



# REACHING OUT

Sunday January 7, 2024

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

*Anglican tradition led by Rev Cathy Carden*

**No Service at Kergunyah Uniting Church**

**Bible Readings for Sunday January 7, 2024**

**Baptism of Jesus**

Genesis 1: 1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19: 1-7; Mark 1: 4-11

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.'

## 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.'

**Mark 1: 4-11**

**Bible Readings for Sunday January 14, 2024**

**Epiphany 2**

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1: 43-51

## Rev Leonie – Update January 4

Leonie is doing OK. She delighted in a visit from Elaine, Vanessa, Madeline and Imogen on Tuesday morning at St. Vincent's hospital in Melbourne. She had a memory test that morning and it showed that her memory was good. As scans show that her brain is healing it was decided that she be transferred back to Albury Base Hospital, which was done yesterday, arriving at the hospital late in the afternoon. Ross says that it was not a comfortable ride for anyone. At this point there still is no explanation of why she fell, and she is encouraged to be more careful in what she does. So, while she is progressing and does get up and about a bit, it is a hard time for her. Leonie is in the medical ward of the hospital. Should you wish to visit her, Ross asks that you get in touch with him first. It has been a very hard several days for both of them and though things are improving, he feels that it will take some time. Ross, though having stayed in a good place in East Melbourne, is happy to be in the quiet of his home. We continue to remember both of them in our prayers. LouAnne

# LET HEAVEN AND NATURE SING

Rev Leonie Findlay – (first published 1 January 2023)

## **PRAYER**

Lord when we look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, that you have established, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them.....

O Lord our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Creator God how difficult and urgent is the task in front of us.

A task that involves us realising that nature is not a possession to be conquered but a gift to be received with respect and gratitude.

Lord God, help us to be faithful stewards of all that you have given to us.

In the name of Christ, we pray.

**AMEN**

## **SOME THOUGHTS**

Nature is much more than a metaphor. Nature is a living revelation of the creator God.

To experience the beauty and wonder of nature is to experience God.

God's presence is in the things that are closest to us. Things that we touch and feel, that we move and live with day by day. While it is true that God is a hidden presence, we have only to let nature speak to us about the God who is everywhere.

For example, the rain is a sign of God's blessing while the perfume of a rose is a sign of God's beauty.

While walking in a garden we can embrace the present moment by pondering the flight of a bird. The more beautiful a flower the more fragile and elusive is its life. The beauty of a flower by its very nature is fragile. Touch it too roughly and it is gone.

Grasp it too firmly and its petals fall away. It could be said that in every created thing something of God can be found.

When we relate to nature as objects that we can use for our real or fabricated needs, it is opaque and does not reveal its true being. When a tree is nothing but a potential chair it ceases to reveal the true nature of God. When a flower is nothing more than a model for a plastic decoration, it has little to say about the simple beauty of life. Our difficult and urgent task is to realise that nature is not a possession to be conquered but a gift to be received with respect and gratitude.

All of nature conceals great secrets that cannot be revealed if we do not listen carefully and patiently to God's hidden language.

Over time we have become more aware of the destructive impact we humans have had on the natural world around us. It could be said that while we stand in awe of God's majesty and all-embracing plan of redemption, it is not just we human beings who wait for our salvation. All creation groans and moans with us, longing to reach its full freedom. We might wonder at the expansive nature of the vision of what God is doing not only in our lives but also in all of creation.

Scripture tells us that the full freedom of the children of God is to be shared by the whole earth.

And our renewal in the resurrection includes the renewal of the universe.

This is Isaiah's vision of the Peaceable Kingdom where: 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox..... They shall not hurt or destroy on my holy hill' (Isaiah 65 : 25) It is not enough for us to discern God's will for our lives.

We must discern God's desires for us as one small but important part of God's great call.

A call to renew and redeem all the earth.

**SELAH**

## **BENEDICTION**

Lord, we thank you for the wonder and beauty of it all.

**AMEN**

## Lectionary Comment - Mark 1: 4-11

This gospel begins with the messenger whom God sends ahead of Christ, to prepare the way. John is the forerunner of Jesus. 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 (probably) dipping themselves in the River. John dressed like a hermit or prophet (v. 6). In Palestine, some species of "locusts" were eaten. Mark does not tell us why Jesus was baptised by John, but what follows is important. 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. (The Greek word translated "Beloved" indicates God's choice more than his feelings.) Part of Jesus' message in Galilee (v. 15) is "repent, and believe in the good news."

*Chris Haslam of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton*

## Emmanuel Roster

### January 7

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

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

### January 14

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

TV Screen: Carolyn Renfrey  
Usher: Ted Stabb  
Pianist: LouAnne Stabb

## Coming Events

Wed January 3 8:30 am Grounds and Maintenance  
10:30 am 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](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.

## 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 congregations of **Beechworth, Stanley, Yackandandah, Myrtleford-Whorouly** commencing Sunday January 7.

## Community Shop

The Community Shop is closed but that doesn't seem to stop the donations. I will be driving past at least once a day to check for stuff at the door and will remove what I find. If you go past and notice stuff, please give me a call and I'll arrange for it to be taken inside. It's important that we keep the Shop door as free of stuff as possible. Thanks for help with this not so pleasant aspect of our wonderful Community Shop. LouAnne (0419 644 769)

## Prayer of the Week

### World Council of Churches

Iran, Iraq, Syria



*Workers during the reconstruction of Mar Oraha monastery in Batnaya, an ancient Assyrian village on the Nineveh Plains of Iraq. The village has two churches and a monastery: the Chaldean Catholic church of Mar Quriaqos, mentioned in a manuscript as early as 1474, and the church of Mart Maryam and the Mar Oraha Monastery - built in the sixth century. During the ISIL offensive of August 2014 Batnaya was abandoned by the 1200 families who lived there, most of the village's houses were destroyed and the churches and graveyards had been ransacked and desecrated. Only 120 families have returned to Batnaya - most have left the region, remaining fearful of future insecurity in the area. Photo: Sean Hawkey/WCC*

#### **We are thankful for:**

- the resilience of the people who remain in their homelands even when they face constant threats and ongoing violence
- the relief and assistance that has been provided to so many
- those who have made a new home for refugees fleeing from these countries
- those who have worked continually for peace, justice and reconciliation.

#### **We pray for:**

- an end to the violence racking these battlefields of global powers
- political leaders emerging in these countries who will pursue peace, the common good, and human rights of all groups
- the international community to pursue policies that will result in acceptable, just peace for all involved
- greater openness to welcoming those displaced or fleeing from these lands, desperately seeking safety and wellbeing.



You can find in the Old Testament predictions and beliefs about God's purposes and plans for his people.

That one day a Messiah would come and save his people from their sins.

But it is more than a prediction, because the Messiah did come.

The New Testament recounts again and again the birth and experiences of Jesus of Nazareth.

He is a real person who was born into a human family, who went to school, who worked, who taught, who called disciples.

He was a person who healed the sick, who raised the dead, who suffered, died and rose again.

He was human in every sense yet divine.

To know Jesus is to know a real person and one day we shall meet him face to face.

So when we read about him each Sunday, we follow the life and words of someone who lived, taught, died and rose again.

He is not assigned to history as a past hero and example of faith, he lives.