

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 29 November 2020

Building Church Closed BUT Open



weppinguca.org.au

Join us on line

All
Welcome!

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

Youtube live at

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

Bible Reading

Mark 13:24-37

But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in
clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will
send out the angels, and gather his elect from the
four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends
of heaven.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its
branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves,
you know that summer is near. So also, when you
see these things taking place, you know that he is
near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this
generation will not pass away until all these things
have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass
away, but my words will not pass away.'

'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither
the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the
Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know
when the time will come. It is like a man going on
a journey, when he leaves home and puts his
slaves in charge, each with his work, and
commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.
Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when
the master of the house will come, in the evening,
or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else
he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.
And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

THOSE
WHO
DREAM

*keep
awake*

1st sunday in advent



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.

Tammy's message

Advent 1 : Mark 13:24-37

On Tuesday I had the great pleasure of preaching at the Catholic Church Our Lady of Hope, Epping as part of the Ecumenical Covenant Churches which includes Catholic Parish of Epping & Carlingford, Epping Anglicans, Epping Baptist Church, Epping Uniting Church and West Epping Uniting Church. Together we celebrated the beginning of Advent.

Below is the written version of my sermon. If you would prefer to listen to the sermon, and the whole service you will find it on the West Epping Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/weppinguniting> or on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/llfki7CJfbA>

Our bible reading began... "But in those days, after that suffering..."

That suffering – what suffering?

Earlier in this chapter, Mark 13, Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple: "Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

Although our churches have remained standing, for many of us this year and the impact of Covid-19 have made us feel as if our temples or churches had been destroyed as they became closed to the congregations. Our familiar way of doing things had been stripped from us. It left many grieving a significant loss. It right and natural to grieve things we lose especially when those things are much loved and valued. But I wonder if it has also highlighted something important, something that we need to pay attention to?

Has it shown us that we have mistaken our temples, our churches, for the Kingdom of God?

In the passage we heard read Jesus, as a good Jewish rabbi or teacher, is quoting or at least referencing scripture. He is referring to the book of Daniel, from what we call the Old Testament, but for the Jewish Jesus would have just been the scriptures. In particular he is referencing Daniel 7:13-14:

*I continued watching in the night visions,
and suddenly one like a son of man
was coming with the clouds of heaven.
He approached the Ancient of Days
and was escorted before him.
He was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
so that those of every people,
nation, and language
should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that will not pass away,
and his kingdom is one
that will not be destroyed.*



God's Kingdom will not be destroyed! Although human Empires, human kingdoms, human leaders and nations rise and fall the Kingdom of God, the dominion of God will not pass away. It will not be destroyed.

We pray: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Thy Kingdom come on earth! This is our prayer. Thy Kingdom come. The coming of the Kingdom of God is what Jesus proclaimed, is what Jesus stood for, what he taught, what he demonstrated in the way he lived, died and was resurrected.

We pray Thy Kingdom come! Not my kingdom come. Not our individual kingdoms of the way we like things or want things to be. Not even the church's kingdom come but Thy Kingdom come!

The Kingdom of God, is the reign of God. The Kingdom of heaven as the Gospel according to Matthew calls it. It is not about another place called heaven that we get to go to when we die but the coming reign of God here on earth. That here on earth God reigns and things here should be according to the will of God.

We pray this prayer but do we mean it?

Do we expect it?

Are we awake to the in breaking reign of God?

Do we see the new shoots that are being put out by our creator God who continues to bring life and reconciliation?

Mark verse 33 says: "Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come". We do not know when the time will come, the moment, the year, the month, the day, hour, minute, or second.

This notion of time is very Western. Has anyone visited one of the Pacific Islands and encountered Island time? Are you familiar with Island time? It is not just that they are slow or laid back and always late as we may perceive it. Rather things happen at particular times. Things happen at the right time, when the right people or enough people have arrived and are ready.

We need to read this passage with an understanding of God's time. The original Greek the Gospel was written in has two different words that are translated as "time" in our English bibles.

One is the word 'Chronos'. This is where we get 'chronology' or 'chronological'.

Our Western understanding of time comes from this sort of time and usually what we think of when we think of time. What time is it? What time does the bus arrive? What time do you want to meet for coffee? It is a moment in chronological time.

The other term is 'Kairos'. This word is more about the right, or opportune time. It is the critical moment. More like it happen just in time.

When we see the second coming of God, or the 2nd coming of Jesus in '*chronos*' time or calendar time we limit God to coming at a particular moment in chronological time. What is more this is not the term used in the gospel.

Mark uses the term '*kairos*'. When we understand God coming in '*kairos*' time, at the right time and in God's time we may see it less as a moment in time. See it less as a 2nd coming but as second comings or subsequent comings. Comings that we need to be awake to. Alert to.

Jesus continues to come. Jesus continues to be present in our moments of crisis. In our moments of feeling like the world is ending. But we can only recognise this if we are looking for God, for the Christ and expecting to see Christ. If we are wake to the presence of Christ in the mess and the pain.

Jesus has shown us that he does not shy away from mess pain and death. Jesus has shown us that he is to be found on the margins with the poor, with the outcasts and the sinners. Jesus showed us that he comes in humility and dwells with the vulnerable. Jesus has shown us that God comes to us in unexpected forms in a man from the backwater town of Nazareth where nothing good comes from. Do we still let God surprise us as he continues to come in ways we do not expect?

How do we recognise the coming of Jesus if it is in unexpected ways?

We need to let the word of God confront and challenge us not just comfort us. We need to let the scripture transform us. We need to turn away from our kingdoms, our agendas, we need to let go of our wants, our opinions and power and then with hands open and empty we can embrace the kingdom of God.

We can use prayer to centre ourselves on the Kingdom of God.

We need to stop comparing ourselves to others and just welcome others, welcome the stranger. As we welcome others we might find that we welcome Christ himself.

As we enter this season of Advent, the new church year, may we keep awake. May we continue to pray: Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth and may we let go of our own little kingdoms, empty ourselves and make room for the Spirit so we can see and participate in the ongoing breaking in of the Kingdom of God.

Come Lord Jesus! Come! Amen.

Rev Tammy Hollands

Prayer for Today

Christ
our Advent hope,
remind us
to prepare
for Your coming.
May we wait,
patiently
and intentionally
for You
to enter the world
and our lives.
Amen



Sunday 29 November

Combined Service at 9.00am



Congregational AGM at 10.30am

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, we will be holding our Congregational AGM via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/8647492332?pwd=SlcPdDc4YUpXQmVLTlFkVm5DNjd6dz09>

Meeting ID: 864 749 2332 Passcode: 2121

Telephone 02-8015-6011 Meeting ID 864-749-2332 passcode 2121

Those who dream

To carry a dream
Is to plant trees in old age,
To be a part of a church,
That is human and frayed.
To carry a dream is foolish and wild.
It's the faith of a child,
Wishing on stars.
But to carry a dream is also hopeful and wise
The faith of our elders,
Saying God will provide.

...
May they say
We are foolish and unwise,
And may we continue to
dream;
May hope keep us alive.

—Sarah Are,
from "To Carry a Dream"



Community Aid food collection

The response from our church family for food items for Community Aid is always so generous - thank you to everyone who contributes with such kindness. Thank you too, to all those who donated wrapped lollies for the lolly bags for inclusion in their Christmas hampers. With that in mind donations of food (some with a Christmassy flavour!) could be delivered to either Margaret or Carolyn or please phone for a pick up by the **end of November** which will allow Community Aid to include them in their hampers. This will be the last food collection for the year. Thank you once again.

Margaret Leivesley: 9871 8276
Carolyn Button: 9871 2661



Christmas gift cards

Order forms for the Mission Team Christmas cards supporting projects in aid of Act for Peace, UnitingWorld and the OVC Project in Mwandia have now been delivered to you. If you haven't received one, please contact the church office.

Orders for the cards can be placed to Erica by:

- scan and email to ericaharrison@optusnet.com.au
- phone 9873 3989 m: 0409 044 923
- leave in letterbox at the cottage



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.

Rosters

Sunday 6 December	8.00am	10.00am
Prayers for Others	Tammy	Tammy
Reader	Alison Anderson	Elva Harris
Lectionary Readings 2 nd Sunday Advent	Isaiah 40:1-11 2 Peter 3:8-15a	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Mark 1:1-8

Sunday 13 December	8.00am	10.00am
Prayers for Others	Tammy	Heather Petrie
Reader	Andrew Aiton	Helen Campbell
Lectionary Readings 3 rd Sunday Advent	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	Psalm 126 John 1:6-8, 19-28

It's just a thought ... But it could change your life

Circumstances do not make you what you are
 ...they reveal what you are!
John Maxwell

Leisure Ministry news

Unfortunately we haven't been able to proceed with our plans for a Mystery Coach Tour at the moment. However...you are invited to join us for a Picnic at Cockatoo Island on Saturday 5 December.

Here are the details:

We will make our own way to Rydalmere Wharf and catch Rivercat Ferry at 10.58am or Meadowbank at 11.11am. Arrive at Cockatoo Island 11.43am. BYO Picnic Lunch, or purchase food, drinks on the Island. Leave Cockatoo Island at either 1.28pm or 2.28pm (your choice). Arrive Meadowbank 2pm or 3pm, or Rydalmere 2.13pm or 3.13pm.

For further details contact: Cathy & Vernon Prowse 9877 0542 or Joan & Morris Ross 9873 3713.

Remembrance Grief Thanksgiving

Thursday 17 December
 7.45pm

A service of lament that covers the loss of loved ones and all that we have missed through this crazy time of Covid.



Pre-registration link will be available soon.

Minister

Rev Tammy Hollands 0409 001 115

Office Administrator

Helen Tattersall 0408 972 957

Safe Church Contact Person

Erica Harrison 0409 044 923

Church Office

Office Hours

Email

Website

Facebook

WEUC Bank Account

35 Orchard St Epping 2121 p: 9868 3574

Closed

(Helen is working remotely from home)

weppinguca@gmail.com

weppinguca.org.au

facebook.com/weppinguniting

Westpac BSB 032 081 Account 961263

West Epping Uniting Church uses information and news provided by its members, adherents and officers for the purposes of conducting its pastoral ministry. In the course of that ministry, material published in this bulletin may reach an audience wider than the membership of the congregation.