

# UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA YASS PARISH



## APRIL 2020

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*As part of God's people we are called by God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to share the love and grace of Jesus Christ, within our community through regular worship, faithful witness and humble service.*

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### **Word of Wisdom:**

As we are in the season of Lent, I wish to focus on one word. The word I wish to speak about isn't a 'wealthy' word. There are many words in the New Testament which are wealthy in meaning – words like redemption, grace, sin, repentance, forgiveness. But the word I have in mind is in no way comparable in terms of richness. Instead, it is a word which is merely used to link sentences together. That word is 'nevertheless'. Let's at the outset be clear about its meaning. It is equivalent to 'notwithstanding' or 'although'. It's the conjunction which introduces a qualification or an exception. So it really is a word that suggests that there is more than one point of view, that there are always two sides to any matter or question!

Long ago, Jesus used the word himself to illustrate that not only does a question have two sides to it, but that a prayer has two sides to it as well! Prayer isn't only a case of asking, of petition. It is also a case of submission, that is, submitting to God's will.

When Jesus saw the Cross on the horizon and became aware of all the suffering that this would entail – something we think about especially during Lent – he said a prayer to God in which, really, he was begging a favour. He prayed in the following words: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as you will.' Jesus begged that he might be spared the anguish ahead. After all, Jesus was human like you and me, and he desperately wanted to avoid the pain and suffering he knew without doubt was coming.

But, unlike you and me, perhaps, Jesus was prepared to accept also that God was much wiser than he was. And so, following on from that very human cry of desperation, Jesus went on to say, 'Nevertheless, let your will be done.'

Now, of course, we have all said prayers like this, especially when we are up against it. But Jesus realised that there was the other side to the situation – and that was God's view of it. He prayed that he would be released from the agonies to come on the Cross. He wasn't, but he was given the strength and the power to endure those agonies.

His petition, what he was asking for, was refused, but his prayer was answered nevertheless.

Of course, from all of this an important conclusion follows – it means we know that no prayer of ours will ever go unanswered.

Certainly, the petition may be refused – God knows best – but the prayer will be answered.

Whenever you are up against it, may you know your prayers to be answered, and may you each be given the strength and the power to overcome these situations, nevertheless. (Rev. Ian W F Hamilton, D C Thompson & Co London 2018)

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, I praise you for making me in your image. I delight in the knowledge that you want me to make a difference in this world, shaping it and cultivating it for your glory and for the blessing of my neighbour. Help me to remember that I am also fragile and dependent upon you. Compel me to come to you always in prayer, to give thanks to you in all things, and to do my work empowered by your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen. *(Dr Mark Stephens)*

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**UCAF News:**

The Friendship lunch scheduled for Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April, has been postponed.

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**OFFERINGS:**

During this difficult period the Parish will still have running costs. Your weekly offering is important to the funds of the Parish. A suggestion is that you set aside your normal amount and then every few weeks go into the Westpac Bank and make a deposit to UCA – Yass Parish Account 634 634 100039947 with the reference ‘Offering’

This will assist the Parish to continue to cover its running costs. The same account number can be used if you wish to deposit via internet banking

Many thanks Ruth Thompson – Parish Secretary

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**CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE:**

By now, you would have heard that our services have been suspended, and our buildings will not be used again until it is safe to do so. In fact the Prime Minister just made this clear as well on Sunday.

This decision was a difficult one taken by the Standing Committee of Council after receiving advice from Synod and after much discussion.

This does not mean that we are no longer doing anything as a church. Church Council will still be active during this time in leading and making decisions. We, along with the Elders task group and our minister, David, will be searching for new ways to connect with you and support you. Email and web activities will play a part, I'm sure; but I also know that a good number of you don't have or don't use the internet. If this has changed for you and you now have an email address and want to be contacted this way, please let me know. Phone contact and normal mail will also be used. We would love to hear any ideas you have. You may contact me at [suedemoor@outlook.com](mailto:suedemoor@outlook.com) or by phone on 0417049922. You will hear from David and others in the coming weeks about some of the ways to worship and gather together (even if it's very virtual). Of course Pastoral Partners, led by Della, Barry and Sandra, will also be an important link.

Our expenses will not change much over this period, and it would be wonderful if you could continue your giving at the same level. Remember, there is an online banking option and you can save up and go to your bank to deposit or save in a jar and deposit in the offering when we return to worship together.

Speaking of the newsletter, remember that you can always contact Lee with information for our newsletter. Sharing as we normally do in church can still occur in our newsletter. Have you celebrated your birthday by Skyping or FaceBooking one of your friends or children? How did that

go? Have you found a good sermon or devotional site? Share it. Do you have a gorgeous flower blooming in the garden? Let's share some good news items to help keep our spirits up in this difficult time.

God bless you and keep in touch. *(Sue Demoor, Council Chair)*

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**RYE PARK CONGREGATION**

There is no report from Rye Park this month.

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**APRIL LECTIONARY READINGS:**

DATE	DAY	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
<b>5</b>	Palm Sunday	Is 50: 4-9a	Ps 118: 1-2, 19-29	Phil 2: 5-11	Mt 21: 1-11
<b>12</b>	Easter Day	Acts 10: 34-43 or Jer 31: 1-6	Ps 118: 1-2, 14-24	Col 3: 1-4 or Acts 10: 34-43	Jn 20: 1-18 or Mt 28: 1-10
<b>19</b>	Easter 2	Acts 2: 14a, 22-32	Ps 16	1 Pt 1: 3-9	Jn 20: 19-31
<b>26</b>	Easter 3	Acts 2: 14a, 36-41	Ps 116: 1-4, 12-19	1 Pt 1: 17-23	Lk 24: 13-35

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**AGM OF THE YASS CONGREGATION:**

The AGM has been postponed until further notice. *(Christine Anderson - Congregation Secretary)*

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**For those who observe Holy Week, the readings are as follows:**

DATE	DAY	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
<b>April 6</b>	Monday in Holy Week	Is 42: 1-9	Ps 36: 5-11	Heb 9: 11-15	Jn 12: 1-11
<b>7</b>	Tuesday in Holy Week	Is 49: 1-7	Ps 71: 1-14	I Cor 1: 18-31	Jn 12: 20-36
<b>8</b>	Wednesday in Holy Week	Is 50: 4-9a	Ps 70	Heb 12: 1-3	Jn 13: 21-32
<b>9</b>	Maundy Thursday	Ex 12: 1-4, (5-10), 11-14	Ps 116: 1-2, 12-19	1 Cor 11: 23-26	Jn 13: 1-17, 31b-35
<b>10</b>	Good Friday	Is 52: 13-53:12	Ps 22	Heb 10: 16-25 or Heb 4:14-16, 5:7-9	Jn 18: 1 – 19:42
<b>11</b>	Holy Saturday	Job 14: 1-14 or Lam 3: 1-9, 19-24	Ps 31: 1-4, 15-16	1 Pt 4: 1-8	Mt 27: 57-66 or Jn 19: 38-42

# Fifth



SUNDAY  
IN LENT

**Welcome to our service this week**

CALL TO WORSHIP.

Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life all who believe in me, though they die yet shall they live. Choose this day whom you will serve.

**God has set before us life and death praising the light or cursing the darkness, loving others or cultivating selfish indifference.**

Therefore, choose life, loving your God, obeying God's voice, and cleaving to God all your days.

**By the grace of Christ Jesus we this day choose life.**

Loving God, ruler of life and death, please look with compassion on our congregation as we individually come before you. As we worship you in the glory of all your love, please multiply the sources of abundant life within us, that we may live boldly, and at the end of this earthly journey, die into your arms without dismay or regret. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen!**

### **Fifth Sunday of Lent Meditation led by Judy and Margaret.**

**Judy:** Had we arrived this morning we would have entered into the normal bustle of church on a Sunday morning: friends greeting each other, young ones bringing their energy and enthusiasm. Now that we are sitting at home, I invite you to clear your minds and consider the word, "**sanctuary.**"

**Margaret:** A sanctuary is a place set aside for sacred things. It is a place of refuge and protection. This room is a sanctuary. The season of Lent is a kind of sanctuary, extended in time. And one of the things Lent teaches is that you and I, too, are a sanctuary. There is inside us a place for sacred things, a place where God abides.

**Margaret:** Let us pray: Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in our quiet places and then lead us into the work of justice and peace. **Amen.**

HYMN 3 "All creatures of our God and King" Verses 1-4 & V7

BIBLE READINGS.

**Ezekiel 37:1-14(Page 838)**

**Romans 8:6-11(Page 195)**

**John 11:1-45(Page 132)**

HYMN 92 "God is love, let heaven adore him"

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION/ PRAYERS FOR OTHERS/ THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Loving God, we are living in uncertain times. We are concerned; concerned for our own health, concerned about the pandemic threatening our communities, states, nation and world. Sustain us through this crisis with your unflinching love, support, strength and caring. We are so thankful that we have you walking this uncertain path with us

As we struggle to cope with the uncertain days and weeks ahead, remind us again and again that you are our strength and salvation, that nothing can separate us from your love and that even though we feel at times we are walking through the valley of uncertainty you are our rod and our comfort still.

We give thanks, O Lord, for those who are looking after those people who have contracted the virus. We thank you for doctors, nurses, health care workers, specialists, researchers and all who are involved in trying to halt this pandemic. Sustain them in their ongoing efforts.

Bless all members of our parish and those who are known to us – families and friends. Strengthen our faith and trust in you and help us to do whatever we can to help others through these worrying times. This we pray in your name. **Amen.**

## DEDICATION OF OUR OFFERING.

Lord, take our lives and let them be, consecrated Lord to thee. Take our offerings and let them be used to further your message of peace, love and goodwill to all. As we await our return to worship services may all that we do, all that we offer, all that we say, all that we think, and all that we hope take root in this troubled world. **Amen.**

HYMN 141 “O for a thousand tongues to sing”

## BENEDICTION

God will bless you and keep you, the Spirit will smile upon you and be gracious unto you. the Christ will send his own light upon you and give you his peace. Now unto to him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only true God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. **Amen.**

THREEFOLD AMEN.

*“God be with you till we meet again.”*

## Reflection for Sunday March 29 2020:

We live in a perplexing and distressing time. Most of our brain space seems to be given over to thinking about, and talking about, “the virus.” This is right and appropriate. Yet in the midst of the crisis, we must continue to do life as normally as we can. That is the challenge for us all.

This is from an essay by C S Lewis called “On Living in the Atomic Age.” It was first written in 1948.

Lewis was addressing a fretful audience, who were living in the immediate aftermath of World War II. They had witnessed a nation use atomic weapons for the very first time. People were scared and they had every right to be.

Nevertheless, Lewis challenged his audience not to exaggerate the situation, not to overthink it.

Indeed, he gets quite pointed in the essay when he says this:

*the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.*

In the face of profound threat, we need to be aware, but we also need to keep going.

*Note: The above service (minus another hymn and the Sermon) has been included in the Newsletter so that those who wish to worship in their home have a service to follow and ‘join in’. This service was prepared for members of another Uniting Church Congregation and I have ‘borrowed’ it for us to use. You might even find yourself softly singing the hymns. (The Editor)*