



Werribee Uniting Church

We acknowledge the people of the Kulin alliance, the original custodians of the land which was never ceded and on which our buildings for worship stand and we gather.

15 September 2024: Season of Creation

Politics and religion: inseparable!

A friend in America wrote to me and said she had been sent a note and asked *not* to address anything implicitly or explicitly political at a future event. This is what she wrote.

“The note flummoxed me, and I realized that if I followed such a directive that I wouldn’t know what to say. “Well,” I thought, “there goes the Bible.”

Like last week’s passage from the Epistle of James.

This reading is political. There’s no getting around it. Social distinctions and favouritism based on wealth are sinful. God prefers the poor. The rich are the bad guys — and blasphemers to boot. If an assembly of Jesus’ followers privilege the wealthy, they’ve failed the command of neighbourly love.

But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

You might talk a good game about loving your neighbour, but if you don’t *do something to redress* favouritism and social inequalities, your faith doesn’t mean much.

Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Later, in the same letter, James wrote, “Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted... The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.” (5:1-5) James ends that section by saying that these wealthy oppressors have themselves “murdered” Jesus.

Do we seriously think for even a second that James would be silent about tax breaks for corporations or the wealthiest people in our society? Or, that he wouldn’t jump on X and attack Trump’s promise to reward his billionaire lackey Elon Musk with a cabinet position? James would have plenty to say about a dictator who fancies himself better than everyone else and bases policies on transactions and *quid pro quo*, a candidate full of “bitter envy and selfish ambition...” ...

Early Christian communities were notoriously political, and less willing to compromise with Rome than later ones. The first followers of Jesus got in trouble for refusing to recognize that Caesar was Lord, insisting instead that their Christ was Lord. To proclaim “Christ is Lord!” was an overt political slogan, the sort of yard sign that could get one tossed in some Roman prison because their movement presented a powerful, perhaps even revolutionary, alternative to the Empire.

TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

Worship services

15 September: Rev. Ian Pearse

22 September: Rev. Valerie Johnson

Bible readings

Today: Proverbs 1:20–33; Psalm 19; James 3:1–12; Mark 8:27–38

Next week: Proverbs 31:10–31; Psalm 1; James 3:13–4:3, 7–8a; Mark 9:30–37

What’s on this week

Monday: 9.30am Playgroup

7.30 Social Justice Task Group

Tuesday: 11am Bible Discussion & Lunch

Thursday: 9.30am Gardening Group;

5pm Health & Fitness;

5pm Choral Practice (chapel)

Friday: 1pm Sew ‘n’ Sow

Saturday: 7am Health & Fitness

Rosters 15 September (& 22 September)

Greetings: Margaret D (Elizabeth B)

Audiovisual: Paul K (Jacob L)

Morning Tea: Jan B & Julie H

(Judith O’K & Dorothy R)

Flowers: Margaret F (Node M)

Music: Tracey S (Wendy B)

Prayers: Ron L (Lauina L)

Reader: Sandra S (Taituave K)

Werribee UC on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/621987747878234/>

Church office

Open Monday to Friday 9.30am–12noon. Phone 97411084 Email

office@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au

WUC Newsletter (Editor: Robert Renton)

Send information for inclusion to the Editor at robert.renton@bigpond.com or 0427 812 606.

Bank Account & Boom Gate (0459#)

BSB 083-909 A/c 516109795

To book facilities at WUC:

Email: (Elizabeth B)

bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au

Samoan service The Samoan language service is held every 3rd Sunday at 4pm in the church. All welcome.

The alternative was found in (what some scholars have suggested was) the first Christian baptismal creed: *For you are all children of God in the Spirit. There is no Jew or Greek; there is no slave or free; there is no male and female. For you are all one in the Spirit.*

... That means the very first Christian creed was not about the nature of God or the Trinity or the divinity of Jesus, but it was about *us* — a creed of human solidarity and the breaking down of ethnic, economic, and gender barriers to create a community where there is *neither favouritism nor privilege to those who the empire deems important.*

...
Sounds like the Books of Acts to me, all those stories about sharing everything in common and having no distinctions based on nationality or wealth. And it was political. Inescapably, completely political. Miraculous, too. Because if you think about it — what could be *more* miraculous than a community that doesn't worship the rich, privilege the elite, and ignore the poor?

If you tell me that I can't talk about politics, I've got nothing. Jesus' best miracles were the political ones. Like inspiring a group of poor, marginal Jews and outcasts to resist Rome by challenging Caesar and the empire. Like the miracle of the first Christians in the story of Acts. Like the miracle recited in the baptismal creed by the earliest converts.

And it is the miracle that James said we accomplish with our works.' (Diana B B, "Sunday Musings")

To contact the Rev. Ian Pearse

The Rev. Ian Pearse offers pastoral care to anyone in our congregation. Please ring mobile: 0411 771 853 or send an email to: enps@iinet.net.au.

Thanks from the H Family

To Mum's friends and her sisters and brothers in the Lord for all the love, care and friendship she received during all her years the Presbyterian and then Uniting Church at Werribee. Thanks also for your assistance before, during and after the service in which we gave thanks for and celebrated her life. Thanks too for Rev. Ian's care. Sincerely, The H Family.

3030 beach patrol

As well as cleaning Werribee South beach & foreshore last week, our enthusiastic volunteers concentrated their efforts on some of the litter hotspots nearby. The end of O'Connors Road near the intersection with Beach Road and the grassed carpark area near the boat ramp were a couple of these hotspots. Our haul of rubbish, estimated at 70kg, included a car bumper bar, fishing rod, 71 drink bottles & cans & lots of plastic fragments. A special thanks to our Indian friends from DJJS Melbourne for again supporting our clean. Our next clean will be at Wyndham Harbour on Sunday Oct 13.

Fund-raising for Asylum Seekers

The Rev. Bruce Watson is raising funds for the **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**, and is asking for your support.



I am trying to fundraise \$700 in the Nike Melbourne Marathon Festival 2024 on Sunday 13th October, for a cause that is close to my heart, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC).

Please help me by making a donation through my page. <https://tinyurl.com/j4vz3ctt>

The ASRC supports people and families with their basic food, housing and medical needs during their journey to safety and freedom; as well as advocating for a fair, just and welcoming Australia.

Making a donation only takes a minute and any money you can give (no matter how large or small) will go a long way to helping me reach my target. Together we will champion hope and compassion!

Thank you, I really appreciate your support.

OSLO Occasional Sunday lunches Out

We will be going to the RSL on Sunday 22nd September for a carvery lunch at 12md. Please contact Elaine or Lorna for booking numbers by Thursday 19th. Everyone welcome.

Church Fête in October

There is going to be a Church Fete on Saturday 26th October from 9am – 2pm. Further details will be forthcoming. If you would like to help with anything there is a signup list in the Church Foyer, alternatively please let the office know with your contact phone number and what Stall or Activity you would like to help with.

Multifaith Week of Climate Action

From the 14th to the 24th of September people of all faiths around Australia will publicly call for a clear plan to get us out of this climate crisis and move boldly and rapidly away from coal and gas and towards a sustainable future. **There will be an ecumenical service on Tuesday September 17 at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne from 10am.** You would be very welcome!

