



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.

24 March 2024: Palm/Passion

Mark's musings on grace

I've just finished the best book I've 'read' this year. (I actually listened to it as an audio-book on my phone directly into my hearing aids—the wonders of technology!) From bestselling author Julia Baird comes a beautiful and timely exploration of that most mysterious but necessary of human qualities: grace. Rightly, the tributes are flowing: “Luminous ... A work to both devour and savour, Baird has, once again, written a book the world needs now.” Guardian

Grace is both mysterious and hard to define. It can be found when we create ways to find meaning and dignity in connection with each other, building on our shared humanity, being kinder, bigger, better with each other. If, in its crudest interpretation, karma is getting what you deserve, then grace is the opposite: forgiving the unforgivable, favouring the undeserving, loving the unlovable. It is at the heart of our 'golden rule'—do unto others...

Sadly, we live in an era when grace is an increasingly rare currency. Our growing distrust of the media, politicians and public figures has choked our ability to cut each other slack, to allow each other to stumble, to forgive one another. Given Baird's focus on questions of historical injustice, racism and sexism, you could call *Bright Shining* a popular sociology of grace with an emphasis on how it can make us well, or at least healthier as a society. She knows too well the precariousness of good health having endured multiple treatments and surgery for cancer and this experience informs the acts of grace that feature in the book.

So what does grace look like in our world and how do we recognise it, nurture it in ourselves and express it in church life, even in tough times? Journalist Annabel Crabb says: “Enlightening, surprising, absorbing .. I learned something every chapter and put the book down full of awe at the power of human beings to be good to each other when no-one would expect it. It's the book I needed to read right now. It filled my cup.”

The uplift and power of *Bright Shining* is found in the way it gives grace fresh currency by bringing this beautiful and elusive condition from the theological margins into the mainstream and showing, with passion and verve, how quietly transformative it can be.

May grace and peace be yours! Mark Dunn

Good Friday's Way of the Cross

People of St Andrew's Catholic Parish, St Thomas' Anglican Church, St Steven's Karen congregation and our Werribee Uniting Church will participate in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning, starting at 11 am, at the piazza opposite Wolf on Watton, and proceeding to St Andrew's on Grieve St North, followed by hot cross buns and coffee.

TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

Worship services

24 March (Palm Sunday): Rev. Mark Dunn
29 March (Good Friday): Rev. Mark Dunn
31 March (Easter): Rev. Mark Dunn

Bible readings

Today: Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29; Mark 11:1–11; Isaiah 50:4–9a; Psalm 31:9–16; Philippians 2:5–11; Mark 14–15:47 or Mark 15:1–39, (40–47)
Next Sunday: Acts 10:34–43 or Isaiah 25:6–9; Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24; I Corinthians 15:1–11; John 20:1–18 or Mark 16:1–8

What's on this week

Monday: 9.30am Playgroup; 7pm Boys & Girls Brigade at Dreambuilders Church
Tuesday: 11.30am Bible Discussion & Lunch
Wednesday: 10am Property Committee
Thursday: 9.30am Gardening Group
7pm Maundy Thursday Service
Friday: 9.30am Good Friday service

Rosters 24 March (& 31 March)

Greetings: Site T (Armando A)
Audiovisual: Noel S (Christian R-K)
Morning Tea: Sandra S & Margaret G (Mary D & Margaret D)
Flowers: Node M (Lorna H)
Music: Angela M (Angela M)
Prayers: Sandra S (Jeremy W)
Reader: Angela M (Neil T)

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

Send information for inclusion to the Editor at robert.renton@bigpond.com or Neil Tolliday on 0402 817 673.

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.

Congregation Chairperson/Secretary

If you wish to offer yourself, or nominate someone else, as secretary or chairperson of the congregation please give me your name and phone number by today, Sunday 24 March. You can send it by text or email or see me in person before worship. (Bev L)

A challenge for Lent



UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

This Lent, we're taking up a 40-day challenge to raise funds to fight poverty and injustice through the work of UnitingWorld and their partners. UnitingWorld works with partners in the Pacific, Asia and Africa, helping communities unlock their potential and set themselves free from poverty and injustice.

Our church has its own page to fundraise during this Lent Season and our goal is to reach \$1500.

We'd love your support to help us reach our fundraising goal and make a big difference. Ways to donate—follow the link below, use envelopes marked with "UnitingWorld", or by speaking to Luciana.

https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/fundraisers/werribeeunitingchurch?ref=ch_3OwChnGzSl8A8p7F01NgzxEI

Three significant world events

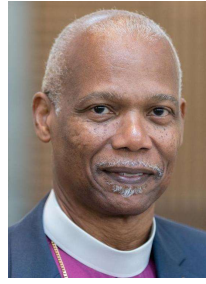
In a week when global heating bleached large areas of the Great Barrier Reef, hundreds of people—supporters of Extinction Rebellion—demonstrated outside Flinders Street Station, and the World Council of Churches Commission for Climate Justice appointed its new Moderator.

The month of February was two degrees hotter over the earth's oceans than previous years. *Guardian Australia* 8 March reported several leading Australian marine scientists concerned about the Great Barrier Reef's five mass bleaching events in the past eight years.

Professor Ove Hoegh Guldberg of the University of Queensland, speaking of his 40 years of in-the-water research says: "the steady increase in warming seas of the past four decades brings extensive coral bleaching, the loss of a precious resource which may never recover".

"If we don't take action to protect corals, by 2040 there will be bleaching events every year destroying the reef beyond repair."

The Most Rev Julio Murray Thomson (pictured above), Bishop of Panama and Primate of the Anglican church Region of Central America, is new leader of the WCC climate justice commission.



He said: "Our responsibility is as stewards of God's creation, but the events of climate change show we have been careless towards our mother earth".

"In my country government and corporations are not doing anything to turn around climate injustice. You cannot imagine the number of people

in Latin America who suffer the most from disastrous weather events."

"The (WCC climate justice) commission's working groups are creating partnerships in civil society; faith-based organizations together with non-government bodies."

"We are called to dialogue with the corporations."

"WCC agencies want to build bridges to work with young people, women and indigenous peoples."

This writer notes Extinction Rebellion is an example of young people in the western world demonstrating their frustration at the inactivity of governments and corporations to control global warming. Despite negative media portrayal of this youth climate movement I firmly believe that we in the Christian churches are called to support youth and work along with them. (NT)

Re-imagine: Bonnie Thurston

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth (Rev.21:1)

The world has become
a sad and sordid place
full of absence, longing
for what might have been.
We are scattered, shattered,
broken as bone china cups
dropped on a tile floor.

I shake accusatory fingers
at the formless void,
from somewhere out
beyond imagining
hear a terrible Eloquence:

"What have you done
with what I gave you?
You made the pieces.
Now pick them up,
re-imagine them as
fragments of possibility.
Fit them together anew.
Re-create my image
in your damaged hearts."

(Reproduced from *The Christian Century*, February 2024.

You can also see on Youtube a discussion with Bonnie T of this poem at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzC7jnvYA3I&list=PLQIZLUpmk_ZAW3DPe8GiKoF_6d9_nD0op&index=7