WELCOME BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

29th August Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021-THE YEAR OF HOPE

'Being Present in the Moment' - Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

What do you see when you look in a mirror? Is the reflection an honest one, or is there more to see than the outward appearance? In the Gospel reading, Jesus is defending his disciples against the Pharisees. He counters their attack with his own accusation that they are hypocrites who find fault in others but ignore the inconsistencies of their own rituals. Jesus holds a mirror up to the way they observe their faith. Being called 'religious' – or doing something 'religiously' – often has negative connotations, reminding us of those for whom religious practice is more important than authentic faith. For the Pharisees in today's reading, outward observance of the law is more important than inner defilement by the evil in our hearts, minds and imagination.

Washing or sanitizing our hands has become an important part of our lives since the pandemic. We have been encouraged to sing a song or a verse of a hymn to make sure we wash for a full 20 seconds. But are we sometimes more dedicated to the idea of the ritual than to its practice, just as the Pharisees were to their rituals? Things become rituals quickly, and we cease to notice what we are doing.

We are creatures of habit. That means that we often rely on rituals to keep us grounded and feel normal. We wake up each day to enjoy our favourite breakfast, we feel normal when we follow our set routine each day. Even on Sunday mornings, some of us have our own preference on how worship should be done, hymns to sing and where we feel most comfortable to sit. Rituals are fine in themselves. It is when we allow the regularity and the comfort of the familiar to rob us of the beauty of God's creative presence within and around us.

In this time of lockdown, it is a comfort to hold on to what is familiar. But if we are not careful, we will fall easily into boredom and a sense of helplessness which leads to despair.

The habit of mindfulness, of being present in the moment, is an important part of a quiet time with God. There is a way of praying called 'the examen'. It is a slow way of praying that comes from Ignatian spirituality, where we are encouraged to bring to mind and reflect on the important parts of the day. And it can be a helpful exercise to do last thing at night, or when you are away on holiday with more time to spare – or just every few days when you can manage it. Let's try it now.

So, for a few moments, sit comfortably, feet on the floor and arms in your lap. Close your eyes and notice your breathing. What thoughts and feelings are distracting you from a sense of prayerfulness? Recognise them and let them go, returning to breathing slowly and deeply. Now, ask yourself, 'What am I thankful for from today?' Next, consider, 'What has been difficult today?' Offer these thoughts and reflections to God in prayer. And, finally, ask God how you should respond to these thoughts tomorrow.

Latest on our Sunday Worship Services - more details on page 3

Sunday 29 August - 10.00 am online worship Sunday 5 September - 10.00am online worship (pending announcment)

Worship At Home

Acknowledgement of Country

Today, as we gather together, we acknowledge the Wauthaurong Peoples, the first inhabitants of this place from time beyond remembering. We acknowledge that through this land, God nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

Reading: Mark 7.1-8,14-15,21-23

A Prayer of Approach

Let us draw close to Almighty God, focusing on God's voice, pressing pause on the clamour of our world and the busyness of our lives. Let us take time to slow our minds and open our hearts, in preparation to receive what God wants to give us today. Let us drop the masks we wear and be honest before God and one another. In Jesus' name, we come, and in his name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Adoration

Holy God, we are in awe of your power and your goodness. Your works are amazing, your love unrelenting. Your glory blazes through our lives. Your mercy surrounds us. Your grace astounds us. We worship and adore you. Amen.

Sharing the Word

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges us to live our faith authentically and make sure that what we believe permeates all aspects of our lives. Being confronted by the Pharisees for not following religious laws and traditions about hand washing, Jesus says that, in fact, they are the ones who have got it wrong. They are hypocritically paying lip service to the Mosaic law but are not enacting it in their lives. It is not blindly following tradition that matters, but what is in your heart (7.6).

Undermining the Jewish food laws, Jesus says that it is the 'things that come out' of a person that defiles them. Evil words and actions come from within and can hurt and destroy others (7.15). Conversely, if we are obedient to God, what we say and do will bring God's love into the world and build others up.

The book of Deuteronomy highlights the connection with Moses, just before the Israelites enter the Promised Land. Moses gives guidelines to help God's people to follow God's commandments and reminds them to keep the 'spirit' of these laws and pass them on to their descendants.

We try to follow God's law, do what is right, be a 'good Christian' and go to church on Sunday. The readings today make us question why we do these things. Is it to look good and impress others, or is it because we genuinely want to show our heartfelt love of God?

A Personal Prayer

Lord, for the times I pretend to be something I'm not – forgive me. Lord, at the times I cannot distinguish truth from lies – guide me. Lord, in the times I need to witness to your light – empower me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Blessing

Lord, I know that if I trust you to protect me, you will give me whatever I need to keep me safe and to keep me fighting on your side. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Live your faith

Next time someone mentions a 'rule', discuss which rules are important, which less so, and why. Could some rules be changed to make your household a kinder, happier place?

Questions for reflection

- When did you last think one thing and say another?
- What are the consequences of such double standards?
- How well do your actions match what you believe and say?



Harold stares at people he thinks the sermon is pertinent to.



Date	Time I	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
<u>Sep 5</u>	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	Ros. Buckwell	D. Stephen	s R. Ferguson	B. Vaitohi	G. Schneider	A. Ingles
					J. Ferguson			
Date	Communion		Flowers		Morning Tea			
<u>Sep 5</u>	L. Moss		S. Jennings		R. & J. Ferguson			
_			U		-			
	A. Merritt				F. Vaitohi			
	J. Jef	ffers						_
	R. Pe	earson						
Date		Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Sep 12	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	B. Dickie	I. Goodwin	H. McCann	B. Vaitohi	R. Bunting	L. Rankin
					C. Schaller			
<u>Sept 12</u>	2 Comm	union	Flowers		Morning Tea			
	N/A		S. Jennings		S. & B. Jennings			
			 0		M. Bullock			
Date	Time I	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Sep 19	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	L. Moss	R. Ferguson	R. Jeffers	B. Vaitohi	B. Jennings	C. Collins
				J. Ferguson	J. Jeffers		-	
<u>Sep 19</u>	Communion		Flowers	0	Morning Tea			_
	N/A		K. Haas		A. & R. Bunting			_
					E. Wood			
	-			-1 1		-		-

Thank you to these willing people for keeping our Church services going. If you need to swap please endeavour to do so or if finding it difficult phone Julie 0418996592

Prayer Points For the Week

Loving God, help us to be persistent in prayer, even in those occasions when we don't see answers right away. Particularly in these difficult times may we know the importance of trusting in Your love and goodness, coming to You daily with our needs and requests.

Dear Lord, we pray for families and in particular children who are unable to attend school, thereby missing important opportunities for learning and interaction with their friends and teachers.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for loving, accepting and approving of us just as we are. We pray for the strength and the confidence to overlook offences and weaknesses so that we can honour You in every way.

Peter Woods

Lectionary Readings

Aug 29 - Pentecost 14 Sept 5 - Pentecost 15 Sept 12 - Pentecost	16 Sept 19 - Pentecost 17
Song 2: 8 - 13 Prv 22 8: 1 - 2, 8 - 9, 22 - 23 Prv 1: 20 - 33	Prv 31: 10 - 31
Psalm 45: 1 - 2, 6 - 9 Psalm 125 Psalm 19	Psalm 1
Jas 1: 17 - 27 Jas 2: 1 - 10, 11 - 17 Jas 3: 1 - 12	Jas 3: 13- 4: 3, 7 - 8
Mark 7: 1 - 8, 14 - 15, 21 - 23 Mark 7: 24 - 37 Mark 8: 27 - 38	Mark 9: 30 - 37



There will be an online worship service for this Sunday August 29th. You are welcome to join together at the same time of 10.00 am and afterwards for a chat if you wish using this zoom link:

https://zoom.us/j/99984774012?pwd=Ky85NGtwbnZqblh2YzFGNDdDZEM1QT09 Meeting ID: 999 8477 4012 - Passcode: 1234

Any changes to this current arrangement will be communicated to you promptly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



SCONES, JAM & CREAM/SAVOURY OR PLAIN

Guess What? Yes you are right. Cancelled until further notice

The Social Justice Group is providing the morning tea as a fundraiser for the ALOLA Foundation.

This East Timor charity supports women and children in many aspects including assistance for victims of domestic violence, health and education. \$75 will provide a scholarship for a girl to stay in school and gain a qualification to prepare her for work.



We are asking, if you feel able, for a donation to go toward providing some \$75 scholarships. East Timor has a population of 1.3 million. Covid19 numbers are high but probably underreported. The Australian Government is providing some vaccine assistance.

BELMONT UNITING EVENING FELLOWSHIP

Guess What? Yes you are right again. Cancelled until further notice
Raye Pearson will eventually come and tell us about her many travels one afternoon.

Everyone will be invited!! There will hopefully be a cuppa too.





In-person Faith Sharing at Church every Tuesday at 10am.

(Cancelled until further notice)

Welcome Mat is back every Friday. (Cancelled until further notice)

Liz Moss no longer has a landline so if you wish to contact her you can do it by using her mobile no. which is

0428 579 479.

Big Thank You

Thank you to the Evening Fellowship for their generous donation of \$854.64 for our new projection system. After the Simpson Fund Grant this amount was still outstanding and now means all is paid.

Thank you everyone.

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all".

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column.

Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Rev. Bob Thomas

This is the time of COVID, it's not an easy time. I hope that this is over, before next year does chime. I want to come to school, and see all of my friends. I hate going into lockdown, I want this time to end. I'd like to thank everyone, in these tricky times together, we will finish this. Thank you for being kind.

Written by Primary student Layla from Bendigo

The Inner History of a Day

No one knew the name of this day; Born quietly from deepest night, It hid its face in light, demanded nothing for itself, opened out to offer each of us a field of brightness that traveled ahead,

providing in time, ground to hold our footsteps

and the light of thought to show the way.

The mind of the day draws no attention;

It dwells within the silence with elegance

to create a space for all our words, drawing us to listen inward and outward.

We seldom notice how each day is a holy place

where the eucharist of the ordinary happens,

transforming our broken fragments into an eternal continuity that keeps us.

Somewhere in us a dignity presides that is more gracious than the smallness

that fuels us with fear and force, a dignity that trusts the form a day takes.

So at the end of this day, we give thanks

for being betrothed to the unknown and for the secret work through which the mind of the day and the wisdom of the soul become one.

John O'Donohue





For further information please contact Bill & Sue Jennings

CHRISTMAS CARDS available in pkts of 5 for \$5.

*at this time we are also receiving donations for the Bushikori Christmas Fund. Tax receipts provided for specific donations..

Photo taken by Pamela Ferrar on her visit to Bushikori, nativity hut built by Grace Wandendeya, models students at Bushikori, creative design by Layla Peacock, printed by Words With Heart



Bauble Card: insert

May you sense His love and goodness in a very special way this Christmas season

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace ISAIAH 9:6



Wreath Card: Insert May the blessing of peace, the joy of family, and the love of Jesus fill your Christmas season.

Today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you, He is Christ the Lord" LUKE 2:11

Order requests via Email to sponsorship@bushikori.org.au
Or enquiries can be made to Esther 0439388856



Cleaned the wardrobe, weeded the garden – what else during lockdown?

- Try searching the computer for videos of your favourite place to view after lunchtime.
- Plan to walk around your neighbourhood, choosing a different direction or location each day within the 5kms. limit.
- Set one goal each day, then celebrate its completion each night.
- Write about your own childhood to your children or grandchildren they will wonder at how different life was a few years ago, and may not remember where you went to school.
- Phone that person you haven't had time to contact.
- Plan the holiday you will take when the world settles down a bit.
- Using each individual letter of the alphabet, write something that you are grateful for e.g. A = active, B = bees & birds, C = church friends etc. Share your efforts with family members via telephone, and give thanks to God.

Lorraine Leitch

'COMING UP!

'Special Prayer Service'

You are welcome to attend a 'Special Prayer Service' for those who are affected by the developing situation in Afghanistan and the Covid 19 Delta variant outbreak. Due to the lockdown, this service will now be conducted online via the link below. If you have any questions please contact Ikani.



Date: Friday 3rd September - Time: 2.00pm

https://zoom.us/j/93167534752?pwd=cU9kQ2wrSm50QTk3dDQvcnlYdWdWdz09 Meeting ID: 931 6753 4752 Passcode: 033643. If you wish to support those affected in

Afghanistan -

https://uniting.church/christians-unite-for-afghanistan/

'September - Season of Creation

The month of September is upon us and as it was in previous years, we will celebrate God's creation throughout this month. Each Sunday, our worship will be based on our environment highlighting our responsibility in the care and protection of God's creation.

About the Season of Creation and Pentecost 2, 2021

During this Season of Creation, when God calls forth Creation and stirs life among all God's creatures, we are invited to worship with Planet Earth and all it contains. During this four-week season, we affirm our kinship with everything God has created and is creating, acknowledge our role in the climate crisis, and strive for a future that is free from past ways of harm and destruction. Earth has hope in what is possible when we live with respect for all creation.

Returning to the Season after Pentecost, we learn from the author and the community of the gospel of Mark. We come to know Jesus in these passages by what he does – for and with others. In acts of healing, conversations with disciples, and exchanges with his opponents, Jesus instructs on how to live as his followers. Our identity as followers of God's way means we look differently at and in the world. Our actions put others above ourselves and God's truth above all. This way is not always easy. Sometimes, it leaves us with more questions than clear answers. We ponder active faith, love of neighbours, the abuse of power, how to give our all, and what truly endures in these times. Who are we in Christ? Who are we as a community of faith?

The arms and hands in Ben Shahn's work *Identity* further speak to our identity. The hands might be raised in question or protest. They could be hands working together within and across communities for justice, and different people entwined in mutual support. They could be hands held high in prayer or remembrance.

Through questions, we come to know God's truth – and knowing this truth calls us to show compassion to others, have hope in the face of despair, and work for justice for all

On Reign of Christ Sunday, the last Sunday in the church year, we watch as Jesus speaks truth to power about ultimate power. Although challenging, we are called to take our part in God's wise reign by living the truth of that witness, even when it threatens authority and puts us at risk.



Ben Shahn, Identity, 1968, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid © Estate of Ben Shahn/Licensed by VAGA at Artists Riahts Society (ARS). NY/SOCAN. Montreal (2020).

'Intergenerational Ministry'

Lynne and I are taking part in an Intergenerational Ministry 'Huddle' with other interested UCA members from congregations across the Synod. One of the purposes of this intentional time together is to explore what Intergenerational Ministry may look like in our own context. It gives us the opportunity to share, learn and dream together with others in ministry. Please refer to the brochure below for more information on Intergenerational Ministry.

EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

What is Intergenerational Ministry?



On any given Sunday we can look around our local church and see babies, children, young people and adults gathered to worship God. It is one of the only places in Western society where all generations are present. Each generation is a gift to the others. The young bring their energy and questions; the mature model wisdom and share their experience. All generations stand before Christ as equal recipients of God's grace.

Surprisingly in our congregations today, many young people never experience the gift of engaging with the older generations. Children and young people are often siloed into a ministry program with their peers. They have age-specific teaching and little engagement with the wider church community.





Lynne and I would be happy to provide more information on this topic or to answer any questions you may have.

What is intergenerational ministry?

Intergenerational ministry is difficult to define because it is a philosophy of ministry rather than a program—a way of being rather than doing. Its goal is to strategically build significant and meaningful interactions between the generations within the structures of a congregation.

The key components of intergenerational ministry are interaction and intentionality. Intergenerational ministry is more than bringing the generations into proximity with one another.

Intergenerational ministry takes place when people from at least two generations intentionally gather for the same activity with one another in ways that reflect a shared experience.

'Intergenerational ministry occurs when a congregation intentionally brings the generations together in mutual serving, sharing or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community' Intergenerational Christian Formation - Allen and Ross.



For anyone interested in this free forthcoming workshop (flyer above) titled 'Navigating the landscape- building intercultural communities' to be held on Nov 3rd. It is to nurture our Church/congregations to become more and more intercultural and offer awareness as to the diversity of our life as a Church.

This is a very good opportunity for anyone from our congregation who may be interested in this topic and to initiate conversations on being an intercultural congregation.









Mark 7.1-8,14-15,21-23

Jesus reminds us that it is not about following rules or seeming to do or say the right thing. He says goodness comes from the heart.



Circle the 5 differences between these two pictures.



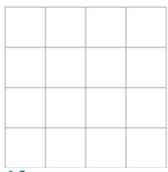


Jesus says that what's important is what's in your heart.



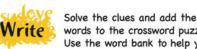
Jesus says that it's our heart that matters most. Use the grid to help you draw a bigger version of this heart.









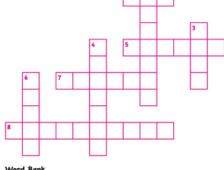


words to the crossword puzzle. Use the word bank to help you.

Across

- 2. What did the Pharisees and Scribes think the Disciples were?
- 5. Which Old Testament Prophet did Jesus quote in today's reading?
- 7. Goodness comes from where?
- 8. What did Jesus accuse some people of doing when their lips honoured them?

- 1. Who were cross with the Disciples?
- 3. Which book of the Bible is today's reading from?
- 4. What were the Disciples not doing before they ate?
- 6. Which part of the bodies contents did Jesus say was important?



Word Bank

inside washing

pretending heart

Outside, inside Mark 7.1-8,14-15,21-23

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.



29 August - 4 September 2021

ome Pharisees and scribes gathered round Jesus. Some Pharisees and Scribes gadicied rounds, speed gadicied gadicied rounds, speed gadicied gad without following the ancient ritual of washing before eating? It's disrespectful to God!' They thought this made the disciples bad people.

Jesus replied, 'The prophet Isaiah was talking about people like you, when he said: "God says this: some people just pretend to respect me. They are only worried about rules and what people will think of them. Their lips honour me, but their hearts are far away from me."'

Jesus continued: 'Listen carefully. Nothing that goes into a person's body from the outside can make them a bad person. But the words and actions that come out can be bad. Goodness comes from the inside. What's important is what's in your heart.'

Mark 7.1-8,14-15,21-23



Did you know?

- The Pharisees were a group who tried to keep every part of the Jewish law very strictly. Most of them felt that Jesus was not strict enough.
- The Pharisees were very concerned with rituals. Rituals are a series of actions that you do in a certain order, often to do with washing.





As of 1pm Saturday August 21, Regional Victoria is in lockdown until at least September 2, 2021.

The following restrictions now apply in Regional Victoria. Note: Additional restrictions to previous lockdowns are shown in red.

- There are only 5 reasons to leave home:
 - Shopping (within 5km of home, unless nearest shop further than 5km)
 - Exercise (within 5km of home, up to two hours, with one other person plus dependants if they cannot be left unattended. The other person can be from another household)
 - Authorised work or Education
 - Caregiving & medical treatments
 - To get vaccinated

Additionally, you can leave home if there is an emergency. You can also leave home if there is family violence or violence by another person in the home, and you are at risk.

- Permitted Work: Only people whose work activities are listed at www.coronavirus.vic.gov, au/authorised-provider-and-authorised-workerlist-O are permitted to attend a workplace. They must obtain a valid Permitted Worker Permit* before attending any workplace. Everyone else must work only from home.
- *Permitted Worker Permits are required for anyone who must attend the workplace for work, and whose work function appears on the above authorised worker list. This includes ministers, staff and volunteers involved in worship broadcasting. See page 2 for further detail.
- Masks must be worn (indoors and outside) unless at home or with a valid exemption.
- No visitors to the home, other than intimate partner. Anyone who lives alone may create a "bubble" with one other person.
- No public gatherings.
- Playgrounds, basketball courts, skate parks and outdoor exercise equipment is closed.

- The removal of masks to consume alcohol outdoors is not permitted.
- Worship services Broadcast only.
 - 5 people max in broadcasting.
 - Must be the same 5 people each week (NOT a rotating roster).
 - Must all have a valid Permitted Worker Permit, submitted to Synod. See page 2 for further detail.
- Funerals maximum of 10 people plus those required to conduct the funeral.
- Weddings may not proceed. The only exceptions are for end-of-life or if deportation is pending.
- Schools closed except for vulnerable children or children of emergency workers. Masks are now recommended for children over 5.
- Adult education Online only.
- Childcare and Early Learning closed except for vulnerable children or children of emergency workers. A Permitted Worker Permit is required to access childcare or early learning (not required for children experiencing vulnerability).
- Restaurants/Cafes Open for takeaway or delivery services only.
- Libraries and Toy Libraries Click and Collect services only.
- Residential Aged Care No visitors, with very limited exceptions.
- Hospitals Visitors only for end-of-life, or one support person for childbirth.
- All entertainment, hospitality, accommodation and tourism to remain closed.
- Travel between Metro Melbourne and Regional Victoria is not allowed, unless for a permitted reason.
- Residents of cross-border community local government areas will be required to obtain a permit to cross between Victoria and NSW from 6pm, Friday 13 August.

Continuted on page 2

