



REACHING OUT

Sunday February 18, 2024

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

Anglican tradition led by Rev Peter McKeague

No service at Kergunyah Uniting Church

Bible Readings for Sunday February 26

Lent 1

Genesis 9: 8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1: 9-15



The Baptism of Jesus

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

The Temptation of Jesus

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Mark 1: 9-15

Bible Readings for Sunday February 25

Lent 2

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22: 23-31; Romans 4: 13-25; Mark 8: 31-38 or Mark 9: 2-9

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 **Echuca/Moama** congregation, commencing Sunday February 18.

AGM of Emmanuel Congregation

The Annual General Meeting of the Emmanuel Church will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2024, commencing at 10:30am after worship. The AGM Report is now being prepared and reports from respective coordinators of church activities are now being accepted. **Reports should have been submitted to Harold by Monday February 12** (hcover@bigpond.com).

If yours is not in yet, please do so ASAP. Nominations will be called for soon for Member of Church Council, Treasurer, Uniting Church Elder and Uniting Church representative to Presbytery. Please give prayerful consideration to an invitation to be nominated.



Church
Committees



Lenten Studies

-still time to join!

At St. Stephen's

Meeting Jesus at the table, Wednesday mornings, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. led by Judy Bedford.

On Zoom

Grounded: Finding God in the World – a Spiritual revolution; Thursdays 8:00 – 9:30 pm; led by Ian Bedford. Zoom link available from Ian or <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84918137081>

At St. John's

Safety net discipleship, Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. (follows worship); study book \$15 available at Parish Office.

At Emmanuel

God's Own Country, First Nations voices speak to the Church, Tuesdays, 2:30 – 4:00 pm.

Lectionary Comment – Mark 1: 9-15

John the Baptist has come, “proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (v. 4). Many have taken the opportunity to start new lives in God. Jesus, too, is baptised by John – Mark does not tell us why. The opening of the heavens symbolizes the start of a new mode of communication between God and humankind. Perhaps “like a dove” (v. 10) is an allusion to the spirit hovering in Genesis 1:2. To Mark, the “voice ... from heaven” (v. 11) confirms the already existing relationship between God and Jesus. Matthew and Luke describe Jesus’ temptation in some detail, but Mark mentions it only briefly: all three say that Jesus overcame tempting, enticement, by the devil. “Satan” (v. 13) is the supreme demon whose kingdom is now ending. “Forty” recalls Israel’s 40 years in the “wilderness”; it echoes the 40 days of testing Moses endured when the covenant was renewed after the gold calf incident (Exodus 34:28). Elijah too spent “forty days” on Mount Sinai (1 Kings 19:8). In the “wilderness” (probably the Judean desert, the home of demons), “wild beasts” may attack him, but “angels” protect him. The word Mark uses here for arrest (v. 14) also occurs in the story of Jesus’ passion and death: John’s fate foreshadows Jesus’ fate. Jesus returns to Galilee. His message begins with “the time is fulfilled”: the time appointed by God, the decisive time for God’s action, has arrived. “The kingdom of God has come near”: the final era of history is imminent. Jesus calls people to start a new life in God’s way, to “repent, and believe in the good news.”

Chris Haslam of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton

Emmanuel Roster

February 18

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

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

February 25

Elder on Duty: Carol Harris
Reader: David Robinson
Prayers: Karen Robinson
Early Word: Carol Harris

TV Screen: Carolyn Renfrey
Usher: David Robinson
Pianist: Colin Harris

Coming Events

Tue February 20, 2:30pm	Lenten Studies at Emmanuel
Wed February 21, 8:30 am	Grounds and Maintenance
10:30 am	Morning Tea and Fellowship at Emmanuel
Fri February 24, 9:30am	Craft Group meet at Emmanuel
Sun February 25, 10:30am	Emmanuel Congregation AGM after Worship

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 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.

World Day of Prayer

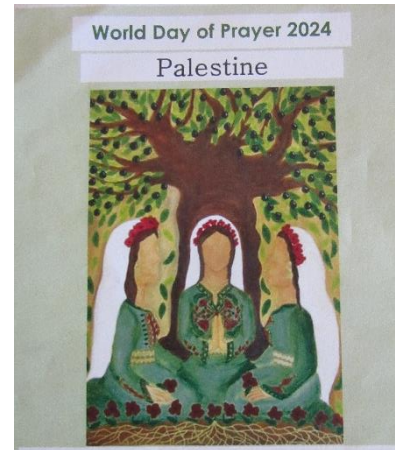
Please join us as we gather for World Day of Prayer

WHEN: Friday, March 1ST @ 10:30 A.M. -Morning tea to follow

WHERE: Sacred Heart Church, 285 Beechworth Rd., Wodonga

CONTACT: Anne Ph: 6024 3366

MORNING TEA PROVIDED: ALL WELCOME



Prayer of the Week

World Council of Churches

France, Germany, Monaco



The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris illuminated at night. Photo: Sean Hawkey/Life on Earth

We are thankful for:

- the rich historic and cultural legacies that have come to the world from these lands.
- Franco-German friendship, reconciliation and cooperation that has emerged since the hostilities of the second world war.
- how churches and governments in France and Germany have welcomed new immigrants.
- the generosity in supporting ecumenical, interfaith and development work in the world.

We pray for:

- overcoming fears and suspicions that still remain from 20th century atrocities, and more recent terrorist attacks.
- churches and governments to effectively counter anti-immigrant populist sentiments in these countries so that they truly will become more multi-ethnic.
- economic decisions that are accountable to those who are most vulnerable and not only to those making a profit.
- election of political leaders who will further the common good not only for their country but for the sake of Europe and the rest of world.

Presbytery of North East Victoria
Chairperson's Letter of Encouragement
February 2024

I have talked about this being a time of disruption and that times of disruption are times when God is more easily seen. It is not that God is generally hidden. This is more a statement about where our attention lies.

In the lectionary readings recently, the call of Samuel (1 Samuel chapters 1-3) popped up as a companion reading to Jesus' call of disciples. In this time of disruption, it is worth focusing on these chapters. The story begins with a barren woman. This is a recurring word picture in the Old Testament. It is like a sign-post that points to barrenness more broadly. Barrenness of relationship with God. Barrenness of worship. Barrenness of the life lived in response to God. A life that bears no fruit – that does not bring forth new life. The Priests, those we most expect to hear the voice of God, do not. Their lifestyle gets in the way. It was a time when those who heard God speak were few and visions that come from a deep connection with God were rare. This resonates with me, though I worry at the harshness of such a thought. Are we not attentive enough to God? Do our lives not reflect a way of being that is different from those around us because our lives begin and end in God?

Then comes Samuel who hears God speak and Eli who recognises the authenticity of Samuel's experience. In his vision Samuel hears that God is about to do something that will make the ears of those who hear, tingle. In Mark's gospel Jesus says much the same thing – let those who have eyes see, let those who have ears hear. Listen! Look! Understand!

What then is God saying to us? If I may hazard an interpretation, disruption opens us to God. I think I have quoted Leonard Cohen before – *disruption is the crack that lets the light in*, so that God can be seen and heard just as God broke in through the life of Samuel.

If I look across the church, and as a very crass generalisation, I can see that for many of us, our life with God is in a little box that sits alongside the many other little boxes that make up our lives. We have a box for God, we have a box for bowls or golf, for work and family, for holidays, for our own cleverness (on which we then rely) and they sit side by side and very often the God box is smaller than the others- is given less time and attention.

If I have a vision from the Lord (and it will need an Eli or many Eli's to tell), if I have a vision from God, it is that our lives are out of balance. If I have a vision from God it is that lives that begin with God and that listen together for a word from God, we will find the way to live more authentic lives in God's service – one big box with a lot of stuff inside all jumbled up together.

This is not a call to guilt. I see around me many, many, many faithful people. This is an invitation, repeating Jesus' invitation, to a deeper, richer life, to a future full of promise. This life, this future cannot be forced, or programmed. It is not something that we can bring about through good ideas or by strength of will. Our faith says the future belongs to God. It unfolds to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. This knowledge is what sustains me when the ground moves under my feet. This is what sustains me in disappointment and struggle. This is what helps me negotiate difficulty with a patience and a calm that does not come naturally to me. A switch is somehow flicked and I remember who I am and whose I am and I thank God for this, every day. Today I want to encourage you to look at your own life and together to look at the life of your congregation. How is it set up to love God and love others? What do you have in place to make sure that this is your focus?

The Peace of Christ be with you,

Gereldine