**PENTECOST 22a – Proper 17a MACEDON RANGES PARTNERSHIP SERVICE**

**28 – 30 August 2020**

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website at <https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/worship-services> or on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/S8NnGO9iFxw>. Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told to lead you. We suggest reading the passages when suggested below. We are touching on several of the scripture readings in one way or another this week.

If you would like to look at previous videos on our YouTube channel, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb4hzdO-YgzmrIRVC-oby_w>.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge all the Aboriginal Groups who have cared for and nurtured the land on which we meet: the Wurundjeri; Woi Wurruung; Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung.

We acknowledge their leaders: past, present and emerging for it is in them that Australia’s future lies.

You are welcome here, as we reflect in different rooms and districts, States and Countries around the world, our spiritual connectedness through Christ Jesus, is remembered.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Mark today in your calendars!

Today is the first day of something new!

Yes, you are called to a new pathway and a new life.

Love marks the way.

Begin the journey.

Allow the Spirit of God to transform and move you.

Respond to the voice of God.

**PRAYER OF ADORATION**

Loving God,

Our joy is in knowing you have made us your people.

Belonging to you takes us on a journey into life and grace.

Reconciliation and grace are hallmarks of your people

So fill us with your wisdom, strength and peace

As we worship you in all we do.

**WE SING TIS 161 Tell out my soul**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORD OF ASSURANCE**

*Pause and take a deep breath.*

*Hold it for a moment.*

*Breathe out.*

*Breathe slowly.*

*As you breathe in, call to mind the times you needed something more over the last week.*

*As you breathe out, let go into God’s care those things that weigh you down.*

*Breathe in; breathe out.*

*Breathe in; breathe out.*

*God is with you,*

*Calling you into a new life;*

*A new beginning*

*Of love and hope.*

*Remember,*

*God calls, leads and holds.*

**OUR READINGS FOR TODAY**

Take a moment to read our readings for today: Exodus 12:1 – 14, Psalm 149, Romans 13:8 – 14, Matthew 18:15 – 20. We explore in our video discussion the Exodus story, the Matthew story and the Romans reading.

**REFLECTION** *by Rev Linda Young*

There are times when we come to a text that is so familiar that we can highlight the parts we love and honour and gloss over the intrinsic suffering and injustice that also lies within the text. For me this happens when I read the Passover Narrative.

When I read it, as I have so many times, I think about the oppressed, the ones in slavery for hundreds of years, away from their homeland and roots. I think about a beautiful ritual performed by families and communities; a coming together in a very specific and holy way, to prepare for the passing over of God’s spirit. I reflect on the importance of this story for every Jewish person as they celebrate Shabbat and remember the God of their ancestors who liberated their people from oppression.

What I and many other like me forget to notice is the abuse found in this passage. I quickly skim over verse 12 about the intentional death of all the first-born children and animals, without skipping a beat. I hold no judgement of the God portrayed here who orders such an atrocious act on innocent children and families of the Egyptians and land on the words about ‘remembrance’ and ‘celebrate’.

I remember as a 16 year old, in my Confirmation class asking a question that had me baffled; “Why is there such a difference between the God of vengeance in the Old Testament and the God Jesus talks about as a God of love in the New Testament?” In my theological studies such tools for answering that question came about.

We must consider the context that the text is written in.

We must consider the culture of the time

We must consider the difference genres of the text

We must remember that it is an interpretation of God by people

We must remember that the text has been translated from different languages which may not give an accurate translation in modern day terms.

We must consider how the text sits with us personally, in our culture, context and within our experience of God.

With that said, from a theological perspective the motif of God as a liberator from evil is very apparent in this text but let us not turn our eyes away from the ones who have suffered for that liberation. Let us not turn our eyes away from the evil that takes place that liberation may come. I often say, “There is no resurrection without death” but may we honour the sacrifice as well as the liberation.

**PRAYER FOR OTHERS** *by B D Prewer*

When we pray for the church and the world, we lock in to the loving things God wants for humanity. Let us pray.

Loving God, friend of the neglected and the despised, friend also of the cherished and honoured ones, we offer to you our prayers for this world for which Christ gave his all.

We pray for the overthrow of the arrogant and cruel, and for discontent in the souls of the greedy and the careless.

We pray for the uplifting of the meek and merciful, and for the encouragement of the poor and the pure.

We pray for the recovery of the bruised and the lost, and the peace of those who thirst for righteousness.

We pray for the feeding of the hungry in body or spirit, and for the healing of those who are dis-eased in body or mind.

We pray for the comfort of the suffering and the grieving, and for the befriending of the lonely timid, or socially awkward people.

We pray for the humbling of the church if it becomes proud, and for courage wherever it is shunned or persecuted.

We pray for the strong and the weak in this congregation, and for the spiritual health of all other churches in the community.

You, Holy Friend, are more eager to give than we are to receive. Deal firmly with your servants gathered here now, that we get rid of everything that clutters our souls, and make way for all the new blessings you have in store for us. Through Christ Jesus our Lord.

***Amen!***

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

Say the Lord’s Prayer.

**WE SING TIS 614 God of love**

**BLESSING** *by**© 2003 Paul Chalson*

God give hope to

Lift you up

Guide you in

The pathways of peace

Fill you with joy

To brighten the dark

Enfold you in love

And guard you through danger

God our beginning

And our end

Saviour, brother,

Helper and friend

Bless you now

And forever more

And guide you in the way of Christ

**OFFERING**

You may like to consider giving an offering to your congregation via direct deposit. Details for each are:

* Gisborne: Gisborne branch, Bendigo bank, B.S.B. 633 108, A/C: 1512 83736
* Romsey: Bendigo Bank, B.S.B. 633 000, A/C: 161501200, Account name: UCA Romsey Uniting Church
* Lancefield: Account Name: Lancefield Uniting Church, BSB: 633 108, A/C No: 112926639
* Mia Mia – Kyneton: Commonwealth bank, B.S.B. 063 517, Account no.: 1002 1775

 *I will publish other congregation’s details as they come to hand. Contact you congregation’s treasurer for details if they are not here.*