


News Letter

24 June 2020

Our Church on-line

Naracoorte Uniting Church web site: <https://www.naracoorteuca.org.au/>

Or listen on your Phone or Tablet. Download the *Church Central*  app from the apps store and find Naracoorte Uniting Church.

No Podcast this Sunday but we will post a video of the service on the website during the week

Church will be back on from Sunday 28 June. 9:30 am at Naracoorte Uniting

With the easing of restrictions, we can start meeting as church again. We can accommodate 50 in the church with appropriate distancing and 40 in Wesley hall. The Uniting Church is asking that those whose age or health status makes them more vulnerable to take medical advice before attending.

Please let us continue to do the right thing in our gatherings, maintaining distancing, good hand hygiene, etc. so that the Covid 19 containment success we currently enjoy will be maintained.

- Sunday School will resume 26 July 2020 (after school holidays)

This Sunday Reading: **John 17:10-26** "Jesus prays for us"

Some Prayers of the people

Gracious Father we pray:

- That our church would continue to be focused outwards towards our community and other communities throughout the world, particularly towards places and people who have not heard or have misunderstood the gospel. We pray that we would be a church with a clear mission.
- for an Assistant Pastor – we pray that God will call the right person for this role with the gifts and graces to connect well with people and with the maturity of faith that places trust in Jesus Christ and commitment to his service.
- we continue to pray for those among us who are ill and those preparing for procedures or recovering from operations. We pray Lord that you are close to people in need, or in trouble, and close to those who are dying. We pray for your grace and peace.

Mid-week Bible Reading

Hebrews 13:1-17 (NIV)

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ² Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. ³ Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

⁴ Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."

⁶ So we say with confidence,
“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?”

⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁹ Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

¹¹ The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. ¹² And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³ Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. ¹⁶ And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

¹⁷ Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

The writer of the book of Hebrews is almost at the end of his letter and he leaves us with a series of exhortations to continue to live in a way that reflects who we are as Christian people – identifying and having empathy with those who are suffering, particularly those who are imprisoned for their faith.

There are calls to love, to live as a Christian family, to show hospitality, to show generosity and compassion, to stay away from immoral behaviour, to honour marriage, to respect the elders of the church and their leadership, to not be materialistic, but to trust God, (“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”) mindful that we inherit a city that is to come, not one that we are building for ourselves.

It’s a long list of good things that we need to do and it’s easy to miss the note of grace, because it is only because of “hearts...strengthened by grace” that we are capable of consistently doing any of these things, and certain of doing them out of love rather than just as duty.

But that’s exactly what the author is getting at when he points to Jesus - the one who makes us “holy through his own blood”. We are not made acceptable to God through a ritual at an altar, as the author points out, or through completing a long list of good things. We are made acceptable to God through the shame and sacrifice accepted and undertaken by Jesus.

So, we join him “outside the camp”, outside of a human culture obsessed with appearances. We accept the “shame” of admitting that God is God and not we ourselves.

The sacrifice that we offer to God is not ritual or obligation, but simple praise for what he has done for us. This “praise” is worship, certainly, but it is also the whole way in which we live our lives; not forgetting “to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased”.

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