



ROSEVILLE UNITING CHURCH

“Sharing the love & welcome of Jesus



roseville.unitingchurch.org.au



@530worship



@rosevilleuniting

Feeling a bit overwhelmed by all that is happening in our world, both near and far, a couple of weeks ago I started to read a book, called *For Such a Time as This: An Emergency Devotional* by Hanna Reichel (I highly recommend it!) Written as a guide for ordinary Christians seeking to live faithfully in extraordinary times, its 28 short chapters encourage readers to love and to resist, to hope and to protest, to dream and to remember, to create space and to take space. The chapter I read this morning ‘Stand where God stands; or Protect the weak’ makes reference to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor and theologian, who, staunchly opposed to the Nazis, and speaking out against what they were doing, was imprisoned and then executed by them.

Reichel writes: ‘What difference does belief in God make at such a time as this? Belief in God is not a comfort in affliction; if anything, it makes suffering and injustice more acute.... Belief in God is a commitment to stand where God stands. Because this is where we have found God, this is where God will find us: with our eyes to the cross, staying with the suffering, regardless of our own strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears.’

Last week, one of our Bible readings was Matthew 25, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ Protect the weak; follow Jesus, who went to the outcasts, and died as one. Reichel follows up her chapter with some questions and suggestions. Who is most vulnerable to persecution and repression in these times? (she is writing out of the US, but the questions are becoming equally valid here). Who is left out to dry, as others protect themselves? Where and how do our lives intersect, and what is one way we can shield and support them? One easy(ish) thing to do is to contact your local politician when political measures target the vulnerable.

Her chapter on discernment encourages us to do research, find facts, read widely. To seek out contrasting viewpoints and compare differing opinions; contrast helps us see more clearly. And to do things in community. A current and divisive issue right now is that of the women and children stranded in the Roj camp in Syria and seeking to return to Australia. A letter to the Prime Minister, recently written by 44 female Christian pastors and leaders, seeking their repatriation concludes “it is our faith which compels us to justice and compassion for them”. You can read the letter here

<https://roseville.unitingchurch.org.au/an-open-letter-to-the-pm/>

We are living in difficult times. But that is nothing new. Perhaps our faith has been given to us ‘for such a time as this’. What does it mean to feel our feelings, to pray without ceasing, to declare what faith in Jesus means and commands today, and to keep living as followers of Christ?

Amanda

Sunday March 8th

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

9.30am **Worship Service with Chris Goringe**
Organist: Sean Weatherley
5 Minutes of Faith: Maddie McDonnell
In person and online...

10.45am **Second Cuppa**
Bible Readings from the Lectionary:
Exodus 17: 1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5: 1-11
John 4: 5-42

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

What’s on this week...

Tue Kids Playtime 10.00-11.30am
Lenten Ecumenical Service Roseville
UC 7.30pm

Wed Small Group 10.00am
Social Bridge 1.00-3.00pm
Elders’ Forum 7.30pm

Fri Christian Meditation 2.30pm
PYES 6.30-9.30pm

Sat Working Bee 8.00—11.00am

Sunday March 15th

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

9.30am **Worship Service with Dan Reeve**
In person and online...

5.30pm **SOUL FOOD**

Bible Readings from the Lectionary:
1 Samuel 16: 1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5: 8-14
John 9: 1-41

Links

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

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

[Church website](#)

[Chris’ sermons](#)

Church Family News

Please remember the family of Julia Weston, who died this week. . A service to commemorate her life will be held in April. Details to follow.



From The Resource Centre at Lent

The author of the first book here is Rowan Williams, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, still very active in ministry, teaching and writing, continuing to speak to people across the world. In his book, "God With Us. The meaning of the cross and resurrection. Then and now", he explores 'the meaning of the cross' and 'the meaning of the resurrection'. This book is seen as 'easily accessible', 'challenging' and 'life-changing'. It's here at our Resource Centre: pick it up, browse and maybe be prepared to go further with it.

Very different in style is Joyce Rupp's "Jesus, Guide of my Life. Reflections for the Lenten Journey". Rupp moves, day by day through the weeks of Lent and the days of Easter. It's a small book to hold, but comes to us with the author's 'insight and personal experience of the power of the Gospel to shape our lives.'

There is so much richness for us in the Lent and Easter materials at our Resource Centre. Do come by and discover for yourself.

The good news is...

15 th Feb	...all are invited
22 nd Feb	...so good it takes us by surprise
1 st March	...forgiveness comes first
8 th March	...the impossible is possible
15 th March	...protection and care for the vulnerable
22 nd March	...justice, mercy, and faithfulness
29 th March	...inspiration to act
5 th April	...alive in the world

Join us in Prayer ...

A Call to Prayer for Peace in the Middle East from [World Council of Churches](#)

God of Abraham and Sarah,

God of Hagar and Ishmael,

God of Isaac and Rebekah,

God revealed to us in Jesus Christ,

We bring before you the lands where our faith was born, now shaken by escalating violence and deep uncertainty.

We pray for the people of Iran,

for the people of Israel,

and for all across the region living tonight with fear.

We pray for children woken by sirens,

for families seeking safety,

for those carrying grief, anger and anxiety.

Prince of Peace,

interrupt the cycle of violence.

Protect civilian life on every side.

Grant leaders wisdom and restraint.

Turn hearts from further destruction toward dialogue and de-escalation.

Call all nations to act with responsibility,

with care for human life,

and with respect for the obligations of international law.

Spirit of the Living God,

comfort those in Australia whose loved ones are in harm's way.

Strengthen Jewish, Muslim, Iranian, Arab and Christian communities who may feel vulnerable or unsettled.

Guard us from antisemitism, from Islamophobia, and from every form of hatred that rises in times of conflict.

Make your Church a place of safety, compassion and steady hope.

May fear give way to understanding.

May violence give way to courage for peace.

May justice and mercy meet.

In the name of Christ, who is our peace.

Amen.



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