



BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

18th April Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

Q & A with Jesus: "Why Are You Frightened?" (Luke 24:36-49)

Based on a Sermon by Rev. Deborah Hannay Sunoo (USA)

Q&A (or questions and answers) with Jesus in the gospel of Luke. Since we're in the season of Easter now, today's story is a resurrection story.

Appearing to the bewildered disciples as a group here, on Easter evening, Jesus says to them "Peace be with you," and then he asks them a sort of double question: "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

The "why are you frightened" question, in this context, reminds me of biblical angels, who are always going around saying to people, "Fear not!" They wouldn't need to say it quite so often if folks weren't scared in the first place, right? Here in Luke 24, the immediate fear is that the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost. Dead people, after all, generally don't attend gatherings like this one. That's already a decent reason for them to be, as the text says, "startled and terrified." And then if we think back over what they'd just been through ...

Why are we frightened? Why do we doubt, Jesus? Is it any wonder? Let's see, it was just a few days ago that you were arrested, and our world came crashing down around our ears. We thought that you were it, that you were him, that you were the Messiah. It had been so exciting to be part of your team, to witness your healing miracles, to learn from your wise teaching. But then you were arrested, mocked, beaten, put to death. It was excruciating to watch – well, for those of us brave enough to be there, at least. The rest of us stayed hidden away for fear of the authorities. We thought they'd be coming after us next. And now we've just heard that two of our friends saw you along the road to Emmaus... and then while we're still trying to wrap our minds around that, all of a sudden here you are with us, too? Or what appears to be you. You'd better believe we're frightened! And as for doubts? What on earth are we supposed to think is happening here?

In response to their fears and doubts, Jesus makes things as concrete as he can for them, trying, I imagine, to give them something they can wrap their minds around. Here are my hands and feet, guys. It's me. Touch me and you'll see. And then I love the next bit: "While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering..." So touching Jesus' hands and feet helps, but only so much. They want to believe him; they just don't know if they really dare. And so they find themselves with this strange, but understandable, combination of joy, disbelief, and wonder.

While they're in that state of joy, disbelief, and wonder, comes Jesus additional question: "Have you anything here to eat?" A simple request, something concrete they can do for him, even while they're caught up in fear and doubt, joy and disbelief. They find him a piece of broiled fish, and he eats it. Now in doing so, he seems to offer them further proof that he's really alive, ghosts not being known for a whole lot of fish consumption either. But in the meantime, he'd at least asked a question they could easily answer: "Have you anything here to eat?" "Sure, Jesus, we've got a bit of fish over on the grill." That we can do!

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Belmont Uniting Church April/May Roster 2021



Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Apr 18	10.00am	Jean Murray	R. Pearson	B. Couper	L Moss T Yates	L. McCann	R. Bunting	A. Ingles

Date	Communion	Flowers
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Apr 18	N/A	A. Merritt
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Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Apr 25	10.00am	Rev. Narelle Collas	J. Ferguson	H. McCann	J. Cocking E. Wood	L. McCann	B. Jennings	A. Ingles

Date	Communion	Flowers
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Apr 25	N/A	H. McCann
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Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
May 2	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	D. Stephens	N. Phillips	H. McCann G. Coomber	B. Vaitohi	D. Zucarro	L. Rankin

Date	Communion	Flowers
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May 2	L. Moss A. Merritt J. Jeffers R. Pearson	H. McCann
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If for any reason you are unable to attend your rostered duty, please endeavour to swap with anyone & contact the worship leader and the Newsletter Editor too.

FAITH SHARING

The Faith Sharing Group commenced (after the pandemic shut down) on Tuesday 13th April and is still seeking new participants. It meets from 10am until 11.30am every Tuesday in the church hall to discuss the lectionary readings set for the week. It is an opportunity to learn, grow and share with others in the church. You will be warmly welcomed.



Coffee after Church Service



If you would like to order a take away coffee or a cup of hot chocolate this Sunday, see Jeannine Oman in foyer when you arrive.

Cafe CBD will prepare your order to be ready by the end of our worship service.



PLEASE NOTE

Social distancing still applies at our church service.

&

Face Masks are still required to be worn during hymn singing.

Prayer Points For the Week

Dear Lord, thank You for family, for friends and for mentors. When we are troubled let us turn to them for help, for guidance, for comfort and for perspective. May others see our love for You, Lord, by the way we live out our lives day by day.

Dear Heavenly Father, help us to be obedient to Your commandments. May we be faithful stewards of our talents, our possessions and our opportunities so that Your Kingdom may be glorified now and forever.

Dear God, we pray for people in Western Australia who have been affected by the cyclone during the past week. Bless the organisations that are helping people with accommodation, food, clothing and other essential items.

Peter Woods



Belmont Uniting Evening Fellowship

Please note the time - **7:30pm Wednesday 28th April**



Guest Speaker - Ian Henricus
"Cycling in France" (All Welcome)

Blume's Fashion Show

Wednesday 12th May

10:00am Morning Tea

10:30am Fashion Show

\$7.00 entry & Door Prizes

Lectionary Readings

April 18 - Easter 3

Acts 3: 12 - 19

Psalms 4

1 Jn 3: 1 - 7

Lk 24: 36b - 48

April 2021

April 25 - Easter 4

Acts 4: 5 - 12

Psalms 23

1 Jn 3: 16 - 24

Jn 10: 11 - 18

May 2 - Easter 5

Acts 8: 26 - 40

Psalms 22: 25 - 31

1 Jn 4: 7 - 21

Jn 15: 1 - 8

May 9 - Easter 6

Acts 10: 44 - 48

Psalms 98

1 Jn 5: 1 - 6

Jn 15: 9 - 17

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The text then says Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, explaining why things had to unfold the way they did, through his suffering and death, and now his resurrection. Then he assured them, as witnesses of all these things, that they would soon be “clothed with power from on high.” That’s a bit of foreshadowing there, a nod toward the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would whoosh around like a mighty wind to inspire and energize the whole early church. That’s a story this same author will tell in his sequel to the gospel of Luke, which we call the book of Acts. Meanwhile, for today, which appears from Luke’s telling still to be Easter day, they have Jesus with them, they have these signs that he is alive, and they have this promise of power from on high. And while he knows they’re still pretty frightened, by the big picture, he’s also asked of them something they can handle, something more concrete: “Have you got anything to eat?”

Now I’m not one to assume that every single verse of the Bible applies perfectly to contemporary situations. Sometimes a whole lot of historical and cross-cultural interpretation is required for us to make sense of what we read in Scripture. But I have to tell you, in light of what’s been going on in our country and in our world this year, today’s questions really jumped off the page at me.

For instance, Jesus asking: “Why are you frightened?” Why are we frightened? How long have you got? I mean, it’s hard even to know where to begin. Global Warming, World Health and of course the Epidemic - Covid – if you have a few hours, Jesus, or a few dozen hours, we’ll be happy to explain to you why we’re frightened. And as for doubts, I’m sure you know those come with the territory for us mere mortals; quite rare is the person without them, even people of deep and abiding faith. We love to celebrate your resurrection on Easter. Singing our “Alleluias” and waving our “Alleluia palms” around here that morning – these are fun, joyful traditions, but like the disciples, even in our joy we can find ourselves wondering sometimes too.

But then comes Jesus’ other question - “Have you anything here to eat?” - to bring things back down to earth. A simple request, a concrete task to do. What might be our contemporary equivalents? Where is the invitation from Jesus to which we can say: “Oh, but that? That we can do!”

If we’re unsure where to start, the Bible certainly offers plenty of places to begin. Feed someone who is hungry. Welcome a stranger. Look after someone who is sick. Visit a prisoner. Pray for one another. Pray for your enemies. Stand with the powerless. Speak out against injustice. Practice hospitality, compassion, generosity. Pick any biblical mandate you wish, and focus your energy and attention there, to distract you a bit from your fears. Listen for an invitation from Jesus to do something concrete, in his name. And be as candid as you like as you pray for direction - “I’m a little freaked out, Jesus, quite terrified, frankly, by some of the things going on in our world, but ... oh, that? Now that I can do!”

After all, it’s been said that courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. So it’s ok if we look around us and find the world to be frightening in times like these. The key is not to let that fear shut us down, but to find ways to resist it. Some of us may even be able to do that on a grand scale. But all of us can surely look for simpler, smaller scale ways to master our fears.

Watching for opportunities simply to do the basic things God commands us to do in Scripture, can help us become fearless, even in the face of all that unsettling news out there in the world. Fearless in the sense of not giving in or giving up to fear. Fearless in the sense of not being afraid to take risks and to reach out to others in love, kindness, compassion. Fearless in the sense that we know there is Something, Someone greater than our fear. Someone that will hold us no matter how scared we are, and no matter our particular balance of joy to wondering, belief to disbelief on any given day. Fearless in the sense of remembering all of those wonderful biblical angels telling us to “fear not” – why not? because God is with us.

So when Jesus asks us here in Luke 24 “Why are you frightened?” I don’t imagine there’s anything wrong with giving him a whole list of reasons why. So long as we also hear him saying, in this same text, “peace be with you,” ... I’m alive and well... and “you will receive power from on high.”

Sure, it’s scary out there. But showing up when we’re frightened is one of the things God does best.

Peace be with you!



And also with you!

**Eril Gliddon | Coordinator Emergency Relief Operations
Ballarat Barwon and West Melbourne**

I would like to say a very big thank you to all the members of the Belmont Uniting Church congregation, who have continued to support Uniting Barwon over many years and in particular during 2020 as we all came to terms with the impact of the Covid 19 virus.

Ros Buckwell informed me of the extra effort everyone went to by collecting food and filling up a car boot at a designated time and place. These donations of food meant that we were able to assist people with a greater variety of nutritious food.

Last week the generous donation of food and food vouchers from the Harvest Thanks Giving festival was overwhelming and very much appreciated. Please convey to everyone that the staff and volunteers and of course the clients are in awe of the empathy and kindness displayed. Thank you again.

Kind regards
Eril.



Combined Pentecost Service on May 23rd at 3 pm at Western Heights UCA.



For further information please contact
Narelle or the Co-Editor Ray Ferguson

Rev. Narelle Collas
Presbytery Minister
Presbytery of Port Phillip West
<mailto:Narelle.Collas@ppw.victas.uca.org.au>



Here is the list of songs that will be sung during the service.

Theme Song: Hearts on Fire – Michael Mangan (Australian)

Holy Spirit Come – Geoff Bullock (Australian)- found In the ‘Source’ music books and other music books

Holy Spirit, Living Breath - a modern hymn from the UK - in the ‘Source’ music books

We are one in the Spirit

The Spirit lives to set us free

The Lord Bless you and Keep You (new blessing song from the UK)

Filled with the Spirits Power TIS 411

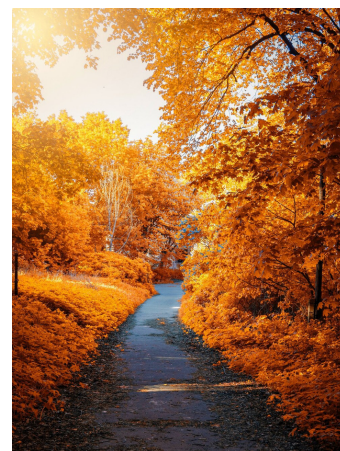
She sits like a Bird TIS 418



John Keats - ‘To Autumn’



Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss’d cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o’er-brimm’d their clammy cells ...



He has risen!



He has risen indeed!