

THE LINK

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH BELMONT NEWSLETTER

Not to condemn, but to love

A commentary on John 3: 16-21 by Margaret Silf; New Daylight September-December 2009

'F'or God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life'. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those that believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

It begins with love, John tells us - God's love for his creation. This is a mind-blowing truth because, for very many people, this is not their experience of human relationships. Very few of us ever experience the power of unconditional love. even the love of parent for child is rarely, if ever, totally unconditional. Here we are told that God's love is poured out unstintingly and unconditionally to the very limits of giving and forgiving.

Love desires to build up the other and bring him or her to fullness of life, but so many human relationships are instead undermined by criticism, judgement, rejection, condemnation. Here we are told that this isn't at all what Jesus



is about. This truth can take a lifetime to assimilate, especially if we have lived with destructive criticism in our own relationships.

A child who is given this kind of loving admiration learns to trust. God invites our trust. He invites us to go beyond merely believing facts about him in our head, to trusting him in our heart, with every breath we take. So it is that, in these few verses, John spells out the core of the gospel: God's love enables us to learn to trust first God, then each other and ourselves, and trust dispels fear.

Reflection

*Where there is love, trust can grow.
Where there is trust, fear of the darkness will
fade into everlasting light.*

'GROWING A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY FOR ALL'

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Sunday 14th March ~ 4th Sunday in Lent

Sentence. The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. *John 3:14-15.*

Collect. Everlasting God in whom we live and move and have our being, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you: give us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, no weakness prevent us from doing it; that in your light we may see light, and in your service find perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings. Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 107.17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21.

Sunday 21st March ~ 5th Sunday in Lent

Sentence. This is the covenant I will make with them,' says the Lord God: 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.' *Jeremiah 31:33.*

Collect. O God, our Redeemer, in our weakness we have failed to be your messengers of forgiveness and hope: renew us by your Holy Spirit, that we may follow your commands and proclaim your reign of love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 119:9-16; Hebrews 5:5-14; John 12:20-33.

Prayers for Today

pray for those in need

- For George Littras and Shirley, Ethan (Irene's Grandson), Murray Calder, June Cook, Jack Laherty, Sheila Dawson, Tom Collett, John and Lyn Hilcke, Alison Walker, Sylvia Biviano, Betty Miller, Diana Smith, Zaher Mhannah, Rhoda Lynch, Ken Bampton, Jim and Jan Dowsett, Wilf Seed, Rose Edwards, Charlotte MacEndry, Rev'd Sharon Valentino, Shirley Dougherty, Jim and Joy Durran, Den, Dawn Tait and for Dawn's sister Coral, Bernard Conradie and André, Amira Farag and George, Anna Bell-Hughes and Ewan, Archdeacon Jill McCoy, Carolyn Melling, for Sandy Whitcroft as she grieves for mother; Roma and for all others on our hearts and minds.
- For the Mentally Ill and Psychiatric Services.

pray for the world

- For peace and prosperity for all nations in political turmoil especially where it has led to violence.
- For all who are orphaned by war and conflict and their Support Agencies.
- For all who are afflicted and affected by the Covid 19 pandemic, all those who are caring for and treating those who have the disease and for the success of the vaccine roll-out
- For all governments; that they will surrender power for service.
- For all Asylum Seekers and Refugees, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and all Advocates and Support Agencies.
- For Foundation South Sudan, for finances, and scholarship recipients (Mach, Abhor, David, James).

Hopefully...but unfortunately not

I hoped that this issue of the Link would be the resumption of weekly Links again, but due to circumstances I will not be able to start the weekly issues until some time in late March or early April. Sorry about this. Peter Fyfe.

More Prayers for Today

pray in

memoriam

- For Roma Whitcroft and for the Whitcroft family.

pray for

our church

- For every member of St Stephen's at this time.
- For Tim our Organist and the Music Group.
- For Our Maintenance Team..
- Pray with thanks for Reverend Liz, for her enthusiasm and for continuing to try new ways to lead us.
- For those among us who are working tirelessly to keep St Stephen's 'working as a Community of Faith'.
- For our Audio Visual Operators.
- To keep striving to maintain our connection with the community of Belmont and with each other to proclaim the good news of Jesus.
- For the gifts, fruit and power of the Holy Spirit to be manifest amongst us.
- For the financial and other resources to enable Christ's mission.

Oh where, oh where has the little step ladder gone???

The small step ladder, donated by Ros Eddington for people to access the high cupboards in the hall kitchen, is missing. It disappeared early in 2020.

If you happen to see it hidden away within the church property, please return it to the Hall Kitchen. We short and shrinking people will be most grateful if it is found.

A prayer for a new incumbent
Bountiful God, give to this parish a faithful pastor who will faithfully speak your word and minister your sacraments; an encourager who will equip your people for ministry and enable us to fulfil our calling. Give to those who will choose, wisdom, discernment and patience, and to us give warm and generous hearts, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

March 14th & 21st 2021

pray for the

community

- For the Wathaurung People, Elders past, present, and emerging, all Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders, for reconciliation and treaty.
- For those within our influence who don't yet know Jesus.
- For the Mayor, Councillors and Council Workers.
- For Matthew Flinders Secondary College.
- For Geelong University Hospital.

pray for the

wider church

- For the Primate of The Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Geoffrey Smith.
- For Archbishop Philip Freier and the Diocese of Melbourne.
- For The Episcopal Church of South Sudan, St Stephens, Kakuma (The Revd Simon Majak) and Donholm (The Revd David Chol).
- For The Oodthenong Episcopal Area (The Rt Revd Kate Prowd).
- For The Geelong Archdeaconry (The Ven Jill McCoy).
- For St Paul's Anglican Church, Geelong..
- For I.T.I.M Chaplains.

Free furniture for a 'good home'

Yvonne and Peter Fyfe have some furniture that just won't fit in their new home: they are:

1. Office computer desk with pull out keyboard shelf and hutch, blonde wood colour, lots of storage space.

Size: 118cm wide x 60cm deep x 150cm high.

2. Office desk with 2 drawers and pull out keyboard shelf. Blonde wood colour.

Size: 140cm wide x 70cm deep.

3. Book case with 2 fixed shelves. Teak colour.

Size: 94cm wide x 75cm high x 20cm deep.

If you have any interest in these items, please contact Peter Fyfe on **0417 576 710**.

Has your group resumed?

If your group is now meeting again after the easing of restrictions, could you please let me know so the info can be in the Link. Peter Fyfe 0417 576 710.

A Prayer: Climate Change

*Oh God, Creator of all that is-
of seas and clouds, rain and rivers,
grass and trees, insects and fish,
humans, animals, birds and reptiles,
all of life connected, sharing this one earth-
we are aware that our way of living
is profoundly affecting the earth's climate,
that many people are in danger of flood or drought,
that some are greatly impoverished,
and the whole fabric of life is in danger;
to those who make international policies,
give wisdom and courage;
to those who direct industry and commerce,
give a concern for the common good;
to those who struggle for justice,
give strength and hope;
and to us all
give the grace to change our ways
for the good of all that lives
and for your glory.*

Amen

David Osborne

The Meditation Group prayed this prayer in line with the call to prayer at 11.00 am last Thursday. Please use this as part of your own prayer time.

Our condolences to Sandy Whitcroft

Sandy Whitcroft is grieving the recent passing of her mother, Roma. Please keep her in your prayers. The Whitcroft family were stalwarts of St Stephen's for many, many years from the early days of our current church. Some of our long time parishioners would remember them well.

Sandy has recently moved back to Belmont and as she put it...'I have come back home.'

Congratulations to Andrea and David Hartley

Congratulations to Andrea and David on the recent arrival of a beautiful new daughter - Dorothy. Well done to you both!

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Pam Osborn **5243 4122**

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Daily Readings from page

Saturday March 27th
Morning

Ps 68: 1-20 or Ps 88; Exodus 10: 21-11: 10;
Luke 21: 29-22: 6.

Evening

Ps 68 (21-23) 24-35 or Ps 31; Jeremiah 45;
Hebrews 4: 1-11.

March 14th & 21st 2021

Prayer of the Week

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Monday *March 15th***Morning**

Ps 37: 1-17 or Ps 25; Exodus 1; Luke 18: 1-14.

Evening

Ps 37: 18-41 Ps 15; Jeremiah 36: 1-19; Hebrews 12: 11-11.

Tuesday *March 16th***Morning**

Ps 38 or Ps 3: 6; Exodus 2; Luke 18: 15-30.

Evening

Ps 39, Pss 32: 130; Jeremiah 36: 20-32; Hebrews 12: 12-24.

Wednesday *March 17th***Morning**

Ps 40 or 90; Exodus 3; Luke 18: 31-43.

Evening

Pss 42, 43 or Ps 38; Jeremiah 37; Hebrews 12: 25-39.

Thursday *March 18th***Morning**

Pss 41, 44: 1-9 or Ps 39; Exodus 4: 1-23 (24-26); Luke 19: 1-10.

Evening

Ps 44: 10-274 or Ps 102; Jeremiah 38: 1-13; Hebrews 13: 1-6.

Friday *March 19th***Morning**

Ps 45 or Ps 69; Exodus 4: 27-6: 1; Luke 19: 11-27.

Evening

Ps 46, 47 or Ps 22; Jeremiah 38: 14-28; Hebrews 13: 7-17.

Saturday *March 20th***Morning**

Ps 48 or Ps 88; Exodus 6: 2-13, 6: 28-7: 7; Luke 19: 28-48.

Evening

Ps 49 or Ps 31; Jeremiah 39; Hebrews 13: 18-25.

Prayer of the Week

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: we pray that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his presence abiding in us he may raise us to joys eternal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Monday *March 22nd***Morning**

Ps 51 or Ps 25; Exodus 7: 8-24; Luke 20: 1-18.

Evening

Ps 52, 53 or Ps 15; Jeremiah 40: 1-12; 2 Corinthians 5: 14-21.

Tuesday *March 23rd***Morning**

Ps 54, 55: 1-12 or Pss 3, 6; Exodus 7: 25-8: 19; Luke 20: 10-26.

Evening

Ps 55: 13-15 (16-17) 18-28 or Ps 32, 130; Jeremiah 40: 13-41: 10.

Wednesday *March 24th***Morning**

Ps 56, 57 or Ps 90; Exodus 8: 20-9: 12; Luke 20: 27-47.

Evening

Ps 60, 61 or Ps 38; Jeremiah 41: 11-42: 6; 1 Peter 2: 19-25.

Thursday *March 25th***Morning**

Ps 62, 63 or Ps 39; Exodus 9: 13-35; Luke 21: 1-19.

Evening

Ps 64, 67 or Ps 102; Jeremiah 42: 7-22; Colossians 2: 8-15.

Friday *March 26th***Morning**

Ps 65, 70 or Ps 69; Exodus 10: 1-20; Luke 21: 20-28.

Evening

Ps 66 or Ps 22; Jeremiah 43; Hebrews 9: 11-26.

Saturday's readings are on page 4

Rosters...are you on?

Sunday March 21st

Worship Leader

9.30 am Shirley Littras

Teacher

9.30 am Shirley Littras

Readings

9.30 am Peter Fyfe

Prayers

9.30 am Yvonne Fyfe

Communion Assistants

9.30 am Terry Henderson
Helen McLean

Welcomers

9.30 am Fady and Gamila Issa

Music

9.30 am Music Group

Audio Visual

9.30 am Terry Henderson

Church Cleaning

Jan and Leigh Douglas

Linen Jane Moloney

Brass Jan Douglas

Flowers (Not required during Lent)

Lawns Geoff Parkinson

Sunday March 28th

Worship Leader

9.30 am Kate Sharp

Teacher

9.30 am Rev Liz Bufton

Readings

9.30 am Shay Burrows

Prayers

9.30 am Kate Sharp

Welcomers

9.30 am Rosemary Inglis
Oliver Lucas

Music

9.30 am Music Group

Audio Visual

9.30 am Anne Hendeson

Church Cleaning

Lyn Hilcke and Dale Price

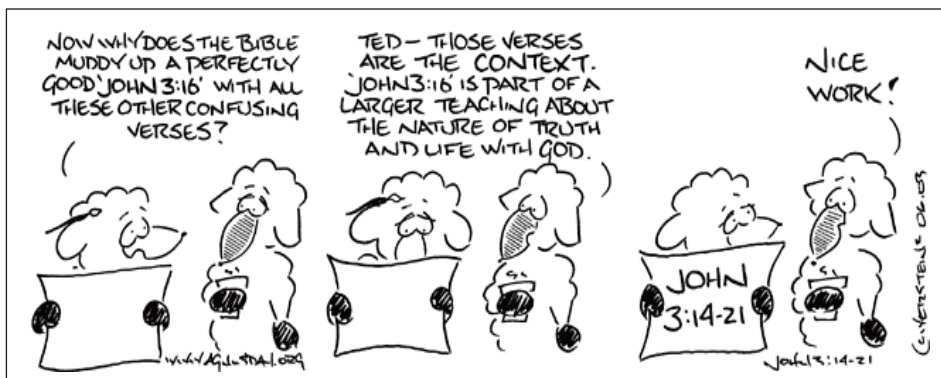
Linen Jane Moloney

Brass Jan Douglas

Flowers (Not required during Lent)

Lawns Geoff Parkinson

If you can't do your rostered task, please arrange for a replacement



We would love a story from you for The Link!

Please give or email your item to Peter Fyfe at pfyfe@inet.net.au by 2.00 pm Tuesdays.

Has your group resumed?

If your group has resumed please let me know so that it can be included in the next issue of the Link. Send it to Peter Fyfe at pfyfe@inet.net.au by 2.00 pm Tuesdays.