



The ANGLICAN PARISH of
Leongatha

Sunday 8th November 2020

PARISH VISION

Preparing the way for the love of Jesus Christ to reach all people.

A YEAR OF MISSION

On Vision Sunday the Rector designated 2020 to be a Year of Mission.

Sentence

Watch and be ready, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Matthew 24:42, 44



Prayer of the Week

Blessed Lord, you have caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that, by patience and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Readings

Joshua 24:1-3, 14-25

Psalm 78: 1-7

1 Thessalonians 4:9-18

Matthew 25:1-13

Pastoral Care

For pastoral care needs please contact Rector of Leongatha- Graham Knott
0490 045 581 rectorleongatha@gmail.com

Assistant Curate and Response Coordinator- Belinda Seabrook
0438 622 721 ministryleongatha@gmail.com

8am Hymns

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1.Wake awake (TiS 266) | 2.Give me oil in my lamp (MP167) (2 verses) |
| 3.Blessed assurance (MP 59) | 4.Ye servants of the Lord (CP 93) |

Financial Stewardship

Leongatha Anglican Church

Electronic banking details **BSB Number** 083 735 **Account Number** 515883623.

Cheques may be posted to PO Box 271, Leongatha, Vic 3953. Payable to 'Leongatha Anglican Church Parish Council Parish Account'.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS- MINISTRY UPDATE

A Note from the Rector

Two things stand out for me in recent days. The first is the simple delight people find in being able to meet together once more. The seating looks different due to the regulations, we can't have refreshments, extended periods of singing and prayer ministry but we can be together as God's people and experience what it is to be 'one in the Spirit.' Thankfulness and joy in being together is something that it is easy to take for granted. Let's try to maintain this simple spirit of genuine joy. It is a wonderful, tangible quality. The second is numbers of people willing to help and serve in whatever way they can. It is a wonderful thing when a genuine spirit of humble and willing service fills the Body of Christ and is genuinely touching to be part of. Every person who brings such a spirit encourages many more to press on joyfully aware that they are not carrying enormous burdens alone. Simple delight and willing service. These bring great joy to our heavenly Father.

Nominations for upcoming AGM

Nominations for the upcoming AGM close Sunday 15th November at 9pm. Please email or hand completed forms to Belinda or Graham, or place in the box in the Narthex after church.

New Lay Reader

Congratulations to Joanne Stuchbery on becoming a licensed Lay Reader in the Anglican Church. (Pictured on front cover officially receiving her license from Graham Knott)

The Gippsland Anglican November

https://www.gippsanglican.org.au/assets/00TGA/2020/TGA_Nov_20_FINAL.pdf

Hard copies Anglican are available in the Narthex after Church services.

Return to Public Worship

On 1st of November public face to face ministry resumed at St Peter's Leongatha. At this time, we are offering 5 weekly services of up to 20 people, additional Sunday services will be arranged if services fill to ensure everyone has the opportunity to worship and that no one is turned away. Current service times are below. To register for a service please email ministryleongatha@gmail.com or text or call 0438 622721

Sunday

Holy Communion - 8am, 10am, 11:30am & 1pm

Wednesday

Holy Communion - 11am

Mainly Music

Dear St Peter's Families, Mainly Music is our ministry program reaching out to families in the community with pre-school children. In pre-covid times, we had a very popular program, with 25 families enrolled, and attendance of around 30 children and 20 parents/carers each week. We are hoping to be able to hold a Christmas celebration and picnic before the end of the year, to re-connect with our families and celebrate the "graduation" of those going off to kinder or school next year. We will be giving each family a Christmas book, and each graduating child a children's Bible. If you would like to contribute, to tell our families they are loved and prayed for, we would love to receive your donations. The Christmas books cost \$4 each and the children's Bibles \$18.

If you would like to include a Christmas message to a family, write it in an email to Heather Scott at scottheather1953@gmail.com and we will write it onto a card to go with the book.

To donate the cost of a book for a **mainly music** family this Christmas, make an EFT deposit to BSB Number 083 735 Account Number 515883623.

Cheques may be posted to PO Box 271, Leongatha, Vic 3953. Payable to 'Leongatha Anglican Church Parish Council Parish Account'.

Readings for next week 15th November

Judges 4:1-10

Psalms 123

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

Prayer Chain

For prayer chain requests please contact Maryann Ashton on 0438 644 315

2020 Annual General Meeting Timeline

Wednesday 30 th September	Close books and prepare financial returns
Sunday 25 th October	Books and financial papers to parish office (Graham Knott) by 1pm for audit
Sunday 25 th October	All reports posted to PO Box 271 Leongatha or emailed to ministryleongatha@gmail.com by 1pm (for collation)
Sunday 25 th October	Nominations open 9am
Sunday 8 th November	AGM meeting booklet available
Sunday 15 th November	Nominations close 9pm
Sunday 22 nd November	Parish Annual General Meeting 4pm
Sunday 22 nd November	St Peter's Leongatha AGM (directly after Parish AGM)
Friday 4 th December	St Andrew's Dumbalk and St David's Meeniyon AGM (time to be advised)
Sunday 13 th December	St Andrew's Tarwin Lower AGM 11:30am (After 10:30am Service)

LET US PRAY

Trust the Lord, completely. Prov. 3:5

- Praise the Lord for his goodness and faithfulness.
- Praise the Lord as restrictions ease.
- Praise the Lord for being able to worship together in church despite restricted numbers.
- Give thanks for our families, friends and the renewing of contact.
- Give thanks for our government, our church leaders, medical personnel, emergency workers and all those who have continued to be there for us during the past nine months.
- Pray for the countries round the world who are coping with increased infection, rising Covid numbers and severe strain on hospitals.
- Pray for United States.
- Pray for those parts of the world experiencing disaster and loss: the Philippines hit again with typhoons; Vietnam devastated by flooding; Greece and Turkey wracked by earthquakes; Central America hit by Hurricane Etta.
- Pray for the people who would serve on Parish Council and for the upcoming AGM.
- Pray for Belinda as she prepares for her Ordination later this month.



GRAHAM'S GEMS

8th November 2020

There are condensed sections of teaching in Matthew's Gospel which take place in very short periods of time. One is clearly the Sermon on the Mount near the outset of his public ministry as Jesus outlines concisely the most insightful and meaningful spiritual teaching the world has seen. Another section occurs in the week immediately prior to his Crucifixion, and especially the Tuesday. In Matthew Chapters 21-25, Jesus almost unburdens himself through highly prophetic symbolic action, parable and

teaching. In this section and Matthew 26 – Jesus tells the disciples to 'watch' on three occasions, repeating the injunction on the last occasion. Today's narrative about the ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom develops the theme of the Wedding Banquet which begins earlier in the day. (Matthew 22:1) Each 'watch' reference has different meaning. We begin by exploring the second.

The conclusion of today's parable is "*Keep watch, because you do not know the time or the hour.*" (Matthew 25:13) We keep watch by imitating the five virgins who had spare oil to keep their lamps burning. The parable is about the coming of the bridegroom: the return of Jesus Christ. We are all encouraged to be ever watchful for this. The people of Jesus' day would have been familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures which referred to '*the watch of the Lord*' on several occasions. To *watch* in these contexts is to present yourself before God immersing ourselves simultaneously in the bible, worship and prophetic intercession that arises from that. The words describe a wholehearted, actual, focused use of time as with the virgins in the parable. The parable is about developing your own intimacy with Jesus. That is the symbolism of the oil. Nobody else can share their oil with you. You must provide your own. If you don't build it up nobody else can. You can't get into the kingdom of heaven on any other person's shoulders – no-one among your family or friends can build your supply of oil. But what is this oil? It is the Holy Spirit plainly but Jesus describes the oil back in Matthew 22:37 where he clarifies the description of those included as guests in the Wedding Banquet. They are those who give themselves to the greatest commandment to, as Jesus said, "*love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" The oil in the lamps is about developing our intimate awareness of the love of God, of growing within that, of spending time to allow God to pour his oil of love over and into us.

The ten lamps represent ministries and service. The size of the lamp indicates the extent of our service, the amount of oil indicates the extent of our love. Jesus says that we are not to focus on how big our popularity is during the day but on our big our heart of love is for him at midnight. If you are anything like me that heart of love contracts and hardens during the noise, volume of activity and the hardness of the day. Jesus makes plain that we must spend daily quality time immersing ourselves, marinating ourselves in the love of God. We can all surround ourselves with people who will affirm and encourage us in our excuses for not spending quality, extended time with Jesus. We tell each other our hardships and validate one another in those excuses. Jesus tells us to watch continually or we will burn out. There are lamps of ministries all around us that have burned out – run out of oil because people are ministering from their past experience, knowledge and anointing. At the end of the age Jesus plainly says that there will be many ministries which keep the form but have lost all power for effective fruitfulness. You can't serve Jesus when the oil has run out. The foolish people in the parable have nothing at the strategic moment. God looks for lovers not those who promote themselves and their image in front of people. The five with oil are united – they go into the wedding banquet. Unity emerges on earth when people focus on the overwhelming love of God and that alone. Along the way many ministries will gradually lose their light and go out, coming to nothing.

We need the oil because the world gets dark and service gets really, really tough. The third examples of 'watch' come in Matthew 26 where Jesus asks the disciples to 'keep watch with him' (Matthew 26:38, 41) on the Mount of Olives. Locals called it the Mount of Oil because of the many olive trees. This is the moment of deep darkness and struggle. The apostles confidently predict that they have sufficient to see them through the crisis. All too soon we see their weakness as like the five foolish virgins they fall asleep not once but twice! There's no lamps alight here! This third command to watch is then about fear and the way that fear at the toughest of times drives people to compromise. However the most important thing for us to notice about this passage is that Jesus, the sinless one, came to such a crisis moment in his life when he had to watch and pray. How much more then do we?

Between the second and third commands to watch and build our reservoir of oil comes a remarkable story of a young, single woman who brought her most expensive oil and poured it extravagantly over Jesus' head. (26:6-13) Others were indignant but Jesus said that this young woman would be honoured for the rest of history. Jesus only honours two people – young, tender hearted Mary and John the Baptist. Mary touched the heart of Jesus because she embodied what he was trying to build in the lives of everyone, particularly the apostles, but had apparently failed. Mary was the one who made the choice to obey the first commandment in Luke 10:38-42. She

refused to be distracted from spending her love and time with Jesus despite the noise and need around. She had sufficient oil in her lamp to pour it away and keep pouring it out despite the indignation of everyone else present. So we come to the second command by Jesus for us to 'watch' (Matthew 24:42) This one is about judgement and unexpected return of the bridegroom when hidden things are revealed. Just as Mary's extravagant pouring out of devoted love caused offence to the religious people present so the bridegroom will cause offence when he returns in judgement. Most Christians today have recreated the bridegroom to be a human shaped God of love who blesses anything and everything whenever he comes and wherever he goes and generally does what we want. The reality is that there is a lot of hidden rebellion and hostility to the bridegroom who comes at the unexpected time, sweeps through those pictured as waiting and only takes a proportion of those present into the banquet with him. There are a number left outside because they took their place with the bridegroom for granted.

Morning Prayer Online

Morning Prayer is a structured half hour service that includes Old and New testament Bible readings, a time for reflection and discussion of the Scriptures and a time to pray together. Morning Prayer is offered Monday to Friday at 9am via Zoom. It is easy to join and a special way to meet and worship together in the current lock down.

If you are interested please contact Belinda or Maryann Ashton – maryannashton423@gmail.com

HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY

St Peter's Church is currently connecting via, home phone, mobile phone, email, website, Facebook, YouTube and Zoom. If you need some help with technology please be in touch, we would be happy to help you.