

Readings

Prv 31:10-31

Ps 1

Jas 3:13-4:3,7-8a

Mk 9:30-37



Preaching

9am Richard Wallace

WELCOME TO AUC!

Please join us for refreshments in the breezeway after the service.

CONTACT US

Church Office

47790060
PO Box 195
Aitkenvale QLD 4814

aitkenvaleuc@bigpond.com
aitkenvale.unitingchurch.org.au

Facebook:
Aitkenvale Uniting Church

Please pray for:

Leaders at Assembly, Synod and Presbytery for wisdom and discernment in making decisions affecting the wider church.

Our elders and members of the Church Council as they make decisions affecting the life of our church.

The Joint Nominating Committee and Presbytery as they seek to discern the calling of a new ministry agent for our congregation.

Many of our number who are in need of healing, comfort and strength of heart.

The youth of our city.

An end to the hostilities in Ukraine and for actions that will bring about a just and lasting peace. And an end to the Israel-Hamas conflict.

On Avoiding Tough Questions

“But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.” Mark 9:32

Still today, sometimes people are afraid of addressing questions to another person. It may be that the anticipated answer might present too much of a challenge to the enquirer. The answer, if the person is in need, might make you feel obligated to help them out, but you are busy with your own priorities. You may decline to ask a question because it is too personal, and politeness demands it not be asked; unasked, not so much from fear, but from respect for the person. Maybe you don't want to show ignorance in the hope to save face. Maybe even, the response may lead to further investigation and reshape your world view. In some cases the answer may outline a future that is too hard to handle and denial is the safest option, perhaps this is how the disciples felt in today's Gospel selection. ABC TV has made a show of seven series of episodes with the title “You Can't Ask That!” And, yes, some of those episodes explore quite personal matters.

In our Gospel lesson today Mark records that the disciples were afraid to question Jesus about a very disturbing declaration. But first let us see that in the context of Mark's narrative. Jesus and his faithful band are travelling from the northern, rather foreign territory, and eventually destined for Jerusalem and the portentous events that will come about there. They are around their home place now, Capernaum. It is here that Jesus announces for the second time that he is going to Jerusalem and will suffer and die, but rise again. This confounded the disciples but they are afraid to probe the meaning of it. Such things shouldn't happen, they're unthinkable and they cannot face the prospect “We can't ask about that!” It is more comfortable to say nothing.

But Jesus was not afraid to ask a question, and it is one that silences the group. What have you been talking about on the way?

Well, they had been discussing “who is the greatest?” The text does not say whether this was about the greatest person in the nation or among themselves. Because of their possibly embarrassed silence, we may assume it was about them. Now Jesus instructs them on true greatness, “If you want to be great, you must be a servant to others.” Jesus flips the common perception that greatness means power, and power to control others; power to command and exact obedience from others. This is pretty much how the world of populism thinks and works today.

The Greek word diakonos can mean “slave” as well as “servant”, and in the next chapter Jesus tells them “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you would be slave of all. (Mk 10:43,44).

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Servant and slave, “diakonos” and “doulos” are used together as qualities, or rather, behaviours and functions of the truly great person. Jesus contrasts the leadership styles he advocates with the leadership styles of his day. He subverts the norms of his day and of ours.

Noting that Jesus specifically gets the twelve disciples together for this teaching, scholar Bill Loader recognises that this teaching is about leadership. This band of followers will become the leaders of the Jesus movement when Jesus is no longer physically present; which, of course was the situation when Mark was writing the gospel and the Christian community was hearing it. And maybe this suggests one of the questions that the disciples were too afraid to ask earlier. “Well teacher, if you are not going to be with us in person, who can be a leader for our community?” So Jesus lays it out, the great leader is the one who is humbly loving and serving.

Finally, Jesus addresses the quality of service as he takes a child in his arms, and talks of receiving him, Jesus, as one receives the child. A child is lowly and vulnerable, so too, the great leader is humble and vulnerable in their serving. Boldness in humble service can draw personal attack Because of this leaders need other leaders to care and support them.

Sadly the church over history has failed to live the pattern of leadership by which Jesus taught and lived and died. Tough questions have not been asked, either out of fear or superficial allegiance to Christ’s teaching or both.

When the church supported trafficking and the enslavement of African people who asked, “How are we really serving these people?” Well, you can’t ask that! When the church was complicit in the suppression and even extinction of indigenous cultures and appropriated their wealth and precious artifacts, who asked, “How are we truly serving these people?” Well, you can’t ask that!

While we advocate for communal caring and service what are the hard questions that we might be asking about Christian service? Some that the Uniting Church has begun to address, but on which there is not broad agreement, are safe injecting rooms for addicts and how to respond to members of the LGBTQ+ community as persons without objectifying them. And for us, at AUC, as we seek to live out a refreshed vision what are the hard questions we might ask, so that we might truly serve?

Grace and peace, Richard



STUDY BOOKS ‘For Times Such as These’ have arrived. Please see Kate after worship to receive your copy. You may pay the \$14.95 by envelope in the collection plate, or to the church's bank account online, marked as Study Book. Kate

Sunday Service 22nd September 2024 Live Streaming:

We welcome and thank **Rev Richard Wallace** for bringing the message to us today. Welcome to our service here and to those at home. To participate in worship, please click on the link below and sit back and wait for the service to start.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM_yuTGxZEXsdQPd3XEQbtA/live

If you miss it, or would like to share it with someone, the recordings are on our website.

Church news bulletin bloopers

- † Applications are now being accepted for 2-year old nursery workers.
- † Brother Lamar has died and has gone on to be the Lord.



This is to advise members of the congregation that Fred Annesley is resigning from Church Council and Eldership and their associated responsibilities because of Alison's health issues and his own health struggle. He will continue in his work on the Discipleship Stream for which we thank him.

His resignation will leave a large hole in the life of the church. I am sure that you too will be sad to hear of his resignation but will join me in thanking him for his wonderful service over many decades as a faithful servant of Christ.

Ron Store

Pastoral Care

In our recent period of discerning what our vision is for our church, one matter came through very clearly – the need for enhanced pastoral care; and a strong recommendation that we establish a pastoral care team. In previous years (as recently as 2020) we had an active Pastoral Care group). In recent years the group has lapsed. Church Council has been aware of the need to restore a pastoral care ministry. Fred Annesley has been doing magnificent pastoral care work in visiting those of our number now in nursing homes and people in hospital. This has become increasingly burdensome for Fred. The need for hospital visiting is even greater now that the Uniting Church no longer has a hospital chaplain in Townsville.

Many churches rely on their minister or member of a ministry team to co-ordinate and provide pastoral care. We do not have a minister at present so leadership in pastoral care must be provided from our own resources.

At its recent meeting Church Council revisited this issue and decided that a pastoral care group should be formed which will operate within the Discipleship Stream. The Discipleship Stream has started looking at different models of pastoral care and how it might work within the Discipleship Stream. After careful and prayerful consideration they will make recommendations.

Pastoral care in a church means caring for each other. Put simply, sometimes it may mean just being a friend, listening to someone who is hurting or grieving, understanding the pain they are experiencing and offering a hand of friendship and support. Sometimes it may mean praying with them or a phone call. If you think that you might have the skills to participate in a pastoral care ministry or would like to learn more, please contact Kate Dix (mob. 0429609509) or Fred Annesley (mob. 0400309912).

When the Discipleship Ministry Team recommend a model of Pastoral Care to implement and Church Council considers their recommendations, you will be advised. *Meanwhile, think about how you may provide pastoral care to those you already know and have a special care for.*

Ron Store,
Chair, Church Council.

Remember! There is no use-by date for a Christian (David MacGregor)

Pocket Prayer Quilts

Still available for a **gold coin donation**. They are just a little something to give to someone who is struggling and remind them of God's comforting love. If you would like to help with these, fabric is always welcome.

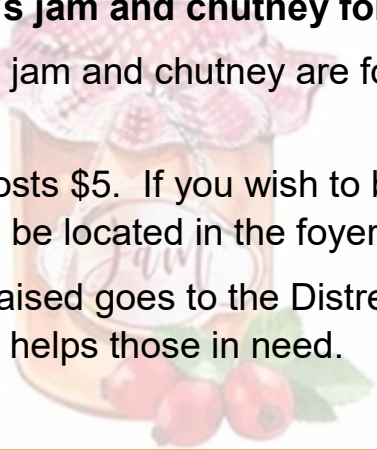
If you can think of anywhere that could benefit from some of these, please leave a note in the basket or in the money jar.

Bill and Vi's jam and chutney for sale

Bill and Vi's jam and chutney are for sale again.

A jar only costs \$5. If you wish to buy a jar, they will be located in the foyer.

All money raised goes to the Distress Fund which helps those in need.



Who is wise and understanding among you?
Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done
in the humility that comes from wisdom.

- James 3:13 -



Offerings to date 17 September 2024

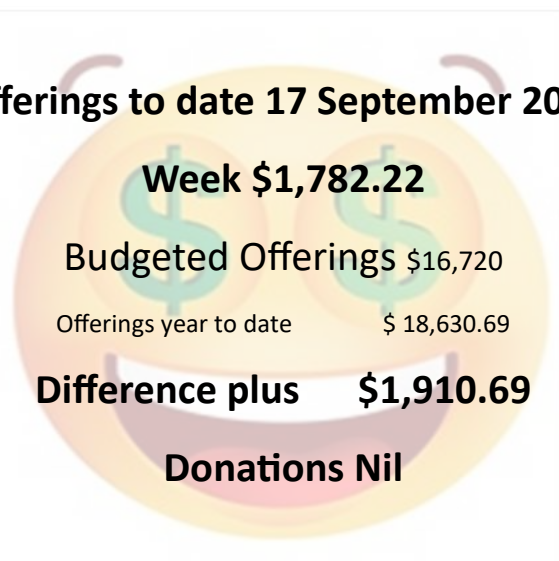
Week \$1,782.22

Budgeted Offerings \$16,720

Offerings year to date \$ 18,630.69

Difference plus \$1,910.69

Donations Nil



AUC Bank Details:

Bank: ANZ

BSB: 014-010

Account Number:

General Acc - 287295271

Distress Fund Acc - 287295327

Account Name: UCA Aitkenvale

Reference: Offering, Donation, (no need to include your name or any other details)



Rosters & Readings for 29th September 2024

9am Service

Preacher	Matthew S
Reader	Joan G
Greeters	Lyn G
Offering	Greg S & Ian D
Livestream	Don A
Data	Richard W
Organ	Carmel S
Morning Tea	Vi and Bill R

Lectionary Readings

Est 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22, Ps 124

Jas 5:13-20, Mk 9:38-50

AUC Prayer Network.

(aucprayer@bigpond.com)

If you wish to have a prayer request circulated across the AUC Prayer Network, or would like to be included in the prayer network notices, please email your request to our direct email address: aucprayer@bigpond.com, or phone Kate on: 0429 609 509.

(Important: requests for prayer on behalf of others requires their personal permission. This is due to confidentiality requirements and government legislation. Please ask first.)

