



Peel Valley Congregation

Gowrie, Hallsville & West Tamworth

23 March 2025

Meg Mangan 0476 375 989

P.O. BOX 3315 WEST TAMWORTH

Isaiah 55:1-9 (NLT)

Invitation to the LORD's Salvation

55 "Is anyone thirsty?

Come and drink—

even if you have no money!

Come, take your choice of wine or milk—
it's all free!

² Why spend your money on food that does
not give you strength?

Why pay for food that does you no good?
Listen to me, and you will eat what is good.
You will enjoy the finest food.

³ "Come to me with your ears wide open.

Listen, and you will find life.

I will make an everlasting covenant with you.
I will give you all the unfailing love I promised
to David.

⁴ See how I used him to display my power
among the peoples.

I made him a leader among the nations.

⁵ You also will command nations you do not
know,

and peoples unknown to you will come
running to obey,

because I, the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, have made you
glorious."

⁶ Seek the LORD while you can find him.

Call on him now while he is near.

⁷ Let the wicked change their ways
and banish the very thought of doing wrong.

Let them turn to the LORD that he may have
mercy on them.

Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive
generously.

⁸ "My thoughts are nothing like your
thoughts," says the LORD.

"And my ways are far beyond anything you
could imagine.

⁹ For just as the heavens are higher than the
earth,

so my ways are higher than your ways
and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Luke 13: 13:1-9 (NLT)

A Call to Repentance

13 About this time Jesus was informed that
Pilate had murdered some people from
Galilee as they were offering sacrifices at
the Temple. ² "Do you think those Galileans
were worse sinners than all the other
people from Galilee?" Jesus asked. "Is that
why they suffered?" ³ Not at all! And you will
perish, too, unless you repent of your sins
and turn to God. ⁴ And what about the
eighteen people who died when the tower
in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst
sinners in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, and I tell you
again that unless you repent, you will
perish, too."

Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

⁶ Then Jesus told this story: "A man planted
a fig tree in his garden and came again and
again to see if there was any fruit on it, but
he was always disappointed. ⁷ Finally, he
said to his gardener, 'I've waited three
years, and there hasn't been a single fig!
Cut it down. It's just taking up space in the
garden.'

⁸ "The gardener answered, 'Sir, give it one
more chance. Leave it another year, and I'll
give it special attention and plenty of
fertilizer. ⁹ If we get figs next year, fine. If
not, then you can cut it down.'"

Other Lectionary Readings:

Psalms 63:1-8 1 Corinthians 10:1-13



CHURCH SERVICES

30 March 11am: Combined service

hosted by the Fijian congregation



The time is always right to do what is
right. ~ Martin Luther King Jr

4th Sunday Monthly Hallsville Markets

7:30am

23 March



Every man creates his own destiny. ~English Proverb

..... enjoy & share the gift of the friendship of Jesus



IN OUR PRAYERS

- We pray for Fay as she recovers from surgery on her left wrist.
- Our prayers are with people grieving the loss of loved ones.
- We give thanks for cooler nights, and better sleep.
- We pray for peace throughout our troubled world

Meg's Musings

I got a lovely surprise this morning.

I notice that a couple of our rose bushes had a few small buds on them.

Not that unusual - except that the bushes still have many sun-burnt leaves on them, the result of a very hot and dry summer.

It seemed to me that our rose bushes are taking a risk, and living life to the full.

It's almost as though their faith in nature has been restored by the 15mm of rain which we received last week.

They are doing their best to put the adverse conditions of summer behind them, and to bloom beautifully once more.

There are times when each of us must put aside our difficult circumstances, and trust that God has it all in hand....that we will "bloom" again before long.

Blessing from Meg



Life is not a journey to the grave, with the intention of arriving safely, in a well-preserved body - but, rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming

- WOW, what a ride! ~ Hunter S. Thompson

Fabulous Finds Op Shop @ Hallsville

Open 9:30 to 1:00pm

Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays.

Cuppa & chat always available.



PEEL VALLEY CONGREGATION

Our goal: "To be transformed communities, experiencing, enjoying & sharing the gift of the friendship of Jesus."

Mission: "Called to be Free, Gifted to Serve."

Minister: Rev Geoff Flynn 0421 338 202

Pastoral Care: Meg Mangan 0476 375 989

Elders: Margaret Crowell Daryl Lush



Minister's Weekly Reflection

Go Bloom Where you are Planted.

This Sunday's Gospel Reading from Luke 13:1-9 gets straight to the point. Unless you turn to and rely fully on God, you're going to die. To drive home the point, Jesus tells a parable about a fruitless fig tree, a frustrated man, and a compassionate gardener. The kernel of the story? Bear fruit or die. You never know what tomorrow will bring.

As I recover from surgery, I have been reading in preparation to lead a Life and Witness Consultation in Inverell on 30 March. What is a healthy congregation, what fertilizer and pruning is required and when is it time to close the doors for the last time?

If a congregation is merely existing, longing for an era past, too worn down to invest the energy, creativity, and passion in sharing the Good News of Jesus with a broken and hurting world, then what's to make it any different from a social club? A healthy church grows outward while still maintaining its deep-rooted connection to Christ. If a congregation is inwardly focused, then its growth is stunted because it can't see beyond its own front door.

Why is it that the Uniting Church struggles to take a lesson from this parable? Why do we resist a change to our church structures, lament the absence of young members, and pine for the good old days? What keeps us from investing fully into the future and taking risks by pruning away the useless

and that which binds us to the past? We do these things to our own exhaustion, and in the process deny our neighbours the opportunity to see Jesus.

Someday, as it was for that barren fig tree, there will be an accounting. For the barren church that means doors closed, windows shuttered, and opportunity lost. No one wants to see that happen to their congregation, right? Or do they? Would they rather be cut down than do the hard work of being pruned, shaped, formed, and nurtured for new life—even if that life looks a whole lot different from the way things have always been?

There are thousands of people around us that needs God's love. Go, bloom in the image of Christ.

Reverend Geoff



"Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts." ~ Charles Dickens

Judy, an English Pointer, mascot aboard HMS *Gnat* then her sister ship, HM *Grasshopper*. Judy survived enemy attacks on both ships. In February 1942, with survivors of the *Grasshopper* she became The men regarded their 'guardian angel' - she had sniffed out a fresh-water on the island where they had been forced to abandon ship. They share the little they had no matter how great the risk.

Hiding Judy under a pile of rice sacks, the men assured her safe transfer to the prison camp in Medan. Scavenging for food and water took its toll like the men, she had a haunted look. Judy was determined to survive and that spirit in the dog inspired her fellow prisoners to keep going too. At Medan Judy met the man who would become her life-long companion - Leading Aircraftsman Frank Williams. One day he held out his hand offering her his ration of rice. After that she never left his side. Judy was a friend and comfort to all the prisoners, but the Japanese guards were becoming increasingly hostile towards her. She never failed to intervene and cause a distraction when the men were being beaten. She barked at nipped at the guards' heels. Frank was well-aware that Judy needed a new and more robust level of protection if she was to survive much longer.

Frank persuaded the camp Commandant, Colonel Banno, (while he was enjoying his Saki) to register Judy as an official Prisoner of War. An inspired idea. Judy's name joined the register with part of Frank's own number to become: PoW 81A Gloerger, Medan.

The reprieve was not to last.

June 1944, the men were on the move.

Captain Nishi arrived with a huge capacity for cruelty. He hated dogs, - moving camp, Judy was to be left behind. Using a series of low whistles and hand signals Frank communicated with Judy.continued

So she join them when boarding the *SS Van Warwyck*. Judy remaining still and quiet when Japanese guards made the prisoners stand on parade for hours. Little did they know that Judy was in a sack over Frank's shoulder all the time.

The *Van Warwyck* was hit by a torpedo and the only chance of escape for Judy was through porthole. Once in the oily, burning water. Frank spent hours swimming around looking. The men were taken to a Camp in Singapore. Suddenly, something hit Frank square between the shoulders. It was Judy, covered in oil and eyes burning red. It was an emotional reunion. Survivors of the sinking told how they had seen Judy bring people ashore by letting them hold onto her body: as she delivered one, she returned to the water for another. She was finally rescued by one of the men who plucked the exhausted dog from the sea and kept her safely hidden during the journey to camp. Judy had one more bit of luck when she reached the docks: Captain Nishi, saw her being hoisted from the boat onto a truck and ordered her to be dropped into the sea. A voice boomed out to over-rule him - it was Colonel Banno - and Judy PoW 81A Medan was lowered to safety.

Over the next year the prisoners were used as a workforce laying 3,000 miles of railway track through the central Sumatran.

Judy was awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal - the animal's Victoria cross - in May 1946.

Her citation reads: "*For magnificent courage and endurance in Japanese prison camps, which helped to maintain morale among her fellow prisoners and also saving many lives through her intelligence and watchfulness.*"

8 June 1946, Judy's bark was broadcast worldwide by the BBC as part of the Victory Day celebrations. She became the first dog to bark live on air! As poster-girl and war. ~ from National Military Working Dog Memorial UK

Just As We Are

Just as we are, your servants here,
Sure of your loving presence near,
Offering all our hearts hold dear,
Accepting Lord, we come.

Just as we are, with all our pain,
Deeply-felt wrongs which long remain,
Chances we know won't come again,
Forgiving Lord, we come.

Just as we are, you made us so,
Plain earthen pots no beauty show,
Yet deep within your treasures glow,
Affirming Lord, we come.

Just as we are, we come to you,
Trusting your promise ever true,
"See, I am making all things new!"
Renewing Lord, we come. ~ Gillian Collins



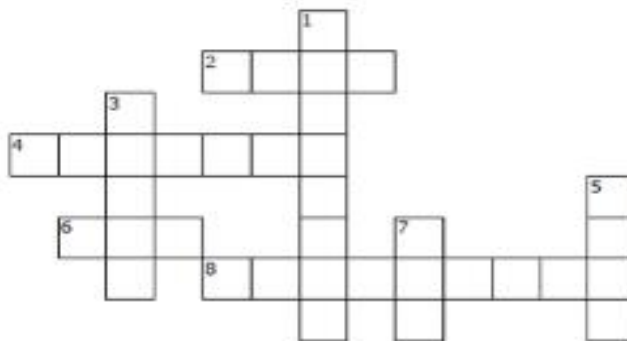
22 July 1946 Frank and Judy

The Parable of the Fig Tree

" 'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.' "

Luke 13:8-9 (NIV)

This puzzle is based on Luke 13:6-9 (NIV)



ACROSS

2. The top layer of the earth's surface favorable to plant growth.
4. A simple story teaching a moral or religious lesson.
6. To break up and move dirt using a shovel.
8. To spread a something on land or plants to help plants grow.

DOWN

1. An area of ground planted with vines and fruit trees.
3. The usually sweet-tasting part of a tree which can be eaten.
5. A large plant with a trunk, limbs, branches, and leaves.
7. The sweet, pear-shaped, fruit of a plant found in Bible lands.

~ Sermons 4 Kids

..... enjoy & share the gift of the friendship of Jesus