



ALKING POINT

Worship Service Times:	
Traralgon:	9:30 am
Glengarry:	11:00 am
Rosedale:	10:00 am
	(2nd & 4th Tuesdays)
	2:00 pm
	(3rd Sunday)

Our Mission: Sharing God's presence and reconciling love.

Our Vision: More wholehearted, more compassionate,
more abundant life shared in our neighbourhoods

SUNDAY, 7th April 2024

Volume 30 Issue 11

Fall asleep with nothing but LOVE and FORGIVENESS in your heart.

What's meant for you will be for you tomorrow or the day after.

Trust your journey.

Rest your soul.

God is with you and will see you through.

~ Coffee, Quotes and Me



B.L.E.S.S. - How to love your neighbour and change the world

Over the next few weeks, if you talk to me or hear one of my sermons, you should hear me referencing the **BLESS** principles.

B - Begin with prayer

L - Listen

E- Eat

S - Serve

S- Story

These principles come from a great little book which I am reading at the moment "Bless- 5 Everyday ways to love your neighbour and change the world" by Dave and Jon Ferguson. These are the simple things that we are doing already as part of our wonderful church community. To spend some time reflecting on each of these elements will be a great opportunity for us to affirm what we are doing and reflect on our practices in this area.

We will also begin a study series on these themes in May. But before then, you can already join in with the prayer time that is happening at the church at 9am every Friday. If you can't be there physically you can join us by remembering that it's happening and tossing your own personal prayer into the mix! I am inviting lots of people to join us as we pray for the church in our community and the response has been tremendous.

B - Beginning with prayer is such a foundational piece of work for the body of God, but it something we often neglect unless it is built into a regular practice. Often, we only remember to do this as part of the corporate prayer of a Sunday morning or bible study. But what if we started every church meeting with prayer, or prayed before we weeded the garden or pruned a tree? What if we prayed as we washed the dishes or took out the rubbish. Changing our practice, even slightly can change our understanding of what we are doing. Prayer is the deep participation in the reconciling action of God in creation.

When we remember that every moment is a holy moment, then there is no right time or right way to pray. Just start. If you are unsure how to start here's a small prayer that might help:

Lord, I am here. You know me, you know what I am struggling to say. Lord, take my time and presence now to allow me to be blessed and to bless others today. In the name of Christ, Amen.



Traralgon District Uniting Church

Incorporating: Traralgon, Glengarry & Rosedale.



AT HOME WORSHIP - ORDER OF SERVICE

SUNDAY 7th April 2024

Call to Worship & Lighting the Candle

Risen Christ, you live!

Speaking peace into the entombment of fear.

Revealing the wounds you still carry.

Inviting us to reach out in faith.

Equipping us to be your people.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Holy, Holy, Holy.

The light shines in the darkness

and the darkness is transformed. Hallelujah!

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded land and waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing—Community of Christ TiS 473

Listening

Read: Acts 4:32-35, 1 John 1:1-2:2, John 20:19-31,

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word Thanks be to God.

Reflecting—Rev Sandra Houghton

I would have to confess to having a soft spot for Thomas, who famously doubted the disciples' witness to the resurrection, as he struggled to believe that it could be true. My fondness for Thomas is not so much because of his struggle to believe, but rather because he is a flawed person. He makes mistakes and he says things rather bluntly. This he has in common with Peter, who is famous for putting his foot in his mouth and saying the 'wrong' thing. This is also something that my family and friends remind me that I'm likely to do.

Thomas struggles to come to believe in Jesus' resurrection. His struggles, and especially the way in which Jesus responds to his dilemmas and treats him so lovingly, give me heart. As I know that I am a flawed person, too. Poor Thomas.

He has gone down in history labelled forever as 'doubting Thomas'! What a label to put on a person! As if the rest of those who were fortunate enough to see the risen Christ wouldn't have had doubts if they hadn't seen Jesus with their own eyes!

Let's face it. Even those who saw the risen Christ struggled to make sense of what their eyes could see but their minds couldn't, at least at first, understand as being true. Remember that when Jesus first appeared to the disciples in the locked room, they struggled to believe that it was their beloved Lord standing in their midst. It was only when they had the opportunity to see his wounded hands and side that they believed that it really was him. And yet, Mary Magdalene had already told them that she had seen the risen Lord. Didn't they believe her? Well, by their reaction, clearly they hadn't believed her.

I remember a minister saying that when Jesus first greeted the disciples with 'Peace be with you', that they wouldn't have taken it in as they would have been too perplexed and shocked. However, by the time that Jesus said 'Peace be with you' a second time he was probably shouting to make himself heard above the din. Such a hullabaloo would have broken out when they truly realised that it really was him standing there.

Did Jesus censure them for their struggle to believe that he had risen from the dead? Or for not believing Mary Magdalene's witness when she told them of her encounter with Jesus in the garden? No, instead of censure he provided them with what they needed for them to be able to believe. He spoke to them, and showed them his wounded hands and side.

Thomas had the misfortune to not be with the rest of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them, and he did not believe their testimony of encountering the risen Jesus. We can argue that the witness to the resurrection by all those who were in that locked room should have been convincing. However, it remains that Thomas was not convinced of the truth of their testimony and set out his conditions for belief. Interestingly, most of these conditions are ones

that Jesus had already fulfilled for the rest of the disciples. The only addition was that Thomas wanted to touch the wounds and the hole in Jesus' side, probably to assure himself that it was not a ghost that the others had seen, but rather a real flesh and blood person.

When the risen Jesus encountered Thomas, did he censure Thomas for his struggle to believe and for the conditions he had imposed for belief? No, he did not. Instead, he graciously offered to Thomas all that he required for belief. He invited Thomas to put his fingers in the marks on his wounded hands, and put his hand in the hole in his wounded side. This was truly compassionate love at its best. Jesus gently and graciously invited Thomas to give up his unbelief. The heart of this story is not Thomas' nor the disciples' lack of faith, but rather the way in which Jesus so generously offers himself.

To Jesus, it appears that Thomas' faith was more important than the grounds of his faith, so Jesus presented to him his post-resurrection body and exhorted him, "Do not be unbelieving but believing." This generous offer of grace from Jesus led Thomas to a confession of faith. It was a demonstration of the way that Jesus continued to care for his sheep.

Jesus' love for his own did not end with his death, rather this story acts to inform us that Jesus' love, compassion and care for his followers continues. The blessing that Jesus confers at the end of this story is a blessing on all who will follow. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." John 20:29b. It is our blessing, a blessing pronounced by Jesus for our benefit as we are part of that cloud of witnesses who have followed in the footsteps of Thomas and the other disciples. We are among those who believe despite not seeing with our own eyes the risen Jesus. Sometimes our believing might be fragile, reflecting the kind of doubt and struggle that Thomas experienced. But Jesus does not censure the one who has doubts and struggles, rather he will seek to give them what they need for faith.

Being perfect is not a prerequisite for experiencing the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, and isn't that good news for us? None of us are perfect, least of all me. Yet Jesus calls to us, as he did Thomas, offering love, grace, forgiveness, guidance and strength. Thanks be to God.

Singing—These things did Thomas count—TiS 649

Prayers for World & Community

O Lord our God,
You hear our prayers before we speak,

and answer before we know our need.
Although we cannot pray as we ought,
may your Spirit pray in us,
drawing us to you and to our neighbours.

We pray for the whole creation: may all things
work together for good, until by your design,
your children inherit the earth and order it wisely.

We pray for peace in the world.

Disarm weapons, silence guns,
and put out ancient hate that smoulders still,
or flames in sudden conflict.

Create good-will between every race and nation.

We pray for those who are poor, those who are
hungry, in need of employment, homes or
education. Increase in us, and in all who prosper,
concern for the disinherited.

We pray for sick people who suffer pain, or
struggle with demons of the mind, who silently cry
out for healing; may they be patient, brave and
trusting.

We pray for the church, that begun, maintained
and promoted by the Holy Spirit, it may be true,
engaging, glad and active, doing your will.

We pray for those who do not believe, who are
shaken by doubt, or have turned, or been turned
against you. Open their eyes to see beyond our
broken fellowship the wonders of your love
displayed in Jesus of Nazareth, in the crucified
and risen Christ. (*from UIW2 pp281-284*)

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

Singing - Christ is alive! TiS 387

Blessing

Risen, reigning Christ, in you, the past, present
and future are brought together in one great hope.
Renew our faith in you, so that the past may not
hinder us, nor the present overwhelm us,
nor the future frighten us.

You have brought us this far;
continue to lead us until our hope is fulfilled and
we join all God's people in never-ending praise;
For your name's sake. Amen (*from UIW2 p477*)

Reflection: *Rev. Sandra Houghton*
Retired minister, Sale.

Liturgy & Editor: *Rev. Jennie Gordon*
Shearwater Ministry Team : Cowes.



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Winter Appeal

If you have new blankets and clothing, scarves, beanies and gloves for our annual WINTER APPEAL, please leave them in the office. The dedication service for your donations will be on the 5th May.

This is one way we can show our support for all our friends in need in our community.
Thank you.



mainly music
Thursday
@ 9:30 am
During school term



Music Group
Fridays
@ 5:00 pm



Playgroup
Monday
@ 9:30 am
During school term

peace be with you

John 20: 19-31

*breathless body bound
tomb sealed with stone
doors locked in fear
yet, you are here*

*persistent peddler of peace
intruder into gathered grief
rupturing the possible with promise
blood and water birthing
breathing new creation
from the dust of disbelief*

*coaxing our questions
enticing eager infant hands
to touch the wounds
until with wobbling faith we stand
and learn to say, acclaim, proclaim
your encompassing, indwelling name
and know you will not leave us*

*as you bless us
as you send us
as we stumbling go*



Poem by Jennie Gordon, from Dad & Daughter

Scripture

7th April

Acts 4:32-35

Psalms 133

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

14th April

Acts 3:12-19

Psalms 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

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