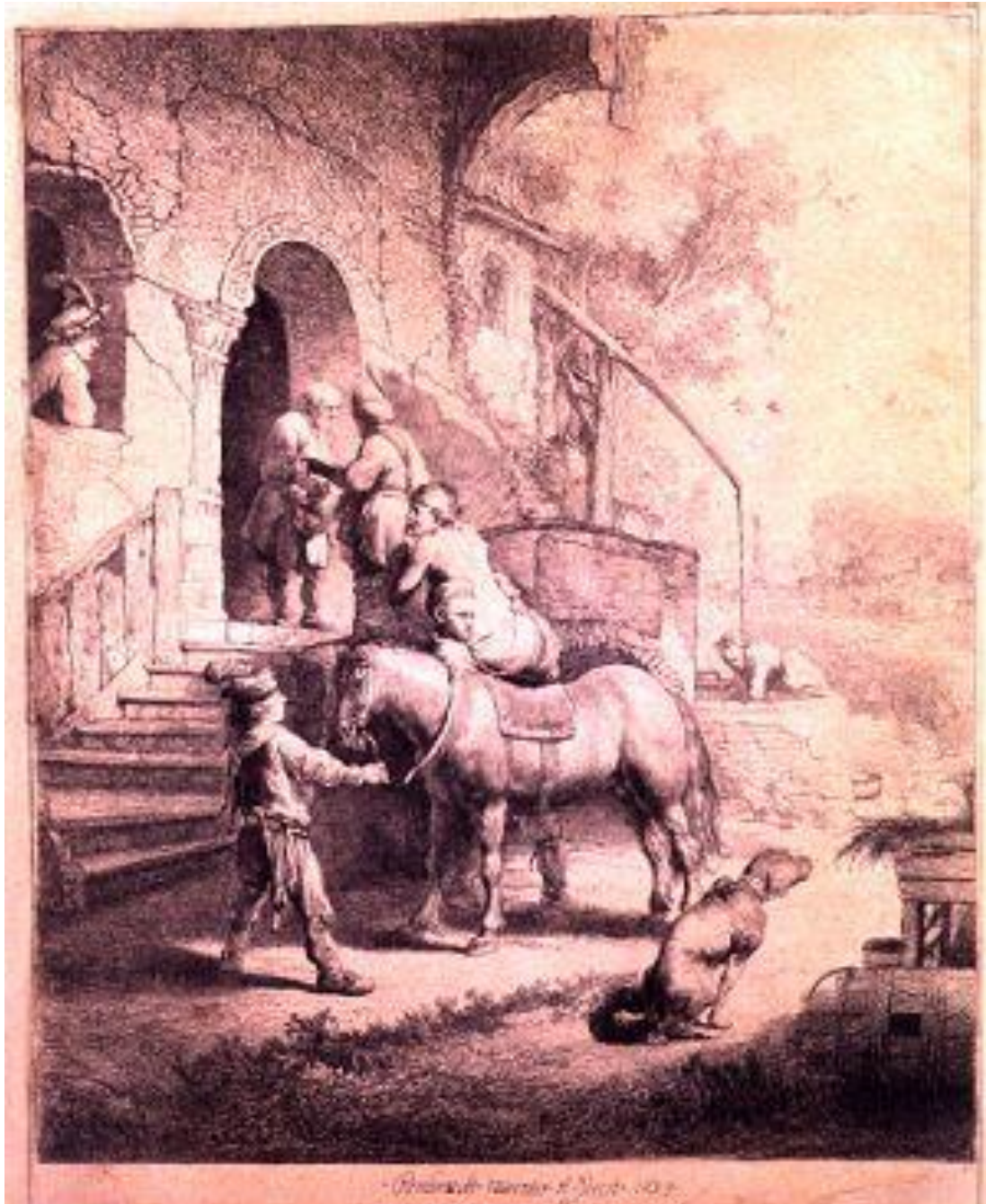


ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Epiphany 7

20th February



The Good Samaritan at the Inn – Rembrandt von Rijn

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6

WORSHIP AT HOME

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.

Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.

Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Psalm 37

Prayer

Here we are again, God
With all that makes us who we are,
all that fills our lives.
We pause, carrying into this space,
where we seek and celebrate joy and freedom,
the burdens we just can't seem to lay down,
The weight of all the scores we long to have settled,
the justice we want to demand
for the wrongs we have suffered.

Yet we also know what would happen if you were to deal with us justly;
with our greeds and violences,
our betrayals and lusts.
If justice was served in our lives, we could not stand.

So forgive us our wrongs, God,
forgive us as we do not deserve;
forgive us against the demands of justice;
And forgive our obsession that justice be done
to those who have wronged us.

Raise us as resurrection people
Into the freedom which is Christ's gift.

May our worship lead us to the place
where our hunger for grace and mercy may be filled,
And where we may be freed from the tyranny of vengeance.

Amen.

Psalm 37

Do not fret because of the wicked;
do not be envious of wrongdoers,
for they will soon fade like the grass,
and wither like the green herb.

Trust in the Lord and do good;
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.
Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;
do not fret over those who prosper in their way,
over those who carry out evil devices.

Refrain from anger and forsake wrath.
Do not fret—it leads only to evil.
For the wicked shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.
But the meek shall inherit the land,
and delight in abundant prosperity.

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
he is their refuge in the time of trouble.
The Lord helps them and rescues them;
he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

1 Corinthians 15. 35-55

But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

So, it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is

also a spiritual body. Thus, it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'

'Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?'

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel according to Luke 6. 27-38

'But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

Reflecting

The Nicene Creed finishes with the words:

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

From time to time, I come across the view that an essential test of Christian “faith” is that one must believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead. The view is that to be an adequate person of faith, one needs to embrace this “belief”; without doubt. Anything less is inadequate.

But the line - *we look for the resurrection of the dead* from the Nicene Creed is a bit more nuanced than this. It’s not so much a statement of belief as a stance, an indication of a faith practice, as Jesus encourages disciples to be watchful; *we look for ...* .

I say this, because what we have read from Paul are the first writings about the resurrection – the first by nearly two decades. Paul was long dead before Mark penned his Gospel, giving us the first account of events that morning on the first day of the week. So, we need to pay attention, particularly as Paul labels fools those who misunderstand the nature of resurrection. These images are complex – as Paul so often is – but the complexity of what he writes is a caution to us to not be content with insisting that a straightforward resuscitation of the body is all there is to say about resurrection.

A few years ago, I did a long course on Christian Mysticism across the last two Millenia. But we first explored ancient Jewish mysticism, then starting with Jesus and then Paul. Now, most of us probably don’t think of Paul as a mystic, rather a bit of a crank who is difficult to understand and is sometimes a bit objectionable; heavens, who calls their correspondents fools in order to get them to pay attention?

We can say Paul is a mystic because, as all mystics do, he struggles with language to say what he is trying to convey. The thing is there is usually no straightforward, everyday language to describe what we experience of the life of God and the spirit. In what we have just read Paul is trying to say something about the nature of resurrection, in the first such recorded writings about resurrection that we have. Here he is writing, not so much about Jesus, but about how resurrection might be envisaged and experienced by these Corinthian believers he is writing to. So, let’s try reading him again, setting aside the images we have from the Gospels about the three-days-dead Jesus.

There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

So, it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus, it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

It might be helpful here to understand that for the ancients the significance of resurrection is not so much the bodily raising of Jesus as the glorification of him who was supposed to have been degraded, erased, disappeared by crucifixion. This is why Paul begins this passage: Some might ask: *How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’ Fool!* So as to alert his hearers that this is not the issue.

Then he speaks of the glory of different kinds of bodies: of the glory of the sun, the moon and the stars, of heavenly and earthly bodies, to shift our minds from a concern with bodies to that of glory. Paul in trying to explain this ‘raising-up’ of Jesus (which is literally what the word

resurrection translates) is concerned with reputation, glory (or otherwise) of Jesus in the eyes of his followers and the wider community. The shame of the cross was meant to erase Jesus' reputation by dishonouring him – but he was sown in dishonour, raised in glory, he was sown in weakness and raised in power. He was sown in a physical body and raised in a spiritual body. Hence he writes: , *'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

Hence, resurrection is about spirit! Not body!

Here is the crunch for us when we wish to assert that resurrection is about a resurrection of the physical body. Paul's imaginative leaps of faith suggest that the life of God was sown in Jesus in the physical body and raised in a spiritual body. And here he makes the leap for we who believe; flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. The perishable must put on perishability. This is the mystical reality of the Christian life, that in dishonour, in shame, in weakness, in all the ambivalence we feel about the lives that we live in our bodies we are being raised in the spirit in same pattern as Christ.

In chapter 1 of this letter Paul writes: *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God,*

This is what it means to be resurrected.

It strikes me that if we read resurrection in this way then it becomes clear that this is the pattern of the spirit of God which is readily available to us, indeed it is a pattern which is at play all the time in our lives and in the world. This resurrection business is not something that the church or Christians control, rather it is the spirit of God at work in the world raising people up to glory from places of shame and degradation to be made 'joint heirs with Christ' as Paul calls the resurrected.

We are called to be people of resurrection, not being cowed by cultures of shame which degrade and dismiss people each day and seek to strip them of their dignity. And because we are people of the resurrection we can pass through these barriers of death in order to lift people to glory and wholeness. This is the nature and purpose of mission. To be bearers of the resurrection life.

The character of this being in the world, this looking for the resurrection of the dead is the character of mercy. It is the character which performs acts of love, which does good, which blesses those who curse, which prays for those who abuse and is unstintingly generous. This is the spirit which is characterised by resurrection, rather than a culture shaped by the sting of death.

Paul concludes: But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Which we may say too. Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People for World Social Justice Day – 20 February - prepared by Dianne Richter

God of all creation, you loved this ancient land long before humans knew it existed or explored it. We thank you for the diversity of the country and its people.

We thank you for the first Australians who know and love this continent with an intimate and profound sensitivity. We acknowledge the courage and sacrifice of the early settlers. We celebrate the diversity of races that now call Australia home and the unique flora and fauna of the continent.

Loving God we acknowledge that we are blessed. In this land you have given us peace, freedom and a society with a rich variety of people. We thank you for the church in Australia. Inspire us to promote the unity of your church as we pray for all its congregations and its clergy. We pray for the Federal and State Governments of this country and for all in positions of authority. We pray that they may govern wisely and justly so that all may live in peace and safety.

We pray for the needs of the whole world, for peace and goodwill over all the earth. We pray for countries ravaged by war, famine, fire or floods. Look with mercy on all to whom great sorrow has come through war or tragedy, help those who are injured, and support those who are dying. Console and protect those who have lost family or friends and give light to those who despair.

In a world torn apart by divisions and strife, lead those in authority into the way of peace, to heal what is damaged and to unite what has been torn asunder. In all lands we remember the unloved, the aged and the little children, the sick in mind or body.

We pray for all refugees everywhere especially those held in detention for many years and ask that you inspire our Government to relinquish the cruelty of their black-letter-law approach. We pray for refugees in makeshift and unsafe camps and pray that all who deal with asylum seekers to do so with compassion, respect and fairness. Loving God, we are all part of your one creation and it is your desire that we be gathered together as one family.

Fill our hearts with the fire of your love and with a firm commitment to bringing about greater justice for all beings.

By sharing the many gifts you give us, may we do our part to ensure equality for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

With a growing awareness of our common home and of the one web of life in which we live, may we see fresh possibilities for responding each day with compassion and courage.

May there be an end to division, strife and war. May we renew our efforts to pray, advocate and work for an end to all forms of exploitation, injustice and suffering.

We ask this especially on this World Day of Social Justice in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Blessing

Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Here we are again Lord: John van de Laar, Sacredise, *adapted*.
Prayers of the People: the Brigidine Sisters & Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide

Rev. Andrew Boyle
Office: 0411 958 127; Mobile 0409 869 009; Email: ajmboyle@outlook.com

Music Director: Mr Peter Hurley

Administrator: Mrs Cathy O'Connor
Fridays, 9am-5.00pm – 0411 958 127
office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

Website: www.ormondunitingchurch.org

NEWS AND NOTICES

PANCAKES IN THE PARK!

Be a part of our Pancake Tuesday Fundraiser

Tuesday, 1st March from 6.00 p.m.

Venue: **Allnutt Park**

As we can't use the Church buildings this year, we're adapting.

- Savoury course is a sausage sizzle
- Sweet course is pancakes and toppings
- Please bring your own chairs/picnic rug if you are able (if not let Dianne or Robyn know and we'll organise some extras)

- You can also bring your own picnic plates and cutlery if you wish
 - Soft drinks will be available – or BYO
- We'd prefer to know who will be joining us (for catering and inclement weather purposes) – please rsvp to dianne_ric@yahoo.com.au or 0413 750 089 by Sunday 27 February

Seem quite different to usual? Some things will be familiar:

- Raising funds for Uniting to support Synod's community service work
 - Enjoying fun and fellowship
 - Yummy pancakes

Need to know more? Contact Dianne R (0413 750 089) or
Robyn M (0423 232 285)

TILSTRA FAMILY

We extend our sympathy to the Hans, Susan, Anneliese and Jayden Tilstra on the death of Hans' father in the Netherlands last week.

WORSHIP DURING THE DEMOLITION PHASE

Note: Zoom Services will commence for Ormond Uniting Church worship effective from Sunday 30th January until the demolition is finished and services at the church will not re-commence until the demolition is complete. Please email the office or check website <https://www.ormondunitingchurch.org/> if needing to request access to the Zoom link.

MEETING UP DURING THE “DEMOLITION PHASE”

Last year the Formation Group made a commitment to offer a time to meet together, chew the fat and enjoy each other’s company during the time that we are unable to be together in worship.

We'll meet in **Allnutt Park (Wheatley Road McKinnon) - Sundays at 6.00pm.**

This coming **Sunday, Feb 20** will be our second catchup gathering at Allnutt Park from 6pm. At this stage it is going to be a perfect evening weather wise, but then again it is Melbourne. If you have any queries around the weather or you would like a lift to the park please contact me on 0448578865 or 9578 6261.

Lorraine Denniston

BYO dinner, drink, and chairs. Following are the dates and the contact names of those who will be able to tell you about changes should the weather hamper the events.

Tues 1 March - Pancake day

6 March - Ron and Mardie Townsend

20 March - David and Heather Baxter

Heather (for the Formation Group)

DEMOLITION OF THE HALLS - CHURCH SITE CURRENTLY CLOSED

The demolition of the Booran Rd hall and the North Rd hall is now underway. During this time the entire church site will be out-of-bounds. We will not have access to the church and the office will be relocated for the duration of the works.

During the demolition phase the office has been relocated to Trinity Uniting Church, Black St Brighton. We are very grateful to the Trinity Church Council for their generosity and hospitality during this phase.

When the project is finished the only building to remain will be the church. (The Fraser St hall will remain but this will be on the parcel of land which has been sold) New, temporary toilets will be provided on site. The church office will be located in the Link after the demolition.

During the demolition period the church office number will continue to be the new number 0411 958 127.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Coatesville Uniting Church – UCAF, have sent an invitation to their World Day of Prayer on **Friday 4 March at 1.30pm**. If anyone would like to take part in this event, please contact Jan Davenport on 9578 1713.

ORMOND LEARNING HUB – READING LUKE’S PASSION – during Lent

By far the largest section of each of the four gospels is the account of Jesus’ Passion. As the Cross is the prime symbol of the church, so the Passion is the prime story which shapes our understanding of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. Yet, we only read the Passion on one day of the year, Good Friday, leaving little opportunity to explore our “biggest” story at any depth. The Passion is rich with symbolism, associations and religious connection back into Israel’s story.

In this 3-week course we will delve into Luke’s Passion, exploring the narrative movement leading up to it, the events of the crucifixion as Luke portrays them, the echoes of the Jewish story and what Luke is pointing to in his telling of the Passion.

When: Thursdays 17th, 24th & 31st March, 7.30pm.

Where: Face to face at Ormond Uniting Church – if the demolition is finished

Cost: \$30 for the course

Who: led by Rev. Andrew Boyle

Enquiries and booking to: learninghub@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

AN EXCELLENT DAILY REFLECTION BOOK

Ormond has been lucky to receive 3 additional copies (free) of With Love to the World this month. It covers the seasons of Lent and Easter.

This means there is an opportunity to "try before you buy". This resource covers about 3 months with a daily reading, reflection and prayer as well as stimulating questions to tackle at the end of each week. Normally the cost of a copy is \$6.00 and there are 4 copies during the year.

Let Heather know if you would like to try one of the 3 free copies and she'll post or deliver to you.

ROSTER for Sunday 27 February 2022 (Service to be via Zoom)

READING	Lisa Saffin	
PRAYERS	Mardie Townsend	
RESOURCES DELIVERY	Gary Richter	

PHOTOS OF ORMOND CHURCH SITE LAST WEEK



