



The ANGLICAN PARISH of *Leongatha*

February 14th 2021 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

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 2021 to be a Year of fulfilling your Holy Spirit shape and potential.



Kids have fun at Mainly Music!

Sentence

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones! Give thanks to God's Holy name!
Psalm 30.4

Prayer of the Week

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

1 | ST. PETER'S, LEONGATHA - ST. ANDREW'S, DUMBALK
ST. DAVID'S, MEENIYAN - ST. ANDREW'S, TARWIN LOWER

Pastoral Care

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

Associate Priest- Belinda Seabrook
0438 622 721 ministryleongatha@gmail.com

Weekly Services of Holy Communion – St Peter’s Leongatha

Sunday

Holy Communion - 8am, 10:30am

Wednesday

Holy Communion - 11am followed by a Community Lunch

Service of Holy Communion- St David’s Meeniyán

Friday 7:30pm – 1st and 3rd Friday of the Month

Service of Holy Communion -St Andrew’s Tarwin lower

2nd and 4th Sunday of the Month 10:30am

There is now **no need to pre-register or “book in”** for a service. It is still a government requirement however that we keep, for a temporary period of time, the name and a contact number of every person that attends a service. This can be provided at the door on the day you attend.

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’.

Readings

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalm 30

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Mark 1:40-45

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS- MINISTRY UPDATE

Stay Informed

Please keep reading your emails and newsletters to keep up to date with the changing and evolving Covid-19 situation in the state, as well as, the Leongatha Community. If you know of anyone who would appreciate being on our email mailing list please encourage them to forward their contact to Belinda or Graham. Masks are currently required in indoor and outdoor settings and Public Worship has been suspended for the 14th February

(today) as well as Ash Wednesday 17th February. Please contact a member of staff if you have any concerns or if you would like to chat.

A Note from the Rector

Vision Sunday provides the possibility for us to anticipate where the Holy Spirit is leading us and to commit ourselves as one community to that vision. Vision is rather like a train which carries us forward. All on the train are heading in the same direction yet carry their own situations with them. There are those who feel extremely joyful and optimistic, others who carry sadness and pain, others who are simply involved with the routine of how life is. In fact, there are people at all stages and ages of life on the train. The important thing is that all of us are on the train and heading out of the station we have been in and onto the next under the direction of the Holy Spirit. 2020 was a year of extremes for us - we faced great pain and greater blessing for the kingdom. We believe we are on the threshold of breakthroughs for the kingdom and have been encouraged in that thinking not simply by shoots of growth but by numbers of prophetic words from those within and unknown to our community. During February we also encourage all members to review their financial giving in support of the vision and their service to build up the Body of Christ. The bible often talks of the tithe - 10% of income as the basic commitment to God's ministry. The reality is that many of us have yet to achieve 5% in our giving. We want everyone to be involved and to feel a valued part of our congregational support. Many people like to support the ministry of Christ electronically. Details of how to do this are elsewhere on the pew leaflet. May this year be one of developing fully into our potential.

World Day of Prayer 2021 - Vanuatu

Friday 5th March at 10:30am and 7:30am at the Uniting Church Peart St Leongatha. Followed by light refreshments.

Homey Roast Dinner Night - Welcome Dinner

Our next Welcome Dinners will be held on 20th February and the 20th March. If you know of anyone who is new to the Parish or community and would like to attend please contact Belinda 0438 622721

Tween Bible Study and Group

The tween young youth group started off with a bang! Icecream candy bar pizza and popcorn, games and a movie. Thanks to all the team for providing such a fun night for young people. This group will continue on 28th February with a bible study running parallel to the 10:30am service at St Peter's. For more information or to receive a time table of events please contact Brigid Kennedy 0404 912 370

St Peter's Small Groups are Starting Again for 2021

We would love for everyone to be part of a group. It's a great way to connect with like-minded people, learn more about being a Jesus person and get involved with serving the community together.

We have existing groups that all have room for new people, but also there is plenty of scope for new groups to be formed. New, this year, are 2 day-time group on Tuesday's in Koonwarra and Friday afternoons in Leongatha.

If you have a passion for some activity you would like to do with brothers and sisters from St Peters speak to me about how to get that happening. Options include a fishing group, meeting with other families with young children, music, 4-wheel drive group etc. There are many more ways we can do life together and invite others to join in. Please be prayerful about where the Lord is leading you.

See the existing groups listed and contact the leader listed for more information or me, Lesley, on 0408 624 434.

Tea & Coffee Roster 10:30am

Volunteers are needed to help this important ministry, if you are able to help please contact Pam Bishop on 0448 140 814

Mother's Union

Our vision is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships. Our members are not all mothers, nor all women - they are single, married, parents, grandparents, and young adults just beginning to express their social conscience. For all 4 million members what Mothers' Union provides is a network through which they can serve Christ in their own community.

St Peter's Mothers' Union will hold its first meeting for 2021 on Wednesday 24th February, at approximately 1.00 pm - after the Wednesday 11.00 am service and Community Lunch.

Everyone welcome - if you have questions about Mothers' Union, please contact Heather Scott 0438 292 325 or Maryann Ashton 0438 644 315

28th February 2pm - Local Talent Exhibition and BBQ Ecumenical Church Mardan

Entry to event by donation. Contact Sam Nicita for more information about entering as a performer. 5664 9306 samnicita@outlook.com

Readings for Next Week Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 43:18-25

Psalms 41

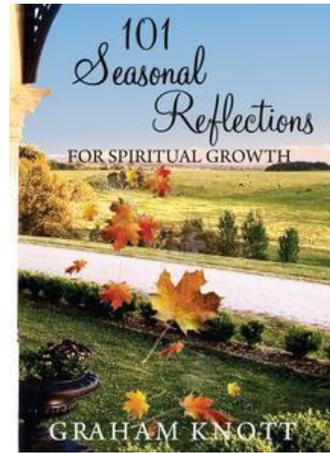
2 Corinthians 1:16-22

Mark 2:1-12

101 Seasonal Reflections

Congratulations to Graham as his first book has now been published- 101 Seasonal Reflections for Spiritual Growth.

Books are available for \$20 and can be purchased after public services in Leongatha or by contacting David Bishop on 0429 888 017.



LET US PRAY

Lord Jesus Christ,
when stormy waves of fear
and rising tides of danger distress us,
you shelter us in your strong heart,
and you hold us steady with your wounded hands.
From the unshakeable certainty of your love,
send out a flood of peace and rivers of justice.
Open up a fountain of health
to cleanse, refresh and renew us.
Gather the whole wide world
into the safety of your embrace. Amen.



GRAHAM GEMS February 14th 2021

Loneliness is one of the greatest contemporary challenges. Large numbers of people from all walks of life, in all kinds of relationships admit to loneliness being something that they struggle with. Loneliness can be reality for the bereaved person as much as for the person setting out on a fresh marriage or leaving home and familiarity for the first time. Many in positions of responsibility and power demonstrate extreme loneliness as they make, sometimes, unpopular decisions by

themselves. Celebrities are often the lonely because they are unable to go to the local shops or Maccas for a meal without being pursued by those who think they know them because they know their fame. Such people become ultra sensitive to the glance from or approach of a stranger mistrusting their purpose and motive. Such response is learned through hard experience. Celebrities value anonymity just as much as the anonymous think they would enjoy fame. The experience of loneliness is unique to each person. There

may be common features but no two experiences of loneliness match. I therefore cannot pretend to understand your loneliness and you cannot understand mine although we may minister to each other and learn to understand one another.

Loneliness results from having done the best things from the best motives for others and, through their responses, ending up in the wrong place. This happened for Jesus. He was approached by a person desperate for healing. Jesus healed the sick, socially and physically excluded person asking them to do what the context demanded to demonstrate their healing and to tell no-one. Instead the person gossiped the good news of his healing everywhere such that "Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere." Jesus became the isolated celebrity through gossip. Gossip isn't always about negative things. Any information we hold about another person is held on trust and should never be shared unless the person concerned gives us deliberate permission to do so. I have known people who have heard they have cancer from strangers who told them what their family had decided to keep confidential from them. I have also known family members who have heard about the birth of a baby in their extended family through the gossip network rather than from the parents who were steadily phoning round following an exhausting delivery. Gossip about good and bad news always leads to loneliness, demonstrates the misuse of power, the reality that the purveyors of it lead very boring lives and need to get a life. The best way to handle what you know about every other human person is to say nothing because you are responsible for your and their loneliness. Once it becomes known that a person is a gossip their lines of communication dry up and diminishing numbers of people trust them. Hold all you know about others with a sacred trust.

Right from the outset of his ministry Jesus demonstrated some of the qualities of loneliness. Jesus connects superficially with crowds from a distance. He knew people but they did not understand or know him. There are no intimate relationships for much of Jesus' ministry. He has no best friends although John would become close to that being described as the disciple 'who Jesus loved.' Continual isolation characterises life for Jesus culminating in a broken cry from the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' He was the life and soul for the party at the wedding feast in Cana yet the overwhelming majority of his attempts to connect were not reciprocated. The daily demands and costs of his ministry and service were such that those who considered themselves his friends felt sidelined and forgotten. When Lazarus, a friend, had died the demands of ministry and service meant that Jesus did not see Lazarus' sisters until after four days. Those sisters were understandably hurt and Jesus also cries. Serving Jesus is a costly and lonely business where motives are easily misunderstood.

Finding pathways through loneliness is very difficult. Many people eat, drink alcohol or take drugs as a way through. Others use sex as they 'long to belong' but end up lonelier. One good answer for many is in the gift of pets who are simply present and accepting of us. Jesus apparently committed himself to a higher calling: that of sharing the kingdom of God without seeking personal recognition. In that ministry of deep caring lay his commitment not simply because the caring was good but because it was energised by an even stronger passion. This was the love relationship between Jesus and his heavenly Father nurtured at great length daily in prayer. That provided something stronger for Jesus where it may be concluded that he was never lonely but always humanly alone because nobody else understood or developed the relationship that held him. So Jesus became highly creative in the ways that he lived, breathed and shared God with others. Developing or exercising creativity is an antidote to loneliness. When we lose ourselves in creativity our focus changes. Loneliness isolates many of us because we don't take sufficient time with the connections we already have. We are always rushing here and there. The day is full but the heart is empty. By way of contrast Jesus always seems to have the gift of pausing and giving his whole attention to the person he is with in the moment. That focus broke both his and their isolation. Perhaps we need to acknowledge and talk about loneliness more. One thing remains certain – many of us are deeply lonely. Jesus understands that but he has provided us with the Body of Christ - one another as part of his solution.