



# REACHING OUT

Sunday December 10, 2023

9:00 a.m. at Emmanuel Anglican and Uniting Church

*Uniting tradition led by Rev Leonie Findlay*

11:15am at Kergunyah Uniting Church

## Bible Readings for Sunday December 10

### Advent 2

Isaiah 40: 1-11; Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3: 8-15a; Mark 1: 1-8

#### The Proclamation of John the Baptist

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

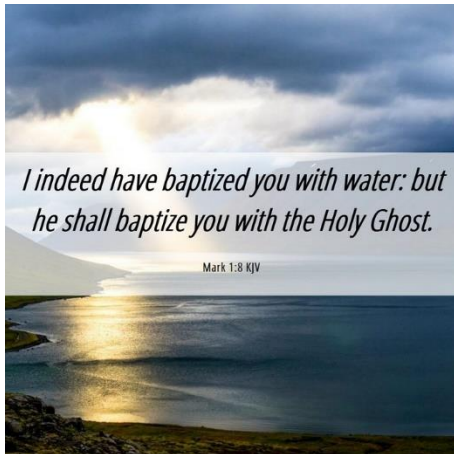
‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight” ’,



*I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

Mark 1:8 KJV

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

**Mark 1: 1-8**

## Bible Readings for Sunday December 17

### Advent 3

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or Luke 1: 46b-55; 1 Thessalonian 5: 16-24; John 1: 6-8, 19-28

## Praying For One Another 2023

**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 **all Ministers in the Presbytery, in Placement or retired** commencing Sunday December 10.

## Christmas Worship Services

Sunday December 24, 9:00am, Advent/Christmas Eve: Uniting Tradition

Monday December 25, 9:00am, Christmas Day: Anglican Tradition



## CHOOSING THE BETTER PART

Rev Leonie Findlay

### PRAYER

Eternal God and father, by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed: guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to your service, and live this day in love to one another and to you.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**AMEN**

### SOME THOUGHTS

There are many situations mentioned in scripture where those involved have been remembered for the lessons they have learned while spending time with Jesus.

Particularly dangerous, it seems, was to have Jesus around for a dinner party.

Simon the Pharisee did. His party was gate-crashed by the woman with the box of ointment, and before he knew it the whole disastrous event had gone down in holy writ with millions of people reading about it.

Then there was the Martha and Mary luncheon. Just as famous and almost as embarrassing. But that's the nature of the gospels. It has to do with the presence of the Christ in the ordinary things of life. However, the ordinary things become more than ordinary. taking on new depth and meaning.

Busily working to prepare the meal, Martha complained to Jesus about Mary's failure to assist in the task at hand. With this complaint Martha tumbled into religious history as the domestic busybody who got her priorities wrong. Luke recorded this incident – not to put Martha down but to record the significance of the words Jesus uttered.

**'You worry and fret about so many things and yet few are needed, indeed only one.'** Luke 10:41

These words are worth pondering as it is this busyness that is a feature of modern life. We are busied by a thousand things and pulled in many directions. Jesus is not calling us to abandon responsibility. Rather, he is asking us amid our busyness not to lose contact with the one thing that can give ultimate meaning to the tasks and responsibilities we have. It is not an abandonment of complexity so much as finding in complexity a deeper unity of purpose, a value which can give us peace and a sense of worthwhileness. In this case, It is not just getting the meal, but knowing and acknowledging the fact that Jesus is taking part in the meal. This gives depth and eternal significance to the Martha story.

It is the Christ who at Martha's dinner party placed before both Mary and Martha the ultimate lesson which would change the way they served. It was the Christ who challenged his friends with a choice.

The choice was whether they would live to serve God on their human journey: or avoid that type of service altogether. The same Christ faces us with the same possibility and the same decision.

**SELAH**

### A BENEDICTION



May the God of peace, equip us with everything good so that we may do His will.

And may He work in us that which is pleasing in His sight. Through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever.

**AMEN**

## Lectionary Comment - Mark 1: 1-8

Mark begins his telling of the “good news” with quotations from the Old Testament. God had promised the Israelites a “messenger” (v. 2) to lead them. The prophet Malachi understood this promise as pointing to the end-times, to one who would prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. To him, the “messenger” would be Elijah. While v. 3 originally spoke of return from exile, by Jesus’ time it was seen as an expression of God’s comfort and salvation. To us, John the Baptist comes to prepare for, and announce, Jesus’ coming. Tradition says that John baptised near Jericho, in an arid region. People came to him in large numbers, repenting (changing their mind sets), “confessing their sins” (v. 5), resolving to sin no more, and dipping themselves in the River. John dressed like a hermit or prophet (v. 6). (In Palestine, some species of locusts were eaten.) John is so unworthy, compared to “the one who ... is coming” (v. 7), that he cannot untie his “sandals”, a task normally performed by a slave. His baptism is a sign of purification, of turning to God, of accepting God’s forgiveness and judgement; Jesus’ baptism re-establishes a spiritual link between God and humans.

*Chris Haslam of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton*

## Emmanuel Roster

### December 10

Elder on Duty: Carol Harris

Reader: LouAnne Stabb

Prayers: Rod Clutterbuck

Early Word: Carol Harris

TV Screen: Harold Cover

Usher: Rod Clutterbuck

Pianist: LouAnne Stabb

### December 17

Elder on Duty: David Robinson

Reader: LouAnne Stabb

Prayers: Karen Robinson

Early Word: LouAnne Stabb

TV Screen: Harold Cover

Usher: Ted Stabb

Pianist: LouAnne Stabb

## Coming Events

Wed December 13 8:30 am

10:30 am

Tues December 12, 9:30 am-12 noon

Grounds and Maintenance

Morning Tea and Fellowship at Emmanuel

Prayer Vigil for Vanessa Felstead at Emmanuel. You are invited to come along during this time and share in prayers or meditation for Vanessa.

## Ministers of the Word & Other Contacts

UCA: Rev. Leonie Findlay

0419 990 358

[lfindlay03@bigpond.com](mailto:lfindlay03@bigpond.com)

Anglican: Fr Jacques Jefferies

02 6024 2129 or 0434 063 069

[stjohnsw@bigpond.net.au](mailto: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](mailto:hcover@bigpond.com)

or LouAnne Stabb 0419 644 769 [stabb@iinet.net.au](mailto:stabb@iinet.net.au) by Wednesday.

## Refugee Support

Over the past few months members have generously given to support the ministry of Grace Mukozi with refugees in Uganda. We now, with a top-up from the congregation, are able to provide \$1000 for her work. It is likely that she will attend this Sunday and we can speak with her about the work that is, and will be done, in her homeland for refugees there. Thank you to all who have contributed.

## A TIME TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE COMING OF JESUS... ..



### Celebrating The Season and Making Room for God at Emmanuel

The Advent event organised by members of Emmanuel Anglican and Uniting Church, St John's Anglican Church, St Stephen's Uniting Church and Kergunyah Uniting Church was celebrated by about 90 people last Sunday early evening. The evening commenced with a delightful time of worship to prepare for Advent which included an activity for all to take part in. Everyone was then invited to a barbecue tea after the service. It certainly was a wonderful time to meet and share with our fellow church families. A special thanks to everyone who planned, presented, and catered for this special event.



### Second Sunday of Advent

## Bringing Peace to refugees in Ethiopia



Sara\* fled to Ethiopia from Yemen eight years ago with her four children. In Addis Ababa refugees are at risk of severe exploitation, with little access to education, medical care, or basics like food. Through Act for Peace's partner, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission, you can help provide refugees with medical and psychological care, as well as livelihoods training, giving people like Sara the chance to build secure futures for their families. **Please give today.**

\*Name changed for safety reasons

**CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: [christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au](https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au)**

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

Thank you for joining once again with churches across Australia as we share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

More information here: <https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/>

Donate here: <https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/donate>



## Gereldine's Letter of Encouragement December 23

We are in the season of Advent which is a time of both looking back and looking forward, knowing that the two are tied together to somehow help us to live at this moment.

In the next couple of weeks we will be telling the Christmas story full of peace and goodwill, full of stars and hills and snowflakes and all the while in our minds, somewhere lurking, will be what is playing out on those same hills, under those same stars, amongst descendants of those same people – something that has nothing to do with peace and goodwill.

I have three images constantly in my mind. One is of a young woman on the back of a motorbike, a captive, her face showing that she knows exactly what is going to happen to her.

The others are of children. Two little boys, brothers, covered in explosive dust. One had just pulled the other from what was left of a building. They are running backwards and forward, searching frantically for their father who is lost, screaming their fear and their anger, their grief and their terror.

In a different place, a little girl, incongruously neat and tidy, a ribbon holding back her hair - her beautiful hair. She is standing on a heap of rubble, with one hand holding on to something that I can't remember, looking across a bombed, blown to bits landscape and she is wailing, wailing.

All around me I feel a silence descending. Not the silence that accompanies peace, or the silence that falls in the face of tragedy, but the silence of turning away, the silence of not wanting to see or to know. A silence that makes jolly Christmas songs and children's pageants and a simple story of God entering our reality ring more than a little hollow.

I want to sing, I want children's pageants, I want to hear the story of the mystery of holiness creeping quietly into our reality. I want them held up as a quiet, simple, act of defiance against those who wreak havoc.

The church is not the building, it is not the organisation, it is people. We are people, who by the telling of the story of Jesus and living into that story, make it real. We are people who declare that it is by the grace of God that violence, that murder, that destruction do not have the last say, do not define us. Ours is a story that gives us hope in the face of continued evil, so my encouragement to you in this Advent and Christmas season is sing carols, stage pageants, tell the story - sing it, show it, tell it, consciously against what is happening in the world, as an act of defiance in the face of evil. It is what Jesus did, it is what we do for his dear sake, and the world turns, always it turns.

The love of God, the peace of Christ  
and the Spirit's gift of life renewed be yours,  
this and every Christmas

Gereldine