

JUNE 2020 | ISSUE 9

THE WALKERVILLE WRITE-UP

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



Prayer for a Just Future

Sunday, 14 June to Saturday, 20 June 2020 is Refugee Week. This week only happens once a year. It is a unique opportunity to make time to learn about the experiences of people from refugee backgrounds and to celebrate the valuable contributions made by refugees to the world. It is a reminder that we are all responsible for creating a welcoming country. The theme of Refugee Week 2020 is celebrating the year of welcome. A more welcoming country doesn't start with politicians, it starts with us.

*"Prayer for a Just Future" by Common Grace's Justice
for People Seeking Asylum Team*

Creator God, you are the giver of life.

Saviour Jesus, you have shown us what it is to love.

Guiding Spirit, you awaken us to justice.

Show us how to build a just future, where all people have
equal opportunity to belong and to flourish in your vitality and
love.

We ask for mercy for people in limbo on temporary visas, for
safety for those seeking permanent protection, for reunion for
families who are separated by borders, and for relief for those
losing hope within our detention systems.

We pray for First Nations Peoples fighting for justice on their
own Lands, for survivors of domestic violence and for creation
groaning under climate disruption.

Help us to live out your inclusive love. Help us to live into your
Kingdom where all people have equal opportunity to belong
and flourish. Work through us, towards a just future. Amen.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

- **Sunday 14th June** service
online
- **Wednesday 17th June** Bible
Study 10am in Hall 2
- **Wednesday 17th June**
Prayer group 11.15am in Hall
2. Meeting in person and via
Zoom (contact David for info)
- **Wednesday 17th June**
Holy Communion
1pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm

NOTE: Kylie is on leave until
Wednesday 17th of June.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

This week we continue our journey through the Gospel of John as we explore the showdown between Jesus and Pilate. Interestingly, John has devoted generous space for this fascinating conversation—one of the longest in the Bible. Doubtless this is because John wants to reveal so much more than the mere facts of the dialogue; for this conversation represents the clash and conflict between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God.

Right in the middle of this account we find Jesus saying,

"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. IF IT WERE, MY SERVANTS WOULD FIGHT TO PREVENT MY ARREST BY THE JEWISH LEADERS. BUT NOW MY KINGDOM IS FROM ANOTHER PLACE." (JOHN 18: 36).

This passage is often misunderstood as if Jesus were saying that the kingdom of God is purely spiritual and has nothing to do with this world, but this would be a mistake. As N.T. Wright explains, when Jesus says, "His kingdom doesn't come *from* this world." He is not therefore implying "that his 'kingdom' was altogether other-worldly, a spiritual or heavenly reality that had nothing to do with the present world at all." After all Jesus instructed his disciples (and you and me) to pray that the kingdom of God would come and rule over *this* world as it does in heaven. Jesus was saying that even though the kingdom of God is not *from* this world, it is nevertheless meant *for* this world.

Unfortunately, much of Western Christianity has adopted a mostly Platonic view of things to come that creates a radical dualism between the material world and the kingdom of God. Thus, we have inherited talk of 'going to heaven,' as if we are to leave the earth and our bodies behind to be found in a celestial and otherworldly existence. This is a million miles from the meaning of Jesus' words to Pilate.

Jesus had a very Jewish understanding of the kingdom that was all about the restructuring and renewal of *this* world, which would include everything from our physical bodies and the creation, all the way to the government of this world and how that would work.

When the first Christians began to go out into the world preaching about repentance and the kingdom of God, they had a very material understanding of the kingdom in their minds when they did it. Repentance was a commonly used political term which was a call to political allegiance to a certain king, whom they asserted was Jesus. Even the name, 'Jesus Christ' is full of political implications for, when rightly understood, it means something like, the true saviour and rightful king of the world.

Let me break this down a little. The name Jesus, in Jewish speak, actually means 'saviour and deliverer,' which in itself is a kingly characteristic. The second half of the name, Christ, is not actually a name at all, but is better understood as a title. Christ literally means 'anointed,' which was how kings were inaugurated in ancient times. Therefore, the title 'Christ,' in this instance, means the one who has been chosen and appointed by God to rule (both the words, Christ and Messiah, are interchangeable designations derived from Greek and Hebrew). We must see these things if we are to properly understand the meaning of the gospel that the first Christians preached.

So then, the essential gospel the first believers preached is this, 'Jesus is the true king of the world, the very one you have been hoping for and waiting for all long, and the proof of this claim is his physical resurrection. Therefore, you

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD? CONT.

must change your allegiance from all the pretend kings and their false kingdoms and give it to the true king, where you will find your place in his kingdom. There you will discover forgiveness and restoration as a foretaste of things to come by the Holy Spirit'.

With all this in mind the conversation between Jesus and Pilate makes a whole lot more sense, most especially when Jesus says,

"IN FACT, THE REASON I WAS BORN AND CAME INTO THE WORLD IS TO TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH. EVERYONE ON THE SIDE OF TRUTH LISTENS TO ME."
(JOHN 18: 37).

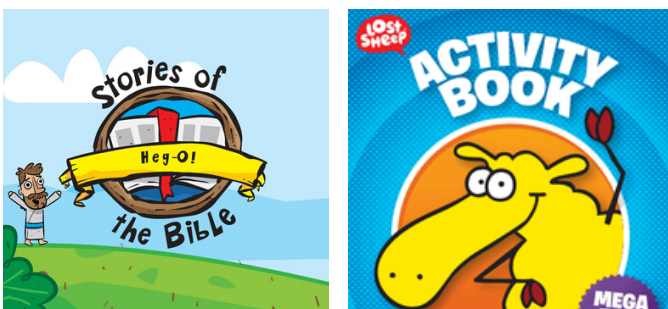
Jesus is the true king, who speaks true words and has a true kingdom. Everything else is a lie.

In faith
David Kowalick

SUNDAY MORNING CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

If you visit our YouTube channel you will find some beautifully presented messages prepared by Kylie and others in the children's ministry team. While Kylie is on leave she has suggested a few options for families: Saddleback Kids have some great animated cartoons (we have watched quite a few of these together!) pick a favourite Bible story and re-create or re-enact the story in your own way.. you could build it with Lego, or video yourself acting - get creative! Share with us and send your Bible Story creation to Fiona in the office.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5aPdmniG3y_n7hXEKTV4qQnleCe-p6Ww



There are free "The Lost Sheep" series printable activities available to download and you can even listen to the author read the stories and teach you how to draw his favourite characters.
www.lostsheep.com.au/activities/

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXD7zYLIM2ZTvhW7z3uK5u7uMonusyrrhn>



As there will be no June msg@5 prepared for you to do at home, and the team have a break to get ready for July msg@5, this is a great opportunity to connect with the wider Messy Church community and watch "Messy Church - Around the World"

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLdW8Sixa4ehhlQu45_utiBeBBzAnB0dM

Did you know our msg@5 Family service is part of the international movement known as 'Messy church'? On Ascension Day (Thursday 21 May) Messy Church set out on the speediest round-the-world trip ever, to celebrate the amazing international Messy Church community and to bring a little joy to the day. Why not go on a Messy adventure across the globe?

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/covid-19>

HOLY COMMUNION SERVICES COMMENCING 17 JUNE



Thank you to those who have already 'signed up' to partake in holy communion beginning Wednesday 17th of June.

Please email ministerwalkervilleuca@outlook.com or text 0413 098 965 to nominate which time slot would work best for you. There will be a maximum of 20 people per session.

DAVID KOWALICK

Beginning Wednesday 17th June there will be communion services throughout the afternoon at 1pm, 2pm, 3pm and 4pm.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

The 2019/2020 Annual Report and Financial Statements are coming out with this edition of the Write-up. Those of you who receive a printed copy, rather than electronic, will also receive a printed copy of the Annual Report. If you require a printed copy of the Financial Statements, please contact the office.

FAMILY MINISTRY SURVEY



Check your inbox for a brief family ministry survey coming out soon designed to gather your feedback on what material you've engaged with while we've been worshipping online.

PRAYER POINTS

Published on the UC e-News.

This week we pray for:

- the healing of racial tensions worldwide, including here in Australia, and an end to racial inequality and racist attitudes.
- our Church partners and other faith organisations around the world actively involved in confronting racism and prejudice.
- Australians who are struggling as we enter our first recession in 29 years.
- every volunteer who is helping to serve those who are in great need of food, shelter and clothing right now.



WALKERVILLE UNITING CHURCH

E: admin@walkerville.unitingchurch.org.au P: 8342 5875 W: www.walkerville.unitingchurch.org.au