

August Mission of the Month:



Gyanankur English School

is an independent Indian school for Preschool to Year 10 in Kesnand, a village near Pune in India, 4 hours' drive southeast of Mumbai.

The school has a Christian board to oversee it and many Christian teachers. Anne Weeks' friend Melinda Parker, who now lives in Sydney, is the Honorary Director & Anne helps out with administration.

Gyanankur's core values are:

1. Joy: School should be fun!
2. Service: not to be served, but to serve.
3. Transparency: lives and relationships marked by openness and honesty.
4. Dignity: everyone is treated with respect.

These are 4 counter-cultural values for India, where discrimination (based on one's colour or status), bribery & corruption are normal.

Since the Covid pandemic struck, the school has been closed but lessons and assemblies happen online. Despite all the challenges, all 42 Year 10 students passed their exams and graduated.

Please pray for the staff on reduced salaries and especially for the headmistress, whose husband recently died from Covid.



Please keep giving!

We may not be meeting physically for worship, but we still have bills to pay and ministries to support. You are encouraged to make use of the electronic funds transfer option from your bank account to the Uniting Financial Services Congregation account using the following information:

BUC Property Committee BSB 634-634 Acc 10000-1487

Thank you for your generous support for the work of the Gospel.

WHAT'S ON @ BUC?

Look out for emails with information about virtual (Zoom) Prayer meetings and "Get-togethers".

All meetings at the Church are post-poned until the covid lockdown order is lifted.



Belrose Uniting Church

in the Assembly of Confessing Congregations of the Uniting Church in Australia

Corner Forest Way and Morgan Road, Belrose

We aim TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world since 1916.

GOOD NEWS WEEKLY

Sunday 8th August 2021

7th Sunday of

Covid Lockdown 3.0

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22, 23

As the covid lock down continues for another month, I find myself drawn to the NSW Premier's daily 11.00 am Covid briefing. Each day I turn on the TV at that appointed hour awaiting with anticipation some good news of falling numbers of covid cases, of the easing of restrictions, and the end of lock down. Each day I am met with disappointment.

This daily routine could easily cast me into despair. So I need to be reminded daily of something else, something that will cast out disappointment and despair: those wonderful verses from Lamentations chapter 23. The writer of Lamentations reflects on the memories of his afflictions, of bitterness and his downcast soul (vv 19 & 20), yet chooses to call to mind something that gives him hope (v 21): the steadfast love of God – the compassion (mercy) of God that is new every morning. Each new day is an opportunity to give thanks for God's faithfulness, despite the threat of being "consumed" by our afflictions. ***May God's mercies surround you each day!***

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Prayer Requests:

Prayer.team@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au



August Sermon Series: Judges - *Light in a dark world*

Throughout August we will be exploring the theme: ***Light in a dark world*** from the **OT book of Judges**. As you read through this book, I hope you will see the hand of God at work bringing light to a world darkened by calamity and human wickedness.

Pray: Jesus said: *"I am the light of the world."* (John 8:12)
Gracious God, may the light of the Lord Jesus shine on me today and illuminate my understanding of Your Word, in His name I pray, Amen.

Read: Judges 4:1 - 24

Reflect: *Whose side are you on?*

1. The Privilege of Choice

The Bible tells us that God is sovereign, and at the same time blesses us with the capacity to make choices. We experience the consequences of our choices, and the choices of others, both positive and negative. Sadly, in a broken world, we, and others, don't always make good choices.

In the Book of Judges, the people of Israel are confronted with the most important choice: God's way or their own way. A telling verse that sums up the attitude of the people in this book is: *"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."* (Judges 21:25). A recipe, we see, for the cycle of decline into spiritual darkness that permeates the whole book:

Rebellion – Reckoning (judgement) – Rescue – Restoration

2. Unlikely Rescuers Judges Chs 4 & 5

i) **The cycle continues:** rebellion & reckoning 4:1 – 3

Chapters 1 - 3 introduced us to this cycle and is summed up in the opening verses of Chapter 4: rebellion against God, and God's just judgement. But God in His mercy did not give up on His people, and raised up Judges (rescuers), some of whom are the most unlikely people.

ii) **Barak's choice** 4:4 – 8

Barak chose to not to trust God's promise, but sought security in the presence of Deborah, God's prophet, as a "good luck charm".

iii) **Deborah's choice** 4: 9, 10

Deborah chose God's way, and rebuked Barak: the victory will come, but not by Barak's hand.

iv) **Heber's choice** 4:11 & 17

Heber the Kenite chose to align himself with God's enemies.

It fell on his wife Jael to rectify his mistake.

v) **Jael's choice** 4:17 – 22

We are not told explicitly what motivated Jael's course of action, but she is applauded in Deborah's song (Chapter 5) as one who is blessed by God and hailed as a most unlikely rescuer.

vi) **The cycle continues:** rescue & restoration 4:23, 24 & Ch 5

Through Jael's action a great victory was won, and the people were saved from their oppressors.

God had used the most unlikely rescuers – Deborah & Jael – both women (unusual for the time), and one a "foreigner" (even more shocking for the time). Peace was restored as the Light of God's blessing shined upon them once again (for the time being – see Judges 5:31).

3. So Whose Side Are You On?

The consequences of choice: we don't always make the right choice; and we can't always direct the choices of others; but we can have the comfort of knowing that God chooses us.

God has chosen the most "unlikely" means to rescue us: God's only majestic Son, becoming a servant, dying on the cross. As the Apostle Paul notes, *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* (1 Cor 1:18)

God chose: * to be faithful to His covenant
* to send a rescuer
* to forgive us when we repent of the bad choices we make.

Jesus chose: * God's will and God's way
* to side with us – becoming one of us
* the cross, so that we may be rescued and restored

Whose side will you be on? What will you choose? Choose light!

Pray: *Heavenly Father, thank you for the light and peace of Your presence. By Your Holy Spirit help me to make good, wise and Godly choices that I may live and walk in the Light of Christ, in Jesus' name. Amen.*



The physical weekly Prayer Meetings are in recess until covid lockdown restrictions are lifted, but all are welcome to join in the Zoom prayer gatherings. The Prayer Meetings are open to anyone who wants to come.

We share prayer points, read and reflect upon a Psalm, moving us to praise God & to pray.

If you would like to participate but are not getting the email notifications, please email me

as I may not have your correct email address:

mail@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

* Gordon Allan * Jen Dinning * Gordon Richardson
* John Bishop * David Keiller * Sierk Dykman
* Marcia Schnabel * Matt Phillips * Joan Sena

* Those in our Church family and wider community who are in isolation as a result of the recent local covid outbreak; & pray for revival in our nation!

* World: global covid crisis; refugees & the persecuted Church; our international mission partners (Bruce & Kathy, Edwardes Family)

Have a prayer request? * Email: prayer.team@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au

*Give to Rev. Ian or place a note in the prayer box near Church front door