



# REACHING OUT

Sunday May 12 – Easter 7

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

*Uniting tradition led by Rev Leonie Findlay*

**No service at Kergunyah Uniting Church**

## Bible Readings for May 12

### Easter 7

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5: 9-13; John 17: 6-19



'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine

are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

**John 17: 6-19**

## Bible Readings for May 19

### Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm: 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

## 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 **Seymour Avenel**, commencing Sunday May 12.

## WHEN LIFE SEEMS TOO HARD

### A Reflection-Rev Leonie Findlay

#### PRAYER

Lord your word tells us that, we are yours and you have called us by name.

'When we pass through deep waters you will be with us and when we pass through fire we will not be burnt. For you are a God who saves us.'

However, Lord, there are many times and many situations when we feel that you are far from us.

Lord, at times like this we cry out to you wondering why you seem to have forgotten us. Why do you seem to stand far off?

It is then that we hear your voice, Lord. It is then that we are reminded that you are close to the broken hearted and you save those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34: 18)

Forgive us Lord for our faithlessness and renew us so that we may live with the certainty that nothing can separate us from your love.

Indeed, you will not abandon us for in you we can take refuge.

Lord, we know that in you we can have confidence for you are good to those whose hope is in you.

Praise be to you, our God.

**AMEN.**

#### SOME THOUGHTS.

Spiritual barrenness is often charged with emotional despondency especially when God seems distant or strangely silent in spite of our earnest prayer.

Our confidence and faith become weak and we are plagued by repeated questions of, '**why Lord and why me?**'.

This experience is not new.

Neither is a temptation to doubt and in turn feel guilty for expressing our doubts and frustrations.

While many writers of the psalms asked the same questions, in the end hope returned and was joyfully expressed in the closing verses of the psalm.

It would seem that in such situations the Psalmist is able to rise above the circumstances to a place of faith despite the unanswered question, 'Why?'

Experience has taught the Psalmist to let go of the question 'Why?' and replace it with 'Who?' Who is the Sovereign God?

While we may not choose our circumstances or environment, we are always responsible for our reactions to them.

Hope or despair is always a choice. Hope centres on God's faithfulness while despair on our weakness.

In spite of external disasters, Job could affirm, '**I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the end, He will stand upon the earth.**' (Job 19: 25 -26)

The darker the night, the brighter the stars seem to shine.

If we insist on pursuing the question, 'Why?', we shall only increase our sense of frustration and lack of faith. In this case we only add to our despair and block the way for God's encouragement.

It is the calm, childlike trust that, even in the very worst of experiences, will enable us to trust our God. It is a well tried and tested reality that life's most revealing insights come to us from life's difficulties.

In Hebrews 1:1-2 we are encouraged to throw away those things that would hinder and the sin that would hold us back so that with perseverance we can complete the race set before us.

**SELAH**



#### A BENEDICTION

Do not be afraid or terrified, for the Lord your God goes with you: He will never leave you or forsake you.

**AMEN**

## Emmanuel Roster

### May 12

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

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

### May 19

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

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

## 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@inet.net.au](mailto:stabb@inet.net.au) by Wednesday.

## Prayer of the Week

### World Council of Churches

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal



*Nepal Evangelical Lutheran Church in Laxmipur on 15 September 2018 worshipping together with ecumenical guests and visitors from the Lutheran World Federation.*

*Photo: Albin Hillert/LWF*

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

- the peoples of these nations – the diversity of their cultures, languages, and art, and their resilience
- the breath-taking beauty of these lands – the mountains in all their grandeur, overflowing rivers and green paddy fields
- all those who work for the churches and their institutions, especially in places where natural disasters strike.

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

- efforts of governments and others to build up these nations' economies
- those who have lost families and homes in earthquakes and other disasters as they struggle to rebuild their lives, homes and infrastructure
- those who contribute to religious harmony and advocate for the minority voice of Christians, especially amid religious and ethnic tensions
- religious and government leaders that they will make it possible for all peoples to live in justice with peace and harmony.
- these small nations which depend on other countries and are often threatened by interests of their bigger neighbours.

## Coming Events

Wed May 15, 9:00 am	Grounds and Maintenance
10:30 am	Morning Tea and Fellowship
Fri May 17, 9:30am	Craft Group

## Chairperson's Letter of Encouragement May 2024

Dear friends, old and new,

When I first became the chairperson of your Presbytery, I spoke about the church as small, lay-led, connected and relational. It was in a sense an honest reflection of the church as it is and a statement about where our strength lies.

Today, I want to invite you to imagine the church as a boat. It is an image that often appears in scripture. In Matthew, chapter 8, for example, would be followers of Jesus are invited to get into a boat with him. Let's, just for a moment, imagine the church as a boat. If you live by a lake, maybe a boat with sails. If you live by a river, maybe a dinghy or a canoe.

In Matthew's gospel, the boat, with Jesus and his followers on board, is caught in a windstorm and pounded by waves. This happens, even where we live. When a strong wind blows across even a small body of open water, waves of surprising height and strength, threaten to smash small boats against the shore. Does this feel a bit like what is happening for your little church-boat? In Matthew's story, we are left to imagine what the wind and the waves represent. What is highlighted is the lack of trust in Jesus, who seems to all the world asleep while we suffer, and the assurance that Jesus as ever, is in charge.

A friend of mine has suggested another way of thinking about the church as a boat. He said the church is like a boat, dependent for its direction on the wind of the Spirit in its sails. (Those who swim or paddle or row will know the power of the current for the same thing.) My friend went on to say that often we fight against the direction the Spirit sets for us, wanting to control the direction we take, deciding for ourselves our destination.

It is as important for us, as it was for those in Matthew's gospel, to trust the one who sets the course and to look ahead to where the Spirit is taking us, each in our own location, and more broadly.

So how do we catch an understanding of the movement of the Spirit? In my experience, it is when we set aside time, when we pray together in openness to the Spirit, when we give our lives totally into the service of God without wanting to set or control the agenda, when we look for and foster the spiritual gifts of those with whom we share the journey. This is perhaps not everything, but it is a start.

My encouragement to you today is to take time out to spend with God, to gather for prayer, not anxiously, not seeking a direction or a pre-set destination, but giving yourselves over to be people who discern together the wind of the spirit, to be people who look out over the prow of your little boat, to where the Spirit points you. See what comes to you. It would be good to know. My prayer is that you will be faithful in this,

Gereldine  
Presbytery North East Victoria