

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 7 August 2022

Readings

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah
Hear the word of the Lord,

you rulers of Sodom!

Listen to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the Lord;

I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams
and the fat of fed beasts;

I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.

When you come to appear before me,
who asked this from your hand?

Trample my courts no more;
bringing offerings is futile;

incense is an abomination to me.

New moon and sabbath and calling of
convocation—

I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity.

Your new moons and your appointed festivals
my soul hates;

they have become a burden to me,

I am weary of bearing them.

When you stretch out your hands,

I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,

I will not listen;

your hands are full of blood.

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings

from before my eyes;

cease to do evil,

learn to do good;

seek justice,

rescue the oppressed,

defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.
Come now, let us argue it out,
says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be like snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.
If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;
but if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be devoured by the sword;
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Luke 12:32-40

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.'

'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

Geoff's Reflection

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

The Freedom Found in Letting Go – it's a Paradox!

There's a story I first read several years ago and I have often returned to it, inspired by its simple message.

A man was sent to a prisoner of war camp – a prison. At the set time, all the inmates were allowed out into the exercise yard and this man strode out with guitar in hand. He set himself up in the midst of the yard and began to play and sing in the most angelic voice. The other prisoners were captivated and transported into another realm – for a time they experienced the peace and freedom of this man, despite their imprisonment.

The guards didn't like what was happening, so they dragged him off and beat him, breaking his hands, warning him not to do it again. Next day, there he was, strumming a guitar with broken fingers and his singing transfixing the prisoners carrying them out of their oppressive surroundings into a free and wonderful place.

The guards intervened and took the man off, smashing his guitar, beating him and warning him again. Day after day he returned. They cut his tongue out and he swayed and danced to the music in his being – others joined in. The guards beat him more and broke his legs. The next day friends carried his broken and beaten body into the yard, where he lay moving his head and arms to the song in his being. Everyone joined in and the guards were beaten!

The story reminds me that when a person is truly free and living in that freedom, it doesn't matter what anyone does, they cannot remove the freedom, the life, the love and joy they feel. It is a rare person who finds this level of spiritual freedom and life.

One was Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan Friar (Catholic Priest) in Poland last century. Fr Kolbe and others who lived and served out of the Franciscan Abbey, protested the Nazi regime and their persecution of Jews. They hid many Jews in their Abbey and were arrested at different times. Fr Kolbe refused to sign a paper that would give him freedom due to his German ancestry because he would not support the German authorities. He continued to speak out and write against the Nazi regime.

Fr Kolbe and other priests were arrested and sent to prison, then finally transferred to Auschwitz. There he ministered to people in their deep pain and suffering. He was beaten and lashed by authorities who didn't like his work. He generously shared himself and what he had with others.

One day a prisoner escaped. In order to create a warning and threaten everyone else, the deputy Commander of the Camp ordered that 10 men would be placed in a bunker cell and starve to death as a warning to everyone else. As the men were named, one fell to the ground and cried out in despair: 'My wife! My children!' Fr Kolbe immediately spoke to the commander asking that he be allowed to swap with the man. He said: 'Can I take this man's place. He has a family, and I don't.' The commander didn't really care as long as he had 10 men. They were taken into the bunker and deprived of food and water. A witness remembered that Fr Kolbe was seen to be calmly standing or kneeling in the cell, either praying with another person or alone. He continued to care for and build up the 10 men as they died in the cell. He gave hope.

Fr Kolbe survived for 2 weeks after the others had died and the guards wanted the cell emptied, so decided to administer a lethal injection to Fr Kolbe. It was reported that when the guards came with the injection, he calmly lifted his left arm and allowed them to inject him. He died calmly and with deep peace and love.



Few people reach the deep state of inner peace and calm of Fr Kolbe, able to give so freely and generously of himself. Many seek it and some glimpse it and moments of deep experience of this transcendent peace, love and hope. Perhaps that was why Fr Kolbe was made a saint – to shine light on human life and help us to see another way in the world. At a time when discussion and questions around what it means to be religious, have faith, be spiritual, are more prominent, the experience of people like Fr Kolbe are enlightening!

In one of our readings this week (Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16) we read about faith – the trust in things we can't see or define or control, things of God. Stories of people such as Abraham and Sarah invite us to ponder what it means to trust our lives into something (someone?) without knowing what the outcome will be. They experienced this sense of 'call' to let go of the security, comfort and familiarity of their lives, to pack up their lives and travel to a place that will be revealed. They don't know where, why, what... They simply trust in this one who calls. In letting go of the control they think they have over the life they believe they have and are in control of, they discover a new freedom and journey into the unknown. All along the way, the Presence and sustaining Love of God are with them. They make all manner of mistakes and take charge more than once. Things fall apart and then new faith and trust leads them back to the path of life and freedom.

In Luke's story (Luke 12:32-40), Jesus invites us to not be afraid but receive the freedom and life of God's Reign, a gift given in joy and love. He urges that we don't store up treasure that will rot, decay or prove powerless before the challenges and pain of life. The things that seem so important, the priorities of our society, such as wealth, power, fame/celebrity, reputation, career, and all the things we can accumulate and own, define, control and cling to, don't and can't hold us in the moment of deep crisis, pain or suffering. Jesus says to let go and gather treasure that will last and sustain us – all that is represented by God's Dream for the world, a dream called the Reign of God.

God's Reign is grounded in love. As we open our hearts to this love that comes from beyond us, beyond all things, we recognise that we are known. We are known in our deepest being and we are loved by the Love that holds everything and sustains the universe!! We are known in our deepest, most intimate place and we are loved for who we are – there is nothing we need to do to earn, prove or deserve being loved in God! This love frees us from fear, from needing to prove ourselves, justify our lives, keep up with others as they compete and clammer for more.

We are invited to live with expectation, hope and faith because God *is*. The One who is the source and life of everything is surely to be trusted but we are urged to let go of our need to know, to define, to control. Faith puts its hope and trust in this God, even without our knowing the whole way or necessarily seeing the fullness of the outcomes. It is the impossible possibility of belief and hope against all the odds and that which we see before us. We live and grow into this faith through a faithful, trusting life that abandons all into the restless, relentless journey that challenges us to be more than we ever dreamed of being and to do more than we ever believed we might – as Fr Kolbe knew and lived!

The link to the video reflection is:

<https://youtu.be/3slv6CzAjDg>

Rev Geoff Stevenson



I TOOK JESUS
TO HEART, AND
STARTED SELLING
MY STUFF ONLINE.

REALLY?

SO... HOW'S THE
ALMSGIVING GOING?

NOT TOO GOOD.
SO FAR I'VE SPENT MOST
OF WHAT I'VE MADE ON
PACKING TAPE AND
BUBBLEWRAP.

LUKE 12:32-48



Prayer for Today

Dear God

I ask your blessing upon all who enter my life today.

May they feel your love as they interact with me, hear your love when I speak and leave my presence knowing they have been touched by your love.

Guide me to see, feel and love the way you do. Not only with those who are pleasant and good but with those who are angry and have lost their way.

Remind me that everyone I encounter today is made beautiful and lovingly by you.

Amen

Worship this Sunday
at 9.30am will be a hybrid service.

Everyone is welcome to attend or join us on zoom.

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Telephone 02-8015-6011

Meeting ID 864-749-2332 passcode 2121

Or watch on our Youtube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNf7ULm92n4lwV43xXykEWA>

Family & Intergen Service

Sundays at 5pm in the Maurice Davies Hall.

Families and friends welcome.

A relaxed church gathering with a bible reading, discussion and sometimes a craft for children to enjoy.



Synod Insights

Newsletter 29 July |

- Comparison is the thief of joy
With so much noise in our lives, how do we make any kind of half-decent decision about who we are?
Bombarded.
That's the only way to describe it.
We are bombarded by advertising on TV, billboards, buses, in train stations, on trams, at the movies, and especially on social media, and all of it is telling us we don't measure up because we don't look right.
- First Peoples Voice, Diaspora and Migrant worker issues highlighted at first Pacific – Australian Church Network Meeting
- Can we recover faith in Faith?
On Sunday, 14 August, the 2022 Abrahamic Conference will explore the role faith may play in an increasingly diverse and secular society.

Read these stories and more in the link below

[Weekly Newsletter \(uca.org.au\)](#)

Mid-week devotion

Join us on Wednesdays at 10am on zoom led by Pastor Lyn Graham.

Join Zoom Meeting at 10am

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/91952761718?pwd=WmtNRFhKbDV3OTZLaVJVRWk4VGVkZz09>

Meeting ID: 919 5276 1718 Passcode: 2121

Zoom prayer group

You are invited to join our weekly prayer time on zoom on Thursdays at 4pm. Everyone is welcome to join in. For more information contact Lois Rees.

Join Zoom Thursday Prayer Group at 4pm

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/98939453219?pwd=dG9paSs1eGg4MGZDbGozNWhqOHlQQT09>

Meeting ID: 989 3945 3219 Passcode: 2121

Induction Service

Parramatta Nepean Presbytery & Greystanes Uniting Church warmly invite you to the Induction of Rev Gail Hinton

Saturday 13 August at 2pm

Afternoon tea will follow the service.

Please RSVP to ghatchurch@outlook.com



Combined service with Carlingford UC

The first combined Carlingford & West Epping UC Worship Service was last Sunday, 31 July 2022 at Carlingford Uniting Church.

Liturgist, Rev. Deborah Yun and preacher, Rev. David Reichardt. Members of both congregations enjoyed worshipping together under the theme 'Togetherness'. The next combined service will be on Sunday 30 of October at West Epping Uniting Church.



Marsden Rd Hymnfest

Friday 14 October 10.30am to 2pm

Marsden Rd Uniting Church
203 Marsden Rd, Carlingford

PROGRAM

- 10.30 Morning Tea
- 11.00 Singing & Listening to personally meaningful hymns from past years, and present favourites + cds and YouTube clips
- 12.00 Lunch: Bring your own. Tea, coffee & cool drinks provided
- 1.00 Singing & Listening
- 2.00 Close



Come for all or part of the program

For information, please contact:

Elaine Forrest: gef79abr@gmail.com or
Jan Roden: janroden@rodenprint.com.au

Inter-church Men's Fellowship

Next meeting **Monday 8 August**, with morning tea served at 10am. The interesting speaker will be Hans Rupp, a retired homicide detective, who will share his experiences through two major homicide cases. Cost \$10.00. Bring a friend to enjoy good fellowship and an interesting speaker.

Please book at the latest by Friday 5 August to Bruce Sheldrick b.sheldrick@optusnet.com.au

Ladies Fellowship

'Well known Aussies you've probably never heard of!' is the topic our interesting and entertaining speaker Graham Sims will be sharing with us this month.

Graham has visited us before and we have always enjoyed his very entertaining presentation.

Friday 12 August at 10am

Starting with morning tea.

All Ladies welcome!

Come and join our friendly group.

Enquiries: Lyn MacGregor 0400 701 876

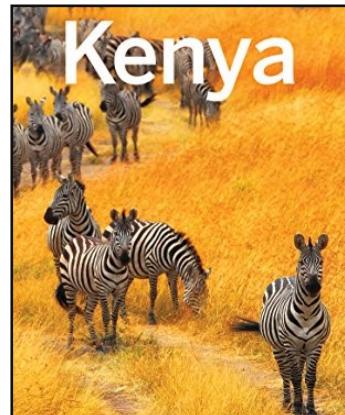


Friday Discovery

10am Friday 19 August.

Join us for morning tea followed by 'Travel Tales' with Pastor Lyn Graham. Everyone is invited to come as Lyn talks and shows us photos of her trips to Kenya (where her son lives).

Enquiries: Joan Ross
9873 3713

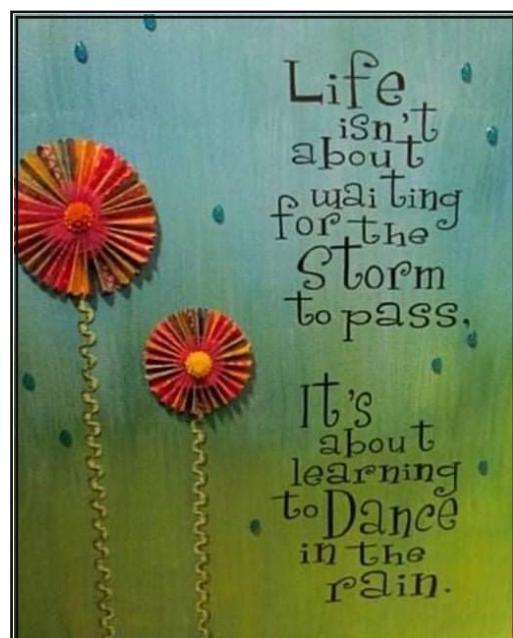


CCA food drive

Our usual food collection for Christian Community Aid will be this **Sunday 7 August**. Start collecting non-perishable items when out shopping and bring them in on Sunday:

eg tea, coffee, biscuits, pasta, rice and pasta sauce, small tins of canned fruit and vegetables, canned fish.

Your ongoing support is very much appreciated and thanks always to John Norman for delivering our goods.



Rosters

Sunday 14 August	9.30am Hybrid service	
Liturgist	Erica Harrison	
Preaching	Rev John Barr	
Ministers Assistant	Lois Rees	
Welcomer	Lyn MacGregor	
Stewards	George Esplin, Morris Ross	
Reader	Mavis Hall	
Prayers for the people	Erica Harrison	
AV desk	Phil & Desy	
Lectionary Readings	Isaiah 5:1-7 Hebrews 11:29- 12:2	Psalm 80:1-2,8-19 Luke 12:49-56

Prayers

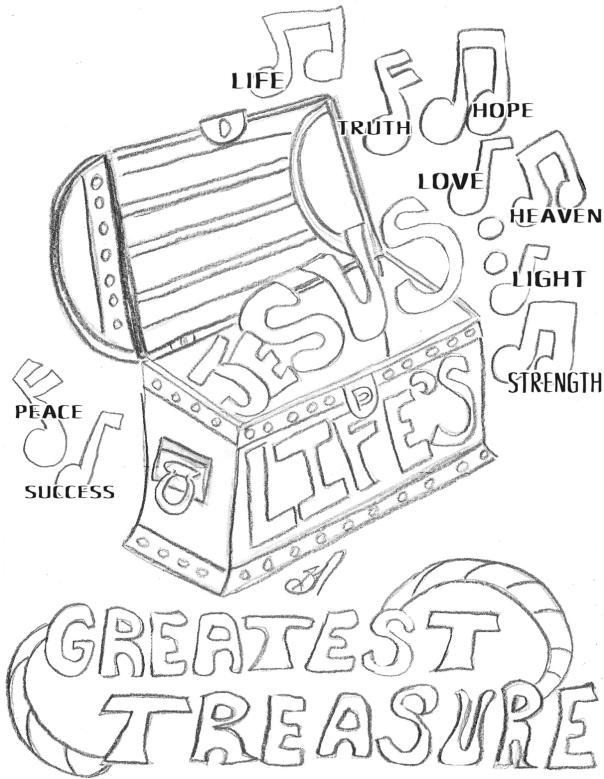
If you would like to know of some specific names of people with particular pastoral needs to pray for, please **contact Annabelle Avern** (member of the Pastoral Care Team) on 0428 368 870, preferably on weekday evenings.



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

I will go anywhere
as long as its' forward

David Livingston



What's on this week

Sunday 7 August	Worship 9.30am with HC Family & Intergen Worship 5pm
Monday 8 August	Inter-church Men's Fellowship 10am
Wednesday 10 August	mainly music 9.45am Zoom Mid-week devotion 10am
Thursday 11 August	Zoom Prayer group 4pm
Friday 12 August	Ladies Fellowship 10am
Sunday 14 August	Worship 9.30am with HC Family & Intergen Worship 5pm

Newsletter

There are hard copies of the newsletter each week for you to take and/or pass onto anyone you feel might be interested in one.

Supply Minister

Rev David Reichardt 0419 164 329

Seniors Ministry

Pastor Lyn Graham 0412 990 949

Office Administrator

Helen Tattersall 0408 972 957

Safe Church Contact Person

Erica Harrison 0409 044 923

Church Office

Office Hours Thursday & Friday 8.30am to 2.30pm
Email weppinguca@gmail.com
Website weppinguca.org.au
Facebook facebook.com/weppinguniting

WEUC Bank Account Westpac BSB 032 081 Account 961263