

*Sunday at
St Michael's*

6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
12 JULY 2020

“SEEDING SPIRITUAL IMAGINATION”

MINISTER: REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

MUSIC: ZOE WALLACE (CELLO)
& RHYS BOAK (ORGAN & PIANO)

CANTOR: GEORGIA WILKINSON

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.facebook.com/stmichaelsmelbourne/>

 <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>



Lavacourt, sunshine and snow
Claude Monet

Frederick Buechner, Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale.

“He [Jesus] speaks in parables, and though we have approached these parables reverentially all these many years and have heard them expounded as grave and reverent vehicles of holy truth, I suspect that many if not all of them were originally not grave at all but were antic, comic, often more than just a little shocking.”

Yvonne Pierre, The Day My Soul Cried: A Memoir, 21st century

“You can't expect to reap a harvest that you're not willing to plant.”

Robert Louis Stevenson, 19th century

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.”

Oscar Wilde, 19th century

“Where there is no extravagance there is no love, and where there is no love there is no understanding.”

Lise-Lotte Loomer, Greenhouse Hygge: The House of My Growing Dreams, 21st century

“We're all given gifts in life, it's what we do with them that shows us what we've learned.”

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.***

This week, we learned that all of metropolitan Melbourne is going back into level three lockdown – we may only leave our homes to shop for food and essentials, to exercise, to obtain health care, and to provide care. If we can work at home, we must. For residents of nine public housing towers, who are in extreme lockdown, the situation is so much more stressful as they cannot leave their homes at all, and their buildings have not been safe or clean for much longer than the pandemic. I am heartened by the community response as Melburnians have offered support through messages of care, monetary donations, and provision of food and other essentials. Even for those of us who are financially secure, and who have safe places to live, it is also ok to acknowledge the stress of lockdown, the toll it takes on mental well-being, and the disappointment we feel.

Taking care of ourselves and one another is still probably the best thing we can do, and so I decided to start today practising gratitude and saying how much I appreciate the wider community of St Michael's. Even though I do not get to see most of you face to face, knowing you are there, receiving some lovely emails of support and care, chatting to people on Zoom or on the phone, move me to recognise the gratitude I feel. Church at St Michael's is not the way I expected it to be, but we are still being church together, through joining in Sunday gatherings (on whatever day of the week we choose!) and through keeping in touch in other ways. Thank you for being part in this.

So as we gather today, we remember that we love because we are loved – by other people who accompany us through life, and by the Spirit of Life who holds us all in love.

GATHERING WORDS

In the peace,
in the presence,
in the power,
Let us sense the sacred.
Let us celebrate life.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HYMN

As the wind song through the trees... will be a new hymn for many – Chosen for the season after Pentecost, it invites us to an awareness of the Spirit and to hope that is born again. It reminds of the communion elements we cannot share together, that their power to transform lives remain with us even so. In memory and hope, we trust that in time we will greet one another again, that in time we will touch, taste, and take the bread and the wine. That in the waiting the spirit is with us like the wind song through the trees...

GATHERING HYMN

GEORGIA WILKINSON

As the wind song through the trees,
as the stirring of the breeze,
so it is with the Spirit of God,
as the heart made strangely warm,
as the voice within the storm,
so it is with the Spirit of God.
Never seen, ever known
where this wind has blown
bringing life, bringing power to the world,
as the dancing tongues of fire,
as the soul's most deep desire,
so it with the Spirit of God.

As the rainbow after rain,
as the hope that's born again,
so it is with the Spirit of God,
as the green in the spring,
as a kite on a string,
so it is with the Spirit of God,
Making worlds that are new,
making peace come true,
bringing gifts, bringing love to the world,
as the rising of the yeast,
as the wine at the feast,
so it is with the Spirit of God.

Shirley Erena Murray (1932-2020)
Music: Swee Hong Lim
Tune: Wairua Tapu

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

Let us take a moment to settle into the silence.
Hear and feel your quiet breathing.
Hear and feel the quiet time and space
and the community of people who join together and apart.

In this time may our spirits be renewed.
In connection with the community of St Michael,
may we be ready to extend ourselves to those in need,
and with trust to receive the care that is offered.

In this time of celebration, may our minds be open to new truth,
and our hearts be receptive to love,
as we give thanks for this life we are blessed to share.

God of surprises,
startle us with truth we do not see,
amaze us with your power and grace,
beckon us, and lead us
far above restricted hope and narrow faith.

A time of silence and reflection

JESUS' PRAYER

*God, you are life for us,
holy be your name.
Your new day come, your will be done,
On earth as in your vision.
Give us this day our bread for the morrow;
And forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Strengthen us in the time of test,
and deliver us from evil.
For the power and the splendour
and the fulfilment are yours,
now and forever. 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

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 13: 1-9, 18-23

REV CLARE BROCKETT

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.

But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

"Hear then the parable of the sower." When anyone hears the word of God's reign and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

For the wisdom of Jesus made known in parables,
We give thanks.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Adagio from the Sonata for Cello in G Minor – Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

One of the greatest pianists ever to have lived, Sergei Rachmaninov was also an extremely gifted composer. Born in Russia, he emigrated to the USA after the Russian revolution of 1917. His output ranged from brilliant piano music to a great deal of sacred choral music and chamber music.

Zoe Wallace (Cello) & Rhys Boak (Piano)

CONTEMPORARY READING

REV CLARE BROCKETT

"A blessing with roots" by Jan Richardson

Tug at this blessing
and you will find
it is a thing
with roots.

This is a blessing
that has gone deep
into good soil,
into the sacred dark,
into the luminous hidden.

It has been months
since the ground
gathered the seed
of this blessing
into itself,
years since the earth
enfolded it.

Sometimes
that's how long
a blessing takes.

And the fact
that this blessing
should finally show
its first fruits
on the day
you happened by—
well, perhaps we shall
simply call the timing
of this ripening
a mystery
and a sweet grace.

Take all you want
of this blessing.

Take every morsel
that you need for
the path ahead.

Let its fruits fall
into your hands;
gather them into
the basket of
your arms.

Let this blessing
be one place
where you are willing
to receive
in unmeasured portions,
to lay aside
for a moment
the way you ration
your delights.

Let yourself accept
its inexplicable plenitude;
allow it to give itself
to sustain you
not simply for yourself—
though on this bright day
I might be persuaded
to think that would
be enough—
but that you may
gather its seeds
into yourself
like the ground
where this blessing began

and wait
with the patience
of seasons
and of years
to bear forth
in the fullness of time
a stunning harvest,
a plenteous feast.

For the blessings of poetry,
We give thanks.

REFLECTION

REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

“Seeding spiritual imagination”

RESPONDING IN LOVE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We pray not because we expect God to fix all our troubles and those of the world.
We pray because prayer is the offering of our deepest concern and solidarity for people in our community, our city, our nation and the world. In prayer, we are moved beyond despair to hope and to action.

Let us pray.
Loving Spirit,
we pray for ourselves,
for struggles we face, the pressures we feel,
and the burdens of our hearts,
that we may touch your hope
and renew our courage.

***We pray for our neighbours,
for people living with mental illness
exacerbated by lockdown,
for people who are unwell,
for people in hospital with covid and other illnesses
and for health workers who care for them,
for people confined to their public housing estates
and for all who are charged with their care.***

We pray for
for all who face difficult decisions,
for people who grieve the loss of a loved one,
for all who live with loneliness.

***We pray for our state and our nation,
for leaders who are pressured and anxious.
We pray for a spirit of cooperation
and the avoidance of blame and criticism.***

We pray for people seeking asylum
who long to find a home,
for the Indigenous people of Australia,
who seek healing and justice.

***We pray for our world,
for places of war and famine,
for places where covid 19 is spreading without check,
where resources are few and political leadership is failing.
for people who work in unjust conditions
for people who have enough and believe they have little.***

May seeds of care and justice, equality and peace,
be sown in our lives,
the lives of our neighbours,
the life of our country,
and the life of our world.

*Let us pray in silence for people and places known to us,
where comfort, justice and healing are needed.*

***We pray our prayers together,
that we may hear one another into speech,
and inspire one another into action.
In your many names, O God, we pray.
Amen.***

HYMN INTRODUCTION

The concluding hymn is also a song of spirit and profound hope, for such a time as this.
This one to a familiar and beloved tune – Jerusalem.

HYMN

GEORGIA WILKINSON

Great God, your Spirit, like the wind –
unseen but shaking things we see
will never leave us undisturbed
fulfil our dreams, or set us free,
until we turn from faithless fear
and prove the promise of your grace
in justice, peace and daily bread
with joy for all the human race.

God shake us with the force of love,
to rouse us from our dreadful sleep;
remove our hearts of stone, and give
new hearts of flesh, to break and weep
or all your children in distress
and dying for the wealth we keep.
Help us prevent while we have time,
the blighted harvest greed must reap.

And then, in your compassion, give
your Spirit like the gentle rain,
creating fertile ground from which
your peace and justice spring like grain;
until your love is satisfied,
with all creation freed from pain,
and all your children live to praise
your will fulfilled, your presence plain.

*Words: Alan Gaunt (1935-)
Tune: Jerusalem. C.H.H. Parry (1848-1918)*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OFFERING

We dedicate the gifts of time, money and energy given over this past week to sustain the
ministry and mission of St Michael's Church and the Mingary Counselling Service.

***We give thanks for our life
and the courage we are given to live it.
Let our gratitude for life
be expressed in our generosity.
Let our faith be expressed in just living.
Let our hope for the future find full expression
in our daily attitude of mind.
Amen.***

SENDING AND BLESSING

BLESSING

Go forth into the world
in the knowledge that we are God's body,
that hope for a new world is in the blood of our veins,
that the struggle for justice is the beat to which our hearts respond,
and that God's promise is the very stuff of which our bones are made.

And may the love of God give us grace;
the God in Christ give us mercy;
and the Spirit lift up our hearts.

BLESSING SONG

GEORGIA WILKINSON

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

Scherzo in G minor – Marco Enrico Bossi (1861-1925)

The Italian organ virtuoso Marco Enrico Bossi was world famous as an organist, but like Rachmaninov his compositional activity spread well beyond the realms of his instrument. This scherzo, full of whirring activity as well as moments of haunting mystery surely helps the listener to exercise their spiritual imagination.

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

Jesus Prayer by David B Royer and Jonathan C Nelson. *Flames of the Spirit: Resources for Worship*. Edited by Ruth C Duck.

Jan Richardson, "A blessing with roots" <https://paintedprayerbook.com/2011/07/05/a-blessing-with-roots/>

"As the wind blows through the trees," Shirley Erena Murray (1932-2020.)

Music: Swee Hong Lim. In *Faith forever singing*.

"Great God your spirit like the wind." Words: Alan Gaunt. Tune: Jerusalem. C.H.H. Parry.

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

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GUEST MUSICIAN

Zoe Wallace

Zoe Wallace is a freelance cellist living in Melbourne and performs regularly with Orchestra Victoria, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. As a member of the string quartet Quartz, she regularly performs at the Melbourne Recital Centre, Melba Hall and has recently performed with the Australian Bach Society, the Lyrebird Society and the inaugural Albury Chamber Music Festival in 2016. Zoe completed her Music Performance Diploma with high distinction at the Prins Claus Conservatorium in Groningen, The Netherlands in 2008 and was the recipient of a Makarov Foundation scholarship during her studies. She has performed with the North Netherlands Orchestra, Camerata Ardesko and the Alinga Duo and received cello tuition from Jan- Ype Nota and Michel Strauss whilst living in The Netherlands. Zoe has studied with Janis Laurs in Adelaide and Christian Wojtowicz in Hobart, and was awarded a Bachelor of Music with first class honours from the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in 2004. Zoe held a full scholarship position at the Australian National Academy of Music in 2010, where she received tuition from Howard Penny and Nicholas Bochner.

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 19 JULY @ ST MICHAEL'S ONLINE

“Living with the enemy”

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman

Music: Michelle Nelson & Meredith Connie (Guitars) & Rhys Boak (Organ)