

North Lake Macquarie Uniting Congregation

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Greetings my dear friends, Welcome to my third minister's letter to you. As the days and weeks pass I have been hearing that many are making good use of the time at home to garden, clear out cupboards and drawers, catch up with hobbies, and even benefit from good contact from family and friends. We can often find positives even in the worst of circumstances and as followers of Jesus we are encouraged to trust Him each day, to be positive and to look out for our neighbour.

I hope you and your family are keeping well. I have been keeping in touch with many by phone, text, email, by our church website and by our church Facebook page. The Minister's Letter is published on our church website, this is for church members but also for all; please invite others to read it and be encouraged by it. I published a video on Facebook for Palm Sunday and shall again for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Today is Palm Sunday... 'Hosanna Loud Hosanna...' we celebrate His coming, His triumphant entry, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Now we move into Holy Week with Jesus saying he is looking forward to Thursday and to the Passover meal. With the disciples we wonder why? What can be so special about Thursday?

We pray... "Loving God, we marvel at the crowd this Palm Sunday... what a sight and what a sound... we joined in with the celebrations, we waved our palm branches and we laughed with the children. Glory be to you O God and blessed is he who comes in your name." We follow Jesus as he leaves Jerusalem and heads back over the Mount of Olives on his way to Bethany.

Thursday: from Together in Song #640 we sing: 'Kneels at the Feet of his Friends.' We read: John 13: 1-9, pause and continue, John 13: 10-17, 31b- 35. A new commandment he leaves us, to love one another. And with the disciples we are confused. What just happened? We were eating, we were rushed to the Garden of Gethsemane and we had to flee. Why was Jesus arrested?

Friday: from Together in Song we sing #534 'Love is his way...' We read: Isaiah 53: 1-12 & John 19: 12-42. We sing Together in Song: 342 'When I survey the wonderous cross...' And with the disciples and with Jesus' mother, we are horrified! Why? AND why did He not do something to stop them? He could have called on ten thousand angels – we are sure He could. Well..., we were sure...! What are we sure of now? Only that the one we believed in is dead.

Easter Sunday: "The Lord is risen! - He is risen indeed!" We sing Together in Song #362 'Jesus Christ is Risen Today...' This is our triumphant day! We read: Matthew 28:1-10. Who will believe this? Then he stands among us saying, "Peace be with you." We sing TIS #380: "Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son endless is the victory you over death have won." We raise our Easter banner, sing our Easter anthems and celebrate this joy of joys... Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. We enter your gates with thanksgiving in your hearts, we enter your courts with praise, for this is the day that the Lord has made. We rejoice and are glad in it!: you have made us glad Jesus Christ is risen today!

Love to you all, Kenneth .