

Newsletter 10th October 2021

Sunday's Readings:

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

Prayers of the people

- Pray for those concerned about the recent case of covid19 in Mt. Cambier. Pray that people will abide with the restrictions to keep them safe.
- Please pray for the Barnabas Fund, Open Doors and Compassion as they help Christians around the world who live in difficult circumstances.
- Pray for the congregational meeting today Sunday the 10th. Pray that a committee be appointed that will be led to the appointment of a minister who will be God's choice.
- 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"**

Congregational Meeting 10th October:

To proceed in filling the vacancy created by the pending retirement of Andrew early in 2022 we are required to appoint a Joint Nominating Committee. The JNC is made up by at least two persons appointed by Presbytery, one of these as Chairperson, and 2 to 6 persons appointed by the Congregation.

The regulations regarding the appointment of a Minister of the Word contain a provision " that the Congregation delegates authority to the Church Council to appoint its members to the JNC."

The Church Council is seeking an endorsement to act on behalf of the Congregation and in formalizing this proposal a meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday 10th October following the morning service.

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

Pastoral Care Fundraiser Early Notice BBQ to be held at a date to be advised

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

- Masks must be worn
- 1/2m² distancing applies (**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 3:7- 4-11 Rest

⁷ So, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion,

during the time of testing in the wilderness,

⁹ where your ancestors tested and tried me,

though for forty years they saw what I did.

¹⁰ That is why I was angry with that generation;

I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray,

and they have not known my ways.’

¹¹ So I declared on oath in my anger,

‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

¹² See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. ¹⁵ As has just been said:

“Today, if you hear his voice,

do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion.”

¹⁶ Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷ And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

4 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. ³ Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

“So I declared on oath in my anger,

‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. ⁴ For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “On the seventh day God rested from all his works.” ⁵ And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”

⁶ Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹ There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

The author of Hebrews is arguing like this:

The Jewish people had been offered an on-going relationship with the living God. They had been offered this “the good news”. They had been rescued from slavery in Egypt, made into a nation led by their God appointed leader Moses, miraculously fed in the wilderness, and guided by the tangible presence of God – the column of smoke and the pillar of fire. And yet when that generation of people are first offered the promised land, offered entrance to a “good and spacious land” “flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8), a place where they could rest in peace and prosperity, they didn’t have the faith to enter. Just as they had repeatedly failed to trust God during their years of wandering so they failed to follow Moses’ directive to “go up and take possession of the land” (Numbers 13-14). God decreed that that generation would never enter, but would die in the wilderness.

It fell to Joshua to lead a new generation into the promised land. But (the author argues) that could not have been the end of it because David in Psalm 95 writes: “Today, if you hear his voice,⁸ do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion...”¹¹ So, (God says), I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”. So, the offer still stands. It is a continuing call to enter God’s rest.

The author of Hebrews is arguing that people still have the opportunity to enter into God’s rest. This is still “the good news”. The offer is open now for “Today” for a “Sabbath-rest” in the same way that God rested on the seventh day from his work of creation. What we are to imagine, I think, is to be able to enter the kind of intimacy that Adam and Eve shared with God at the creation of the world. We are to imagine them walking together in the garden, “in the cool of the day”.

The gospel message is that the people of God, through trust in Jesus have now entered into that rest. “³ Now we who have believed enter that rest”. It is a present reality “Today”, as the writer affirms. Certainly, we look forward to the day of the Lord, the coming of Christ in power and glory, resurrection, renewal, and a new heaven and earth, but for Christians it is a promise already being fulfilled as “¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ...”.

Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430 AD) famously wrote “*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.*” He may have been thinking about this passage above, or perhaps about what Jesus himself told us:

²⁸ Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

This kind of “rest”, in communion with God, is not inactivity but it’s not a meaningless, frantic, pursuit of self-directed, self-fulfilment either. It’s an easy burden, even if the demands of energy and commitment are huge. Because if we know the “*why*”, even the most difficult “*how*” becomes meaningful and bearable. A restful soul.

Andrew