

Dear Beloved,

this week being a fifth Sunday Steve Rendell is preaching on Community. I think that the Community of Christ is a very important concept for us all to grasp and I think that when we start being to community to everyone around us is when we will see the church become relevant again.

On 6th June, 2.00 pm Steve Clark our archdeacon will be coming to talk to us about where the church and especially this church is headed in the future. It is very important that as many of us as possible come to listen AND TALK TO HIM.



Blessings

Wendy

Parish Dream 6th May at 2.00 pm

Includes two talks / discussions with Archdeacon Steve Clark thinking about what the future holds for the church and this Parish, then dinner together.

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Ladies Fellowship Lunch Saturday, 6 May. Talk to Jan.

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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 roster, well in advance.

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Concert on 11 June Details TBA

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Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

--

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.

--

Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

Mary Mitchell

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Cooma

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The New 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.

30 4 23 second order, second thanksgiving

Hymn TIS 135 All things bright and beautiful

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sentence

'I am the good shepherd,' says the Lord. 'The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.' John 10.11

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.

Prayer of the Day

God of all power, you called from death our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep: send us as shepherds to rescue the lost, to heal the injured, and to feed one another with understanding; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Acts 2.42-47

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Psalm 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.
² He will make me lie down in green pastures: and lead me beside still waters.
³ He will refresh my soul: and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.
⁴ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.
⁵ You spread a table before me in the face of those who trouble me: you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup shall be full.
⁶ Surely your goodness and loving-kindness
will follow me all the days of my life:
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

1 Peter 2.1-10

¹ Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.' ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' ⁸ and, 'A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.' They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

John 10.1–10

¹ 'Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger's voice.' ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. ⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, 'Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

the prayers

Let us pray for the world and for the Church. Challenge our values again. Jesus and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.** Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to 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 for ever. Amen.

Jesus said: Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28
God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.

Confession

Christ the Son of God has been revealed as a light to the nations.
Let us bring our darkness to his light, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.
Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn TIS 607 Make me a channel of your peace

OFFERTORY

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.**

Thanksgiving 2

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** 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.** It is right to praise you, faithful God, always and everywhere, for with your only begotten Son and life-giving Spirit, you are the one true God from everlasting to everlasting. At the dawn of time you wrought from nothing a universe of beauty and splendour, bringing light from darkness and order from chaos.

You formed us, male and female, in your image, and endowed us with creative power. We turned away from you but you did not abandon us. You called us by name and searched us out, making a covenant of mercy, giving the law, and teaching justice by the prophets.

And so we praise you, joining with your faithful people of every time and place, singing the eternal song: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

When the fullness of time was come, you sent your Son to be born of Mary.

Bright image of your glory, he learnt obedience to you in all things, even to death on a cross, breaking the power of evil, freeing us from sin, and putting death to flight. You raised him from death, exalting him to glory, and the new day dawned. On the night he was betrayed your Son Jesus Christ shared food with his friends, his companions on the way. While at table he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and giving it to them, said: 'Take, eat; this is my body.' He took a cup of wine, and, giving thanks, he gave it to them, and said, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Do this in remembrance of me.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, living God, as we obey his command, we remember his life of obedience to you, his suffering and death, his resurrection and exaltation, and his promise to be with us for ever.

With this bread and this cup we celebrate his saving death until he comes.

Accept, we pray, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and our celebration that all who eat and drink at this table may be strengthened by Christ's body and blood to serve you in the world. As one body and one holy people, may we proclaim the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, eternal God, now and for ever.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: **so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

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

Eternal God, giver of life,

in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.

May we who celebrate this holy feast

walk in his risen light and bring new life to all creation.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn TIS 454 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,

Blessing

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**

2023-04-30 Acts 2:42-47 "Community"



In our reading from Acts this morning, we see the foundations of a community of believers. I would call this community a gathering together of dedicated people for a common purpose. What were they dedicated to:



Teaching these people were new Christians, none of them more than 3 years old in the Lord, and at least 3000 of them only a few days old in the Lord. Some had come from a background in Judaism, some were Romans, some Greek, some Parthians, some Medes, some Elamites, some from Crete, some Arabs ... but all bound together with a need for teaching.

They didn't have a bible, but they had the author of the bible, the Holy Spirit, of whom Jesus had said "when He comes, He will teach you all things". There was much to learn, because they had all seen God's power, and needed to know how to live, learn, and share this good news. They didn't have 39 articles of faith to guide them ... they just have the Holy Spirit, the apostles, and each other. No doubt mistakes were made along the way, but that is part of learning.



Fellowship: They were dedicated to fellowship ... hanging out with each other ... sharing what was happening in their lives, and the lives of people they were coming in contact with. They were making inroads into the wider community also (v.47 enjoying the favour of all the people). Fellowship builds us up and encourages us ... although it is NOT an excuse for gossip.

If we've had something awesome happen in our lives, WE WANT TO SHARE IT, and give God the glory. Likewise, if we have a concern, disappointment, or failure in our lives, it is very healthy to share it. We are encouraged by Paul in Galatians 6:2 to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Fellowship gives the community healthy mental attitudes.



The breaking of bread: The new Christians broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

What do we celebrate in the breaking of bread on Sunday? We celebrate that Jesus fulfilled God's purpose in His earthly life by removing the sin that separates from God's presence. How did He do this? By taking our failures upon Himself, and instead of us being separated from God for all eternity, He was separated from God for a space of about 3 hours.

We can come to God at any time, humbly confessing our failure to meet his standards (sin) and receive His forgiveness through the shed blood and separation from His presence of His Son, Jesus Christ. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that through Him, the world may be saved. (John3:17).



It is good for us to remember this when we meet together with parts of our community. It is NOT a replacement for meeting together as a complete community to break bread together and be one in remembering that sacrifice, but it is a good reminder that we are totally dependent on God's grace and mercy to us in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". Sharing food together also builds our relationships in the community. If you're in a football club, and the club has a big win, how many people celebrate that win by going and having a few beers together. We celebrate God's love by sharing together anytime we meet together.



Prayer: What is prayer. Is it something we do when we come to church on a Sunday. Is it something we do at the end of the day, or the start of the day. Are our prayers always asking for something (gimmee prayers). Do we ask for blessing on what we are going to do or where we are going for the day?.

Prayer is NOT JUST ASKING; Prayer is COMMUNICATION with God. It involves giving Him praise for who He is. It involves not asking Him to bless what we plan, but rather asking Him to bless what HE plans for us. It involves asking for His guidance and LISTENING to His answers.

A worker would not go to the boss and say "Giddy mate, I've planned out my day, I'm going to do this and that, and head out the door, while the boss is saying ... hold on .. I have this planned for you today. Meanwhile, you're gone and out of earshot. That's not relationship building. God wants us to come to Him in prayer, seek his guidance, and ask Him to bless what He wants. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!



Caring for each other: They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Many of these new Christians would have come from Jewish families where the possessions of the individual were often tied to the possessions of the family. The same happens today if someone from a Jewish or Muslim faith becomes a Christian.

I witnessed a couple in Sydney some years ago who were publicly baptized as Christians and LOST EVERYTHING. Their home and business had been funded by their Muslim relatives, and their commitment to Jesus meant that ALL funding was pulled. But they had counted the cost and considered it worthwhile.

This New Testament community we are looking at was part of, and interfacing with a wider community ... and IMPACTING that wider community and the Lord added to their number daily those that were being saved.

We have many community groups within our larger community: Men's Shed, Probus, University of the 3rd Age to name a few. These groups actively seek new members based on what they have to offer.



The Greek word that we translate as "church" is ekklesia which literally means "a gathering together of dedicated people for a common purpose". ie A COMMUNITY.

What do we have to offer to the larger community? Do we have something to talk about? You might say "I'm old", "I'm shy", 'I'm busy' "I'm disabled'. We are not told the demographics of the New Testament church communities, only that they were excited by what they had and were experiencing and were talking with other people about it. I would say they had old people, shy people, deaf people, disabled people, sick people, healthy people, young families, children, and everything in between. But they had LIFE and knew they had eternal life. They didn't sit about saying I can't.



One of the things which we are well equipped to offer people in this community is fellowship. People are lonely and disconnected but we can offer them acceptance, friendship, and community.

If those early Christian and all the Christians through the years had not said I CAN, we would have no church community today. What do you say?

Amen.

In this body, we need each other

