

*Sunday at
St Michael's*

15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

13 SEPTEMBER 2020

“FORGIVING AND FORGIVEN”

MINISTER: REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

MUSIC: MEREDITH CONNIE & MICHELLE NELSON
(GUITAR) & RHYS BOAK (ORGAN & PIANO)

CANTORS: JAMES EMERSON & CHRISTOPHER WATSON

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

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

ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH OFFICE

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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/playlist/SundayatStMichaels>

Henri J.M. Nouwen, 20th century

“Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all people love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour increasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human family.”

Anne Lamott, 21st century

“Forgiveness is giving up all hope of having had a better past.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, 20th century

“By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are.”

Corrie ten Boom, 20th century

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”



*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,
20th century*

“Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.”

Thich Nhat Hanh, 21st century

“When there is a mature relationship between people, there is always compassion and forgiveness.”

“Forgiveness,” Sofiya Unger

GATHERING AS PEOPLE OF EARTH AND SPIRIT

WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

Welcome to this online gathering.

I'm Margaret Mayman, minister at St Michael's Uniting Church in Melbourne.

Wherever you have come from, wherever you are going to;
whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe;
you are welcome.

We begin our worship, acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
who have dwelled with this land since time before dreaming.

At St Michael's we acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation,
on whose land this church was built.

***We acknowledge that land was taken from Indigenous people
without their consent, treaty or compensation.***

***We honour the elders of the Wurundjeri people,
past, present and emerging,
and join with them, in hope for justice and reconciliation.***

I invite you to acknowledge the First Peoples, on whose land you live.

A warm greeting to you, St Michael's members and friends, to your our growing online
companions, and especially to you who are joining us for the first time.

At St Michael's online we are gathering, connecting, feeding our spirits in these challenging
times. We come recognising the stress and suffering in individual and corporate lives.
We bring the spiritual traditions of Jewish and Christian faiths, the wisdom of other paths,
the insights of poets, and the glories of music into conversation with the realities of our lives,
seeking solace and beauty so that in company with the Sacred and each other, we may live
well not just for ourselves but for our social and ecological worlds.

GATHERING WORDS

In the Spirit of God who shares divinity with us,
In the Spirit of God who shares humanity with us,
In the Spirit of God who unsettles and inspires us...
we celebrate life in its beauty and its blessed diversity.

HYMN INTRO

The Sacred known by many names, made known in many ways "God the All-Holy"

HYMN

JAMES EMERSON

God, the All-Holy,
Maker and Mother,
gladly we gather,
bringing in prayer
old hurts for healing,
new hopes for holding,
giving, receiving,
loving and care.

Spirit, All-Seeing,
knitting and blending
joy in desiring,
friendship and ease,
make our belonging
loyal and lasting,
so that our pledging
freshens and frees.

Christ, All-Completing,
Nature enfolding,
evil exhausting
in love's embrace,
weaving and mending,
make every ending
God's new beginning
glowing with grace.

*Words: Brian Wren (1936-)
Tune: Bunessan
Gaelic melody*

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

Let us gather now,
friends of Spirit – travellers in time
to hear the story
of Love's evolving narrative.

In this sacred time,
we release into the present,
laying aside all worries, plans, and complaints,
entering into the now
of Mystery's eternal temple.

In this sacred time,
we honour our past,
retelling the great story of deep time
as Spirit's unfolding tale,
giving thanks that a whole universe
is gathered up in the likes of us—
tradition's promise.

In this sacred time,
we consent to the allurements
of an unrehearsed future,
from where the living Word
woos each one of us toward
our unique expression—
that is Spirit's dream.

JESUS' PRAYER PARAPHRASE

Remembering Jesus, who invites us on the Way, we pray together

***Spirit of the Universe,
we respect and cherish your creativity,
we long to live according to your ways,
choosing and doing what is just and right.
Sustain our physical and spiritual needs.
In acknowledging our own imperfections,
we accept the frailties of others.
We seek to make good choices,
through your Wisdom
made known through the generations,
and your eternal Presence
with all creation.
Amen.***

SHARING A SIGN OF PEACE

We are alive. We are loved.
We are freed to share life and love in the world.
May the peace of Divine Presence be with you!
And also with you!

People are invited to send peaceful thoughts to family, friends, and wider community.

LISTENING FOR SPIRIT

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 18: 21-35

REV CLARE BROCKETT

Then Peter came and asked Jesus, 'When a sister or brother wrongs me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?'

"No," Jesus replied, "not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven. And this is why."

'The kin-dom of heaven may be compared to a ruler who wished to settle accounts with his officials. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, the ruler ordered him to be sold, together with his family and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

So the official fell down in homage before the ruler, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And moved to compassion for him, the ruler let the official go and forgave him the debt.

But that same official, as he went out, came upon one of a colleague who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe."

Then that same official fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But the official refused; then he went and threw him into prison until the debt was paid.

When the other officials saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to the ruler all that had taken place. Then the ruler summoned the official and said to him, "You wicked wretch! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow official, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger the ruler handed the official over to be tortured until he should pay the entire debt.

So my Abba God in heaven will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your sisters and brothers from your hearts."

For the stories of Jesus and the beloved community,
We give thanks.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

'Little Comets' from 'Crossing the Spheres' - Michelle Nelson

Little Comets is a Movement from Melbourne based composer Michelle Nelson's 2020 work, 'Crossing the Spheres'. This piece reflects on the spiritual dimension of migrating between cultures, inspired in part by the ancient notion of the 'music of the spheres'.

Meredith Connie & Michelle Nelson (Guitar duo)

CONTEMPORARY READING

REV CLARE BROCKETT

"The Place Where We Are Right" by Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow.
And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.

For the Spirit speaking still,
We give thanks.

REFLECTION

REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN

"Forgiving and forgiven"

RESPONDING IN LOVE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers of thanksgiving and solidarity, for compassion, justice and peace.

Divine Presence,
may forgiveness become a strong current
in the living waters that flow through us.

May we reach deep inside ourselves
to set aside ego, hurt, anger, pride, and history,
all that is of lesser, even insignificant value;
and find the strength to offer hand
or voice or presence
in reconciliation
for a second or a seventh or a seventy seventh time.

We pray that a spirit of forgiveness and generosity
in public life in our city, state and nation.
We hold in our hearts all who are suffering...
the lost and the lonely,
the dying and the grieving;
people struggling to find mental and spiritual well-being.

We pray for our neighbours
who are overwhelmed by isolation;
for parents supporting their children to study at home,
and for parents of little children who are working and caring.

We proclaim the inherent value of each person,
no matter their age,
resisting with our hearts and voices
anything that diminishes the responsibility we owe
to love and protect our elders.

We pray for older people who are not seeking help
because of fear about aged care
and family members who are trying to provide care
without adequate support.

We remember all who are sick with COVID,
and all who are living with other serious illnesses
at a time when seeking health care is infinitely more complex
than it usually is.
We pray for relief from pain, and hope for healing,
and the assurance of love.

With thankful hearts we remember doctors, nurses,
aged care workers, chaplains who are caring for people who have COVID.
We pray for epidemiologists and scientific researchers
as they explore courses of treatment and prevention.

With concern we remember everyone impacted
by the economic consequences of the pandemic –
those dependent on job seeker and job keeper benefits,
small business owners, artists and musicians,
university teachers, temporary visa workers
and international students.

We pray for ourselves,
as we seek to know peace and share peace,
that we may live deeply present to each moment,
not focused on what the future will bring,
but on how our gifts may be used
to bring life in the present.

*In silence, let us pray for the earth and its people,
for particular people, places and situations known to us,
where comfort, justice and healing are needed.*

In words, and in sighs too deep for human words, we pray
Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OFFERING

We continue to be the church – in our gathering together,
in connecting and sustaining one another,
in our shared mission of love and justice.
This work is sustained by the gifts of many and in gratitude
we dedicate gifts given to support the mission and vision of St Michael's
and the work of the Mingary Counselling Service in prayer,
and we rededicate our lives in response to gifts received.

***In gifts that are given, we express
our affirmation of this congregation
and our hope this congregation
will be a continuing and valuable part of our lives
and the life of our communities.***

***May we be surrounded each day
with a spirit of generosity and strength,
so we may respond to all life brings
with generosity and strength. Amen.***

HYMN INTRO

We name ourselves as Spirit people – bearing Christ, being neighbours, honouring diversity–
“We are your people, Spirit of grace.”

HYMN

CHRISTOPHER WATSON

We name ourselves as Spirit people – bearing Christ, being neighbours, honouring diversity–

We are your people; Spirit of grace,
you dare to make us, to all our neighbours,
Christ's living voice, hands and face.

Joined in community, treasured and fed,
may we discover, gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.

Rich in diversity, help us to live
closer than neighbours, open to strangers,
able to clash and forgive.

Glad of tradition, help us to see
in all life's changing, where you are leading,
where our best efforts should be.

Give, as we venture justice and care
(peaceful, resisting, waiting, or risking)
wisdom to know when and where

Christ as we serve you in different ways,
may all we're doing show that you're living,
meeting your love with our praise.

*Words: Brian Wren (1936-)
Tune: Whitfield
John Wilson (1905-92)*

SENDING AND BLESSING

BLESSING

Most of us will remain at home this week.
Some of us will be sent out into the world,
and then we will return home.
May our homes be places of blessing.

May the blessing of the Sacred
made known in Jesus
who made his name at home in Nazareth,
who by his life with friends and strangers,
blessed the life of many homes,
bless your home and your life
and the homes and lives of all people and creatures
and the life of planet earth, our one and only home.
Amen.

POSTLUDE

'La luna tranquila' from 'Crossing the Spheres' - Michelle Nelson.

'La luna tranquila' (The Tranquil Moon), is a Movement from Melbourne based composer Michelle Nelson's 2020 work, *Crossing the Spheres*. This piece reflects on the spiritual dimension of migrating between cultures, inspired in part by the ancient notion of the 'music of the spheres'.

Meredith Connie & Michelle Nelson (Guitar duo)

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

"The Place Where We Are Right," by Yehuda Amichai. *A Touch of Grace: Poems, Photographs, Summer 2000*. Poetry by Yehuda Amichai. Photography by Didier Ben Loulou.

Prayer of Awareness by Bruce Sanguin in *If Darwin Prayed*. Adapted.

"God, the All-Holy," Words: Brian Wren. Tune: Bunessan. Gaelic melody.

"We are your people," Words: Brian Wren. Tune: Whitfield. John Wilson.

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GUEST MUSICIANS

Meredith Connie has been active as a Classical Guitar performer, composer and teacher for over thirty years in the USA and in Australia.

In 2017 she released her most recent CD on Move Records Fairy Tales Monsters and Wild Animals, a solo recording of her own compositions and fantasy themed works. Previous releases include Sol Y Sombras (Light and Shadow), a recording of solo and chamber works, and Imaginary Landscapes (duo with flute as Duo Rubicund). Meredith is very pleased to be working with Michelle Nelson as a duo, exploring the vast riches of guitar chamber music.

Michelle Nelson, a professional musician since the early 1980s, has extensive experience in performing and composing, teaching, assessing and guitar education writing. As a composer Michelle has written several works that have been featured and broadcast regularly on Australian classical music radio networks. These include the Brolga Dances suite recorded by the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra on their 2009 album Brolga Dances [Move MCD 410], Sonata for Flute & Guitar on Michelle's 2012 album After The Fire [Move MCD 492], The Guitarist's Bach from her 2016 album Return To The Dance [Move MCD 531], and the popular Midsummer Dance and Strawberry Fair, from the Midsummer Bagatelles suite, on the 2017 album Ringing The Strings [Move MCD 557] by the Concordia Mandolin & Guitar Ensemble. Current projects include writing duet material for the Nelson Connie Duo.

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

We are a group within the Contact and Care team, here to support you, during this difficult and often concerning time. We extend a commitment to pray for yourself, or someone known to you, who is facing personal challenges. All requests are treated with confidentiality, sensitivity and respect. Kindly ask permission from the person/s concerned, if the prayer is not for yourself. To request prayer, please contact the St. Michael's office (9654 5120) and ask for a message to be forwarded, or speak with Catherine Jones directly. Meanwhile, please join us, as we pray for all the many concerns Covid has created.

Also, light a candle and place in a safe window location, at 8.p.m curfew, to unite in prayerful hope with other Christians.

Thank you.

'Dear God, these circumstances will change. This situation shall pass.'

'God give us strength. Strength to hold on and strength to let go.

Amen'

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 Meeting ID: 834 6407 7308. Password: 000405

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83464077308?pwd=NnIrWFA4VIN2bEEvcE4vRUhnbldpdz09>

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

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

MINGARY

The Mingary Counselling Service is now offering services via Zoom in addition to telephone services (with the counsellors working from home) for new and existing clients. If you require counselling, please contact the office and we will arrange an appointment.

SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER @ ST MICHAEL'S ONLINE

“Love and Work”

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman

Music: Helen Bower (Violin) & Rhys Boak (Piano & Organ)