



REACHING OUT

Sunday December 29, 2024

9:00 am at Emmanuel Anglican and Uniting Church

Anglican tradition led by Rev Peter McKeague

No service at Kergunyah Uniting Church

Bible Readings for Sunday December 29

Christmas 1

1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26, Psalm 148, Colossians 3: 12-17, Luke 2: 41-52



Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a

day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

Luke 2: 41-52

Bible Readings for Sunday January 5

Christmas 2

Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14, John 1:(1-9), 10-18

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 all ministers in the Presbytery, in placement or retired Sunday December 29.

ANTICIPATION

Rev Leonie Findlay

PRAYER

Holy God, help us to pause in the midst of our busyness.

Quieten our minds that we will hear the good news of your gift of Jesus Christ, your gift to a world so in need of peace, justice and joy.

Lord, as we wait in hope for the coming of Christ, help us offer hope to those around us.

Help us see your glory breaking into our lives, as Mary and the shepherds saw before us.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Messiah

AMEN

SOME THOUGHTS

The season of Epiphany celebrates the birth of Jesus as the coming of God's redemptive love into a world dark with human intrigue, hate and abusive power.

The story of the wise men who had seen the star and lived in anticipation of seeing the new King of the Jews is the traditional story of Epiphany.

Rather than being a time to prepare for all that Christmas has become, Advent is a period of spiritual preparation.

A season of prayer and anticipation of the coming of Christ and the hope, peace, joy and love we long to experience.

Each year the Christmas story is told, carols are sung and presents shared.

For some Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, while for others it is a time tinged with sorrow.

Renewed by the joy of Christmas once again, what do we anticipate in our lives as disciples of Christ and in our communal life together as the church?

Have you ever taken a night hike?

With just the gleam of a flashlight in front of you, the fervent hope is that this battery powered light will shine into the darkness and it will not be overcome until you are safely back at the campfire.

Some of us feel this way about the future.

We begin each new year without much sense of anticipation because we have learned to fear rather than anticipate the unknown of the future.

To anticipate is to be expectant. Anticipation is one aspect of hope.

If we can't anticipate something in our future, we are not likely to experience hope.

Perhaps part of the problem is that we believe we are alone, responsible for the light that accompanies us in the darkness. We may not take the first step until we are sure we have just the right flashlight, with brand new batteries. Consequently, the adventure of a night hike and the revelations that the future has to offer us are postponed.

The message of Epiphany is that God has created light in our world and has light to offer to our hearts. Just as the sun, moon, and stars, shine in our natural world, there are sources of light for our personal journey of faith into any future, no matter how dark it appears in midwinter. We do have to gather the resources such as prayer, scripture and community. And we do have to start out on that night hike.

SELAH

BENEDICTION



God's word promises us light, joy, and peace, through the coming of Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate Jesus' birth, may we rejoice that it is God's passion and purpose to give us a future.

AMEN

Emmanuel Roster

December 29

Elder on Duty: Rod Clutterbuck
Reader: Rod Clutterbuck
Prayers: Rod Clutterbuck
Early Word: Carol Clutterbuck

TV Screen: Harold Cover
Usher: Rod Clutterbuck
Organist: Colin Harris

January 5

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

TV Screen: Harold Cover
Usher: Carol Harris
Organist: Betty Bjorksten

Coming Events

Wed January 9, 8:30am Grounds and Maintenance
10:30am Morning Tea and Fellowship
Craft group resumes in February
Sun February 23, 10:15am Annual General Meeting of the Congregation after Worship

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@inet.net.au by Wednesday.

Prayer of the Week

World Council of Churches

Stateless people



A boy flies a kite in the Jamtoli Refugee Camp near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. More than 600,000 Rohingya refugees have fled government-sanctioned violence in Myanmar for safety in this and other camps in Bangladesh. Photo: Paul Jeffrey/Life on Earth

Give thanks for:

- those who live with a sense of being valuable in God's sight, even if they officially lack a nationality
- those who reach out to stateless people, making them feel at home, and addressing the dilemmas they face.

Pray for:

- an end to the discrimination and marginalization that lead to some people being stateless
- those who lack support and feel they are in limbo while being stateless
- churches and other organizations to reach out to provide stateless people with what they need to live
- governments and international organizations to change policies and practices so that all people feel they belong somewhere



The popular ABBA song, I Have a Dream, has the chorus line, “I believe in angels”. We don’t hear many sermons about angels. Stories and appearances abound in literature, and artists picture winged, other world, beautiful images. There is mention of evil angels. Grace Kelly sang a romantic song about guardian angels. Significant Bible figures are visited by angels. A choir of heavenly celebrates the birth of Jesus. And two angels, dressed in white, have a startling message for the puzzled and frightened women at the empty tomb. There is reference to angels and archangels in heaven, a hierarchy of angels. It’s all a bit troubling and confusing. Most of us have never seen one. Why are some people so special that angels only appear to them? Maybe it’s best to avoid speculation and leave any judgment to the wisdom and business of heaven. It’s helpful to look at Jesus’ life. The word means one who is sent to deliver a message from God, a heavenly messenger. Jesus knew, in Gethsemane’s dark hours, that he could call on 12 legions of angels to avoid the Cross.

But his purpose could not be achieved by force. Nevertheless, it was in Gethsemane, a heavenly messenger came in the form of a strengthening angel, and he was empowered to go on.

There’s something for us in that. In our darkest moments, was there not a kind word, helpful hand, or a comforting message and presence to lift us up, and gave us something to go on? In this way the strengthening angel comes to us in our need.

Wise words from the Letter to the Hebrews alert us to the possibility of the presence of angels in the most ordinary and surprising of places. “Keep on loving one another as Christian brothers and sisters. Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There are some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it.”

Although I have been slow at times to recognize it, the presence and influence of a strengthening angel has been real to me, on my faith journey. I shall always be grateful for that. A strengthening angel is there for the common man as for the saint.

www.victas.uca.org.au/resources | Photo by Insung Yoon | December 2024