy or a popular task.

In the same way I raise a question about our life together in every congregation and faith community. When was the last time that your congregation, or mine, examined its life to see how it coalesced with the way and the will of God; when was the last time individuals in your congregation, or mine, were encouraged to examine their lives for the same thing? My worry, as I suggested last month, is that we have put God in a little box sealed off, insulated from the rest of our lives so that, for example, our political views are not influenced by our faith, nor is how we spend or gather wealth, or engage in leisure, or how we treat one another. The change suggested – that in the presence of God we re-engage with practices that help us examine our lives – our actions and our motives. These are the sorts of changes I envisage as necessary and I invite collective discernment - coming together, invoking the Spirit of God amongst us, seeking clarity, asking is this so?

This is a letter of encouragement, so I don't want to leave you feeling that all that you have done has no worth. It has worth, great worth. Perhaps I can explain what I am trying to say in this way. When I was young, I sailed. We would set out around a course and on the way, we were subject to all sorts of conditions, the wind would shift, that water would run differently, and we would have to make mid-course corrections. Maybe that is what change is - a mid-course correction made necessary by the conditions we encounter around us and within. We are still faithfully headed in a particular direction, making necessary adjustments along the way. There is joy in sailing and joy in the journey that we make as disciples of Jesus. In this journeying life the peace of Christ is with us.

Gereldine