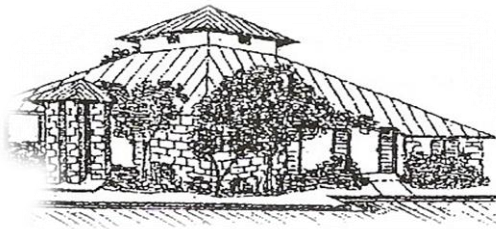


.Kirwan Uniting Church



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KEEPING IN TOUCH

WELCOME! *We welcome all visitors with us today, and pray your time with us will be a blessed one.*

Kirwan's Mission Statement

To be a people of God led by the Holy Spirit to practise and spread the love of Jesus Christ in the world

24th May, 2020

Lectionary readings	Easter 7
Acts 1: 6-14	Ps 68: 1-10; 32-35
1 Pt 4: 12-16; 5:6-11	Jn 17: 1-11

Richard's Rambling

As I type this on Thursday, it is Ascension Day. It's a public holiday in many European countries, including Germany where it is called, to the delight of English-speaking schoolboys and girls learning German, Christi Himmelfahrt, Christ Heaven-going. Here's what Luke has to say (Acts 1):

... he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Some years ago, Leisa and I rented a holiday house on the Manly NSW beachfront for a dear friend's wedding. Another family of dear friends, Americans, came over for the wedding and shared the house. Their then 3yo (graduated High School last month – aagh, we're getting old) daughter said to us, as we bade a sad farewell at Sydney Airport, "Don't worry, we'll be back". General Macarthur told the Philippines after he left in the face of the Japanese advance, "I shall return". Shopkeepers locking up their shop as they pop out for a few minutes, leave a notice "Back soon". Vera Lynn sang, "We'll meet again". We don't know when these reunitions will happen, but we need to know that they will happen. Our dog doesn't believe me when I tell her that I'll be back, but she's overjoyed when I return.

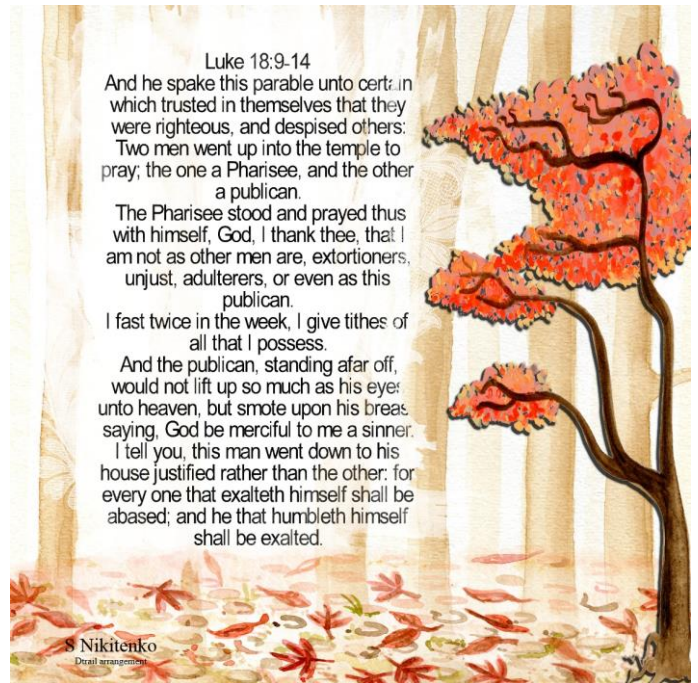
Don't get hung up on Luke's imagery, but there are a couple of things to take away from his account, and one from Mark. First, and most important, "This same Jesus will come back". We don't know the manner of his return, and certainly not the date, but we should hold fast to his promise that it will happen, that all of creation will be

restored, redeemed, and every tear wiped away. Secondly, Christ's "heaven-going" was obscured, hidden by a cloud. We find it hard sometimes to believe the first point, that Jesus will return and fix things, because of this second point, that clouds of doubt, of hopes dashed and unrealised, of grief, of apparent impotence in the face of sickness, hardship and evil, obscure the promise. A hymn verse speaks to me in those cloud-darkened days:

"You fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds you so much dread
are big with mercy, and shall break
in blessings on your head."

Thirdly, Mark (ch 16) reminds us that while we can treasure in our hearts the promise of Christ's return, we have work to do in the meanwhile. No accident that Pentecost follows Ascension in short order!

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.



Not much news this week. Hope you are all keeping well and pray that we will be able to join together in fellowship in the very near future.

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Coronavirus Update

UCA Queensland Synod

<https://ucaqld.com.au/important/coronavirus-update/>