

the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt 5:45). Let us pray that all people enjoy God’s protection and provision, and that they would thank him for it, instead of taking it for granted and grumbling that they don’t have it better.

In vs 2, Paul wants us to pray first of all not for fellow Christians, nor even Christian leaders, but for “kings and all those in authority.” He recognises that God entrusts every society’s government with the duty to shape that society. He explicitly articulates that a government can either enable or hinder Christians from living “peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” Many social commentators have observed how here in the ‘Western world’, Christian identity and lifestyle is now viewed with suspicion. Christian godliness and holiness have become incompatible with a peaceful and quiet life. Aggressive secularists view Christian morality, especially sexual ethics, as antithetical to communal harmony. From the Christian perspective, this means that we need to get used to being accused of troublemaking. The only response in such circumstances is faithful endurance (Rev 13:10). This may be, or may soon become, the environment we face in the post-Christian, increasingly anti-Christian West.

But if I’m understanding Paul aright, such decline into oppression is not inevitable. We should pray that local, state and federal governments in Australia will recognise the socially harmonious benefit of religion in general, and of Christian beliefs and behaviours in particular. If that ever happens, we must not then treat such social tolerance as an entitlement, a reward for faithfulness, or even a luxury to be enjoyed while it lasts. Rather, as, Paul continues to write, we should use any such tolerance and freedom for a evangelistic purpose:

*This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. (vs 3-6a)*

Effective proclamation does not require special protection or privilege. Tolerance is adequate. With it, we can then peacefully demonstrate, both in public and private, how and why Christ gives us not just peace in this world but eternal peace with God.

Bishop Emmanuel and the other victim of last Monday’s knife attack, Father Kochou, are excellent examples of this kind of peace. They have publicly forgiven their attacker, gently chastised the rioters who attacked first responders, and called their supporters to similarly forgive. Let us join them in peacefully proclaiming the peace which Christ uniquely brings, in this world and the next. And let us pray that all levels of Australian government continue to permit us adequate peace for peaceful proclamation.

Collect

Saving God, who called your Church to witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: help us to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be reconciled to you; through him who died for us and rose again and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**



St Luke’s Anglican Church Emerald

Cnr Ruby & Theresa St.

Phone – 4982 1802

Email – emerald@anglicanchurchcq.org.au

Website – stlukesemerald.org.au

*In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another [1 John 4:10-11]*

**Easter 5 (28<sup>th</sup> April)**

Acts 8:26-40

Psalms 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

**John 15:1-8**

**Easter 6 (5<sup>th</sup> May)**

Acts 8:26-40

Psalms 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

**John 15:1-8**

**Pray for Peaceful Proclamation**

TGCA, 19/04/2024, KAMAL WEERAKOON

On Monday 15th April, a teenager stabbed two Eastern Orthodox priests during a church service in western Sydney, in what seems to be a religiously-motivated attack. The chief target, Bishop Emmanuel, has become simultaneously popular and controversial by being outspokenly conservative in all manner of social issues. This, and the angry response of the crowd that gathered after the attack, have made the NSW Police and Government understandably concerned about the possibilities of an escalating spiral of retaliatory violence.

In this environment, we have an opportunity to pray for and work towards communal, inter-religious peace. Not just for the common good—for love of neighbour, but because that kind of secular peace is good for gospel proclamation.

In 1 Timothy 2:1–7 Paul calls on us to pray for our government. He does not exhort us to pray for an explicitly Christian government or political structure; nor does he imply that the gospel can only advance under governmental favour. What this passage does assume, is that it is possible for Christians to live publicly, even in the pre-Christian Roman Empire, without having to fear official punishment.

Paul urges as a matter of first importance that “prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people” without distinction. He wants us to pray for the world—for all people everywhere. That means our entire global community, wracked with all kinds of wars, conflicts, disasters and other miseries. It means Australia as a nation, and our states and local communities. This mirrors the care of our creator God for the whole world and all its people, whether they believe in him or not, whether they are Christian or not. “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on

## A guide for our prayers during the week

### Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop Peter
- Other parishes
- Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

### Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors
- Ivy, Nancy, Chris

### Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- St Luke's Op Shop
- Blackwater
- Emerald Churches

### Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

### Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Persecuted Church
- CMS and ABM

### Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Bible Studies
- Food for Body and Soul
- Wardens and Parish Council

## Dates to Remember

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Today     | Service at 4 pm                            |
| 2 May     | Bible study (Full of Promise)              |
| 5 May     | Food for Body & Soul                       |
| 25 May    | Lay Preacher training<br>Springsure 1-5 pm |
| 26-29 May | Clergy Conference                          |

|                       | 28 April | 5 May   |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|
| <b>Service Leader</b> | Daniel   | Larry   |
| <b>Read</b>           | Dianne   | Merv    |
| <b>Prayers</b>        | Donna    | Russell |

## The BCA Prayer

Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**The Ridley Certificate** is an online video course in Bible, theology and ministry for individuals and groups designed to help people deepen their faith and expand their Bible knowledge.

There are six video lessons per subject. Each lesson has up to 40 minutes of video content, plus questions for further discussion or reflection, multiple choice questions, handouts and bonus resources to explore.

Subjects for study through the Ridley Certificate are available free of charge from **1 May** for the next five years. Access to these subjects can be found here: <https://certificate.ridley.edu.au/>.

### Direct Debit Giving Information

**Account name:** St Luke's Anglican Church

**BSB:** 034-181

**Account No.:** 810 226

**Description:** 'Giving'