



REFLECTION

RISE UP LET US BE ON OUR WAY

BIBLE READING

MAY 17 2020

Easter 6

Acts 17:22-31

Ps 66:8-20

1 Pt 3:13-22

Jn 14:15-21

MAY 24 2020

Easter 7

Acts 1:6-14

Ps 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Pt 4:12-14, 5:6-11

Jn 17:1-11

EASTER

The great fifty days of Easter includes eight Sundays beginning with the Easter Vigil and concluding on the Day of Pentecost.

The season celebrates the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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Closed till further notice

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At the End of John 14 Jesus says “Rise up, let us be on our way.” (v31) David Baker in his message reflects that the gift of the Holy Spirit is meant to strengthen and encourage you to be disciples, followers of Jesus in the world. The Spirit may be a “comforter” as many old translations say but the original meaning of “comfort” had the idea of encouragement.

Jesus goes on to explain that the Spirit will remind you who Jesus is, what he stood for and what he commands or tells you to do. Because of the Spirit when you need encouragement to go on in hard times, or when you need courage to stand up for what is right, you will have a helper or advocate. Jesus says this on the night of his arrest and trial – the day before his death. He knows what’s coming and is preparing the disciples for it.

Once he has told the Disciples this and also assured them of his peace, he says “Rise up, let us be on our way.” This can be heard as a call not just to the disciples on that night to follow Jesus but to you and to me, and to the church as a body. You and I are called by Jesus and empowered by the Spirit to be his people in the world.

Rev Andrew

IPSWICH CITY UNITING CHURCH WEBSITE

<https://www.ipswichcityunitingchurch.org.au/>

To be involved in maintaining the website please phone or email Peter Hall - 0473430255 or prphall@bigpond.net.au

RECYCLING

Recycling of plastic bottles and cans as a fundraising activity of the New Life Op Shop continues. Ruth Duncan is still happy to collect items from you, so please give her a call to make arrangements for anything you wish to be collected on 0400 869 564.

Pentecost

The friends of Jesus gathered
In the upper room to pray.
It was Pentecost in Jerusalem
A hundred souls had come that day.

Some remembered when last they met
Jesus made a dire prediction.
He told them of his coming betrayal
The next day His crucifixion.

Seven weeks had passed since then
A sad time of remorse.
When Jesus Mother joined the group
Peter made a long discourse.

When Matthias he said should replace
the traitor
They were of one accord.
Then they bowed their heads and prayed
For Christ their Risen Lord.

After they had sung a hymn
There came a mighty gust.
They were frightened and scared
No one knew who to trust.

And then came down fiery tongues
It added to the mystique.
The Holy Spirit took control
And led them all to speak.

Religious Jews from countries wide
Were attracted to the sound.
There to celebrate Pentecost
They thought it most profound.

Some heard speech in their own tongue
They were excited and amazed.
The Lord himself had sent His Spirit
He should be well praised.

Others had doubts because they knew
Those people came from Galilee.
Strong drink they said, makes them do
this
They're drunk is clear to see.

Peter again stood up and spoke
They are not drunk he made clear.
He quoted Joel and David the King
Said no one here should fear.

Then he spoke of Jesus Christ
His calls for all to repent.
It was through His beloved Son
The Lord His Holy Spirit sent.

And so the name of Pentecost
With the Holy Spirit does stand.
All the miracles performed
Are by the Spirit's hand.

John Walker. © 2020



Farewell to Haigslea Uniting Church after 109 years of service

in [Scoop](#) 17/04/2020

With over 100 years in existence the Haigslea Uniting Church was all set to close its doors in late March with a service of dissolution but the COVID-19 pandemic changed all those plans. Despite pandemic-related restrictions, the church still took steps to thank those in the church community with a farewell video.

James O'Callaghan reports. After 109 years, the Haigslea Uniting Church was due to celebrate a service of dissolution and closure on 29 March. But with the COVID-19 pandemic making public gatherings impossible, minister Rev Peter Taubner took alternative avenues to speak of the impact of the church upon the local community outside of Ipswich, west of Brisbane.

Peter recorded a video from both the outside and inside the church as a means to thank those who would have attended if possible.

"It was also an opportunity for the folk of Haigslea to offer you all a word of thanks and positive encouragement, even in the face of COVID-19," said Peter. "This has been a time of bittersweet memories and recollections of past glory."

Queensland Synod Moderator Rev David Baker was scheduled to attend and speak at the service, and said in a message to the congregation that he had been blessed by their worship and faithful service.

"Your lives have been sustained and nurtured by the means of grace you have received there," said David.

"The Christian journey is one of dying and rising; of letting things go so that new life can emerge. You have done well and you have provided a place of worship and respite, and now it's time to lay it down."

Peter said that members of the congregation are connecting with other

churches nearby.

"They are going to face the short term with courage and boldness, knowing that our God is in control and that his son, through the Holy Spirit, continues to lead us forward in faith, hope and truth."

Haigslea Uniting Church has been a key part of the community for many years. The Ladies' Fellowship has played an instrumental role in the congregation with their remarkable witness within the community over the last 30 years. The prayer group which met on a Sunday morning before church also played an important role with blessing and support of members and worship leaders.

<https://journeyonline.com.au/scoop>

What is the next normal?

in [Scoop](#) 13/05/2020

For now the COVID-19 pandemic has created a new normal of social distancing, hand sanitiser and closed churches (amongst many other major changes to our lives) but as we slowly see restrictions ease, many will be asking what will life be like on the other side of the pandemic. **Scott Guyatt** examines the key questions and considers what the future might hold for church and community.

So, we find ourselves in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic, and the temptation in the midst of all of this, of our former life being taken away from us is to say, "When can we get back to normal? When can we have our life back? When can we go back to work, to church, to school, to sports, to restaurants, to travel? When can we return to normal?"

These are the questions we hear over and over. And they're completely understandable, and totally appropriate questions.

Increasingly though, there are other voices saying things like, "Well perhaps we don't want to go back to normal, but forward to a new way of being that takes into consideration, pays attention to the kinds of lessons we've learned along the way." We might think of this as our "next normal".

So what would be some of those lessons, what would be some of those stories that we would carry forward with us on the other side of this experience into a next normal? What would be the changes that we would make, that we would take, that we would apply? How would we think about all of this?

For some there would ideally be no change, simply a desire to get back to normal, back to life as I know it—as quickly, and as efficiently, and as unchanged as I can.

There is the sense that I love my life and I want to get back there. The question here is, “How do we get back to normal?” We might call that approach to change beyond the pandemic as Level 0.

Level 1 might involve small practical changes. I might wash my hands a little more often. I might be more conscious of not going to the shops or to work or to school when I’m sick. Maybe I hold a little more distance to the people around me when I’m in public.

This approach to change is thinking about practices. In a church situation, for example, perhaps we might think about the notion of 100 people all touching the same loaf of bread one after the other as we share communion.

Maybe that’s a practice we can’t carry forward from our old normal to our next normal. That’s the kind of thing I’m thinking of as Level 1: small adaptive practice-based changes or modifications to our old normal that we take into our new. Think of this as bottles of hand sanitiser on every corner—but otherwise life as we knew it. The question here is, “What are the little things that we’ll incorporate into life?”

Taking a Level 2 approach might see us thinking about the kinds of practices and experiences that have sustained us, have been valuable, appreciated, over these last few months. Again If I were to think about congregational life, I might consider the the way we’ve moved to offer significant parts of that life in an online digital setting—streaming worship, online small groups using video conferencing platforms, and so on.

These are ways for people to engage in the otherwise normal life of church without having to be physically present.

There are stories of people who for a range of reasons are unable to physically participate in Sunday morning worship. This new time, this new experience has enabled for some an active participation in parts of church life that were otherwise unavailable to them.

Some of us might like to take some of these practices forward, recognising that they’ve been really valued parts of this experience, and we don’t want to go back completely, to lose this new practice. We want to take it forward.

The question here might be, “What have I valued that I can carry forward to make the old normal better?”

If we thought about a third level beyond that, we might start to wonder if we’ve only been exposed *in part* to some of our new practices. We’ve been exposed *in part* to streaming events, or to video conferencing, but perhaps we haven’t made the most of those possibilities.

Perhaps all we’ve really done is broadcast our old practices, our old patterns—the ways we meet, the interactions we pursue, the events, small groups, conversations, church worship services—largely unchanged. We have just broadcast the existing forms and activities.

So we might ask, “What does this new medium, this new possibility enable for us if we put all of that on the table?” Rather than just saying “Let’s broadcast our Sunday morning worship,” would we be so brave as to ask the question: “What different ways, different approaches, different practices of worship could be enabled by this digital, streamed, live, remote kind of connection?” Let’s not just keep doing what we’ve always done, our old normal, and broadcast it, let’s instead find new possibilities that these new tools and experiences open up for us. This might be what we describe as a third level of response. The question we’d consider here is perhaps, “What new possibilities have I seen hints of over the last few months?”

I wonder too if there is a fourth level that goes beyond practices, beyond possibilities and goes really into the realm of values: what is it that we have learned through this experience that is important to us, that might shape the way we relate to each other at a very fundamental level, that might influence the way we practise politics, the ways leadership is exercised or understood, the way we choose to shape our society from a consumerist or financial perspective? What have we seen that opens up discussions about the very nature of the kingdom of God? Are there some lessons, some opportunities to consider whether the very shape of our society, the very nature of our communities are quite right?

Does this experience of these last months offer an opportunity for something of a circuit breaker—something of a complete reset? This might be what we consider to be a fourth level response, a place in which

the question becomes “What if we put everything on the table?”

If I think about the people I know, the conversations I’m hearing, the questions being asked, all of these responses are out and about:

“I just want to get back to normal.”

“I’m going to make a few changes.”

“I like some of the things we’ve been able to do and want to carry them forward.”

“I like some of the things that have happened, but we haven’t made the most of them so lets think deeply about them.”

“This experience, this time has opened up some really significant questions for me about our life, our community, our values, and I want to explore all of those.”

I guess what I’m left wondering is what’s the right question to help us each find the right conversations as we consider what comes beyond “let’s go back to life as we know it”? What would be the question that helps you be discomfited enough to think maybe about the next level up of possibility than you’re currently considering?

Maybe you don’t need that at all—maybe what some of us really do need is that sense of comfort and known-ness—of what is normal, proper everyday life.

My observation though, is that there are enough of us around who are wondering “where do we go from here?” (in the sense of “where forward” as opposed to “how do we go back”) that make this consideration worthwhile.

What’s the question for you?

What’s the kind of change you’re wanting to experience, explore, inhabit, encourage for you, your family, your neighbourhood, your church or community group?

What will help you find your next normal?

Scott Guyatt
The Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod

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