

Breath of and for life.
By Bill Pugh

God walked in the Garden in the cool of the day at the time of the evening breeze. A busy God needed a quiet walk, a refreshing breeze. Breath, wind, spirit breeze are fundamental to human life. Recent experience has reminded me of the necessity of breath. Signs outside the doctor's surgery urge us to wear a mask for protection and hinder the spreading of bugs. How many workers have suffered and died because of breathing polluted air. Coal miners, asbestos workers have been the victims of lung cancer. To have a lung infection pulls one up with a full stop. A tap is turned off and life weakened.

In the beginning of things God breathed into our lungs, the breath of life, and we became living, breathing souls. Protection of our fragile environment is essential for us to breathe the breath of life. On the day called Pentecost it blew mightily on the gathered friend of Jesus. A rushing wind which brought new strength and empowerment to proclaim the resurrection.

So the Church was born. News of this new faith was received by the scholars and philosophers. In Athens Paul was invited to address them on Areopagus Hill. Paul said the real God is revealed and known through his only son Jesus, cruelly condemned, crucified and raised to life on the third day. At the mention of Resurrection, the Council were furious. Dismissing him. The Speaker of the House adjourned the debate with no fixed arrangement.

The old prayer reminds us to be "deeply conscious of the shortness and uncertainty of human life". Shortness of breath and physical incapacity underline our vulnerability.

Reflection: *More than ever do I value the ability to breathe into my lungs good clean air. The gift of life renewed every day. And later to sense the calm and peace which comes at the time of the evening breeze.*

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WEEKLY NEWS SHEET



Mount Martha Uniting Church



Sunday 2nd August. 2020

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JOURNEY
OF
Faith

MOUNT MARTHA UNITING CHURCH.

SUNDAY, 2ND AUGUST 2020

READINGS . GENESIS 32: 22-3

ROMANS. 9: 1-5 MATHEW 14:13-21

The Adventures of Foyer Ted

Back at the beginning of the pandemic, the call went out to put a Teddy Bear in a window for local children to spot when out exercising 'on a bear hunt'

As the foyer of our Parish Centre has large glass windows to a street that has considerable foot traffic, I raided the Church's box and put a bear on the couch in the window on an impulse, a week or so later I raided the church bookshelves and gave him the 'Hungry Caterpillar' to read. I was astonished to be swamped with feedback about how cute he looked, how that was so-and-so's favourite book, and what would he be doing next? So, the next week he gained some headphones and the responses kept flowing.

The challenge was on! Each week Foyer Ted had a new activity, duly photographed and included in our weekly news sheet. Along came Easter eggs, a bunch of flowers for Mother's Day, some 'Blues Brothers' sunglasses, a mobile phone, binoculars and a bird book, jigsaws, knitting, crosswords... And the comments kept rolling in. Some people were making a special trip each week just to see what he was doing! It was such a simple thing, really, but the adventures of Foyer demonstrate that even little things can make a surprising difference.

Ian Menzies.

How about it folk! Our Church Foyer would be good!

Minister's Reflection

"Quotation": from a book called "Bonhoeffer For New Generation" edited by Otto Dudzus in 1985. It is relevant to the current lockdown. It was one of daily letters of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologianist prisoned by Hitler. On page, seven it says:

The morning

"Each new day is a new beginning in our life. Each day is a self-contained whole. Today is the limit of our cares and concerns (Matt. 6.34; James 4.14). Today is long enough to find God or to lose him, to keep the faith or to succumb to sin and shame. God created day and night so that we should not wander in boundless space but in the morning already see before us our evening's destination. Just as the old sun is new each day it rises, so too the eternal mercy of God is new every morning (Lam. 3.23). To understand God's old faithfulness anew every morning, to be able to begin a new life with God in the midst of a life with God, is the gift that God gives us every morning.

In the Bible, the morning is a time full of wonder. It is the time when God helps his church (Ps. 46.6), the time of joy after a night of weeping (Ps. 30.6), the hour for the proclamation of the word of God (Zeph. 3.5), of the daily distribution of the sacred manna (Ex. 16.13f.). Jesus gets up to pray before daybreak, and in the early morning the women go to the tomb and find Jesus risen (Mark 16.2ff.). In the first light of day, the disciples find the Risen Christ on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 21.4). It is the expectation of the miracle of God which makes the men of faith rise early (Gen. 19.27; Ex. 24.4; Job 1.5 etc.). Sleep no longer holds them. They hasten to meet God's early grace.

When we wake we can drive away the dark shades of night and the confusions of our dreams by immediately uttering the morning blessing and commending ourselves on this day to the help of the triune God. Bad temper, uncontrolled moods and wishes which we cannot get rid of during the day often come to haunt us at night, as ghosts which cannot be exorcised and which seek to embitter our days. Our own plans and concerns do not belong in the first moments of the new day, nor does an excessive zeal for work, but God's liberating grace, the blessing of God's presence."

I view it as pastoral care in the word of the faithful! *To be continued*