



8 OCTOBER 2023

Welcome to church this morning,
we hope you enjoy being with us.

Lectionary Readings

This week 8 October, 2023

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20
Psalm 19
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

Next week 15 October, 2023

Exodus 32:1-14
Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

Plastic Shopping Bags

Thank you to those who have donated plastic shopping bags, like you get at Woolies or Aldi, for those Hands and Feet clients who forget their bags. This will be an on-going need so if you have any bags you no longer need, please bring them to church and leave them in the meeting room any Sunday.

Op Shop Sale

The Op Shop's half-price sale continues next week so why not drop and grab a bargain at 37 Dell St Woodpark. We're open 9.30-3.30 Mon-Fri and 9-12 Sat.

Theological Perspectives on the Voice Referendum

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I had intended to keep this theological perspective as neutral as possible however it has ended up favouring the Yes vote. I guess that is to be expected, I am after all a minister formed by the Uniting Church and that lens generally colours my thoughts. If you believe that our faith in the Good News of Jesus Christ should influence all our thoughts, feelings and actions, I encourage you to find your own Gospel story or theme to support your vote.

I promised last Sunday to provide some theological perspectives on the Referendum. Below I have included a quote from Rev. Tim Costello, that references Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Tim Costello writes that, "From its earliest days, the church has navigated conflict and inequality. Jewish Christians insisted they would not eat with Christian Gentiles, until the apostles made it clear that transcending those divisions was at the heart of living out the gospel. They had the courage to overcome resistance, and the message of freedom in Christ and one family in Christ not two – a Jewish Christian and a Gentile Christian soon carried across the world". <https://www.tearfund.org.au/stories/an-open-letter-from-rev-tim-costello-to-church-leaders-on-the-voice>

Continued over the page



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Theological Perspectives on the Voice Referendum (continued)

Ironically there are many who claim that the Voice to Parliament will cause more division, however, note that Paul is not saying that the Galatian Church should all become one people culturally, they become one in Christ because that is the exactly the place where differences are respected and accepted. In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul advises that differences of opinion also need to be held respectfully. Paul states that if in good faith and conscience you think differently to your Christian sister or brother, do not make the issue a stumbling block towards unity in Christ. Something for all of us to take heed of no matter which way we vote.

The Uniting Church in Australia is making a stand for the Yes vote, which is not surprising for a church that sees itself as focused on issues of social justice. Theologically this perspective is founded in both Isaiah and Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of Heaven. Isaiah describes the level playing field of the God's realm as a vision of every valley being raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground becoming level, and the rugged places a plain (Isaiah 40:40). Jesus announced at the start of his mission that he had come to proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free (Luke 4:18). Jesus is clearly the ultimate champion of the social justice movement.

I will conclude with another quote from Tim Costello, with a tiny edit in brackets from me. I have also included some graphs from *The Voice to Parliament Handbook* by Thomas Mayo and Kerry O'Brien. The first image highlights the need for change in order to address the current state of inequality and the second makes it clear that we will not be in any danger if we vote Yes.

Tim Costello concludes his open letter, saying, "I fully accept that voting 'No' does not mean you are a racist, (but) enough of the discredited line that to stand up to injustice is divisive, dangerous and unwise. Four in five Indigenous Australians are asking for a voice, and Christians represent a larger share of the Indigenous population than the population at large. Let's heed the lessons of history, from Botany Bay to Uluru. Let's raise our voices for Amazing Grace, but let's not fail the true test for our generation. Tim's full letter can be found here: <https://www.tearfund.org.au/stories/an-open-letter-from-rev-tim-costello-to-church-leaders-on-the-voice>

Vote in good faith and good conscience. God be with you.—Rev Gail

