



12 MAY, 2024



Welcome

Welcome to church this morning, and happy Mother's Day to all who 'mother' within our community.

Welcome also to Paul Cohen, from Celebrate Messiah, who will be sharing a presentation on Pentecost from a Jewish Perspective.

Lectionary Readings

This week 12 May, 2024

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
Psalm 1
1 John 5:9-13
John 17:6-19

Next Sunday 19 May, 2024

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Pentecost Sunday

You're invited to wear red to church next Sunday 19th May as we celebrate Pentecost.

Congregation Meeting 19 May

There will be a very brief congregation meeting after church next Sunday 19 May, to consider and vote on the election of Peter P to Church Council.

Combined Churches Pentecost Service

You are invited to the combined churches Pentecost service to be held at Wentworthville Baptist Church, 18 Chelmsford Rd South Wentworthville at 6pm next Sunday, May 19th.

Community Presentation on Dementia

Wentworthville Uniting Church is hosting (on behalf of Presbytery) a Face Dementia presentation led by Dr Meredith Gresham, at Wentworthville Uniting Church on **23 May at 10am.**

Topics covered include

- Learn about dementia and how to recognize the early signs and changes
- How to reduce your risk of dementia
- Tips to improve your brain health
- Question time

More details from Rev Meredith Williams, meri_will@hotmail.com



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GAIL'S MESSAGE

If Jesus were to drop into Stockland Merrylands, wearing modern day dress and with his hair tied up in one of those trendy 'man buns', he would not look out of place among the multicultural shoppers, many of whom have Middle Eastern ethnicity. Would we fear him I wonder. Would we avoid him as we walked through the Food Court, and choose to sit next to people who look just like us? This may be a silly and far-fetched question, however over the centuries the Church has been quite good at distancing itself from Jesus' Middle Eastern, Jewish roots. Think of how many blond, blue eyed Jesus's you have seen portrayed in art and film over the past decades! In the liturgy guide of the Uniting Church, the notes for Good Friday include the following advice, there "are traditional prayers and responses used around cross on this day" from other denominations. However, "great care must be taken to avoid any suggestion of anti-Semitism – of suggesting that the Jews are to blame for causing the death of Jesus." The liturgy guide goes on to explain that in John's Gospel 'the Jews' does not apply to the whole Jewish people, but to particular individuals. The first followers of Jesus were also Jews. We are all responsible for Christ's death, in that we have turned against him." (Uniting in Worship 2, Mediacom 2010)

As I have mentioned many times we must always read the Scriptures with an awareness that it contains many voices, and most importantly with an awareness of Jesus message to repent and love one another. When Jesus' teachings are overlooked the Church can make tragic and devastating decisions, the most hideous of all being the German Evangelical Church's embracement of the Nazi's anti-semitic political platform. Racism is ugly wherever we find it and it certainly has no place within the Church. Right from the start Jesus' message embraces all people.

Just before Jesus ascends back to God, he tells his disciples "The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem". Did the disciples have a moment of inherent racism I wonder, when instructed to take the message about the very Jewish Messiah to 'all nations'. I can imagine them wanting to ask, "sorry Jesus, do you mean even the gentile nations Jesus, to all those who are not of our race?"

Understanding Jesus and his disciples' Jewish roots is a great blessing. When we are given insights into the way God has spoken to Israel throughout the centuries we become aware of the universal scope of God's love and God's eternal plan to save and redeem us. Today we are blessed by welcoming Paul Cohen as our guest speaker. Paul will provide us with the background to the Jewish Feast of Pentecost. We will celebrate Pentecost as the birth of the Church the following week on Sunday 19th May. If possible please wear red to help create a celebratory atmosphere.