

APRIL 2020 | ISSUE 3

THE WALKERVILLE WRITE-UP

The official Covid-19 congregational news
edition of Walkerville Uniting Church



Some Wondering

Have you ever wondered what happens in a Godly Play session? Here is what happened Sunday the 26th April.

Preparation: Before the session Kylie explains what children need to get comfortable for the Godly Play Session with Tina. Parents will need to allow at least 15-20mins for the story, and wondering time, plus another 15-20mins for the children to respond and make something.

The Parable: The Parable of the Mustard Seed can be found in Matthew 13:31-32. He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

The story unfolds: Tina helps to explain the story with objects and wondering questions.

Some wondering questions: parents ask the children (remembering there are no right or wrong answers!):

I wonder... whether the man who sowed that tiny seed in the ground has a name..

I wonder... what he did while he waited for the seed to grow..

I wonder... whether he was happy when he saw the birds coming..

I wonder... whether the seed liked being planted..

I wonder... whether the seed enjoyed growing..

I wonder... whether the birds were happy to find the tree..

I wonder... whether the birds have names..

I wonder... whether you have been close to a tree like this..

I wonder... what this tree really is..

I wonder... what this place really is..

I wonder... what else you are wondering about..

I wonder which part was your favourite part of the story...

I wonder what you will create today in response...



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

- Wednesday Prayer
11.15am Zoom
- Playgroup online
- Sunday service
including Children's
Conversation &
Godly Play.

REFLECTIONS ON GODLY PLAY

These comments were posted in the Facebook group in response to the Godly Play story.

- Hanging out with Kylie and Tina (virtually) and wondering lots and worrying less...
- Oscar wondered when the coronavirus restrictions would end and how he could make a mustard tree out of Hama Beads.
- Isaac wondered about the name of the man who planted the mustard tree and decided that Zac was a good option!
- Ava wondered what high school would be like when she eventually gets there and enjoyed making bookmarks and colouring this morning.
- Noah wondered how long it took for the tree to grow and how much bigger it will get. He commented "The kingdom of heaven keeps on growing bigger and bigger, there is always room for more and more people"

He made his own tree, can you see the tiny (pom pom) seed it grew from?



If you would like to join Godly Play or invite a family member to, they can find all of the stories so far on our YouTube channel. Or [contact Kylie](#) for more information.

FAMILY MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Playgroup @ Home

Pause Connect Play Fun Belong

Playgroup @ Walkerville UC

THURSDAY 9.30AM
Playgroup @ Walkerville UC
Facebook Group

May 17th Online

MSG05 Family Service

MESSY Church

Explore PENTECOST

IN A BAG!

New Life in the Spirit

PLAYGROUP



Our playgroup friends are putting together their own one-off newsletter to help feel connected. We've enjoyed the creative contributions coming in so far, and look forward to seeing more! Email your letter [here](mailto:admin@walkerville.unitingchurch.org.au).

YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

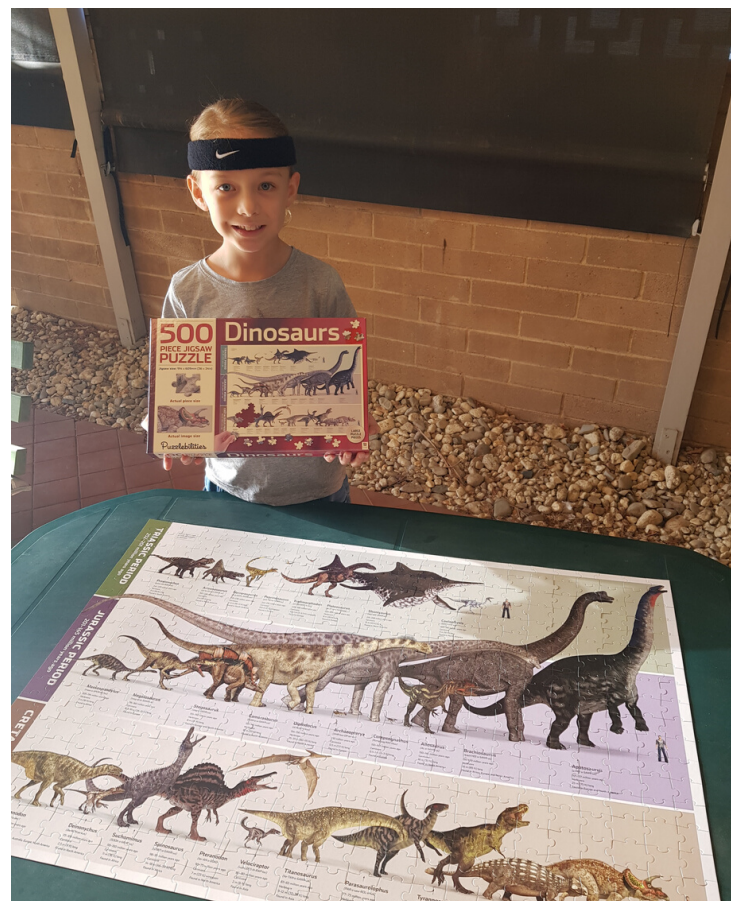
HAVE YOU BEEN OUT DRIVING RECENTLY?

Yesterday I pulled up at a red light, about six cars back. There were three columns of cars waiting at the intersection. But the curious thing was- they were all social distancing. Every car was at least a metre further apart than usual. This new normal has really got into our psyche. Check it out next time you are out on the road.

Cheers, Helen B

IT'S PUZZLING....

Noah has been working on this 500 piece Dinosaur puzzle over the past few weeks. He's very happy to have completed it!



What are you up to at home?
We'd love to see your photos and
hear your latest news.



THE BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH

We now come to the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John. This entire chapter captures a lengthy prayer by Jesus. It is often referred to as the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. Here we discover Jesus praying, firstly for his own high priestly ministry (v1-5), then for the ministry of his disciples into the immediate future (v6-19), and lastly for all, who will come to believe down through the ages (v20-26)—which includes you and me. This week we will explore the first portion of this prayer.

Jesus' prayer begins as he tests the weight of what he is soon to suffer on the cross. Over the earthly lifetime of Jesus, there must have been a gradual realization that the restoration of creation could only be accomplished through his own descent into the darkness and disorder of death. As he learned the scriptures and understood the leading of the Holy Spirit he would have increasingly comprehended that he was being directed to suffer like no one had ever suffered before and to traverse territory that no one had ever passed through before.

Many people have suffered physically as much as and, in many cases, more than Jesus did, but no one has borne the guilt, shame, degradation and disgrace of the entire human race at the same time. In his suffering Jesus was tested to the deepest degree as his integrity and faithfulness were stretched to the farthest limits of death.

Interestingly, Plato uncannily predicted that if an apparently perfect man were ever to appear that we human beings would be so confronted that we would feel the need to test the authenticity of that perfection by subjecting that man to a test of suffering similar to that of Job. For Plato this would require that everything of value in his life would need to be stripped from him.

Ultimately, his life would need to be taken from him in the cruellest of manners to see if he would remain "righteous" until the end. "We cannot be sure in that case whether he is just for justice's sake or for the sake of the gifts and the honors. So we must strip him bare of everything..." (Republic 2.361c). For Plato, the process of "stripping bare" would inevitably culminate in death by crucifixion (Republic 2.361e - 2.362a). Three hundred and fifty years later Plato's prognostications are horribly played out in the life of Jesus Christ.

By this time Jesus is fully aware that he is about to face a test something like that which Plato predicted. He will need to call upon all his reserves and for Jesus his greatest strength is his connection to his Father and so he prays, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." (John 17:1). What is Jesus saying here? Maybe the following loose paraphrase will help. "Father this is the moment when everything will be revealed, and everything is in the balance. Therefore, Father let me be revealed as your true Son so that your Fatherhood will be fully seen in me as I obey and trust you through every moment of this trial." Jesus knows that what will be tested in this trial will be his connection and faithfulness to the Father. Jesus is the first and only human being who has the chance of overcoming the trial because he is the first and only human being to truly know the Father.

In the next two verses Jesus lays out exactly what the nature of eternal life really is. Firstly, he says that the integrity of his relationship as the true Son of the Father gives him the inherent authority to share eternal life with humanity.

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THE BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH CONTINUED

Jesus then describes the nature of eternal life in the third verse saying, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." In other words, eternal life is all about the profound connection and fellowship of the Father and the Son and Jesus understands that his mission is to draw humanity into that same life. However, to accomplish this Jesus will have to allow his authority to be examined by death and his integrity will be tested by sin. Jesus knows that right at that moment everything is on the line and that the next eighteen hours will be the most important chapter in history. He knows that his connection to the Father will be stretched by death.

Death is the exact opposite of life at every level: spiritual, relational, communal, ecological and biological. Death does not just result in the demise of our physical bodies; it strikes at every connection that makes life worth living. Death disintegrates, dissolves, dissipates, disperses, disbands, diffuses, divides, disappoints, disassociates, divorces, distances and destroys every connection it touches.

Sounds a little bit like a pandemic, and in a sense, it is. The insidious virus of sin ultimately corrodes every proper and perfect connection

that we were created to know and enjoy, and, in the end, it kills us.

Only Jesus has the capacity to swim out into the cesspool of our brokenness to save us but in doing so he must allow himself to experience the corrosive acid of sin and risk the undertow of death. And so, he prays, "Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." (John 17: 5). Again, let me paraphrase with these words, "Father give me a fresh measure of the kind of love and life I enjoyed with you before creation even existed, to strengthen me for the test I now must face." Keep in mind that Jesus is fully human in this trial and he cannot, and will not, draw upon his divinity to accomplish it. For the test to mean anything he must face down death as one of us.

With hindsight we know that he has defeated death, but what we may miss is what that means. It means that Jesus has proven that he has the authority to grant eternal life to us. Now by faith we can share in the spoils of the battle won, and really live.

In faith
David Kowalick

PRAYER POINTS

Published on the UC e-News. This week we pray for:

- Residents of Pacific Island nations whose lives have been disrupted by Cyclone Harold. [UCA President Dr Deidre Palmer has offered a Prayer for the Pacific.](#)
- Our UCA partner churches in Asia, Africa and the Pacific who are caring for their COVID-19 affected communities. Health workers and other essential community service providers who continue to provide vital care and support to the most vulnerable.

SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line

Uniting Communities is operating the South Australian COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line, established by the State Government to help those struggling with the current situation or with feelings of isolation.

Counselling is offered over the phone and via video calls, along with referrals to a range of services if needed.

The Support Line is open 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm on 1800 632 753.

FEELING PHILOSOPHICAL THIS WEEK...

Many years ago, when our son was about 4, we (and several friends) appeared on an ABC television program entitled "Parental Guidance Recommended" talking about our children's readiness for school (the show's producer was a parent at our kindergarten). In the program I suggested that it was beneficial for children to have the opportunity to be "a big fish in a small pond"... it sounds rather pompous when talking about kindergarten but, nevertheless, I recalled it recently when considering how some school children are missing out on special events this year. This got me thinking about teenagers, at the cross-roads between childhood and adulthood.

As a person who enjoys celebrating special occasions, I believe rites of passage are especially important. Think about all the 'rites' teenagers experience, which they will probably miss this year:

- getting a part-time job
- school formal
- speech night
- graduation

Not to mention the other experiences our daughter and son gained greatly by:

- taking part in school musical activities
- participating in sporting rivalries
- experiencing opportunities for school leadership

In virtually every indigenous community around the world, boys (particularly) have always gone through a coming-of-age rite of passage ceremony around the time of puberty. I believe this helps them to transform from boy behaviour to adult male behaviour. And I think that in our contemporary world, properly facilitated rites of passage could be an effective form of preventative medicine against depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions.

We are quite rightly very concerned at this time for the elderly in our community and those whose health is seriously compromised - but let us also spare a thought for those much younger, active young people who may be missing out on special memories which many of us hold dear. And so, I feel for teenagers this year who, while facing uncertainty about schoolwork and exams, may justifiably feel they have 'missed out' on some very special occasions in their young lives.

Imagine when they're our age and look back on this year of seismic change. I hope they won't feel cheated. The ramifications of that emotion could have serious consequences for our society (as we've seen in young adults in the eastern states). So although on the surface teenagers seem to 'have-it-all', let us remember what they won't have this year; and pray that they will grow to be responsible adults without a chip on their shoulder, thankful that they survived in self-isolating, social-distancing, law-abiding Australia.

Sue Farrant



Are you feeling philosophical?

Had some thoughts you'd like to share?

Send them to

admin@walkerville.unitingchurch.org.au

SOME EXTRA WONDERING

How are you finding connection to the church during this time?

How do you rate how Walkerville UC is connecting to you?

Are you using the website, Facebook, YouTube? Just this newsletter? What can we do to help?