



Hornsby Uniting Church

Our Vision: To grow in Christ and share His love.

News for February 21, 2021

God, who has created all things, draw us into a closer relationship with you. When life's waters threaten to overwhelm us, help us to trust that you are with us at all times. Re-orient us away from our poor choices and help us to choose life with you. Amen.

Worship this Sunday starts at 10:30am (combined worship with Sau Faupula)
or join us for online worship, at :

<http://hornsby.unitingchurch.org.au/church-at-home.html>

Water and God's promises are key themes that weave through this week's passages. After a great flood, God promises to safeguard the world and to be in deep relationship with all creation. A psalmist trusts in God's promises, and water is a sign of God's promise and protection in the first letter of Peter. As Jesus emerges from the waters of baptism, God's spirit rests on him – a sign of God's promise.

Genesis 9:8–17 follows just after the well-known story of Noah who is best known for building a large boat on which he, his family, and representatives of all land animals would be saved from the floodwaters. In this week's passage, God promises to protect and never destroy the earth and makes a covenant with all creation. A rainbow is a sign, a reminder, of the promise. God wants to be in a deep and mutual relationship with all of creation.

Although God promises there will never be a flood that destroys Earth, today there are many devastating disasters. Tsunamis, hurricanes, floods, and other storms have resulted in a loss of life and significant damage to property and creation. How do we reconcile this promise with our modern-day realities? One way might be to continue to believe that God does not bring about this suffering. Rather, it is people's apathy about creation and human choices that destabilize the environment.



This Season of Lent could, therefore, be a time to re-orient and reflect on how humans have failed God's good creation. While humans may have destroyed parts of the environment, we may not be able to clean up the environment with only human wisdom – we need to rely on God's wisdom to change our ways. Lent is a time of reflection of becoming closer to God and reflecting on God's promises.

The story of Noah is often told to children, and we might wonder where is there good news in the destruction of a people? Perhaps this story is more about God's promises, new beginnings, and creation care. Young children could likely relate to themes of being sorry for something they did, for doing something new, or doing something to take care of Earth. The story offers an opportunity to explore more about God-promises, regrets, and care for all of creation. God of the promise invites our trust.

Baptism that signifies cleansing and new beginnings is a central theme in Mark 1:9–15. As Jesus emerges from the waters of baptism, God's Spirit comes as a sign of peace and promise. This same Spirit also urges Jesus into the wilderness. While Jesus struggles in the wilderness, he is not alone.

Trusting and relying on God's promises – even when life is difficult – is a key theme in this Bible passages. Trust and reliance on God are invited even after a devastating disaster, while waiting on God's help, during times of violence, and during times of temptation. In all times, God invites us into a deeper relationship. During this Lenten season, how might you work to be closer to and more reliant on God?

Lent 2021 – God is always Good

Because of God's everlasting Goodness, Easter reminds us that we can look into the future and not be afraid.

Lent 2021 will begin on Ash Wednesday, 17 February and ends on Saturday, 3 April. It is a season of reflection and preparation

before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the wilderness for 40 days and forty nights. It is marked by praying and fasting. In fasting, many people decide to give something up that they love - perhaps chocolate, coffee, sweets, abstaining from meat or even using social media.



3 Things To Do During Lent

Give something up.

Attend mass and pray.

Set goals: Getting closer to God and helping those in need (eg)

Our Lent study this year is a five-part study; *Walking with Jesus: by John Birch*.

Approaching Jerusalem (Mark's story) 4

Questions and signs (Luke's story) 8

The Last Supper (Matthew's story) 12

Arrest & crucifixion (John's story) 16

Resurrection (Luke's story)

We will be studying it on Tuesdays during our normal Bible Study time, 7:30-9:00pm.

Birch introduces the study:

Easter is at the heart of the Christian faith and its most important festival, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his death – three days that changed the world. The basic story is familiar not only to those who call themselves Christians and many who do not but picked up the basics through education or as a child taken to church. However, the days leading up to and beyond the Cross are, in the gospel stories, busy ones for Jesus and his followers. There is a potentially dangerous journey to make to Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations and a waiting Cross and later, following the Resurrection, another from Jerusalem to Emmaus. In-between are several incidents and opportunities for Jesus to teach that are maybe not so well known but important in the bigger picture. On our own journey through Lent it is a good time to see how these stories, big and small, shared by the writers of the gospels, feed into our understanding of who Jesus is and what Easter means for us.

This week our study concentrated on the fact that God (Jesus) is good. This is the God who in love gave himself for us during Easter that we may be reconciled with His Father. Max tells us that God's goodness is a major headline in the Bible. This is why we celebrate Easter, but what is your view of God's goodness?

I always trust that God is good.

I believe that God is good when life is good.

I have a hard time believing that God is good.

It is easier to believe that God is good to other people than me.

I say, "God is good," but my thoughts and actions don't always reflect that.

What other views do you have?

God has always been good no matter how we disappoint him, mess up or even not reserve a little space in our busy lives for him. There have been many times in our lives when we have taken things into our own hands and not

trusted the only one who could solve our problems or show us the right direction to take. In our study we learnt that in our messes in life when we try to take control instead of trusting God to take control, the God of goodness waits for our invitation to come in and to help us. Each day as we go about our chores, “before you face the world, face your Father,” in heaven. David said in Psalm 16:8; I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. This is the key to resting in God’s Goodness – The God of Easter.

Rev Jojo Nkrumah-21.02.21

Sleep Counts: *The easiest way to get some sleep is to count your blessings instead of your problems.*

Cast all your cares on me, Jesus said.

What’s New?

Morning Tea will resume on Sunday February 21, which is our Combined Congregations service, though we may only have a small participation this month from the Senal congregation. Please note that the service on 21/1 **starts at 10:30am**.

Along with other groups, **Friday Mahjong** has resumed, and you are invited to come and play (beginners welcome!) each Friday from 1:30-5:00pm.

Asquith Community Markets also resume, on Saturday February 27 from 9:00am. Encourage your friends to drop in at the church, Royston Pde for great stalls and bargains; it also helps us with being visible and raising funds!

Although our **Community Concerts** are likely to be late in resuming, since they frequently involve singers or wind instruments, we are hopeful of continuing this community outreach and church visibility event in the future. Special thanks to **Ann Travers** who will be stepping aside from an organising role with the concerts, though she continues her many other church and LinC activities! *Can you* assist with the running of this event together with other workers, three or four times a year?

LENT BIBLE STUDY - We have paused our current Bible Study book, and during the season of Lent we will be using the material “Walking With Jesus”, a copy of which is attached with the weekly news. Meeting at the Centre from 7:30-9:00 each Tuesday, you are welcome to join your church friends in a sociable and no-pressure study!

Would you join in a Bible Study group which was held on another day, perhaps during the daytime? We are examining options for having a second study group - let Rev. Jojo know what day and time would suit you.

Church Key - If you have church building keys, please check whether you have any stamped with a “KA2” or “40” and let Kent know, please.

Margaret Howe advises that our finances are relatively stable, given the upheaval in recent months. Income to the JPMC from venue hire is down but improving somewhat, and Jobkeeper is phasing out & ending in March. Rent from Sarah’s Place is coming in and needs to be balanced against costs of building maintenance and the

establishment of a sinking fund to maintain the cottage and the minister’s manse. Thanks to those who have been able to maintain their giving, either through the weekly ‘plate’ or direct bank transfer.

A deferred Memorial service for the late **Rev. Miriam Cotton** will be held at Umina UC on Friday March 5, 2pm.

An online **Climate Conference** is being hosted by the Uniting Church on March 20 - see the SCCP News for details, or ask Kent.



22 February – 28 February 2021 Readings & Reflections – Bible in a Year

BIBLE A YEAR	OLD TESTAMENT	PSALM	PROVERBS	NEW TESTAMENT
February 22, 2021 A TRUE FAMILY Mark 3:35 <i>For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.</i>	Leviticus 14:1-57	Psalm 26:1-5	Proverbs 10:5-7	Mark 3:20-35
	<p>Does Jesus have anything to say about dealing with difficult relatives? Is there an example of Jesus bringing peace to a painful family? Yes, there is. His own ... It may surprise you to know that Jesus had a family at all! You may not be aware that Jesus had brothers and sisters. He did. Quoting Jesus' hometown critics, Mark wrote. "[Jesus] is just the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon. And his sisters are here with us" (Mark 6:31). And it may surprise you to know that his family were less than perfect. They were. If your family doesn't appreciate you, take heart, neither did Jesus. Yet he didn't try to control his family's behaviour, nor did he let their behaviour control his. He didn't demand that they agree with him. He didn't make it his mission to try to please them. (HE STILL MOVES STONES)</p>			
February 23, 2021 A HOME FOR YOUR HEART Psalm 26:8 <i>LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells.</i>	Leviticus 15:1-16:34	Psalm 26:6-12	Proverbs 10:8	Mark 4:1-20
	<p>When it comes to resting your soul, there is no place like the Great House of God. "I ask only one thing from the Lord," David wrote, "This is what I want: Let me live in the Lord's house all my life. Let me see the Lord's beauty and look with my own eyes at his temple" (Psalm 27:4). If you could ask God for one thing, what would you request? David tells us what he would ask. He longs to live in the house of God. I emphasize the word live, because it deserves to be emphasized. David doesn't want to chat. He doesn't desire a cup of coffee on the back porch. He doesn't ask for a meal or to spend an evening in God's house. He wants to move in with him ... forever. He's asking for his own room ... permanently. He doesn't want to be stationed in God's house; he longs to retire there. He doesn't seek a temporary assignment, but rather lifelong residence. (THE GREAT HOUSE OF GOD)</p>			
February 24, 2021 A NEXT-DOOR SAVIOUR Mark 4:44 <i>"Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"</i>	Leviticus 17:1-18:30	Psalm 27:1-3	Proverbs 10:9	Mark 4:21-41
	<p>He was, at once, man and God. There he was, the single most significant person who ever lived. Forget MVP; he is the entire league. The head of the parade? Hardly. No one else shares the street. Who comes close? Humanity's best and brightest fade like dime-store rubies next to him. Dismiss him? We can't. Resist him? Equally difficult. Don't we need a God-man Saviour? A just-God Jesus could make us but not understand us. A just-man Jesus could love us but never save us. But a God-man Jesus? Near enough to touch. Strong enough to trust. A next-door Saviour. A Saviour found by millions to be irresistible. (NEXT DOOR SAVIOUR)</p>			
February 25, 2021 WHERE HOPES DON'T HAPPEN Psalm 27:5 <i>For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent.</i>	Leviticus 19:1-20:27	Psalm 27:4-6	Proverbs 10:10-12	Mark 5:1-20
	<p>What do we do with our disappointments? We could do what Miss Havesham did. Remember her in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations? Jilted by her fiancée just prior to the wedding ... she closed all the blinds in the house, stopped every clock, left the wedding cake on the table to gather cobwebs, and wore her wedding dress until it hung in yellow decay around her shrunken form. Her wounded heart consumed her life. We can follow the same course. Or we can follow the example of the Apostle Paul. His goal was to be a missionary in Spain ... however, God sent him to prison. Sitting in a Roman jail, Paul could have made the same choice as Miss Havesham, but he didn't. Instead, he said, "As long as I am here, I might as well write a few letters." Hence your Bible has the Letters to Philemon, the Philippians, the Colossians, and the Ephesians. (TRAVELLING LIGHT)</p>			
February 26, 2021 A HUNCH AND A HOPE Mark 5:34 <i>And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."</i>	Leviticus 21:1-22:33	Psalm 27:7-14	Proverbs 10:13-16	Mark 5:21-43
	<p>Maybe all you have is a crazy hunch and a high hope. You have nothing to give. But you are hurting. And all you have to offer is your hurt. Maybe that has kept you from coming to God. Oh, you've taken a step or two in his direction. But then you saw the other people around him. They seemed so clean, so neat, so trim and fit in their faith. And when you saw them, they blocked your view of him. So, you stepped back. If that describes you, note carefully ... one person whom Christ commended ... for having faith. It wasn't a wealthy giver. It wasn't a loyal follower. It wasn't an acclaimed teacher. It was a shame-struck, penniless outcast – a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years – who clutched onto her hunch that he could and her hope that he would. Which, by the way, isn't a bad definition of faith. A conviction that he can and a hope that he will. (HE STILL MOVES STONES)</p>			
February 27, 2021 OPEN YOUR HEART Psalm 28:1 <i>LORD, I call; you are my Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me.</i>	Leviticus 23:1-24:23	Psalm 28:1-5	Proverbs 10:17-18	Mark 6:1-29
	<p>How did Jesus endure the terror of the crucifixion?> He went first to the Father with his fears. He modelled the words of Psalm 56:3, "When I am afraid, I will trust you." Do the same with yours. Don't avoid life's Garden of Gethsemane. Enter them. Just don't enter them alone. And while there, be honest. Pounding the ground is permitted. Fears are allowed. And if you sweat blood, you won't be the first. Do what Jesus did; open your heart. And be specific. Jesus was. "Take away this cup," he prayed (Luke 22:42). Give God the number of the flight. Tell him the length of the speech. Share the details of the job transfer. He has plenty of time. He also has plenty of compassion. He doesn't think your fears are foolish or silly. He won't tell you to "backup" or "get tough." He's been where you are. He knows how you feel. And he knows what you need. (TRAVELLING LIGHT)</p>			
February 28, 2021 THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST Mark 6:34 <i>When Jesus stepped ashore and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them ... And He began to teach them many things.</i>	Leviticus 25:1-55	Psalm 28:6-9	Proverbs 10:19-21	Mark 6:30-56
	<p>When Jesus lands on the shore of Bethsaida, he leaves the Sea of Galilee and steps into a sea of humanity. Keep in mind, he crossed the sea to get away from the crowds. He needs to grieve. He longs to relax with his followers. He needs anything but another crowd of thousands to teach and heal. But his love for people overcomes his need for rest ... Many of those he healed will never say, "thank you," but he healed them anyway. Most will be more concerned with being healthy than being holy, but he healed them anyway. Some of those who asked for bread today would cry for his blood a few months later, but he healed them anyway ... He had compassion on them. (IN THE EYE OF THE STORM)</p>			

Adapted by Rev K. Nkrumah – Grace for The Moment – Max Lucado

IN PRAYER

Through healing waters, through troubled waters,
through still waters, through dangerous waters,
through welcoming waters,

God is with us.

We are grateful, Creator, for sacred water that flows in our bodies and through the earth.

Water is a powerful force that both creates and destroys, sustains and erodes, deposits and washes away. Yet, water is wasted, polluted, and ignored. May we seek ways to restore good relations, and remember all the ways your gift of water is life. It is tempting to think we have all the answers. Forgive us, God, for the times we give in to temptations and turn away from you. Lead us in your way, we pray.

God loves all creation with a love that is steadfast and true. God forgives us and sets us free to live. Thanks be to God!

To you, O God, we pray. In you, O God, we trust. For you, O God, we wait.

Lead us, so that we may always follow in your way.

Teach us so that we may remain steadfast and faithful.

Remind us of our covenant, so that we may be a covenantal people, striving to care for all of creation as you care for us.

Where there is brokenness and discord in your creation...

Where there is death and dying...

Where there is isolation, exile, and forced migration...

Please send reminders of your love and, where possible, help us to be your messengers.

Love God in all things equally. For God is equally near to all creatures.

And among these creatures God does not love any one person more than any other.

God is all and is one. All things become nothing but God.

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things.

If we spent enough time with the tiniest creature

- even a caterpillar - we would never need sermons.

So full of God is every creature.

Go and spend time in God's Creation

and in the amazing presence of God in all things.



Do you need to contact someone? Have a support need?

Rev. Kodjo Nkrumah - 0408 250 601. Kent Blackmore - 0438 611 795

Joyce Lum - 0402 093 618. Bill Laidlaw - 9477 3409

The church office opens on Thursday mornings from 9:00 - 10:30am.

Mark 1:9-15 NRSV - Word Search Puzzle

From Pinawa.Church/puzzles (use for free distribution only) words in a straight line left to right or top to bottom

J J B D E S C E N D I N G N S W J
O O A F U L F I L L E D B A A E E
R H R J U S T A F T E R E Z T L S
D N R F R O M N R S V E A A A L U
A I E C Z N E W S A W P S R N K S
N N S A G A L I L E E E T E D I H
F T T M B E L I E V E N S T T N E
O O E E Y A N G E L S T E H E G A
R C D O V E H A S P I R I T M D V
T O R N P L E A S E D A Y S P O E
Y M O F B E L O V E D Y O U T M N
W E N O W I L D E R N E S S E W S
I P R O C L A I M I N G T A D A W
T I M E C O M I N G E M H Y E T A
H G O O D R O V E O A V O I C E I
E B A P T I Z E D D R I S N U R T
M A R K W A S A P A R T E G P M E
L I K E H I M M E D I A T E L Y D

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptizeded by John in the Jordan. (10) And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. (11) And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." (12) And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. (13) He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. (14) Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, (15) and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Word List

PROCLAIMING IMMEDIATELY WILDERNESS DESCENDING FULFILLED
NAZARETH BAPTIZED ARRESTED TEMPTED PLEASED KINGDOM
HEAVENS GALILEE BELOVED BELIEVE WAITED SPIRIT SAYING
REPENT JORDAN COMING BEASTS ANGELS WATER VOICE THOSE
SATAN JESUS FORTY DROVE APART AFTER WITH WELL TORN
TIME NRSV NEWS NEAR MARK LIKE JUST JOHN INTO GOOD
FROM DOVE DAYS COME CAME YOU WAS THE SON SAW
OUT NOW HIM HAS GOD AND UP OF MY IS BY