



St. Stephens Uniting Church Williamstown  
 179 Melbourne Road Williamstown 3016  
 Minister: Rev. Juliette Maua'I 0456 690 291

Worship Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April Easter 3 Prepared by Elaine Peck 0434 648 228  
 Readings: Luke 24: 13 – 35, Acts 2:14a,36-41, 1Peter 1:17-23, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

**PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**



**Welcome to Worship**

Had it been possible for you to attend St. Stephens Church today, you would have been welcomed at the front door by Ros Waldon.

Our welfare today would usually be directed to the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre: Church Council has approved the “Op-shop funds distribution sub-committee” recommendation that \$5000 be forwarded to ASRC from 2019 Op Shop Profit. Personal donations to ASRC can be forwarded to: Asylum Seekers Resource Centre 214-218 Nicholson Street Footscray 3011 or online donations through the Centre website: [asrc.org.au](http://asrc.org.au)

**Call to Worship** (You may like to sing these words. Click on the attached video link for accompaniment)

Alleluia, alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord,  
 alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.  
 Jesus is Lord of all the earth: He is the king of creation  
 Spread the good news o'er all the earth:  
 Jesus has died and has risen.  
 God has proclaimed his gracious gift:  
 new life for all! Alleluia.  
 Come let us praise the living God,  
 joyfully sing to our Saviour  
 Alleluia!  
 TIS 390 words Donald Fishel Music Don Fishel arr. Betty Pulkinham

**Prayer of Invocation**



\*We seek your presence, Almighty God, as we come together in this time of remembrance. Remembering all who have put their lives on the line during times of conflict and remembering all those who are making sacrifices during the present pandemic to keep us safe. We remember our St. Stephens friends and the congregations all over the world who cannot gather in their churches. Help us not to hide our sorrow and our pain from you. Let our actions in these difficult times embrace your divine values, and be open to your careful examination, inspired by the sacrifice of calvary and the men of ANZAC legend. Enfold us afresh in the love and healing of the Holy Spirit, may the promise of eternal life inspire us anew. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

\* Adapted from ANZAC Day Worship Resource – Uniting Church in Australia

**Prayer of Confession**

Gracious God, we come to this time of confession acknowledging that over the past week we may have done a fair bit of grumbling, fretting, .....(fill in your own story)  
 We want to be positive, creative, philosophical, .....(fill in your ambitions)  
 but we become pathetic, unmotivated, complaining, .....(fill in your shortcomings)  
 Forgive us dear Lord when we are not the people that you want us to be. Forgive us when we have missed opportunities to make life a happier place for others who are finding the going rough at the moment, .....(fill in the actions you meant to take but didn't get around to)  
 Enable us Lord to be stronger followers of your son, Jesus, during the week ahead. May we be recognised as His disciples by our faith, our courage and our love for all people.  
 We give thanks that you bless us with the promise that we are your beloved family. Flawed but forgiven.  
**Amen**

**Readings for Easter 3:**

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19, 1Peter 1:17-23, Acts 2:14a,36-41, Luke 24: 13 – 35

**Reflection based on Luke 24:13-35**

Luke's account of what occurred on the road to Emmaus is a gospel story that I am particularly fond of and one to which I am particularly connected as it was the subject of a homily delivered at our marriage service and also used by the the Minister who performed my Mother's funeral service. The theme being focused on was, I gather, "hospitality", although 57 years ago (tomorrow) I am not sure whether at the time, being a rather nervous, young bride, I really grasped the full significance of the message. My mother's life certainly was

centred on hospitality and most of her life she was kept busy building community of one sort or another. I hope as a family we have tried to follow her example and live out the Christian message that “everyone is welcome”. It is heart warming when we read Luke’s account of the two people on the road to Emmaus, and how readily they invited the “stranger” who joined them to stay with them overnight as the hour was late to continue further on the road. We should bear in mind that whoever is the stranger in this story, he was one of their number. With his knowledge of their scriptures and compassion for their loss, they must have experienced a connecting of like-minded travellers. Inviting total strangers into one’s home can be a very scary thing to do and probably even inadvisable although we are often told that this is what Jesus would expect of us.

There is another message in this story, i.e. grief and loss of community, fear of the future, and a sense of hopelessness. The lives of these two of Jesus’ followers have been changed by the events that have taken place in Jerusalem in recent days. We read that one of these two is a man named Cleopas, and although he has not figured in the Jesus story to any extent that I am aware of, some authorities consider that Mary (wife of Cleopas) could be the sister-in-law of Jesus’ mother Mary, and is one of the women who stood at the foot of the cross and was with the women who prepared Jesus’ body for burial. She may also have been with the women who came to the tomb on the third day.

As these two on the road to Emmaus walk they are deeply engaged in discussing what has taken place. They appear to have put great store in Jesus’ potential as the Messiah destined to “redeem Israel” and are finding it difficult to come to terms with the fact that all their hopes appear to have been dashed by Jesus’ cruel death on the cross: a deed carried out by their own religious leaders of all people. The two also appear to have up to date information as to what took place early that very morning when the women went to the tomb.

We read in Luke 24: 15, “Jesus himself came near and went with them”. I find this a mysterious concept. The fact that Jesus’ followers did not recognise that it was Jesus walking with them. Luke depicts this presence, not as a spiritual presence but an unknown stranger who is able to provide comfort, understanding and a sense of meaning to all that has taken place. He explained that it was all simply the carrying out of God’s plan for the coming “Messiah” outlined by ‘Moses and all the prophets’ (Luke 24:27).

For those Christians who believe that Jesus physically rose from death, and was able to walk the road with his two followers, this story may not be such a mystery. Although puzzling that they did not recognise Jesus, it is understandable that they may not have met him face to face during the tumultuous events taking place in Jerusalem since Jesus’ recent triumphal entry. Also out of context, and certainly not expecting to see Jesus alive it is possible they may have been uncertain.

Nevertheless, it was in the act of offering hospitality to this “stranger” that they recognised Jesus as he broke bread with them. Their preparedness to return the seven miles to Jerusalem straight away to share their experience with the other followers is testament to the how their grief had given way to joy as they realised that Jesus was “alive”

Some Christians may interpret this story as the opportunity we have to meet Jesus in the person of strangers to whom we offer hospitality. We may think of Jesus being “alive” to the two on the road to Emmaus in a spiritual capacity and we can especially experience Jesus’ presence in this way as we come together in our faith community to share in our regular service of Holy Communion at St. Stephens.

We can also experience the love of Jesus when during each of our journeys in the shadow of grief we are joined by persons who support and nurture us.” I love the way the two who walked the Emmaus road proclaimed with great joy – “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was opening the scriptures to us”.

There has been much heart warming material circulating on TV, Social Media, etc. that is great to take hold of when we are overwhelmed by tragic and heart breaking news.

I pray that during the coming week, your hearts will burn within you and you will experience joy as you encounter support and encouragement from not only other people, but from a variety of sources during the difficult times in which we now live.

The ABC Program Compass last Sunday featured the Emmaus Community in Perth – a place where many lost souls can find salvation, acceptance, encouragement – a place to call “home”. A heart warming story.

<https://www.enhancetv.com.au/video/compass-a-place-to-call-home/63941>

### **Offering Prayer**

The offering we bring to worship each Sunday is but a token of what we owe to you, O Lord, for the bountiful gifts you bestow upon us every day.

May we bring to you our grateful hearts and our commitment to share what we enjoy, especially with those who struggle financially and emotionally.

Bless our endeavours, O Lord, in the name of Jesus your Son, who embraced poverty and sharing as a living example to us all. **Amen**

*Your weekly offering to the Church can be made on-line to BSB 633-000 A/C NO. 125234211*

*Add your name or envelope no. as reference.*

*Treasurer Tom Russell would be happy to receive cheques mailed to: 14 Anile Place, Williamstown 3015.*

## Intercessory Prayers

I contacted Ros Waldon, who was on St. Stephens roster for prayers this week, inviting her to suggest a prayer for today.

Ros replied: "I had put aside a prayer from the President of the Assembly, Deidre Palmer, in mid-March. I believe it is appropriate, and possibly appropriate to use something from the President of Assembly."

Thank you Ros for responding and for adapting the prayer to be particularly relevant for this Sunday.

### A PRAYER FOR COMPASSION, WISDOM AND STRENGTH

Loving and compassionate God.

You call us to love our neighbours and to be bearers of your hope and grace in our world.

*Expand our hearts and vision to respond with compassion to those around us affected by the horrific accident causing the death of 4 Police Officers, and those who are struggling in this time of uncertainty, anxiety, grief and suffering as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.*

Give wisdom and strength to our health workers, and government officials, as they provide leadership in bringing our country through this crisis.

We bring before you and into our hearts and minds:

- Those whose work and income are uncertain
- Those who are isolated
- Those who are fearful of an unknown future
- Those who live in situations of domestic violence, and whose isolation increases the control of their violent partners
- Those who are homeless, and all those who offer them support and care
- Those who are involved in aged care – our agency leaders, staff and residents and their loved ones
- Businesses whose futures are uncertain – their leaders and staff
- School staff and students
- Those with health conditions that put them in greater risk

Give wisdom and care-filled discernment to all our Church leaders – our Councils and local congregations, as we seek to creatively live out our worship, witness and service in ways that offer Christ's life-giving love and presence.

Strengthen and sustain us to be your people – shaped by your abundant grace, bearers of your generosity and overflowing love.

Through Christ our Light and Hope, we pray.

Amen

## Blessing

The peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;

and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen**

The Peace of the Lord be with you all

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I invited Yvonne to share a recipe that she would love to bake for your morning tea this morning if that were possible.

Here is her selection.

### PECAN BLONDIES



#### INGREDIENTS

½ cup plain flour	125g unsalted butter softened
1 tspn vanilla essence	1 tspn baking powder
2 eggs	1 cup castor sugar
½ cup chopped pecans.	½ cup soft brown sugar

Preheat oven to 180C.

Lightly grease a shallow baking tin 18 x 27cm and line the sides and base with baking paper (leaving the paper hanging over the two long sides).

Sift together the flour, baking powder and ¼ tspn salt.

Cream the sugars, butter and vanilla in a bowl with electric beaters until light and fluffy.

Gradually add the eggs, beating well after each addition.

Fold in the flour with a large metal spoon and gently stir in the pecans.

Spread mixture in the tin.

Bake for 30 minutes or until golden and a skewer inserted to the centre comes out clean.

Leave in tin for 10 mins, then cool on a wire rack.

**Icing** 150 g white chocolate chopped ¼ cup cream 2 tbsps chopped pecans extra.

Place chocolate and cream in a small saucepan. Stir over low heat until the chocolate has melted and the mixture smooth.

Remove from the heat and cool. Spread evenly over the slice with a flat-bladed knife and sprinkle with the extra pecans.

Allow to set.