

Between heaven and earth

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist
Sunday 19B
August 11, 2024

Preparing for Worship Today

- Welcome to this service of worship at Mark the Evangelist!
- Congregational responses are printed in ***bold italics***.
- If you get here early enough, **please read through the text of today's readings prior to our hearing them.** The text can be found at the end of the order of service. We usually have a brief time of conversation about the readings before hearing them, and before the sermon – all to make our hearing a little sharper!
- Pray for those who will be leading us in our worship today!



A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Prelude F Couperin, *Recit de cromorne*

The Gathering of the People of God

Processional

If you are able, please stand as the Scriptures are brought into the worship space.

Call to Worship

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come into God's presence with singing!

***For the Lord is a gracious God,
whose mercy is everlasting;
and whose faithfulness endures
to all generations.***

Psalm 100.1,2,5

Prayer of invocation

Hymn 143 Immortal, invisible, God only wise

With the Children

The Word Spoken: Scripture and Preaching

The Testimony of Scripture

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.

2 Samuel 18.5-15 *Hanging between heaven and earth*

Psalms 34 *O taste and see*

The REFRAIN is sung before and after the whole psalm.

The psalm text will then be sung responsorially to the TONE below: the first line is sung by the 'half' of the congregation closest to entry doors, the second bold-italic line by the other side



- ¹ I will bless the Lord | at all times;
his praise shall ever be | in my mouth.
- ² My soul shall glory | in the Lord;
let the humble hear | and be glad.
- ³ O magnify the | Lord with me;
let us exalt his | name to-gether.
- ⁴ I sought the Lord | and he answered me
and delivered me from | all my fears.
- ⁵ Look upon him | and be radiant
and your faces shall | not be a-shamed.
- ⁶ This poor soul cried, | and the Lord heard me
and saved me from | all my troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps around | those who fear him
and de- | -livers them.
- ⁸ O taste and see that the | Lord is gracious;
blessed is the one who | trusts in him.

REFRAIN

John 6.35, 41-51 *I am the bread of life*

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Preaching of the Word

*The sermon text will normally be available
after worship and online*

A 'sermon of stillness' – a moment for quiet reflection – usually follows the preaching

Prayer of Confession



**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

Declaration of Forgiveness

(Please stand if you are able)

...hear, then, Christ's word of grace to us:
Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Doxology



Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone are the
 ho - ly one, You a - lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the most high,
 Je - sus Christ with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.
 A - men. A - men. A - - - men.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The 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 again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and 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.*

Prayers of the People

(Names for inclusion in the prayers may be recorded in the book in the narthex)

The Visible Word: Eucharist

Hymn 517 Hallelujah! Sing to Jesus

(If you are able, please remain standing until after the Lord's Prayer)

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

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.

(The prayer continues...)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might, hea - ven and earth are
 full of your glo - ry, ho - sa - na in the high - est. Bles - sed is he who comes in the name of the
 Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san na - in the high - est!

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r 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!

Hosanna in the highest!

(The prayer continues...)

The Lord's Prayer

***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.***

(The people sit)

The Breaking of the Bread

...The gifts of God for the people of God...



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on
us, have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world: have mer - cy on us, have mer - cy on us Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world: grant us peace, grant us peace.

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace, grant us peace.***

...Let us receive what we are,
let us become what we receive
The body of Christ

The Communion

The Uniting Church recognises this Table as the Lord's and, so, open to all who would normally commune in their home congregations.

GATHERING: *We'll gather in a circle around the table for the distribution of the elements; please wait until all have received and the prayer is said before returning to your seats.*

If you can't stand or walk to the front but would like to receive communion, please raise your hand if the celebrant has not already noticed you.

Offering

(We remain seated as the offering is brought forward)

Many members now make their offering by electronic transfer; the plate will be passed for those who prefer to make cash/envelope offerings. The prayer dedicating the offerings 'captures' the full range of gifts.

Notices

The Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn 628 In faith and hope and love

Word of Mission and Blessing

Postlude F Couperin, *Dialogue sur la trompette*

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We'd love to hear your feedback on the service.

Our email address is:

enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

Our website is:

<http://marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/>

TODAY'S READINGS

Read the following texts-for-the-day before the service and be ready for a brief conversation about them before we hear them read! When it comes to the texts being read for us, try to avoid the temptation to read them again here along with the lector, and simply listen!

2 Samuel 18:5-15

⁵The king gave orders to Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.' And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders concerning Absalom.

⁶ So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷The men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. ⁸The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword.

⁹ Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. His head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. ¹⁰A man saw it, and told Joab, 'I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.'

¹¹Joab said to the man who told him, 'What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt.' ¹²But the man said to Joab, 'Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not raise my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying: For my sake protect the young man Absalom! ¹³On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof.'

¹⁴Joab said, 'I will not waste time like this with you.' He took three spears in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom, while he was still alive in the oak. ¹⁵And ten young men, Joab's armour-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him, and killed him.

(Absalom is David's son, who has staged a coup)

Why do you suppose we have this story recorded for us in the Bible?

John 6.35, 41-51

³⁵ Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

⁴¹ Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' ⁴²They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' ⁴³Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

(John likes to play with this kind of over-literal misunderstanding)

Believes *what*?
Note the present tense: "has"

The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is situated in the Sahel, south of the Sahara desert. The Mossi empire governed this land until the close of the 19th century, when it became a French protectorate and later a colony, called Upper Volta by the French. The country gained its independence in 1960, and received its African name during the time of military coups in the 1980s. Over 90 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, mostly subsistence farming and nomadic herding. One of the main threats to the economy is recurrent drought. Many innovative local groups are working with the rural population to improve living conditions. Cotton is the main export product. In recent years, Burkina Faso has taken a lead in defending the cause of cotton from the South in the WTO negotiation rounds. Islam was introduced to the area during the 18th century, and Christianity came with colonization. Today over half of all Christians are Catholics. The Protestant denominations belong to the Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. The largest is the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal, 800,000 members). Together they form the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions, affiliated with the WEA. In the 1970s and 1980s the WCC ran an extensive anti-drought programme in Burkina Faso and other Sahel countries, with an office based in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Fas

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Florence Nightingale & Edith Cavell, renewers of society



Florence Nightingale: At seventy, Florence Nightingale wrote, “When many years ago, I planned a future, my one idea was not organizing a hospital but organizing a religion”. History remembered the woman who cared for wounded British soldiers in the Crimean War and is credited with founding modern nursing, but few know of her fifty years of amazing accomplishments after Crimea.

Florence was born in 1820 into a wealthy Unitarian family and raised Church of England. Her father educated her ‘like a son’ he didn’t have - in history, science, languages and philosophy. Brilliant and religiously absorbed, Florence was frustrated with her privileged life in Victorian England, with its divinely ordained class system of rich and poor, rulers and workers. She spent much of her childhood helping poor villagers around her family’s estates.

At seventeen, she received an audible call to serve God, but her family thwarted any attempt to follow this call. In 1849, she visited a Deaconess training center in Germany and discovered her dream - women training to serve the poor. Florence finally left home at thirty-three to become volunteer superintendent of a home for destitute governesses in London and left for the Crimea from there. When she returned twenty-two months later, she avoided public acclaim and retreated from public life. A grateful nation had established the Nightingale Fund in her honor, but she did not start the proposed nursing school. Haunted by dead soldiers, reforming army medical services was a more pressing task. When the Nightingale Training School for Nurses opened in 1860, Florence submitted proposals for its administration, but her focus was army reform.

Over the next fifty years, Florence was involved in reforming colonial policy and sanitation in India, work house reform, hospital design and location, preventative medicine and village health education. She developed hospital record forms to analyze patient information, introduced trained nurses to poorhouses, advised on indigenous health in British colonies and drafted the British delegation’s recommendations to the Geneva Convention. She helped change laws that restricted women’s rights to their children, property and divorce, and worked for paid employment for women, accomplishing all this through politicians who came to her home for advice and guided the reforms through Parliament.

Florence can only be fully understood by taking seriously her divine calls as the inspiration for her life and work. She once thought of founding a religious order and visited a Paris convent to learn the disciplines she followed through her life.

[contd...]

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Florence Nightingale & Edith Cavell, renewers of society [...contd]

Her secluded, disciplined lifestyle after Crimea created her own monastic structure. Florence wrote an eight hundred-page manuscript offering a new religion for the poor, challenging the belief that poverty was God's will. The Divine Spirit is in each of us, she said, guiding us, with the help of "saviours", beyond any predetermined destiny - she saw herself as a "saviour" for her time. Her theological ideas reflected the later disciplines of liberation theology, process theology, feminist theology and contextual theology, exploring topics like the concept of God, universal law, God's will, sin and evil, family life, spiritual life and life after death. Her conclusions were in dialogue with the Church of England Broad Church movement whose Essays and Reviews challenged the church in the 1860's. Florence's writings are one of the British Library's largest collections. She died in 1910.

Reference: Val Webb, *Florence Nightingale: the making of a radical theologian* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002).

Val Webb

Edith Cavell - Nurse, Humanitarian and Spy

Edith Cavell was born in Swardston, near Norwich. Her father was a priest in the Anglican church. The religious faith that she was brought up with, was to provide an important influence on her life. In 1900, she trained to be a nurse at the London hospital. In 1907, she was recruited to be the matron of a new nursing school in Brussels. This was a period of growth in the prestige and importance of nursing; a period which began with Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War.

In 1910, Miss Cavell began one of the first nursing journals, *L'infirmiere*, which documented good nursing practices and basic standards. She became a teacher of nurses in different hospitals throughout Belgium and sought to improve standards of nursing.

In the Nursing Mirror, Edith Cavell writes:

"The probationers wear blue dresses with white aprons and white collars. The contrast which they present to the nuns, in their heavy stiff robes, and to the lay nurses, in their grimy apparel, is the contrast of the unhygienic past with the enlightened present."

In 1914, the First World War broke out. At the time, Miss Cavell was in England, but she moved back to Belgium to her hospital which was later taken over by the Red Cross. As part of the German Schlieffen plan, the Germans invaded Belgium and in late 1914, Brussels was under a very strict German military occupation.

PEOPLE TO COMMEMORATE

Florence Nightingale & Edith Cavell, renewers of society [...contd]

Many British soldiers had been left behind in the withdrawal of the Allied forces and were stuck in Brussels. Miss Cavell decided to aid the British servicemen, hiding them in the hospital and safe houses around Belgium. From these safe houses, some 200 British servicemen were able to escape to neutral Holland. At the same time, she continued to act as nurse and treated wounded soldiers from both the German and Allied side. The occupying German army threatened strict punishments for anyone who was found to be 'aiding and abetting the enemy'. Yet, despite the military rule, Miss Cavell continued to help. Edith wrote: *"Nothing but physical impossibility, lack of space and money would make me close my doors to Allied refugees."*

In mid-1915, nurse Edith Cavell came under suspicion for helping allied servicemen to escape; this was not helped by her outspoken views on her perceived injustice of the occupation. In August 1915, she was arrested and held in St Gilles prison. After her arrest, she did not try to defend herself but only said in her defence that she felt compelled to help the people in need.

After a short trial, the German military tribunal found her guilty of treason and sentenced her to execution. This surprised many observers as it seemed harsh given her honesty and the fact she had saved many lives both Allied and German.

For two weeks prior to her execution, Miss Cavell, was kept in solitary confinement, except for a few brief visits. On the night before her execution, she was visited by the Reverend Stirling Gahan, an Anglican chaplain. He recorded her final conversation. He records that Miss Cavell said: *"Patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness to anyone."* She is also recorded as having said: "I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me."

On her last night, she wrote to her fellow nurses, saying: *"I have told you that devotion will give you real happiness, and the thought that you have done, before God and yourselves, your whole duty and with a good heart will be your greatest support in the hard moments of life and in the face of death."*

Though diplomats from the neutral governments of the United States and Spain fought to commute her sentence, their efforts were ultimately in vain. After her execution, the fate of Edith Cavell was widely publicised in the British and American media. It was shown as more evidence of German brutality and injustice. Edith Cavell was portrayed as a heroic and innocent figure who remained steadfast in her Christian faith and willingness to die for her country.

Tejvan Pettinger

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Online discussion groups From Wed Aug 7 and Fri Aug 9
Midwifery and Mission “unveiling” August 20 [NEW](#)
Church Council (ordinary meeting) September 3 [NEW](#)

NOTICES

SPRING ROSTER

Roster for September, October and November
Please advise Sue Blackwood about your availability to participate in the next roster by the 18th of August.
All help is much appreciated. slblackwood46@gmail.com

MIDWIFERY AND MISSION “UNVEILING”



Much too late but too important to leave undone, MtE will be “unveiling” the relocated Midwifery and Mission sculpture and presenting it to the CTM/VicTas Synod as part of the congregation’s relocation to the CTM.

The event will commence at 10.30am in Yuma Auditorium in the CTM with a presentation on the themes and development of sculpture by Rev Dr John Smith, minister of MtE at the time of its 150th celebrations. We will also be joined by Anna Meszaros, the sculptor.

You are most welcome to join us! Please indicate your intention to attend via the response form on the MtE website (or a direct email to Craig) – this will assist with set up and catering arrangements.

Please note that there is no parking available on site at the CTM for this event; parking can be found in the streets about College Crescent or alongside the Melbourne General Cemetery.

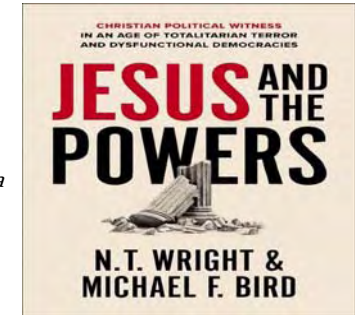
ONLINE STUDY GROUPS

August-September 2024

From Wed Aug 7 (7.45pm)
and Fri Aug 9 (1.30pm) for 8 weeks

Register your interest and obtain the studies link via
www.marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

About this book: *Part political theology, part biblical overview, and part church history, this book argues that building for Jesus's kingdom requires confronting empire in all its forms. This approach should orient Christians toward a form of political engagement that contributes to free democratic societies and vigorously opposes political schemes based on autocracy and nationalism. Throughout, Wright and Bird reflect on the relevance of this kingdom-oriented approach to current events, including the Russian-Ukraine conflict, the China-Taiwan tension, political turmoil in the USA, UK, and Australia, and the problem of Christian nationalism.*



“ALBRECHT DÜRER'S MATERIAL RENAISSANCE”

Free, personal guided tour led by Matthew Champion for members of Mark the Evangelist Congregation, and any of their friends, of a special Art Exhibition at The University of Melbourne:

10:30am Friday Morning, 6th September, Arts West Gallery, University of Melbourne

For more information about the exhibition, see: <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/about/arts-west-gallery/albrecht-durers-material-renaissance>.

Let Gaye know if you would like to attend (speak to her, or email: gaye.champion.au@gmail.com) and she will liaise with Matthew.

Heidelberg Choral Society presents

BRAHMS REQUIEM

Ein deutsches Requiem Johannes Brahms
St Cecilia's Day George Loughlin

Heidelberg Choral Society and Orchestra
West Gippsland Chorale
Conducted by Peter Bandy

Nathan Byrne associate conductor
Rebecca Rashleigh soprano
Christopher Tonkin baritone

Sunday 18 Aug 2024 | 2.30pm
George Wood Performing Arts Centre
Yarra Valley Grammar, 84-90 Kalinda Rd, Ringwood

 Tickets
\$60 / \$55 conc / \$35 student
www.eticks.com.au/BR

 www.hcs.asn.au

People to commemorate this week

Florence Nightingale & Edith Cavell, renewers of society

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger

LECTIONARY READINGS 18 AUGUST 2024

1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14 ; Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:51-58

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As a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia,

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist is responsible for Hotham Mission.

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Please advise all notices and roster changes to **email:**

enquiries@marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au

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