

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
DIOCESE OF BALLARAT
ST PAUL'S - BAKERY HILL



"If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31)

Sixth Sunday of Easter
17th May 2020

***A Year to challenge violence, injustice & oppression, and work for peace
and reconciliation***

Welcome to St Paul's Church in this time! We acknowledge the Wathaurung people, the traditional custodians of this land. We gather in prayer from where ever we are. If you have found this order of service and are using it, please feel free to make yourself known. Contact details are on the last page.



Worship 9.30am [Zoom]

Contact Sister Elisa to be included via St Paul's email or phone number. See back page.

Dear people of St Paul's,

In this time of separation from our church gatherings, we can affirm and encourage each other in prayer. We can also join in worship at our regular times using this form of prayer which is from the Anglican Churches Liturgy. We will use it on Sunday with our Zoom services but if this is not possible for you, then join us at 9.30 am in spirit.

You can use it on your own or with others around you. You may use all of it or a part of it as suits you. If you have some lovely recorded music which feeds your faith, then add that to the mix also.

Further, I suggest you create a prayer space, in it you could have a candle, a cross and /or a picture, none of these are essential, but may be a help for prayer.

Finally, I pray that this difficult season may be one which, despite hardship, enriches and strengthens your faith.

Every blessing

Sr Elisa

When all are gathered, the presider begins:

In the name of God: Father, + Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Christ is risen. Alleluia!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia

SCRIPTURE SENTENCE "Those who love me will keep my word," Jesus promises, "and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." John 14.23

Prayer of preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, and all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Penitential Rite

Christ died to sin once for all, and now he lives to God.

Let us renew our resolve to have done with all that is evil and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

cf Romans 6.10

**Merciful God, our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:**

we have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;

we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.

Father, forgive us.

**Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Words of Assurance/ *absolution*

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the perfect offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John2: 1-2

COLLECT OF THE DAY: (*pause for silent prayer*) O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond our understanding: pour into our hearts such love for you, that, loving you above all else, we may obtain your promises that exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Acts 17.22-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³ For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said,

‘For we too are his offspring.’

²⁹ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰ While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

This is the Word of the Lord **thanks be to God**

PSALM 66.8-19

- ⁸ Bless our God, O peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard,
⁹ **who has kept us among the living,
and has not let our feet slip.**
- ¹⁰ For you, O God, have tested us;
you have tried us as silver is tried.
- ¹¹ **You brought us into the net;
you laid burdens on our backs;**
- ¹² you let people ride over our heads;
we went through fire and through water;
yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.
- ¹³ **I will come into your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay you my vows,**
- ¹⁴ those that my lips uttered
and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.
- ¹⁵ **I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings,
with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;
I will make an offering of bulls and goats.**
- ¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for me.
- ¹⁷ **I cried aloud to him,
and he was extolled with my tongue.**
- ¹⁸ If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.
- ¹⁹ **But truly God has listened;
he has given heed to the words of my prayer.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 3.8-22

A reading from the first letter of Peter

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

10 For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit;

11 let them turn away from evil and do good;

let them seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,

and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

This is the Word of the Lord **thanks be to God**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! All who love me will keep my words, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them. **Alleluia, alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 14.15-21

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

+ Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸ “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

For the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection - Sr Elisa

Sermon. The Spirit of Truth.

In today’s Gospel reading we have the commandment to love, twice; and in between we have a whole ream of material on the Spirit of Truth and the Advocate!

At issue is the commandment to love and because the commandment is at both ends of the reading, we can take it that

the teaching in between is about how we can meet such a difficult command.

Before I get into it, I want to address something which could be inferred from the passage. That God's love is conditional on our love in response. We need to be clear, that is *not* true. We were all loved from the very beginning, it is why we were made, and why God journeys with us and why he sent Jesus to enable us to have a saving relationship with God. As Nicky Gumble always says and repeats often; 'God loves you.' That is true for everyone, Christian or not.

The passage, however, is addressed to the Christian community. Our experience of God's love is different to people who are not in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We know this wonderful love of God and have accepted it as part of our lives, so we want to respond in like. Jesus is telling us that the way we respond is by obeying the commandments.

Despite all the brokenness, frailty, and sin, which gets in the way Jesus, through his life, death and resurrection has provided us with a way of entering this relationship with God. Because he cannot be with us physically, he is saying that the Advocate or Spirit of Truth fills us in his place and enables us to respond to God's love. Jesus is very clear the required response is for us to obey the commandments, summarised as.

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and being and your neighbour as yourself.'

The first thing we need to know about Christian love is that it is not about feelings. You can dislike someone and still love them. That is

because Christian love means to care for the good, or the well-being of the object of love.

The truth is we find this incredibly difficult. We have difficulty loving ourselves, and we have difficulty loving our neighbours and so have difficulty loving God.

As we grow in the faith and reach out to meet the demands of these commandments, we first of all realise we cannot do it in our own strength and secondly, there is much in us and in the world which pushes us away from obeying them. We need help. We need help with just our everyday relationships because our feelings get in the way. We are afraid of rejection or being misunderstood or not getting what we think we might need.

To help with this Jesus speaks of *another* Advocate sent by his Father. Jesus is our first Advocate and when he ascended to heaven, the second Advocate is the 'Spirit of Truth'.

The Greek word translated 'advocate' is 'paraclete' and can also be translated as 'helper' or 'comforter'.

The idea is that the paraclete is one who stands with us and supports us in our endeavours to obey these commandments.

This gift of the 'Spirit of Truth' is with us when we live in relationship with Jesus who is 'the way and the truth and the life' as we heard last week.

John makes the point that the world [that is; those people who are not in relationship with Jesus] cannot receive, see or know him. That doesn't mean they will never have a relationship with him, but that they have not yet responded to the call for such a relationship.

So, what is the Spirit of Truth? It lies somewhere in the person of Jesus. And why do we use the word Truth as a title and descriptive? Because all truth rests in God and one of the most significant ways the Spirit of Truth supports us is by helping us to see the Truth of God in Jesus, the Word of God in flesh.

In this modern world truth is something we struggle with. It becomes a further block for our ability to obey the commandments. People often seem to be manipulating the truth for dishonest reasons or for personal gain. They tell half-truths or exaggerated truths to achieve their ends. One of the refreshing things about the state of emergency over Covid19 is that our governments are not manipulating us as much, but are working together for our wellbeing, and it is so obvious, and people are feeling more secure because of it.

We all understand that we can have different views about things and see them from different angles- thus the idea of relative truth, but so often relative truths are presented as absolute and we know they are not. We live in a world where the truth or truth in general is constantly being muddied.

I believe that being able to be honest in relationships even when honesty is difficult can enrich and build trust and hope and thus is an expression of love. The best marriages are the ones where people can have a fight and then work it through by being both honest and open with each other and find ways to give and take as a consequence and so move forward in love.

Intimate relationships are gifts which help teach us to love one another and as we do so, we shape each other and grow as God's

people. That happens in marriages, in families and in church communities and where-ever we engage with other people.

Most of us carry deep hurts and wounds in our lives which have come to us through damaging relationships and things which happen. These wounds affect our sense of being lovable and we meet them when we try to get close to others and find that patterns of behaviour developed to help us survive, get in the way. It's easy to avoid these things by not getting into relationships which can stir them up, but there are times when we hit them, and experience an irrational show of anger or fear. These are invitations for us to look at the truth of what is behind those wounds and bring them to the light for healing. Love in this sense takes deep courage to face our own brokenness and fear and allow it to come to the light and be healed.

I had a friend who was affected deeply by what seems to have been an evil belief system of her parents which led to her having some very deep emotional wounds. When any conversation mentioned beliefs, which were different to her own, she would rant about it for a considerable time and could not be stopped or moved in her view. Most of us learnt to avoid the subject, but these things came up from time to time and it was damaging her relationships. Then one day she realised what she was doing, and she sought help, and now that situation does not affect her in the same way because there has been a deep healing. The truth will set you free! The Spirit of Truth was leading her to all truth.

This is also true in our relationship with the world. Much of our behaviour towards each other and the earth is based on our own needs, which are not real needs but neediness due to our

brokenness, and so we do not always consider the consequences of our actions. Even when we know the consequences, we fail to love God, each other and our world.

Sometimes, through God's grace, we are given responsibilities, through family or work. We are entrusted with the life of a community of people and we are called to love and act in interests beyond ourselves and to reach out and teach, share and be the love of Christ. As we do this, we meet our blocks, and are forced to grow through them, and so we learn and deepen under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth which leads us into all truth. Which leads us to the truth which passes all understanding.

At the end of the day, what we begin to realise about the Spirit of Truth, is that it is not just about facts and figures to be proven empirically, but at a deeper level it is about relationships and love. As we enter into this relationship with God, through Jesus, the Spirit of Truth unites us in the truth; it enriches us, those around us, and the world; as we move toward our ultimate goal, union with God and the fulfillment of the Kingdom. **Amen.**

Silence for reflection.

We say the Apostles Creed. And
**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION *Based on prayers by Bruce Prewer.*

Today there are many spaces in these prayers in which I invite you to insert your private love and concern for others. The following bidding and response will be used after each prayer:

Spirit of truth enlighten us all.

Spirit of truth lead us into the fullness of Christ's love.

Let us pray for the world, and the church in these days of Covid19, that the truth of your love will prevail in the minds and actions of all.

Let us pray for those who are confused by life, and fear there is no Spirit of truth anywhere.

Let us pray for those who are too cocksure, who think they hold the truth without error.

Let us pray for those covered by oppression and suffering, who fear that despair is the truth.

Let us pray for the severely handicapped, who are angry with whatever truth is responsible.

Let us pray for the healthy and proud, who imagine that all the truth favours the strong.

Let us pray for the dying and those who love them, who fear that death is the ultimate truth.

Let us pray for those who nurse the new born, who today intuitively know that truth is love.

Let us pray for those who today find faith in Christ, and eagerly want to be led into all truth.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

Grant that what we have asked in faith we may by your grace receive through Jesus Christ our Lord.

GREETING OF PEACE

Alleluia! We are the body of Christ!

His Spirit is with us! Alleluia!

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you. Amen.

[We wave to each other as a sign of peace]

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Prayer

O loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Thanksgiving, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son, we offer you praise and thanksgiving. Even though we are dispersed from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Salvation we pray that you will unite us with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The preface continues... forever praising you and singing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Eucharistic prayer continues...

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

The prayer concludes with ...in songs of never ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever.

Amen.

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body in Christ,

for we all share in the one bread.

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us;**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us your peace.

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us celebrate the feast.

The body of Christ broken for you.
The blood of Christ poured out for you.



Prayer after Communion...

Eternal God, giver of life, in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord. May we who celebrate this holy feast walk in his risen light and bring new life to all creation.

Father we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your spirit, to live and work to your praise and glory, Amen.

THE BLESSING

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

John 11.25,26

and the blessing ...

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia!
In the name of Christ. Amen. Alleluia!

All parish activities are on hold or under assessment until further notice

Readings for next Sunday Acts 1.6-14, Psalm 68.1-10, 32-35, 1 Peter 5, John 17.1-11

Diary for the next week

5pm. Tuesday Evenings: Zoom Evening Prayer with focus on prayer for Covid19 & our Diocese. All welcome to join us.

10am Thursday: Ascension Day worship.

Then

10.30am. Thursdays. Cuppa and chat on Zoom – bring your own cuppa and join us.

5.45pm Thursday: Parish Council on Zoom.

Thy Kingdom Come

The week between Ascension and Pentecost has traditionally been observed as a Time of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year, we are being asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury to join with Anglicans around the world, praying for the Coming of the Kingdom. In its simplest form, you are asked to pray for five friends or relatives who do not know the saving love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Each day between Ascension (Thursday 21st and Pentecost, Sunday 31st) you are invited to pray for the same five people, that God may become more present in their lives and hearts. I urge you to engage in this simple but powerful way in which we join our prayers to the prayer of Jesus in Jn: 17, that we may all be one.

Ministry Development Committee: Bible Reading Challenge for June.



An excellent resource, based around the Gospel reading for each day in June is now available. Sr Elisa will forward a copy via email next week. If any would like a full printed hard copy then please let Sr Elisa know ASAP.

We will have meetings on Wednesdays 5.30pm over June to reflect on the readings and questions. This will be our Bible Study for June.



Waiting

When we can text a message to India and talk to a cousin in the Antarctic in *real* time, having to actually wait for a conversation or an answer to a party invitation seems like agony – and unnecessary. But in *real* life, time is seasonal, God-made. Waiting is a spiritual exercise which needs to be cherished, pondered over and learnt. If we are disturbed, agitated by waiting, we can set up strategies; the very first is to be thankful for *time*, *waiting time*, *God's time*. Travelling home from work past houses after house, consider that God made and loves whoever lives behind those walls. Is this the season for my branch (me!) to do something?

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. Psalm 130: 5-6

Waiting to grow up and take one's place in the adult world can be very fraught for some. Members in Wales are God-inspired as they use a strategy of teaching young homeless people new skills like cooking. We thank God for this loving and timely action which is building their self-esteem and confidence to enter the season of living independently.

PLANT SALE

Gardening tips for our November Plant Sale –

Cut back flowered perennials- geraniums etc, lemon verbena bush, herbs. Take cuttings and place in sandy light soil, place pot into plastic bread bag, tie at top and stand in sheltered place. Store dahlia tubers, lift gladiola corms, and plant spring bulbs in pots so you can bring them inside when flowering. Dead head agapanthus - keep seeds to sow in spring. Continue to lift self-seeded bush/tree seedlings and pot up.

Books -a great time to sort out the bookcase for our book stall in November--and tell family and friends, can be collected later when we are able to get out and about.

Sheep poo is for sale in \$1 & \$2 bags contact Avis - mob 0408 801 192, Noella 0418 501 382, or Deirdre 0408 433 481 to order.

METAL COLLECTION

June is Metal Collection Month - keep collecting metal items also car and bike batteries

Metal collection for June -- check roadside /nature strips for metal items that are free.

ANGLICARE

Items which are currently required for the Emergency Relief program are: tissues, toilet paper, pasta sauce, long life milk and any other long life food items. Please feel free to drop them in to Anglicare during opening hours.

KNITTING YARN

Thank you for the beautiful wool that was donated by many to support Syrian refugee children with warm jumpers.

With gratitude, Sue Lanyon

Parish Directory

Bishop

The Rt. Rev'd Garry Weatherill

Parish Priest Sr Elisa Helen, CSC

Tel. 5332 6479 [leave a message]

Associate Clergy

The Rev'd Canon Geoffrey Tisdall

The Rev'd Malcolm Thomas

The Rev'd Deacon Bert Muysers

Parish Secretary: Lisa Smith

Organist: Ken Turner

Wardens:

Bryan Crebbin

Mark Stewart:

Heather Clinton

Treasurer: Mark Stewart

Parish Council Secretary:

Lisa Smith

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