

Dear Beloved,

Our readings this week are all about relationships, our relationships to God and to our brethren. Talking of relationships this weekend is synod, our wonderful representatives (Glenn Fletcher, Jean White and Colin Mayhew) are still there but I slipped away early to be with you. I saw lots of old friends including Kevin, Paul and Heather, who all sent their love.



Blessings

Wendy

Community Day Saturday, 23rd September

Please encourage any community groups you know to have a stall.

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Community Day Saturday, 23rd September

Please think about how you can help on the day.

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Community Day Saturday, 23rd September

Please take some posters and put them up wherever you can.

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Morning Tea on 24th September to farewell Wendy

Followed by lunch at the club at 12.30

Please tell Karen if you are coming to lunch

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Morning Tea after the Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday

please volunteer for the roster.

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Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9.30 all Welcome

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Please volunteer for the church roster, well in advance.

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Are you interested in joining God in unexpected places?

Kairos Prison ministry

St Thomas the Apostle Kambah

Sat 4th Nov 10.30 - 2.30 kocanberrasec@kairos.org.au

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Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Catherine

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Whoever will come to be our Locum after Wendy

Whoever will come to be our new Priest

--

Those on the Clergy Appointment Board that they will have wisdom

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

--

Beattie Russell and Jenni Robertsin Yallambie.

--

Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Cooma

--

The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains

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for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

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People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

10 Sept 2023 The Holy Communion - FIRST ORDER

HYMN TIS 168 For the fruits of all creation

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Sentence of Scripture

'Where two or three are gathered in my name,' says the Lord, 'I am there among them.' Matthew 18.20

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Two Great Commandments

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Lord, have mercy on us: and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit.

Prayer of the Day

Go before us, O Lord, with your most gracious favour and further us with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exodus 12.1–14

¹ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² 'This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴ If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire – with the head, legs and internal organs. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover. ¹² 'On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. ¹⁴ 'This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord – a lasting ordinance.

Psalms 149

¹ O praise the Lord, and sing to the Lord a new song: O praise him in the assembly of the faithful.

² Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their king.

³ Let them praise him in the dance: let them sing his praise with timbrel and with harp.

⁴ For the Lord takes delight in his people: he adorns the meek with his salvation.

⁵ Let his faithful ones exult in his glory: let them sing for joy upon their beds.

⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their mouths: and a two-edged sword in their hands,

⁷ To execute vengeance on the nations: and chastisement upon the peoples,

⁸ To bind their kings in chains: and their nobles with fetters of iron,

⁹ To visit upon them the judgement that is decreed: such honour belongs to all his faithful servants. Praise the Lord.

Romans 13.1-10

¹ Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour. ⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

Matthew 18.10–20

¹⁰ 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. ¹² 'What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish. ¹⁵ 'If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ 'Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ 'Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.'

Sermon

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

Let us pray for all people, and for the Church throughout the world.

Loving God, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we who would come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ must consider how St Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves before presuming to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For the benefit is great, if with a penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament. We then spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and he in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us. Yet also the danger is great if we receive the bread and cup unworthily. Judge yourselves therefore, that you be not judged of the Lord.

Repent truly of your sins, having a steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour. Amend your lives and love your neighbour. Above all, give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, truly God and truly human, who humbled himself to death on the cross for us sinners, that he might make us children of God, and raise us to eternal life.

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

Invitation to Confession

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we acknowledge with shame the sins we have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us.

We earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for all our misdoings.

Have mercy on us, most merciful Father. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him: have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
Hear the words of assurance for those who truly turn to Christ.

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I Tim 1:15

Hymn TIS 203 Fairest Lord Jesus

Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom **Blessed be God for ever**

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, Everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Through him, you have revealed to us your glory in the community of your love, three persons, one God, ever to be worshipped and adored.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory to you, O Lord most high. We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

All glory to you, our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross for our redemption: who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that we who receive these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise, after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' **Amen**

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life; take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life; drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty and Everliving God, we heartily thank you that you graciously feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus assure us of your favour and goodness towards us and that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of your eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of your dear Son. And we humbly beseech you, heavenly Father, so to assist us with your grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as you have prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

Hymn TIS 569 Guide me, O Thou Great Redeemer

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.



God is a God of relationships. Jesus came to earth and died so that we can be in relationship with God and everything he does is because of that relationship. He loves us with amazing, unconditional love. Nothing in our lives is more important than that relationship. Because of that relationship God wants us to have loving, fulfilling relationships with each other.

Our Old Testament Reading is the instructions for the first Passover and in the midst of all those careful instructions about the lamb and the blood on the doorpost is the instruction that if a household is too small, they are to be included in their neighbours household. No widow, orphan, childless couple, or lonely person of any description was to be left out at the original passover or any time in the future. As the Psalmist said: For the Lord takes delight in his people: he adorns the meek with his salvation.



The reading from Romans is all about our relationships: our relationship to those in authority is to acknowledge their God given authority and be subject to them. We might or not admire our politicians national, state, and local but we obey the laws and pay our taxes. We do what is right and then we don't need to be afraid of them or the police.

Paul reminds us that those in authority are God's servants just as we are and whether or not they acknowledge his authority, we acknowledge it and obey the authorities just as if we are obeying God. Notice that Paul says: 'For the one in authority is God's servant for your good.' If there were no authorities governing our land and all the nations of the world, everything would be chaos, we would spend all our time protecting ourselves and our loved ones and all the modern advantages we enjoy would not have been possible.



Paul then goes on to talk about our relationship to those around us. Those in the wider community; 'give to everyone what you owe them': yes, taxes but also revenue, respect, and honour! We fairly naturally think of the need to pay debts and pay what is necessary for whatever we buy, or to pay people who work for us, but have you ever thought of the need to pay respect and honour? That is relationship.

Everyone you meet is made in the image of God and therefore deserves respect and honour. Jesus did not have white skin, he trained as a carpenter and as an adult he was homeless, some of his closest friends were prostitutes, simple fishermen and tax collectors. There is no one that we can ever justify looking down on, failing to give respect and honour if we are really following Jesus. This includes loving, respecting and humouring our first nation brethren and giving them a voice. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another.



For whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. Every Sunday we read the two great commandments, Love God and love your neighbour. And here Paul reiterates what Jesus said: 'whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' That is the ultimate command about relationships, In every instance if you have a choice to make in a situation about whether to love someone or do what the law or tradition dictates, the right answer is always to be loving. 'Love is the fulfilment of the law'.

This is exactly the same as what Jesus is talking about in our gospel passage. Which is the continuation of a much longer passage of Jesus teaching about consideration for the 'little people'. There he starts talking about children but very soon widens the term to anyone who is humble, without pretensions: people without status.



Just as a shepherd would leave the ninety-nine sheep to go in search of a lost one so God himself will search for a lost disciple to bring him back to the fold. And just so, Jesus wants us to go to anyone we see slipping away and talk to them. There is no suggestion here that we should be 'holier than thou' and telling others whenever they slip up. We need to read this in the context of the shepherd lovingly retrieving the lost sheep.

This is a blueprint for us on how to win that lamb back into the fellowship, and how to resolve any conflicts or disagreements among us. Sometimes we just pretend that there isn't a problem, we swallow our anger and resentment, paper over the cracks and carry on as though everything is normal. We might avoid or ignore the other person or speak very carefully when we see them being careful to be 'nice'.



We have this concept that Christians are always 'nice' but there are no instructions anywhere in the bible to be nice. We are called to be loving, yes, but also honest and sincere and sometimes 'nice' is a very long way from loving, honest, or sincere. That is why Jesus instructs us, when we see our brother or sister sinning, whether it is against us or something else, to go to that person privately and have a quiet loving word. None of us are perfect but we are all here to help each other.

The idea is that if you can have this quiet word and they can see the problem it is resolved and no one else needs to know, you have helped them without embarrassing them. It is when they cannot see the problem that you ask some spiritually mature brethren to join you. Not people who agree with you but someone that your friend will respect and listen to. If it's really serious and they refuse to mend their ways, then it can be escalated further.



This was Jesus' word to the church, and the church did not exist yet, but Jesus probably envisaged little groups of his followers meeting together, praying the special prayer he gave them, reminding one another of his teachings and trying to live it out and acting as localised assemblies of God's renewed people. The word translated here as church is actually 'assembly'.

If someone refused to mend their ways after this group had warned them, they were to be treated as a pagan or a tax collector. In other places Jesus gave instructions about how to treat outsiders: 'Love your neighbour'. So that person might no longer be part of the fellowship but if at any stage they came back to the Lord, changed their ways, and wanted to follow Him again they would be welcomed back, and in the meantime, the fellowship would continue to love and pray for them.



We aren't left on our own as we struggle to become the sort of communities, and families that Jesus is describing. God's presence is with us. And as we pray together in Christian Fellowship, we are assured of being heard and answered. God does not want us to superficial relationships with each other, he is calling us to be family, to share the real essence of our lives, our struggles as well as our joys.

In a promise that remains central to everything that Christians do together 'where two or three (or twenty or thirty or two hundred or three hundred) gather in Jesus's name, he is there in the midst of them'. That's not just a promise that we will sense his presence. It's a promise and a warning that he will see and know the innermost truth of everybody's heart. Therefore, we can meet each other in real hope, with joy and love.



Meeting together in church and afterwards when we have morning tea is great but the call on our lives is to meet together in smaller groups, in bible studies, but also to meet together maybe just in twos and threes, meeting for a coffee, meeting for a chat, meeting for a walk, meeting to truly share what God is doing in our lives and our struggles: enriching each other's lives with love, accountability and encouragement.

When we live our lives following Jesus, we live in relationships, relationship with God, and relationship with our families, our friends and all the people we meet, and with God we live all those relationships in unconditional love bringing God's love and blessing to this community.