

*Sunday at
St Michael's*

4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
28 JUNE 2020

TEXTS OF TERROR: THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

MINISTER: REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

MUSIC: AMIR FARID (PIANO)
& RHYS BOAK (ORGAN)

CANTOR: JAMES EMERSON

WELCOME TO ST MICHAEL'S

St Michael's is a unique church. We are proud of our independent spirit; seeking continually to discover new ways to understand faith and to demonstrate it in our lives, and in the heart of the city.

As part of the Uniting Church in Australia, St Michael's is committed to involvement in social and national affairs. We hold foundational Christian values of the importance of every human being, the need for integrity in public life and concern for the welfare of the whole human race irrespective of race, creed, gender, sexuality, status or age.

OFFICE BEARERS

Chair of Congregation: Ian Smith
Church Council Chair: Laura Beckett
Treasurer: Ian Cox
Secretary: Maree McDonald
Deanery I: Household
Dean: Peter Anderson
Deputy Dean: Jack Morgan
Deanery II: Church Services
Dean: Graeme Adamson
Deputy Dean: Albert Phillips

Deanery III: Contact and Care
Dean: Lyndell O'Brien
Deputy Dean: Joy Arnot
Deanery IV: Programs
Dean: Lorraine Woolley
Deputy Dean: Val Gill

Culture of Safety Contact Person
(Keeping Children Safe)
Val Gill
Organist & Manager of Music
Rhys Boak

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 <https://www.youtube.com/user/StMichaelsChurch/videos>

Podcast: www.soundcloud.com/stmichaelsunitingchurch

Weekly eNews: reception@stmichaels.org.au

Please send notices to office@stmichaels.org.au by 11.30am Wednesday



MEDITATIONS

St Michael's is a vibrant, progressive, inclusive church with a long tradition of nurturing the spiritual well-being of the human person and working for the common good in society.

♥ **Our buildings may be closed, but our hearts are open.** ♥

During the COVID-19 virus pandemic, we are offering Sunday Gatherings online – Reflections by our minister Rev Dr Margaret Mayman; biblical and contemporary readings from congregation members; beautiful music by organist, Rhys Boak and guest musicians; and prayers for these challenging times.

A video of this service will be available on the website and YouTube on Sunday.

<http://www.stmichaels.org.au/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/StMichaelsChurch/videos>



The Sacrifice of Isaac
Mark Chagall 1966
Chagall Museum, Nice, France

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines."

Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*.

"True hospitality is marked by an open response to the dignity of each and every person. Henri Nouwen has described it as receiving the stranger on his own terms, and asserts that it can be offered only by those who 'have found the center of their lives in their own hearts'."

Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*

"Hospitality is the practice of God's welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis."

Letty M. Russell

"The Christian faith has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult, and left untried."

G.K. Chesterton

GATHERING AS PEOPLE OF EARTH AND SPIRIT

WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

Welcome to St Michaels Uniting Church online gathering,
I'm Margaret Mayman, minister at St Michael's.
Wherever you have come from, wherever you are going to;
whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe;
you are welcome.

As we gather, we acknowledge Indigenous custodians of this land;
land that was taken from them without their consent, treaty or compensation.
The Spirit of God has long dwelled
with the First Peoples of this ancient land.

***We honour the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation,
and other first peoples on whose lands we stand,
and pay our respects to their elders,
past and present, as we celebrate the sacredness of life.***

Last week, I spoke of looking forward to the easing of pandemic emergency restrictions in Victoria - including plans that some smaller churches were making to gather face to face with up to 50 people in the congregation. Sadly the significant increase in community transmission of COVID-19 in Victoria, has led to those changes being delayed.

This is incredibly disappointing, especially for businesses in the hospitality sector who were anticipating being able to host 50 customers, and finally returning to something close to economic viability. The excited anticipation of turning a corner has been crushed.

The streets around 120 Collins had been gradually coming back to life. But this week it was once again like a ghost town, as workers remain working at home.

In the small cafés where I purchased my morning coffee, I talked with business owners who were just holding on, who are now depleted by the set back, and just exhausted. And yet they know that we must maintain restrictions for the greater good.

The disappointment is also real for people who were just beginning to feel safe and more settled after months of anxiety; people who were beginning to feel that it was safe to meet with friends, to return to some of the ordinary routines of everyday life.

So as we gather today, I want to acknowledge the weariness, uncertainty and anxiety. We draw on the resources of faith, not to fix everything, but to remind ourselves that hope is rekindled when people act together, when people act compassionately and justly, and that in all of this, we are not alone.

So let us gather together, wherever we are... and recall who we are called to be.

GATHERING WORDS

In the peace,
in the presence,
in the power...
Let us celebrate life –
in ourselves, in our world, and in the Spirit
in whom we live and move
and have our being.

Let us join in singing, "Let us build a house where love may dwell, and all can safely live."

GATHERING HYMN

JAMES EMERSON

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive;
built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Words and Music: Marty Haugen (1950 -)

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

As we open ourselves to the Sacred,
we open to the process
of becoming more whole:
of living more fully;
of giving and forgiving more freely;
of understanding more completely
the meaning of our lives here on this earth.

Divine Presence, made know to us in Jesus,
we yearn to hear your voice,
amongst all the clamouring voices,
that compete in marketplace and media.
May we know that when we hear the call
to love and forgive, to embrace and to heal,
that this is indeed your voice.

Spirit of God, Giver of Life
move between us and around us.
Breathe into us your freshness that we may awake.
Refresh our vision that we may see more clearly.
Kindle our senses that we may feel more sharply.
Give us the courage to live.

A time of silence and reflection

JESUS' PRAYER

***Ground of all being,
Mother of Life, Father of the universe,
Your name is sacred, beyond speaking.
May we know your presence,
may your longings be our longings
in heart and in action.
May there be food
for the human family today
and for the whole earth community.***

***Forgive us the falseness
of what we have done
as we forgive those who are untrue to us.
Do not forsake us
in our time of conflict
but lead us into new beginnings.
For the light of life,
the vitality of life,
and the glory of life
are yours now and for ever. Amen.***

SHARING A SIGN OF PEACE

May the peace of Divine Presence be with you!
And also with you!

People are invited to send peaceful thoughts to members of our community.

LISTENING FOR WORDS OF SPIRIT

HEBREW BIBLE: GENESIS 22:1-14

GRAEME ADAMSON

After these things God tested Abraham. God said to him, "Abraham!" And Abraham said, "Here I am." God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

God said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "Yahweh will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of Yahweh it shall be provided."

For the challenging and sometimes disturbing stories of ancestors in faith.

We give thanks.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

V Pláči (In Tears) from "On An Overgrown Path" - Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Leoš Janáček was a prominent Czech pianist, musicologist and folklorist. Janáček had a life-long passion for Moravian and other Slavic folk music. The collection of pieces, *On An Overgrown Path*, dates from 1901.

Amir Farid (Piano)

CONTEMPORARY READING

GRAEME ADAMSON

"Sacrifice" by Sara Maitland, in *Angel and Me: Short Stories for Holy Week*.

Sarah is old, old and very tired. Her mind wanders, sometimes she laughs and sometimes she weeps and those who love her do not know why. Her mind wanders across all her long life and she struggles to make it into a story: the story of her life, the story of Sarah.

It is hard to make sense of it sometimes. There are gaps, gaps in the story that make it impossible to understand. She does not know what happened between Abraham and Isaac in the land of Moriah. She does not speak to Abraham anymore, and she knows that Isaac will never tell her. Now he is grown he will toss his head and speak of women with contempt. He will take him a wife from a distant people, a woman he has never met and into whose eyes he has not looked deep, to see if they share a laughter which will sustain them even in the desert.

Abraham came back from the land of Moriah smug, contented, smooth and sleek. Isaac came back from the land of Moriah like a wild animal, bound but not tamed. For months afterwards he would wake in the night screaming and his mother in the women's tent, would hear her boy child sobbing and could not go to him, comfort him, hold him. There was a look in his eyes still, evasive, distant, the look of a man who uses pride to cover betrayal.

For the Spirit speaking still,
We give thanks.

REFLECTION

REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

"Texts of Terror: the sacrifice of Isaac"

RESPONDING IN LOVE

A PSALM ON NAMING GOD

MIRIAM THERESE WINTER

Encircling One
who encircles us all
in a love that lasts forever:
***we know you will encircle us
when we call you by your name.***

One who waits
for those who forget
and for those who walk away:
***we know you will wait for us
when we call you by your name.***

Still voice in a raging storm
the quiet intuition
in the depths of our inner selves:
***we know you will speak your truth to us
when we call you by your name.***

One who longs and is longed for
the ache at the heart of our universe,
the desire of all to be one:
***we know you will be one with us
when we call you by your name.***

One who sits in sorrow
cradling the pain of generations
in the hollows of your heart:
***we know you will sit with us in our pain
when we call you by your name.***

Rainbow of chaotic colour
encompassing the variety
of a pluriform universe:
***we know you will open your world to us
when we call you by your name.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Loving Spirit,
we live in a world of glorious difference and diversity
but we have made difference a reason to fear and exclude.

We pray today for a world where people the Divine image
in others who are different.

We pray for people who are excluded from aspects of human community
because of race, age, gender, nationality, religion,
sexual orientation, gender identity, or health status.

Embracing God,
we pray for our country and our city,
for the global community and our planet home.

For all who are struggling with mental health issues,
financial hardship, or relational stress.

*In the silence, we pray for those people and places known to us,
where there is sorrow, pain, fear or loss.*

May we create places of hospitality,
to embrace and celebrate our differences and our common dreams.
Inspire us to be a people of welcome.

In your many names, we pray.

Amen.

HYMN

JAMES EMERSON

Deep in the shadows of the past,
Far out from settled lands,
Some nomads travelled with their God
Across the desert sands.
The dawn of hope for humankind
Was glimpsed by them alone -
A promise calling them ahead,
A future yet unknown.

While others bowed to changeless gods
They met a mystery:
God with an uncompleted name,
"I am what I will be";
And by their tents, around their fires,
In story, song and law
They praised, remembered, handed on
A past that promised more.

From Abraham to Nazareth
The promise changed and grew,
While some, remembering the past,
Recorded what they knew,
And some, in letters or laments,
In prophecy and praise,
Recovered, held and re-expressed
New hope for changing days.

For all the writings that survived,
For leaders long ago,
Who sifted, chose and then preserved
The Bible that we know,
Give thanks, and find its promise yet
Our comfort, strength and call -
The working model for our faith
Alive with hope for all.

*Words: Brian Wren (1936-)
Tune: Kingsfold
From an English and Irish traditional melody coll.
Lucy Broadwood (1858-1929)
harm. and arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OFFERING

And now, as we prepare to go, let us dedicate the gifts of time, money and energy given over this past week to sustain the ministry and mission of St Michael's, and re-dedicate our lives as co-creators with the Divine of justice and joy.

Holy One,
we are grateful that we have so much to give
and so much yet to learn.
We dedicate our offerings
so that we and our neighbours
and the whole earth community
may be equipped and sustained for abundant life.
Amen.

SENDING AND BLESSING

BLESSING

Until we meet again,
go into this week in peace, and with love.
And the blessing of God,
Creator, Christ, and Embracing Spirit
be with us and with all creation.
Amen.

BLESSING SONG

JAMES EMERSON

May the blessing of God go before you,
May her grace and peace abound,
May her spirit live within you,
May her love wrap you round,
May her blessing remain with you always,
May you walk on holy ground.

*Miriam Therese Winter (1938 -)
Tune: Blessing Song
©Medical Mission Sisters. 1987*

POSTLUDE

'Elegy' - George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987)

The Australian born organist and composer George Thalben-Ball composed this Elegy on the spot during a live BBC broadcast from the Temple Church, London in the 1950s to fill a gap caused by a service ending earlier than expected. The BBC and composer were swamped with requests for the sheet music, which at that time did not exist. It has subsequently become an integral part of the repertoire.

Rhys Boak (Organ)

OFFERINGS – AN INVITATION

People have been asking how they can support the mission and ministry of St Michael's when they are not able to make their offerings at church on Sunday. There is a 'Supporting Us' button on the St Michael's website. We are very grateful for offerings that have been received from members and from the wider audience of people who are appreciating our online videos. If you would like to contribute, you can make an offering through the website by credit card or use online banking. A downloadable donation form is also available. Thank you.

The online banking details are:
St Michaels Uniting Church
BSB: 083004
A/C: 515113338

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Sacrifice" by Sara Maitland in *Angel and Me: Short Stories for Holy Week*. Bloomsbury. 1995.

The Lord's Prayer paraphrase by J Philip Newell, in *Ground of All Being: The Prayer of Jesus in Color*, published by New Beginnings, an imprint of Material Media, 2008.

"Psalm on Naming God," Miriam Therese Winter, *Woman Wisdom*. Harper Collins. 1991.

"Let us build a house." Words and Music: Marty Haugen.

"Deep in the shadows of the past." Words: Brian Wren.

Tune: Kingsfold. From an English and Irish traditional melody coll. Lucy Broadwood. harm. and arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams.

"Blessing Song," *Woman Song*, Miriam Therese Winter. Medical Missionary Sisters. 1987.

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GUEST MUSICIAN

Amir Farid

Winner of the 2006 Australian National Piano Award, US born Iranian-Australian pianist Amir Farid has been described as "a highly creative musician –a pianist of great intelligence and integrity. He brings strong musical substance to all that he does, imbuing it with his own particular experience and understanding", and who "in a well-populated field...distinguishes himself for all the right reasons". As one of the most versatile and loved musicians in Australia, the currently New York-based pianist has performed concerti with major orchestras, collaborating with conductors such as Christopher Hogwood, Oleg Caetani, Johannes Fritzsch, Alexander Briger, Marko Letonja and Benjamin Northey. Highlights include Rachmaninoff's 2nd piano concerto with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in front of a 13,000-strong crowd at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Mozart's concerto No.14 with

the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and “The Mozart Dances” with the Mark Morris Dance Group and West Australian Symphony Orchestra as part of the 2015 Perth Festival. Since graduating with distinction from the Royal College of Music London in 2009 with Andrew Ball, he has performed as a solo recitalist and collaborative artist in concert halls and festivals internationally, including Carnegie Hall New York, St. Martin in the Fields London, Mostly Mozart festival at Lincoln Center New York, Al-Hashemi-II Kuwait, MONA FOMA Festival Hobart, Coriole Festival SA, Huntington Festival NSW, as well as other venues in USA, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, New Zealand and China.

NOTICES

CONTACT AND CARE TEAM

During this time we are unable to meet together in person, we have put in place a program to assist everyone to continue to feel connected and supported.

We have a team of members of Contact and Care and Church Council who are each keeping in touch with a group of people by telephone, to keep the important lines of communication open. If you would like to have someone get in touch with you for a chat during these times, please contact the St Michael’s office and leave your phone number or email address.

The members of the Contact and Care Team are also available to talk with, or assist people, who are experiencing difficult times for any reason. If you would like to speak with a member of Contact and Care, please contact the St Michael’s office.

All matters remain confidential.

Lyndell O’Brien: Dean of Contact and Care

Joy Arnot: Deputy Dean

PRAYER TREE

Living in the time of a global pandemic can feel as if our known world has turned upside down and inside out. The St Michael’s Prayer Tree (a small group within Contact and Care) is available to support you, during this different and difficult time. We are striving to ensure that everyone is cared for. We extend an offer to pray for you or someone you know. All prayer requests are treated with sensitivity and respect. We do ask that you seek permission from the person concerned, if the request for prayer is not for yourself.

If you wish for us to pray for you, or someone dear to you, please contact the St Michael’s office (9654 5120) and ask for a message to be forwarded, or speak with Catherine Jones directly.

There is no breath of prayer or intention of thought for another in Love that is not answered No cry for help goes unheard and at the end of the darkest night a new day is always born. (Sylvia Briault in Precious Words)

Catherine Jones, Prayer Tree Leader

PASTORAL CARE

Our minister, Rev Dr Margaret is available for pastoral care meetings by phone. Please phone the office to arrange a time for Margaret to call.

ST MICHAEL’S SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsmelbourne/>

 <https://www.youtube.com/user/StMichaelsChurch/videos>

Podcast www.soundcloud.com/stmichaelsunitingchurch

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

SUNDAY GATHERINGS @ ST MICHAEL'S – ONLINE

In light of the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Victoria, St Michael's Sunday Gatherings will be offered online for the foreseeable future. Links to videos, orders of service and the latest eNews are on the front page of our website.

ST MICHAEL'S ZOOM CHAT



Thursdays at 11am- noon (join anytime)

Meeting ID: 834 6407 7308. Password: 000405

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83464077308?pwd=NnIrWFA4VIN2bEEvcE4vRUhnblpudz09>

One tap mobile: +61731853730,,83464077308#,,1#,000405# Australia

Telephone audio only: +61 3 7018 2005 Australia (use meeting ID and password)

THE MINGARY COUNSELLING SERVICE is offering Telehealth services (with the counsellors working from home) for existing clients. If you require counselling, please contact the office and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

SUNDAY 5 JULY @ ST MICHAEL'S ONLINE

“I will give you rest”

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman

Music: Joe Chindamo (Piano) & Rhys Boak (Organ)