

21st March 2021

Sunday's Reading

Ecclesiastes 10:10

Family Service

Joel Munro will bring us the word this week.

➤ **Some Prayers of the people**

- Pray for the coming Easter presentation in the schools and give thanks that prayers were answered for this to happen. Give thanks for the generous donations of people to support this.
- Pray for encouragement and support for the Lucindale community as they recover from the effects of the fire. Give thanks for the various groups and people who are helping and supporting them.
- Pray for our youth in the congregation and community as they face these challenging times, that can make good choices in their lives.
- Pray for our government, that they will be guided to make good decisions in these difficult times.
- Pray for those who are persecuted for their faith, for those who are hungry, homeless and live-in fear.

Notices

Thank you to all those who shared last Sunday morning about the way God is moving in their lives and the lives of others at this time. It was quite an inspiring and encouraging time.

Friendly Thursday is at 10am in Blackwell Hall. All are welcome to come and join in for fellowship.) Dot is always looking for people to join in, making a cuppa, playing games or just a cuppa and chat.

Name tags: Please let Lois or Teresa know if anyone requires a name tag.

Mid-Week Bible reading

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

These words were addressed to a people in exile, far from home and bereft of hope. They had broken the covenant made at Sinai and reaped the consequence of their disobedience. The people had not demonstrated any aptitude for faithfulness and only sought God as a last resort.

The old covenant was written on stone tablets and on scrolls. The book of the Law containing the many rules and regulations of the covenant were mostly ignored and forgotten by the priests and the people.

The old and new covenants are the same in that the character of God continues to love a wavering and faithless people. They continue to be God's treasured possession. But now God will put the law within them and write it on their hearts. Now everyone, great and small can know God.

And it will be all God's doing "I will forgive their iniquity and will remember their sins no more". This time, the covenant relies solely on God's mercy, his ever-present grace to forgive and restore disobedient people and call them back into relationship with himself.

This new covenant is a description of how a believer in Christ lives. The indwelling Spirit interprets his word in our hour of need. His voice speaks to us as we read the Scriptures and pray. It is intimate fellowship, not through intellectual attainment, but direct, and immediate. His sweet indwelling presence breaks in upon you and he becomes more real than the physical world around you.

The new covenant is a very one-sided affair: God does it all and we do nothing except receive it. If we think that means we can do whatever we like, then we fail to understand grace.

It is all God's doing. In and through Jesus Christ our Lord, the God of Jeremiah continues to forgive, renew, reform, and call people into right relationship with him and one another. God is faithful, even when we are not. That truly is good news and should be celebrated preferably with trumpets and always with great joy!