



10 NOVEMBER 2024

Welcome

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

Lectionary readings

This week 10 November, 2024

Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17

Psalm 127

Hebrews 9:24-28

Mark 12:38-44

Next Sunday 17 November, 2024

1 Samuel 1:4-20

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-18), 19-25

Mark 13:1-8

Christmas is Coming!

The Hands and Feet Volunteer Team invites you to spread some Christmas Cheer this year by donating a Christmas treat, such as chocolates, shortbreads, puddings etc. to go into our clients baskets on 11th December.

There is a box at the back of the church for your donations.

Side by Side Christ Ministries

Thank you to everyone who has contributed towards our collection to support Emmanuel and Side by Side Christ Ministries in Uganda, we have raised \$1422 so far.

Child Care Centre Update

You all know that we have a Child Care Centre and a Before & After School Centre. What you might not know is that the child care has been struggling for enrolments in recent years due to extreme competition from new local centres. Added to this struggle is onerous change to governance regulations for our Management Committee members with fines and even potential jail time!

This has meant we were faced with a tough decision, however we have struck a deal with Uniting Early Learning to work with us into early next year to work out a possible solution.

Happily the Tigers Before & After Centre is going well and we expect it should be readily integrated into the Early Learning group.

We are all sad to see such an established mission activity struggling after 51 years but with luck and your prayers we look forward to a positive outcome.



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Rev Gail's Message

The Revised Common Lectionary offers four readings each week across a three year cycle. The cycles are repeated and were created to present in worship a broad cross section of the entire body of Scripture. During the current cycle we have moved through the Book of Hebrews over the last few weeks. I have been using these texts as assurances of forgiveness because they primarily focus on Jesus as our Great High Priest.

Hebrews is a difficult book to understand and it has been described as arcane, stodgy, overly intellectual and boring. The book focuses on subject matter that make no sense to the modern day reader, including Jewish sacrificial practices, purification rituals, the priesthood and an obscure character called Melchizedek. Historians tell us that even the original audience back in the first century would have found the ancient Jewish practices described in this letter/sermon outdated, so what is it all about?

Hebrews may have intended for Jewish converts who wondered if they had made a mistake in following the controversial figure of Jesus Christ. It may also have been written to encourage gentile Christians to understand the ancient spiritual heritage of their faith. To early churches with mixed membership, both Jews and non-Jews, the letter explains that Jesus is the new covenant between God and all people, a covenant of love, peace and reconciliation that was the fulfilment of the old. "The Old Covenant between God and Israel refers to the Law (the 10 Commandments plus 600+ other laws). It was given through Moses around 1400 BC. It is recorded in the Old Testament. It emphasized works—what we must do for God ("Thou shalt/shalt not")." People being people, no one could live up to the expectations of the Law and in order to be cleansed of any sin a symbolic, ritual sacrifice was offered to God in the Temple. The Temple's High Priest acted as the mediator between God and the people and he would stand in their place, to offer an innocent animal as a sign of repentance. This sounds almost barbaric to our modern day sensibilities yet this manner of appeasing the gods was a common practice in many ancient cultures and we know that at times the Israelites were tempted to go one step further and sacrifice human children to the gods like their pagan neighbours. The God of Israel firmly decreed that this was not permissible. Phew!

The New Covenant refers to the gospel ("good news") given through Jesus Christ and recorded in the New Testament. It emphasizes grace and what God has done for us through Christ. Hebrews emphasises the superiority of Jesus as the penultimate High Priest who becomes the innocent sacrifice for all people, across all time, as a once for all transaction. Many people rally against the notion that a loving God would sacrifice his own innocent son, however Hebrews makes the case for a fully divine Jesus and a fully human Christ. If we make Christ too human we fall into the trap of judging God as barbaric. The remedy is to understand Jesus as the "one through whom worlds were created" (Hebrews 1:2) and see that it is Godself who reaches out to us in the most loving and sacrificial way imaginable. I pray you feel the intense, abiding love that God has for you, yes for little old you, just as you are, beloved by God since the beginning of the worlds and into eternity. **Amen.**