



ROSEVILLE UNITING CHURCH

“Sharing the love & welcome of Jesus”



roseville.unitingchurch.org.au



@530worship



@rosevilleuniting

Helpless Hopelessness is Disempowering - David Gushee

I realized after fourteen months of dumbfounded mainly-silence that I had succumbed to hopelessness about the US, the country that I love and that it was time to snap out of it.

There are three problems with hopelessness.

One: it closes its eyes to reasons for hope; therefore, in the name of realism it misses key parts of reality.

Two: it is profoundly disempowering; therefore, it takes the hopeless one off the field of fighting for a better reality precisely when everyone's best efforts are needed.

Three: it may be conceived as a luxury, available only to those who can imagine living without hope and still surviving; therefore, hopelessness may be an expression of social privilege.

Hearing lectures at Austin Seminary this past weekend involved becoming reacquainted with hope. I wrote down this quote from Catherine Keller: “Biblical hope is not optimism...It is the embrace of a desired possibility — to realize, recognize and actualize the possible...to embrace a hope is already to begin an action — active embrace of hope already helps to bring about some outcome.” This implies that lack of hope may well cut off movement toward any action and thus any change one might wish to see in the world.

In my words: *helpless hopelessness is disempowering.*

Contrast that helpless hopelessness with this line from Gloria Anzaldúa: “Voyager, there are no bridges, one builds them as one walks.”

Which may mean that, at least if one has the power to do something constructive — something at all, anything really — to give in to hopelessness is irresponsible. If you don't see a bridge to a better world ahead of you, start walking, and build it as you go.

Keller quoted bell hooks to this effect: “to be hopeful is to be responsible for the future.”

I think I now know this about myself: as a white liberal-leaning man of a certain age, I was born and raised in an era, and maybe even in a version of Christian ethics, that taught me *optimism based on visible progress*, with a really nice backstop of social advantage to keep me safe no matter whether progress continued.

But that was optimism based on social circumstances. What we now need is hope based on far deeper wellsprings.

The traditions that can teach us this deeper hope are not provided by the privileged. They are offered by those for whom hope is and has always been most difficult and therefore most necessary.

Maybe that is why James Baldwin resonates so much with me and so many others these days. And so I close with some of Baldwin's greatest lines about hope:

Cont'd

Sunday February 8th

<https://roseville.unitingchurch.org.au/livestream>

9.30am **Worship Service with Chris Goringe**
Organist: Jillian Cranney
5 Minutes of Faith: Maz Berry

In person and online...

Bible Readings from the Lectionary:

Isaiah 58: 1-9a (9b—12)
Psalm 112: 1-9 (10)
1 Corinthians 2: 1-12, (13-16)
Matthew 5: 13-20

5.30pm **Worship Service with Chris Goringe and Sonia Powell**

What's on this week...

Tue Kids Playtime 10.00-11.30am
Church Council 7.00pm

Wed Small Group 10.00am
Social Games 1.00-3.00pm

Fri Christian Meditation 2.30pm
PYES 6.30-9.30pm

Sunday February 15th

<https://roseville.unitingchurch.org.au/livestream>

9.30am **Worship Service with Chris Goringe**
Organist: Alan Caradus

5.30pm **Music Special**

Bible Readings from the Lectionary:

Exodus 24: 12-18
Psalm 2 or Psalm 99
2 Peter 1: 16-21
Matthew 17: 1-9

Links

[Service live \(or replay\) streaming](#)

[Zoom \(for meetings\)](#)

[Church website](#)

[Chris' sermons](#)

- “I cannot afford despair... You can’t tell the children that there is no hope.”
- “Hope is invented every day.”
- “Yet, hope—the hope that we, human beings, can be better than we are—dies hard; perhaps one can no longer live if one allows that hope to die.”
- “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

And then the one that summons me right now:

“The hope of the world lies in what one demands, not of others, but of oneself.”

Amanda

Dates for your diary....

- 17 February: Pancakes at the Manse 7.00pm
 22 February: Arts for Tea 10.00am
 20 February: Lenten Ecumenical Service, Killara UC, 7.30pm
 10 March: Lenten Ecumenical Service, Roseville UC, 7.30pm
 14 March: Working Bee 8.00—11.00am
 15 March: Soul Food 5.30pm
 21 March: Lindara Market 8.00am—1.00pm
 24 March: Lenten Ecumenical Service, Holy Family Catholic Church 7.30pm
 19 May: Pentecost Ecumenical Service, Lindfield UC, 7.30pm
 11 July: Working Bee 8.00—11.00am
 18 July: Lindara Market 8.00am—1.00pm
 14 November: Working Bee 8.00-11.00am
 21 November: Lindara Market 8.00am—1.00pm
 1 December: Advent Ecumenical Service Killara CC, 7.30pm

Join us in Prayer ...

Loving God,
 we thank you for our world and all who live in it.
 You call us to live with trust, generosity, and compassion,
 and you promise light in times of darkness.

We pray for places marked by conflict, injustice, fear, and greed.

Bring peace where there is violence,
 wisdom to leaders,
 and hope to people whose lives are overshadowed by hardship.

We pray for those who struggle,
 for people facing poverty, illness, loneliness or uncertainty, and for carers who quietly give so much.
 May they know your comfort and strength, and may we respond with kindness and practical care.

We pray for your church, here and around the world.
 Help us to live generously,
 to welcome all people,
 and to reflect the love of Jesus Christ
 in our words and actions each day.

Faithful God,
 teach us to trust you,
 to share freely what we have,
 and to be a light in our community and beyond.

Amen.

Sonia



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