

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 23 July 2023

Reading

Genesis 27:41- 28:22

Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.' But the words of her elder son Esau were told to Rebekah; so she sent and called her younger son Jacob and said to him, 'Your brother Esau is consoling himself by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran, and stay with him for a while, until your brother's fury turns away— until your brother's anger against you turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and bring you back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?'

Then Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?'

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, 'You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. Go at once to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham.' Thus Isaac sent Jacob away; and he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he charged him, 'You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women', and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his

mother and gone to Paddan-aram. So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please his father Isaac, Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, and sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you.'

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.

Prayer for Today

May all I do today begin with you,
O Lord.

Plant dreams and hopes within my soul,
revive my tired spirit: be with me today.

May all I do today continue with your help,
O Lord.

Be at my side and walk with me:
Be my support today.

May all I do today reach far and wide,
O Lord.

My thoughts, my work, my life:
make them blessings for your kingdom;
let them go beyond today.

Amen.

Caring is for Everyone

On **Saturday 5 August 2-4pm**
we invite you to come and share
afternoon tea and hear
our **speaker, Alison Ridge** a Registered Nurse,
who will give an informal presentation,
based on her experiences as someone who has both
personal and professional experience
with aged care and general care.

Following the talk will be a question time.
This is an open invitation to attend.

Caring is for Everyone

Sponsored by West Epping Uniting Church
Pastoral Care Team

RSVP & Enquiries: Elva Harris 0407 197 990
e: elvaharris1206@gmail.com



If you able, please **RSVP** by contacting Elva – details
above **OR** write your name on the **COMING** sheet
that is on the Notice Board.
Please **COME** even if you haven't let us know.

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 you can watch on our youtube channel

[WEUC - Youtube](#)

Family & Intergen Service

Sundays at 5pm in the Maurice Davies Hall
during the school term.

Families and friends welcome.

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



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?](https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/91952761718?pwd=WmfNRFhKbDV3OTZLaVJVRWk4VGvkZz09)
[pwd=WmfNRFhKbDV3OTZLaVJVRWk4VGvkZz09](https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/91952761718?pwd=WmfNRFhKbDV3OTZLaVJVRWk4VGvkZz09)

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?](https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/98939453219?pwd=dG9paSs1eGg4MGZDbGozNWdqOHlQQT09)
[pwd=dG9paSs1eGg4MGZDbGozNWdqOHlQQT09](https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/98939453219?pwd=dG9paSs1eGg4MGZDbGozNWdqOHlQQT09)

Meeting ID: 989 3945 3219 Passcode: 2121

Church of South India (CSI) Service

Friends of CSI Holy Communion Service for all our
friends who appreciate the CSI liturgical service.
The service will be in English and will be conducted
at West Epping Uniting Church at **5pm on Saturday
29 July 2023**. All are invited to come and
participate in this service.

Combined Worship & Pot luck lunch

Next Sunday 30 July is a combined service with Carlingford Uniting Church here at West Epping at 9.30am.

Morning tea and a pot luck lunch will follow.

Many thanks to all who have offered to help at the PLL. It's POT LUCK with what you get so let's have some fun. Savoury or sweet dishes are welcome.

Members of Carlingford Uniting Church will also bring food.

To help with catering, and set up, please add your name to the sign up sheet on the notice board in the foyer.

Enquiries to Alison
m: 0418 623 446



Thank you!

Join us at morning tea **this Sunday** to say thank you to Helen Tattersall. Helen has been West Epping's Office Administrator for many years and has gone above and beyond in her duties to serve the ministers, the congregation and the community during this time.

Everyone welcome to a special morning tea to say thank you!

Funeral service

A funeral service will be held for our friend, Doreen Davies, on **Thursday next, 27 July at 11am** in the Magnolia Chapel, Macquarie Park.

Everyone is invited to attend.

Doreen was a Life Member of our Ladies Fellowship, and a great supporter of the Missionary Fellowship. She will be missed by us all.



Synod Insights

Newsletter 14 July

From 0 to 90 in just 4.5 months

0 to 90 in just 4.5 months is not impressive for car performance, but for a church that hasn't seen children counted among their number for decades, to have ninety children attend their recent Holiday Kids Club is something to celebrate.

Rockdale Uniting Church recently ran 'Kidsfest' during the July school holidays, with ninety children participating in singing, dancing, games, craft, jumping on inflatables, eating and learning about Jesus

Read this and more in the link below:

[Weekly Newsletter \(uca.org.au\)](http://uca.org.au)



Congregational meeting

The next Congregational meeting will be held on **Sunday 22 October** following the morning service. Annual reports (July 1 2022 to June 30 2023) should be forwarded to the Office Administrator with a copy to the Church Council secretary, Alison Anderson no later than Friday 15 September. Please use the correct pro-forma.

Theatre tickets


Tickets are now available for the next preview performance of the **Chester Street Players** - *The Peach Season* by the Australian playwright Debra Oswald.

It is about contemporary family issues.

The preview performance is on Wednesday 26 July at 8pm. These tickets are only \$20, and are a fund raiser for Epping Uniting Church.

If you would like to go, please let Lois Rees know, (0408 460 050) and you will be able to pay at the door on the night.



 You will always be treated with *respect and compassion* when you choose to Speak Out

 **Speak Out**
IN CONFIDENCE

Geoff's Reflection

Of Light and Darkness, Wheat and Weeds, Good and Evil...

Recently, whilst on leave, I read a couple of novels (also watched some old DVD's). One of the things I recognised was that the main protagonists (and other characters) were complex people with a range of attributes and characteristics, both good and bad, within them. None of these characters was purely good or purely bad – there was light and darkness co-mingled within their being.

One of the stories I read, *Doctor Sleep*, featured a young man called Dan Torrance. It picked up parts of an earlier story where his background as a child was tough. His father lived with daemons of the mind and body, experiences and genetics, that haunted him and drove into places that were dark and ugly. He was alcoholic and it turned him into a fearful person of rage, anger and abuse. In his dry times, he was a wonderful, loving man. Young Dan grew up with these experiences and the genetics that compounded his own haunted mind – nightmares, fear, confusion... Dan turned to alcohol to quieten the daemons of the mind and stop the thoughts and nightmares. This worked but created its own daemonic behaviour, violence, abuse, anger and rage that created a load of shame and guilt.

After his parents had died, and his drinking was uncontrollable, Dan drifted from town to town. He usually lasted a few months, holding down a job, doing good and functioning well. He was well-thought of until the daemons flooded back, and the nightmares returned. Some person, event or experience brought things of the past back and thrust him into the downward spiral that depended upon alcohol to quieten the mind and spirit. Inevitably it would get out of control and Dan would act out in some ugly or malicious way and everything came crashing down, once again. He lost jobs, sometimes was offside with the law and served time, but was forced, as much by shame as anything, to move on.

He drifted into one more small town. This one had a small fairground, a miniature town with its own miniature train that drove kids and families around the fairground. It was closing for winter and as he admired it the caretaker, Billy came and struck up a conversation. Something in Billy recognised that Dan was a troubled person but a good heart and asked if he needed work – Billy could use some help, at least for winter. He took Dan to the boss, Casey, who also recognised Dan's troubled soul and reached out to him, giving him a job but warning that reliability and no alcohol were the two rules.

All went well for a while, as it usually did in a new place. Then memories returned, experiences awakened the daemons and the nightmares and trouble returned. He bought and rejected drink a couple of times until the stress and inner pain was too deep. One morning he went to a bottle shop and bought some booze, sat in the park near the fairground and fiddled with the bottle lid – willing himself not to drink but desperately wanting it at the same time. Billy arrived earlier than usual and recognised they had a problem. After a brief discussion, he took Dan to Casey, a veteran alcoholic and part of the AA system. Casey pushed Dan to decide whether he really did want the grog or whether he had had enough. The inner turmoil and shame fought with his desire to be free and whole and well. With the help of Casey, Dan finally broke down and admitted he had a problem, an enormous problem! Casey pushed him farther until he recognised that he had a problem he couldn't fix. They talked about a Higher Power but Dan wasn't sure about God, although he knew that there was something more beyond – he'd worked with dying people. If there was a God in that, fair enough. Casey worked out a plan for him to attend 90 AA meetings in 90 days, maintaining a journal. He found his way into the AA community and regular meetings, support from Casey and others and gradually worked himself out. He maintained his sobriety, even when life began to get out of control. He found other support and techniques for looking after himself and dealing with his daemons.

His journey became about reconciliation – reconciliation with himself and the daemons and shame of his experiences and actions. He had to face the fact that he was a complex mixture of good and evil. There was part of him capable of really bad stuff when let loose and uncontrolled. He was also capable of deep love and sacrifice, generosity and courage. He was neither the deeply bad and horrible person he often felt he was, but neither was he perfect – he had light and darkness within him. The journey through reconciliation meant that he accepted the shadow, dark side, of his being, that which he denied or hid from. He accepted and confessed to some horrible stuff in his life and the AA community listened and forgave him – helped him forgive himself. He made restitution where possible and paid it forward to love and help others as acts of redemption and atonement.

As I listened to Dan's story, I recognised that we are all this complex mixture, and no-one is pure good or pure evil.

It is easy to judge ourselves and others based on particular actions, words or experiences and make that the whole of a person's essential being, without the recognition that there are other parts of who we are.

Jesus spoke of this in different words – wheat and weeds. A farmer sowed wheat into his paddocks and his workers care for these fields. One day, when the wheat was growing to maturity, they came to him with the news that someone had planted weeds into his wheat – the fields were a mix of wheat and weeds. They asked if they should remove the weeds but the master told them to leave them to grow alongside the wheat until it was time for harvest. He was concerned that they may mistake wheat for weeds and pull it out. The words in this story were tares or darnel, which looks very much like wheat until mature when the heads expose themselves as empty – airheads. Wheat has seeds and the heads are heavy and droop down, whilst darnel floats in the air. The master tells them to wait until harvest then remove the weeds, bundle them, along with stalks and rubbish from the wheat, and use for fuel.

In this story, Jesus recognises that the fields of our lives are a complex mixture of good and evil, truth and falsehood, light and darkness, which co-exist in our being. We are encouraged to recognise these different dimensions to our being and to accept our shadow side, the darkness we may try to hide or avoid. We are to bring our darkness, our shame, into the light and expose it to forgiveness and love. Only then can its power over us be lessened and we be freed to heal and be reconciled to ourselves, and our lives become more deeply embedded in the love and kindness that is the fruit of mature being.

Just as Dan found peace and hope in a life unified and reconciled, where he could own his failures and eccentricities, and be aware of his potential to fall and create havoc and pain, so can we. This is the promise and way of Jesus, who invites us into the way of honest, open acceptance of who we are and to accept this complex reality in each person – we all wrestle with good and evil and have light and darkness. We are invited to love!

The link to the video reflection is:

<https://youtu.be/2S6sY7kGPLM>

Rev Geoff Stevenson



Friday Discovery June Meeting

We had a fascinating morning hearing about patchwork and all things glass from Barbara Newton and Gordon Anderson.

We meet on the 3rd Friday of the month at 10am.

Come along sometime for morning tea and learn something new. Everyone is welcome!



PRIVACY POLICY: It is the current policy of the Uniting Church in Australia that permission must be given by an individual before his/or her name is put into print in any material published which may reach an audience wider than the membership of the congregation.

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.

Inter Church Men's Fellowship

Monday 14 August 10am. Speaker will be Ian Swayn who will share experiences from his forty years as a QANTAS pilot.
Cost \$10.00 includes a great morning tea.
Bring a friend.
Please advise your attendance by Wednesday 9 August to Bruce Sheldrick
b.sheldrick@optusnet.com.au
9871 1691 or 0418 777 173.
Note: Our October meeting will be held on Monday 16 October.

Help wanted

The white parking markers on the fence in the Cottage carpark need to be repainted. Are you able to help with this? If so, please contact Morris Ross 9873 3713.

Rosters

Sunday 30 July	9 30am Hybrid service
Liturgist	Rev David Reichardt
Preaching	Rev Deborah Yun
Ministers Assistant	John Hall
Welcomer	Joan Ross, Sue Elliott
Stewards	Heather Baker, George Esplin
Reader	Soraya Raju
Prayers for the people	Phil Chapple
AV desk	Nick & Morris
Lectionary Readings	Genesis 29:15-28 Psalm 105:1-11, 45b Romans 8:26-39 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

What's on this week

Sunday 23 July	Worship 9.30am Family & Intergen Service 5pm
Tuesday 25 July	Playgroup 9.30am Cottage Crafters 9.45am
Wednesday 26 July	mainly music 9.45am Zoom Mid-week devotion 10am
Thursday 27 July	Zoom prayer group 4pm
Saturday 29 July	Friends of CSI Service 5pm
Sunday 30 July	Worship 9.30am & pot luck lunch Family & Intergen Service 5pm

It's just a thought....

...But it could change your life

Jesus is my best friend.
At times I have failed people.
At times people have failed me.
Jesus never fails.

John Maxwell

Supply Minister

Rev David Reichardt 0419 164 329

Office Administrator

Helen Tattersall 0408 972 957

Safe Church Contact Person

Erica Harrison 0409 044 923

Church Office

35 Orchard St Epping 2121 p: 9868 3574

Office Hours Thursday & Friday 8.30am to 2.30pm

Email weppinguca@gmail.com

Website weppinguca.org.au

Facebook facebook.com/weppinguuniting

WEUC Bank Account Westpac BSB 032 081 Account 961263

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