



REACHING OUT

Sunday December 17, 2023

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

Anglican tradition led by Fr. Jacques Jefferies

No Service at Kergunyah Uniting Church

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

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said.



Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of

his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

John 1: 6-8, 19-28

Bible Readings for Sunday December 24

Advent 4

2 Samuel 7: 1-11,16; Luke 1: 46b-55 or Psalm: 89: 1-4, 19-26; Romans 16: 25-27; Luke 1: 26-38

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 the congregation of **Trinity North Albury** commencing Sunday December 17.

REMEMBER WHO WE ARE

Rev Leonie Findlay

PRAYER

Lord, we thank you that, as your children, we are brought into a perfect unity of love.
In that relationship give us courage to live lives of integrity
Lord, keep us seeking you, for when we stop seeking, we are truly lost.
Free us Lord to show you our true feelings.
Then free us to let go of them and let them be transformed by you.

AMEN

SOME THOUGHTS

Jesus came into the world to give us spiritual life.

A new identity, a true self, one no longer dependent on the fragile structures of the world. But rather, on the eternal love between the Father and the Son.

Between a loving parent and a much wanted child. A love that is given by and through the Holy Spirit.

It is as if we have been wandering in a foreign country looking for peace and purpose in our lives and a true sense of who we are.

Jesus stands in our midst and beckons us home so that we can be restored to our true selves.

When we belong to God, as children, as brothers and sisters of Jesus, creator and redeemer, then we have spiritual knowledge of God's heart.

A heart that enables us to know who we truly are and see the world as God sees it.

In God, we gain new ears to hear, new eyes to see, and new hearts to discern what is happening around us.

Concerns that, in the past, completely occupied our minds lose their meaning.

What seemed a reason to fear no longer holds us in its power. What made us travel far and wide no longer drives us. Instead, our being is filled with a deep desire to see God's will done on earth as in heaven. Often in quiet meditation and reflection we discover that we are much more than our individual selves and come to realise who we really are. The truth is that we are more than ourselves, more than what we can think or express. More than our physical presence, more than our personality and character. It is a struggle to claim our belovedness. Living amid a demanding, pulling, and pushing world makes it difficult to remember who we are in God and how to live this divine life in the here and now. Our identities are so wrapped up in the structures and spirit of the world that we live as though we were who the world says we are: rich or poor, able or disabled, good or bad, emotionally stable, or vulnerable.

So, who am I? Who are you? We are God's beloved ones. Bearers of the divine image and human beings capable of glory and goodness as well as harm and alienation.

We need to hear again and again that we are the beloved of God, and that Jesus guides us in the Way of being the beloved. Jesus calls us to make our whole lives a life of communion with the father.

SELAH

BENEDICTION



And now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling.....

To him be power and authority, for ever and ever

AMEN

Lectionary Comment - John 1: 6-8, 19-28

In the opening verses of the book, the evangelist has told us, that the Word, the logos, (i.e. what God says, God in action, creating, revealing and redeeming) existed before all time. He is the force behind all that exists; he causes physical and spiritual life to be; life, goodness, light, overcomes all evil. Jesus, the "light" (v. 7), took on being human through God, and is a force for goodness, light, godliness, for all people.

Now he tells of John the baptizer, who is sent, commissioned by God, to point to Jesus, to "testify to the light" (v. 7). He is the lamp that illuminates the way, but Christ is the light (v. 8). When the religious authorities ("Jews", v. 19) send emissaries ("priests and Levites") to assess the authenticity of this religious figure, John tells them that he is neither of those whom they are expecting to come to earth: neither "the Messiah" (v. 20) nor the returned "Elijah" (v. 21). (Jews believed that one or both would establish a kingdom on earth free from Roman domination.) Nor is he "the prophet" who was expected (by some) to be instrumental in establishing the Messiah's kingdom. John says simply that he is the one who prepares "the way of the Lord" (v. 23), who announces the Messiah's coming, fulfilling Isaiah 40:3. Representatives of the Pharisees (who enforced traditional Jewish law and practice) ask in v. 25: why are you performing an official rite without official status? (Jews baptized proselytes at the time.) John tells them that the one to whom he points is already on earth (v. 26); he is so great that I am not even worthy to be his slave. Surprisingly, per v. 28, this occurred outside Israel.

Chris Haslam of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton

Emmanuel Roster

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

December 24

Elder on Duty: Ted Stabb
Reader: Ted Stabb
Prayers: LouAnne Stabb
Early Word: Carol Harris

TV Screen: Harold Cover
Usher: Harold Cover
Pianist: LouAnne Stabb



Christmas Worship Services

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

Sunday December 24, 7:30 pm, Kergunyah Christmas Eve worship

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

Coming Events

Wed December 20 8:30 am
10:30 am

Grounds and Maintenance
Morning Tea and Fellowship at Emmanuel

Mon January 29 10:30am

Community Shop Reopens

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.

Third Sunday of Advent

Finding Joy in resilience



Twelve long years have passed since Rima* and her family fled their beloved home in Syria as the devastating civil war unfolded. Forced to leave everything behind, they sought refuge in Jordan, carrying with them only the essentials. With your kind gift to the Christmas Bowl, you can support Act for Peace's local partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, continue to provide vital food packages, hygiene kits, and the long-term support that refugees need to rebuild their lives. **Please give today.**

*Name changed for safety reasons



CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: 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.

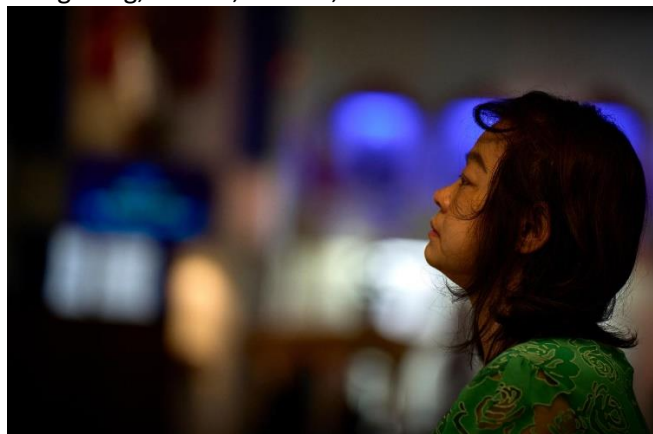
More information here: <https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/>

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

Prayer of the Week

World Council of Churches

Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the Mainland of China



Teresita Coachoa, a migrant worker from the Philippines, prays before Mass in the Tanzi Catholic Church in Taichung, Taiwan. She has cancer and lives in a shelter at the church run by Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera.

Photo: Paul Jeffrey/Life on Earth

We give thanks for:

- the long and complex history of China, with its many artefacts, cultures and traditions developed over time
- those who established missions and churches in the past, and the determination of Chinese Christians to contextualize the church here and now
- those who boldly live out their faith, challenging injustices even when they fear persecution
- the economic growth and development that have lifted many out of poverty
- the steps China is taking to counter huge environmental challenges.

We pray for:

- those left behind and further marginalized by rising economic growth, especially women and peasants in rural areas
- the political and social tensions between the mainland of China and Hong Kong and the rest of the world
- a growth in prophetic witness of the Chinese church in society
- for greater understanding and cooperation between Taiwan and the Mainland of China
- spiritual meaning and freedom from captivity to economic growth and consumerism.