



Bible Readings for
August 2, 2020
Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 17:1-7, 15
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

Reflection from Ray
Continuing on our readings
Genesis and this extended
flawed family that yet plays
such a significant role in
salvation history. **Jacob**
lives in a world marked by
ruses and scams, but all is
about to catch up with him
as he spends a sleepless
night on the banks of the
Jabbok River. In the
morning Jacob will be
facing his twin brother
Esau in what he fears will
be a tense reunion. It's
been 20 years since he last
saw Esau and the last
words spoken between the
brothers back then were
that Esau was fixing to kill
Jacob. Worse, Jacob's
servants sent ahead to
smooth the way have
returned reporting Esau is
preparing for the meeting
by summoning 400 men.
Jacob fears they are not
being invited to swell the
numbers at the welcome
home party.
So he sends all his family
and all his herds on ahead,
over the river and then it is
just him and who is this
mysterious person he
wrestles with – an angel?,
God? (cont. page 4)



A devastating week with the soaring number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. And now the compulsory wearing of face-masks throughout Victoria and extension of the lockdown areas beyond metropolitan Melbourne.

Since we are not able to meet face to face the Church Council has scheduled a Zoom meeting for Sunday afternoon. This will be our first electronic meeting and we will wait and see how the technology works for us. But it has been a while since we last met and with the restrictions continuing for a while yet we really did need to bite the bullet and get on board with the technology.

August 2 being the first Sunday of the month we would normally have been sharing in Holy Communion, but maybe if you click on the [Uniting Church Synod on line church services](#) link you will find a church having on line communion.



**Do****Yourself****A****Favour**

So our last week of top Australian songs. Not to say we will not revisit any artists down the track but next week we will go international again. And as promised last week a treat for all you hard rocking fans (and lets face it that would be most of you!) AC/DC.

Cynics accuse them of using the same 3 chords to produce the same song over and over for 30 years, but when you get a winning formula... why not?

Being a church newsletter I could not really choose Highway to Hell so it came down to a toss up between Long Way to the Top and Jailbreak. Jailbreak got the nod by a whisker. Both have iconic videos.

Wikipedia says about this song, "Jailbreak is a song by Australian hard rock band AC/DC. It is the ninth and last track on their third Australian album, "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" which was released in September 1976. The song was not released in North America until 1984. It was written by Angus Young, Malcolm Young, and Bon Scott.

(cont. page 4)

Mental Health Matters

Part of my ministry role is to establish an "open-door" community at Sunshine Uniting Church. Of course, since COVID-19 gathering has been put on hold and I've had time to reflect, plan and dream.



On entering Sunshine Uniting Church you find yourself in an open atrium space, an area of welcome that also unites the different spaces of the building: the worship space, Uniting offices, garden area, kitchen and congregation offices.

On a (pre-COVID-19) Sunday, it fills with worshippers gathering after a service. During the week, however, many different people move and gather in this space. Sunshine Mission, as it's known locally, is a Uniting service providing emergency relief, financial services, a men's shed, a community lunch and other support services for vulnerable community members.

I've been looking forward to "launching" HMAS Sunshine into this mix to extend this welcome to those living with mental illness and providing an important link to the mental health wards of Sunshine Hospital.

Uniting's work in creating a compassionate hub in the heart of Sunshine creates a wonderful opportunity for missional partnerships. My hope is that as we plan and dream together we'll discover new and exciting ways to unite in these challenging times and into the future.

The Rev Fiona Bottcher (Deacon)

The above article appeared in this week's edition of the

It will come as no surprise that SYNOD has been

Postponed to Feb 26th—28th 2021

Thanks for everyone who put their names in as nominees for Synod. But everything has changed. Our representatives at the Synod meeting will be less due to covid and possibly the need to go on-line.

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Of course that will be the time it
goes wrong!

Thanks again to those people who have
been keeping up their offering through
direct deposit into the congregation's
account. If you are in a position to do this it
really helps. A reminder of details for Direct
Deposit for Offerings for Sunshine Uniting
BSB 083437
A/C No 515591719

I
missed
this moment but apparently there was a mildly amusing incident
when the Health Minister was demonstrating how easy it was to
put on and wear a mask.



The music video for "Jailbreak" was filmed in
March 1976 for the Australian music
programme Countdown. Filming was
directed by Paul Drane in a quarry in the
Melbourne suburb of Albion, near Sunshine.
The video featured the band's then-current
lineup playing the song. Angus Young is
dressed in what he later described as "little
convict pajamas", Bon Scott and Phil Rudd are
dressed in blue prisoner uniform covered
with typical Australian Broad Arrow, and
Malcolm Young and Mark Evans are dressed
as guards. Additionally, the band acts out the
section of the song that details the
protagonist's escape from prison. The film
shows the prisoners (Scott, Angus and Rudd)
doing hard labour under watch of the prison
guards (Malcolm and Evans). Later, the
prisoners manage to blow open the gates to

the prison. Rudd and Angus are able to
escape, but Scott is shot by Malcolm and
Evans as he attempts to do the same. The
video is dubbed with the studio track from
the Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap album.
"Jailbreak" is one of the first videos to make
use of explosives and fake blood. Drane is
quoted as saying, "We didn't really know how
much [explosive] we were going to need to
make the doors fly open, and I had a couple
of guys from props with sticks, trying to push
the doors apart, so the hinges are not really
there...It was the first time we'd had access to
anything like this, these exploding blood
packs."

Do yourself a true blue favour by [to jailbreak
here](#)

And if also can't split the two songs here is
[Long Way to the Top](#)

Ray's Reflection continued

So to today's reading with its notorious long night of wrestling. Probably all of us have had them. Everything always seems longer, darker, and more gloomy during a fitful night of tossing and turning. For me ...3.30am. More than one night I have spent tossing and turning and playing out scenarios. Tomorrow, if he does that again I am definitely this time say this, and how dare she suggest that, and I will... damn I should have said that when she said that, and how dare they all think this about me.

But in this strange and compelling story Jacob is portrayed as more than running possible scenarios or past events through his active mind. He is said to be wrestling with a mysterious man, later called an angel and later Jacob reaches the conclusion it was nothing less than the eternal, the divine he was wrestling with. Remember Jacob has sent everything he owned, everything and everyone he loves ahead of him. He is separated from all the things that were valuable, he stripped of all things that propped up his life. He stands stripped of everything, alone, naked before God. No back up, no-one in his corner. And it is here we are going a level deeper than just spending a sleepless night stewing over how I have been slighted.

Jacob was alone, no-one to impress, or be impressed by. No-one to compare yourself to. You ever get to that place? Maybe it is so much harder to do the spiritual work of honest self examination while still surrounded by the modern equivalent of all those things Jacob sends ahead - sheep, goats, chickens, those we admire in the media, those we admire in the football field or in the movies, those who have better shaped bodies, or seem more confident. All that keeps us from an honest, unafraid, perhaps searing openness to ourselves before God. How to get to that place? Well I don't think it happens all that often but crisis can be a way. A relationship ends, you get the diagnosis, you get retrenched, you have an accident. It can happen when you get to that place when you face the fact that you cannot control your life any longer.

That is an important aspect to this story. One that is dark and brooding. There is the sense in this story that Jacob is at a tipping point, maybe even in danger; that unwittingly he has wandered into the territory of a powerful being who if does not intend Jacob evil is certainly not to be dismissed as of little regard. Someone into whose presence you would not casually saunter, ill-prepared. And a new name is given, Jacob is now Israel. So many times we hang on to the names and perceptions of who we are that are either given to us by our parents, or our peers, or even our actions- we get so caught up in our identity; in what we call ourselves, or the bad ways we act or think, or the things we have done... that we miss the fact that God has already given us a new identity- a new name... not through a wrestling match like Jacob, but through the cross of Jesus Christ. Through Christ we leave our "Jacob" identity behind and have been given a new identity in Christ.

We sometimes find ourselves in ambiguous moments, as if, like Jacob, we were between two points - where we've been and where we want to go. It is there, at that in-between point, that we struggle. We wrestle with voices, with emotions, with fear, with our need to forgive, with angels sent by God. But like Jacob, we must struggle, even if we become wounded. We must become like Jacob and stand our ground and embrace our essential self, as we wrestle to become Israel and receive the blessing of our new identity for ourselves.