

Newsletter 17th October 2021

Sunday's Readings:

Ps. Andrew Everson will be bringing us the Word this week

Prayers of the people

- Open Doors are sponsoring an International Day of Prayer for the church on 7 November. Our church will pray together on that Sunday morning at our service for the persecuted church.
- Please pray for the Barnabas Fund, Open Doors and Compassion as they help Christians around the world who live in difficult circumstances.
- Please continue to pray for Murray Burdett, John Ruck, Gordon Williams, Grant Inverarity as they cope with health issues, undergo treatment or await results of tests, and pray for improved health and recovery.
- Please pray for our families and friends and encourage those who may be unwell or stressed in our congregation.

Notices

Family Church – Sunday 17th October 5:30 pm

- **Watching Episode 1 of "The Chosen"**

AGM Congregational Meeting 21st November:

There are 3 vacancies of elders to be filled. Robina Williams and Bronte Cobbledick terms are concluding and Joel Munro is resigning. Nomination form for Elders are available at the back of the church or the office. These forms need to be forwarded to Carol Lawrie by 9.15am on Sunday the 7th of November.

Reports need to be forwarded to Carol Lawrie by 7th November. A list of reports or on the notice board in Blackwell Hall.

If you have any questions prior to the meeting please contact members of the Church Council, Congregation Secretary Carol Lawrie or Bill Cobbledick Chairman of the Congregation.

Church Gardeners Required: Jill and Eugene are "retiring" as of the 1st November – Is gardening a passion for you? See Jill and Eugene

We thank them for the many years of gardening they have given us.

Tom Golding” Embracing the Prostitute or the Bride” Tom will be speaking at Barnett’s on the 23rd Of October from 9.30am to 3pm. At 12.30pm there will be a BBQ lunch (meat supplied) if you could bring a salad or sweet to share. BYO Bible, chair and drinks. See leaflet for sessions and breaks.

Name Tags and Updates: Please use the form at the back of the church if you would like a name tag or need to update you email or phone number to get the newsletter or be able to be contacted.

Tithe a tin Pray a Packet: the support that the congregation gives this worthy project is very much appreciated by those who are in need during these difficult times. Thank you very much

Church Service: Due to Covid 19 the guidelines for Sunday are as follows.

- Masks must be worn
- 1/2m² distancing aapplies (**152** persons in the church)
- Singing allowed with masks on.
- Morning Tea under covid 19 guidelines

Tarooki: Please join us to celebrate 61 years of camping in Robe. Onsite at 55 Main St. Robe on Sunday November 14th, 2021, at 10.30am for a Thanksgiving Service followed by a catered lunch. RSVP to tarooki@uvsa.org.au or 0429157270 by November 1st.

Midweek Bible reading:

Hebrews 4: 14 - 5:10

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

⁵ Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³ This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honour on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵ In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.”

⁶ And he says in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

God has made us relational beings. That is, we are only really human in relationship to others. We can only really define ourselves, to know who we are, in relationship to others. And it is only in positive, affirming, relationships of love with others, that life becomes truly meaningful. We were made for relationship.

The most potentially powerful relationship is the one we have with God, our creator. And yet this relationship is also potentially the most difficult. Even if it is crystal clear that the creation itself shows us that God is so very real, and even though what we know is that God is unquestionably faithful and unreservedly good, the distance between us and God can seem too large to cross. God can seem too distant to know. We can “know” about God with our head knowledge. We can even “know” about God with our heart. But we can still miss the intimacy of a real reciprocal relationship.

The Jewish people found some of these tensions resolved through sharing in the intimate relationship of their great leaders and prophets – Abraham who spoke with God at the burning bush; Moses often who spoke with God at the tent of meeting so that his face glowed with the encounter; and the prophets such as Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah and the priests such as Samuel who heard God’s word. The great leaders, prophets and priests interceded with God on behalf of the people. Sometimes this intercession didn’t happen, and tragedy followed.

Ezekiel 22:30 reports God as saying:

³⁰ “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”

In it was a particular job of the High Priest to intercede with God on behalf of the people. The Jewish faith recognised that the only real thing that stood between God and his people was unconfessed sin. So, it was the task of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement to enter the most Holy place in the temple, (the place where it was understood that heaven and earth intersected) and present a sacrifice for the sins of the nation, including his own sins, presented on behalf of the nation.

Importantly the High Priest represented the nation because he was part of it. He was, at least in theory, “a man of the people”, with appropriate gifts of leadership and empathy, appointed by consensus, and not someone who simply appoints themselves.

The writer of Hebrews draws all these ideas together when he declares that Jesus is our great High Priest.

Jesus is one of us. He lived a human life, was subjected to the same kind of pressures and temptations. He felt pain, and thirst, and hunger, but also knew the pleasure, indeed the joy of relationships, of family life, and of the simple pleasures of work, prayer, and relaxation. Jesus loved life, hated and opposed death, and had only love and empathy for people caught in the difficulties and the compromises of life. And yet he was sinless – and in this regard he is perfect humanity.

He is also perfect God. And as such, Jesus is the true place where heaven and earth meet. Jesus is the perfect intersection of God and humanity. So, he is our perfect High Priest, uniquely able to represent us to God and to truly represent God to us.

He is also the lamb of God, the once for all days-of-atonement sacrifice.

Jesus was from all eternity God, but still as a human being he needed to grow in his understanding of himself and of his mission. Did Jesus seek these things for himself? No, he did not. Certainly, he sought God from his very early days, but Jesus was appointed by God the Father. At Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan River it is God's voice from heaven that declares "You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased".

When Jesus approaches the awful time of his trial, humiliation, and death, his prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane were heard. He was given the strength not to avoid the cross, but to triumph through it, as the writer notes in verse 7 above.

Melchizedek, was the man who approached and blessed Abraham. He was "king of Salem" and priest of "God Most High" (Genesis 14:18). The name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness". Also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." This man combined the offices of king and priest. The writer of Hebrews is saying that Jesus resembles Melchizedek. Jesus is our king and our priest.

Jesus is the way for us to relate to God. He is God in human form – a completely faithful, approachable friend, the one who stands in the gap for us, our priest, and our king.

Andrew