

WEST EPPING UNITING CHURCH

Our Vision:

We are people sent to share the love, hope and compassion of Jesus Christ with all the world



Newsletter

Sunday 5 July 2020

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.'

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'



Building Church Closed BUT Open

weppinguca.org.au



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we gather, the Wallumedegal people of the Eora nation and give thanks for their care of the land over many generations.

Join us on line

**Each Sunday at
8am and 10am**

Youtube live at

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNf7ULm92n4lwV43xXykEWA)

[UCNf7ULm92n4lwV43xXykEWA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNf7ULm92n4lwV43xXykEWA)



5th Sunday after Pentecost

You have probably heard of middle child syndrome. Middle child syndrome is the belief that middle children are excluded, ignored, or even outright neglected because of their birth order. I wonder if Isaac would consider himself a victim of 'middle child syndrome' or maybe more accurately middle forefathers syndrome? Isaac is the second of the three patriarchs of the Jewish and Christian faiths. Isaac, the promised heir of Abraham and Sarah has his story sandwiched between their story and his son Jacob's story, who in turn goes on to father the twelve tribes of Israel including the famous Joseph and his technicolour dream. There is no section devoted to Isaac. He does not have a strong voice or do anything particularly exciting.

Since the focus has been on the patriarchs, Isaac and his wife, Rebekah, are often overlooked. It is important that we do not keep coming to the biblical text with an assumption that it is a man's world and see how God blesses both men and women. Rather than focusing on just the patriarchs we need to also see the matriarchs and Rebekah in particular as the matriarch of this couple.

Over the last few weeks in my sermons on Sunday worship I have been exploring how God made good the promise to Abraham to make him the father of nations and that the promise was not just for Abraham but was also for Sarah. In this week's Old Testament or Jewish scripture TANAKA reading we hear Rebekah is blessed that she may "become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes." While this blessing is a blessing from her family rather than direct from God she does become part of the continuation of the promise that God made to Abraham and Sarah.

I have gotten ahead of myself. Let's back track and look at the beginning of their story. Their story starts after the death of Sarah, when Abraham is 136 years old and Isaac is 36. Abraham speaks with his senior servant, and has him swear that he will not take a Canaanite woman as his son's wife but rather is to travel to the land of Abraham's family and get a woman from there. It is interesting to note the servant's question of what he should do if the woman does not want to come back with him. This question indicates that women do have choice. In contrast Isaac's voice is silenced and it is unclear if he knows of the plan. Abraham is not concerned with the thought the woman may refuse and he tells his servant that:

"The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you,"

The servant goes "to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor" and prays to the God of his master Abraham that he may succeed and know, see, discern the right girl by her response to his request for a drink. As the narrator introduces Rebekah to the reader there are a number of

signs she is the 'right' girl. For example her genealogy, "born to Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother", and she is a virgin, "not known by a man" (Genesis 24:15-16). That she is the "right" one is confirmed when she performs all that the servant had prayed and introduces herself to him and says "We have plenty of straw and fodder and a place to spend the night."

She ran and told her mother's household about these things. Laban, her brother, ran out to the man and said, "Come in, O blessed of the Lord." Then food was set before the servant to eat; but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." Which brings us to this week's reading. The servant recounts the story to her brother Laban and Bethuel her father and asking "if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

Laban and Bethuel answered "the matter has come from God we cannot say to you if it is wrong or right. Here is Rebekah before you take and go." (Genesis 24:50) Although it seems that the men will make the decision and Rebekah will not be given voice, in the morning they called Rebekah, and ask her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will." So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"May you, our sister, become
thousands of myriads;
may your offspring gain possession
of the gates of their foes."

It suggests this is a story of a strong woman who has an important part to play; a part that is divinely orchestrated.

The passage then jumps to Isaac who is out in the field. Rebekah sees Isaac and enquires of him. The servant identifies him as his master and Rebekah covers herself with a veil. There are a number of questions that we can ask the text at this point. Is the servant deceiving Rebekah, does Rebekah think that this is Abraham not Isaac or is Isaac the master now that he has 'come of age' and has a woman? The passage goes on to say:

"Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother, and he took Rebekah and she became his wife
Isaac loved her in place of his mother"

Rebekah has become the replace of Sarah. The baton has been passed from Abraham and Sarah to Isaac and Rebekah. We will hear more of their story next week.

Rev Tammy Hollands



Prayer for Today

Gracious and Holy God,
give us the wisdom to discover You,
the intelligence to understand You,
the diligence to seek after You,
the patience to wait for You,
eyes to behold You,
a heart to meditate upon You,
and a life to proclaim You,
through the power of the Spirit of Jesus,
our Lord.
Amen

Join us for our first picnic

Our first picnic will be this Sunday 5 July at Boronia Park in Epping at midday.

If everyone can please bring all their own food, chairs or rug to sit on, and practice social distancing, then we should be able to share in a great time of fellowship and friendship in complete safety.

We are looking forward to seeing as many of our members and friends as possible. If it is raining, then we will try again the following week.



Food glorious food

Margaret and Carolyn are organising the next food collection for CCA in Eastwood.

If you are planning to attend the **picnic on Sunday 5 July at Boronia Park** could you please bring your food items there where a box will be provided.

Many Thanks!



Giving

Regular giving can still be made via the following ways:

Direct Deposit:

into the WESTPAC Church account:
BSB: 032-081 Account No: 961263 Account Name: West Epping Uniting Church
Please identify the payment with your name in the reference section.

Cheque:

addressed to West Epping Uniting Church and post to PO Box 2738, Carlingford 2118.
Please, don't post cash.

Credit Card:

(Visa and Mastercard only) send details to the treasurer, Morris Ross

e: morrisross67@gmail.com
or mail to PO Box 2738, Carlingford 2118

Details required:

Card number

Name of cardholder

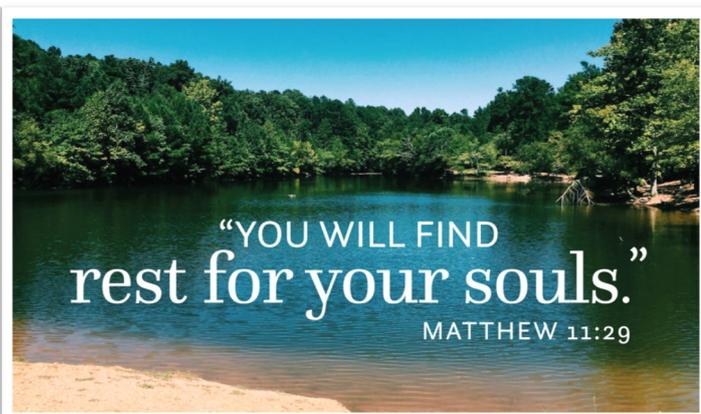
Expiry date

Amount & Frequency of payment ---

eg one-off or regular (each day/week/month/whatever)

Uniting Financial Services:

Direct Deposit through UFS if it has already been set up.



West Epping Uniting Church
is a member of an Ecumenical Covenant with the Anglican Parish of Epping,
the Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford, Epping Baptist Church and Epping Uniting Church.



Prayers

If you would like to know of some specific names of people with particular pastoral needs to pray for, please **contact Annabelle Avern** (member of the Pastoral Care Team) on 0428 368 870, preferably on weekday evenings.



Special needs prayer

Gracious God,
 We pray for all those needing strength,
 hope and encouragement.
 Reach out to care, to nurture and to protect.
 Dwell in their hearts.
 Dry their tears and take away their fears.
 Be their Healer, Comforter and Provider.
 For you know each one of us by name.
 You know all our needs.
 Touch us with your healing power.
 Renew us in your redeeming love.
 In the name of Jesus we pray.
 Amen.

Brighteners....

....to lift your spirits

Why is it, 'A penny for your thoughts,'
 But, 'you have to put your two cents in'?
Steven Wright

Directory changes:

A new directory will be available soon.

Please let the church office know if you have changed your contact details in the last few months.

e: weppinguca@gmail.com
 m: 0408 972 957



Rosters

Sunday 12 July	8.00am	10.00am
Prayers for Others		Jan Venn-Brown
Reader	Alison Anderson	
Lectionary Readings Pentecost 6	Genesis 25:19-34 Romans 8:1-11	Psalms 119:105-112 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday 19 July	8.00am	10.00am
Prayers for Others	Tammy	Lois Rees
Reader	Sandra Cadman	Cheryl Lee
Lectionary Readings Pentecost 7	Genesis 28:10-19a Romans 8:12-25	Psalms 139:1-12, 23-24 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Down is Up

The lower I bow, the higher I rise
 To the heights of the heavens above
 As I bow at His feet
 I am movin' on up
 Transported by mercy and love.

Come! Humble your spirit. Bow down to the King!
 And soar to the summit of grace.
 Bow low at the foot of the cross
 ...and ascend!
 Come down to the most high place!

Bow low! Rise high! Rise up! Exalt your King!
 And soar to the summit of grace!
 Bow low at the foot of the cross
 ...and ascend!
 Come down to the most high place!

Movin' on up!

-by Shirley M Lealess-

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