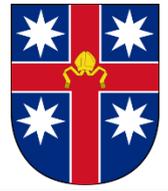




REACHING OUT

Weekly Newsletter of Emmanuel and Kergunyah Churches



Sunday August 17, 2025

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

Anglican tradition led by Fr David Holloway

No service at Kergunyah Uniting Church

Bible Readings for Sunday August 17

Pentecost 10

Isaiah 5: 1-7; Psalm 80: 1-2, 8-1; Hebrews 11: 29-12: 2, Luke 12: 49-56

Jesus the Cause of Division



“I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

Interpreting the Time

He also said to the multitudes, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

Luke 12: 49-56

Bible Readings for Sunday August 24

Pentecost 11

Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-6, Hebrews 12:18-29, Luke 13:10-17

Praying For One Another 2025

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 **Bright and Porepunkah** Sunday, August 17.

Coming Events

Wed. Aug. 20, 9:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

Fri. Aug. 22, 9:30 a.m.

Grounds and Maintenance

Morning Tea and Fellowship

Craft Group

WHY LORD? Rev Leonie Findlay

PRAYER

Lord, each day we are faced with situations we fail to understand and mysteries that are beyond our comprehension. Lord, grant us the grace to give up wanting to understand why things happen as they do. Help us to trust you as the author of our lives.

Lord, although we can only read the page we are living, encourage us to discover the truths of our story as we faithfully live page and chapter day by day.

As our story is told and the book closed may we rest in your love and grace having laid the questions, 'WHY,' to rest.

AMEN

SOME THOUGHTS

At a deep level, we seek to know why things happen as they do because then we think maybe we can discover ways to prevent the unknown and uncontrollable from happening.

Since the earliest of time, human beings have wondered about the nature of the sacred realm.

Without appropriate knowledge and ways of understanding, we project our limited understanding into areas that are beyond our capacity to reason.

This being the case, it is only logical to believe that we are entitled to ask WHY, and expect an answer, and or explanation, from the divine.

But perhaps it is our understanding of our nature of God that must be examined when such a crisis makes us wonder.

The grace of trust gives us the capacity to defy what our eyes and ears tell us.

Not from our intellect, grace and trust, flow from the depth of our being.

It gives us the stamina to hold on through difficult times and to endure challenging circumstances. Indeed, it allows us to sense and trust that there is purpose to what, and why. Things happen as they do.

The grace of trust is woven into the act of surrender.

Through such, 'LETTING GO,' we trust that God is still at work in every moment of our lives.

In surrendering our need for control and letting go of 'WHY', we entrust our lives to the all-knowing God.

At difficult and painful times, we are inclined to cast our eyes to heaven and ask, 'WHY'?

This is because we all participate in an illusion that unfair, unjust and painful events should bypass us. Whatever the reason, however we justify our conclusion, all is mindless chatter to justify our personal narrative.

As difficult as it is to admit, a significant amount of our suffering is self-inflicted.

Whether pain or pleasure, loss or gain, win or lose, what unfolds in these moments in no way can explain the whole of the journey we are on.

Surrender requires detachment and the wisdom to act on guidance as given to us.

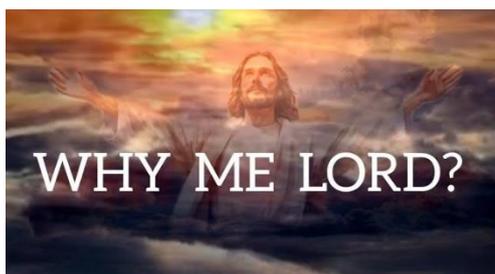
No matter in what form guidance comes, when it does, we are compelled to act on it.

Surrender to it. Let go of the 'whys' somewhere hidden in our emotional responses.

Since we hardly trust ourselves, to trust God will always be a work in progress.

SELAH

BENEDICTION



And now to him who is able to keep us from falling and lift us from the dark valley of doubt and despair, may we open our hands in trust and surrender.

To this one, our God, may we hand over the question WHY and take hold of the grace of trust, he gives to us.

AMEN

Emmanuel Roster

August 17

Elder on Duty: Ted Stabb
Reader: Carol Harris
Prayers: Carol Harris

Early Word: LouAnne Stabb
TV Screen: Carolyn Renfrey
Music: LouAnne Stabb

August 24

Elder on Duty: Rod Clutterbuck
Reader: Carol Harris
Prayers: Rod Clutterbuck

Early Word: Carol Clutterbuck
TV Screen: Harold Cover
Music: LouAnne Stabb

Emmanuel Contacts

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
Reaching Out: Items to Harold Cover 02 6024 7929 hcover@bigpond.com by Wednesday.

Prayer of the Week

Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger



Two people at the top of a well, shot from inside the well. Photo: Sean Hawkey/Life on Earth

We are thankful for:

- the heritage of ancient trade routes, rich oral traditions and nomadic practices of people in the lands these countries now occupy
- humanitarian work to improve food security and livelihoods, especially for women
- pro-active efforts to preserve the environment in these desert lands
- welcome and provision for those who often must flee across borders.
-

We pray for:

- those impoverished who lack basic needs and rights, that these will be met
- desperate children and others who turn to crime or begging or become enslaved
- effective response to the frequent droughts and hunger in this area
- more stable political rule in these countries to stem violence and provide for all
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Pick up your copy from the foyer table!

The August edition is out now. Read about the upcoming Victoria/Tasmania Synod 2025, (August 30 – Sept. 2) and the to be installed Moderator, Rev. Salesi Faupula.

Presbytery of North East Victoria Chairperson's Letter of Encouragement, August 2025

In their book, *The God Bearing Life* Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster tell the story of Moses and the burning bush in a way that has shifted my thinking forever. What they say is that bushes are burning everywhere, alive with the presence of God. The problem is that few notice. Bushes are burning and holiness is all around, for those who will see.

Foster and Dean are not the only ones to draw this to our attention. The poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, earlier wrote: Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God, but only those who see, take off (their) shoes. Palawa theologian, Garry Worete Deverell says much the same thing in speaking about indigenous Australian spiritual life. Everything is God breathed and for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, everything is alight, everything sings the song of the presence of God.

Most of us have been formed by an evangelical movement, or a liberal theology, that is now several-hundred years from its beginning. It seems clear that the thrust of these movements, their thought and expression, no longer speak in meaningful or life-giving ways to the people around us. If I am honest, and I hope that I am, I do not consider myself a terrible, irredeemable sinner. I know my place in relation to the other that we call God, but I also know that my life-long relationship with Jesus has given me a dignity that allows me to stand before God, knowing my place, but also knowing my worth. That is quite something, is it not? Whatever your self-understanding, we share a puzzle about our calling as a people of God living in a very interesting time. What do we understand? How are we to speak?

For me, a starting point is to try to understand the culture in which we all live. If we are to speak into that culture, we need to understand it. This is too complex a question to address fully by the end of this page – but I am going to hazard that one part among many has something to do with the switch, in our lifetime, from the bottom line being the common good to the bottom line being the profit margin - an economy in which some rise at the cost of others. It is a switch that renders us competitors rather than neighbours, consumers of rather than carers for creation. I am going to hazard that in the world of consumption there is little time for, or perceived need of, a spiritual life. If we look carefully, with eyes that see, there is a sickness, a suffering, that goes with the loss of an understanding of ourselves as spiritual beings. The question for us, as it has always been, is how to open our own eyes, and the eyes of those around us to see bushes on fire with the presence of God. My instinct is that one way in which this will happen is through self-understanding gained through respectful conversation with the first people of this land who know about loss of connection and who, despite the hostility directed toward them, are finding a way back. So shall we.

For people like me it will come through an ever-deepening immersion in the landscape, in the different quiet of the bush, in the vast openness of places where I can see from horizon to horizon, in a life that is stripped back. What will it be for you?

How shall we speak? Maybe in actions more than words and in practice more than principle. All that I know at this moment is that God, the indefinable, ineffable holy, is always and everywhere – like breath, like fire. Bushes are burning, the whole world is ablaze. The invitation is to open your eyes.

Gereldine