



Hornsby Uniting Church

Our Vision: To grow in Christ and share His love.

News for May 12, 2024

*Our God of steadfast love is faithful and just. God knows your hearts and offers you peace.
Receive God's peace and abide in Christ's love.*

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 - Where violence seeks to end life, God seeks to bring new life. The invitation in this Easter season is to pay attention to the little buds of new life all around us. They are there, if only we take the time to notice. In this passage, new communities are forming. Communities of love who seek to follow the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this community formation, it is important for there to be people present who were actual witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. This reminds us that we are part of a great cloud of witnesses who have lived into this story over many years and over many generations. Mothers telling their sons. Grandparents telling their grandchildren. We get to join in *that story* and *that legacy*. Thanks be to God.

What does it mean to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ today?
What does it mean to cultivate resurrection hope while also acknowledging the reality of grief? Can both be true?

Psalms 1 - The image the psalmist gifts to us in this passage is that of a tree planted by a stream of water. This is a tree that always has access to sustenance. This is a tree that grows deep roots, it is not easily pushed around by the cares and occupations of this life. Our society tends to celebrate outer measures of success, but what if true peace and true joy are rooted in our ability to cultivate our own interiority? To sit in silence, to listen to our breath, to pay attention to God's spirit moving among us? That just might be what it means to plant oneself near living streams of water. If we are to stay present for ourselves and others, we need to be drawing on that strength.

Is the well you draw on deep or shallow? How can it be deepened?
What spiritual practices help you pay attention to God?

1 John 5:9-13 - God's testimony brings life. We know that if something does not lead to life and flourishing, then it is not the testimony of God. This passage was written in the midst of conflict. False teachers were leading the flock astray. How do you choose who to listen to? There are always loud voices competing for attention. The voice of God is often described as a whisper. The litmus test is this: does this make me more loving? Does this bring me closer to Jesus? Continual discernment helps us to regulate who we are listening to. The goal is to become more loving and more compassionate as we center our lives on Jesus and the things he cared about.

Does the testimony I tell with my own life attest to the loving, liberating, life-giving work of God?



Blessed is the man...

Whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

Psalms 1:1-3

Our morning worship service is videotaped each Sunday, and made available online later in the day.

You can join us at

<http://hornsby.unitingchurch.org.au/church-at-home.html>

GAMES NIGHT IS BACK!

Join us again for Games Night on Saturday May 18 from 7:00pm - 9:30. Learn a new game or three, or play one that's familiar!

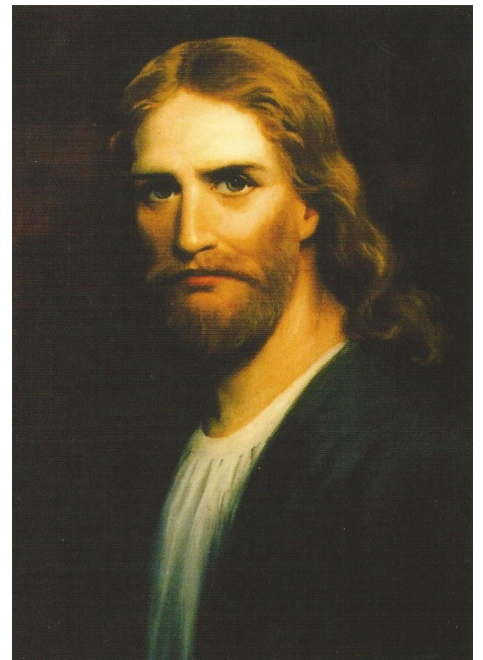
We welcome **Juliana Nkrumah** to lead the 'message' this Sunday.



Audio-Visual upgrades

We are in discussion to have some parts of the audio visual system upgraded or repaired (the hum in the speakers, for instance). First up is the replacement of both projectors in the 'carpet' auditorium; new projectors are now on order. While this is happening, special thanks to some private donors who recently gave us a generous sum to assist with the cost - it is much appreciated and lets us get improvements made more quickly.

You will remember Rev. Max and Bonnie Fox. Bonnie's daughter has a framed print of Herbert Beecroft's "Jesus Turned and Looked at Peter" which was a great favourite; she is looking to put this into the right hands, so if you would like to acquire the picture, please let Kent know and I will put you in touch. Easy pickup from Waitara.



Mission Australia supports actions for women's safety and calls for more social and affordable housing

<https://www.insights.uca.org.au/mission-australia-supports-actions-for-womens-safety-and-calls-for-more-social-and-affordable-housing/>

Bulletin 120524 - **The Armour of God**



There is no one who would say, everything is all right with me all the time and everywhere in my life. Every milestone in our lives come with its own challenges, fears and worries etc. People resolve them or try to resolve them in different ways; some depend on medication or drugs, some on counselling and plus medication, some lose it altogether and become mentally disabled; whilst others are completely overcome with the new life's problems that they believe ending their lives is the best solution because they have no other support system to help them weather the storms of life.

We all go through storms of life issues, some might be stressful, painful, shameful and worse off, existential. The question for you today is; to whom do you turn? When you belong to Jesus Christ, and His Father God, we have a sure solid anchor to hold us down that the storms buffeting us will not drift us away to destruction. In Christ Jesus, we are safeguarded he gives us an armour to ready us to fight for us to be victorious over the battles of life. During such times we leave the battle to God, he has fought many of such, many harder and worse than yours, so why not believe in this capable Captain!!

David Jeremiah - we have God's Armour. 1 Samuel 17:47 states: Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands. After young David, the shepherd boy, convinced King Saul to let him go out and fight Goliath, the first thing the king did was dress David in his own armour and bronze helmet. But David said, "I cannot walk with these" (1 Samuel 17:39). So, David went out to face Goliath with his own "armour": a tunic, a staff, a sling, five stones, and faith. For that task, which was all David needed to defeat his enemy.

When we face the giants that threaten us in our life, there is a temptation to put on "armour" God didn't design for us to wear. It may be the armour of this world (position, power, education, wealth, influence) or it may be armour that we've seen a fellow Christian successfully wear. It may take a few battles for us to learn that God has provided all the armour we need and individually tailored for each one of us; it is fashioned with truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, salvation, Scripture, and prayer (Ephesians 6:14-18).

As we journey in this world, faced with the giant storms of life; I wish to encourage you today, to not give up or admit defeat. Face your giants today clothed in the armour of Christ. Let God prepare you for battle, and you will be victorious. We can trust Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts to lead us into victory- the hymnist John SB Monsell puts it in this beautiful well-loved hymn:



Fight the good fight with all thy
might;
Christ is thy strength, and Christ
thy right;
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

Cast care aside, upon thy guide,
Lean, and His mercy will provide;
Lean, and the trusting soul shall
prove
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.

Faint not nor fear, His arms are
near,
He changeth not, and thou art
dear.
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

To end take Apostle Paul's exhortation from Ephesians 6:11-13 - *Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

Do not let the world's battles overcome you, put on God's armour and stand, ready to fight! The Lord God richly bless you. Rev Kodjo Nkrumah 120524, (inspiration from David Jeremiah)

IN PRAYER

Loving God, you know our hearts.

May that be enough for us right now, to simply rest here secure in the knowledge of being known.

Let that be enough to bring us together to share what we know and what we wish to know.

Jesus prayed a prayer for his followers, that they may be one.

What divisions must we lay aside?

Jesus prayed a prayer for his followers, that they may be protected.

What must we do to guard and keep each other?

Jesus prayed a prayer for his followers, that joy may be complete.

What holds us back from complete joy?

Jesus prayed a prayer for his followers, that they may be sanctified in truth.

What truth do we need to hear today?

Let us receive the assurance of these prayers,

and may unity, caring, joy, and truth be the fruit we bear in the world. Amen.

What have you made known to us, O God,
your stumbling, bumbling, dice-tumbling followers?

That we are yours.

That eternal life is ours.

That we do not belong to this world.

May each of these truths direct us, guard us, and protect us.

May they water us like a living stream, because by these truths we are
called out and chosen to live beyond ourselves
to shared lives of joy, meaning and purpose.



*I am praying for
them. I am not
praying for the
world but for
those whom you
have given me,
for they are yours.
John 17:9*

“I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” - **John 17:6-19**

Do you need to contact someone? Have a support need?

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