

The Sacred Is Calling

November 2021 (31st October - 27th November)



When does something become sacred? When does a place, or a sign, or an action, or a gesture, or an object, or a sound temporarily become something more... something that points us to something bigger, a glimpse of divine justice, mercy and grace?

This month we are searching for the sacred. Where do we find it? How do we recognise it? How do we cherish it? And how are we changed by encountering it?

There are moments in our lives that have special value and meaning because they give us profound insights into God's eternal reality. Jesus spoke about 'the kingdom' as a way of describing God's ongoing divine project of peace and restoration for creation. In a sense the Kingdom has already arrived and yet it is still emerging and growing – coming alongside us to show us that another way of harmony and dignity and love is possible. As disciples of Jesus we follow in the footsteps of the Kingdom speaking sacred words and doing sacred things to remind one another of our calling to be part of God's renewed creation.

We find the sacred in familiar places: in the words of the Bible and the actions of the sacraments, but the sacred also catches us off guard in a careless moment; for the Holy Spirit is always moving and transforming everyday life into lines of poetry or colour that speak of God's endless love.

The sacred is something that is set apart from the normal run of things, something that bursts into everyday existence pointing the way to God's Kingdom of perfect mercy,

justice and grace. It is not an escape from reality – it is an invitation to, and a deeper revelation of, reality as God has always created and intended it to be.

The sacred is calling out to us.

Our desire for transcendent truth, to experience the sacred, is not limited to a select club of Sunday morning worshippers. It is a heartfelt human desire that we all feel in our hearts, a deep longing for meaning and worth – for a way of making sense of it all. Without necessarily using the word 'sacred', this call is longed for and heard across humanity by people wanting to feel alive, connected, and valued.

So this month may we open our eyes, hearts, and souls wide as we search for, recognise, cherish and reflect on those moments when we encounter the sacred, that draw us evermore into God's embrace.

Each week of the four week theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme, which contains daily Bible readings and prompts for thought.

A Sacred Sequence (31 October)

There are moments in our lives that stand apart, when we make special decisions, bonds or promises. There are other more subtle moments when we take a quiet action, or a small step; or when something just clicks into place and changes how we understand the world. These sacred sequences, large and small, transcend the everyday and reverberate throughout our lives.

1. Ruth 1: 1-18

1. **A sacred bond.** Naomi saw Ruth's determination, her will, her choice, and there was no more to say.

2. Hebrews 9: 11-14

2. **Swept up, washed up, brushed up** — and sent out to serve the living God!

3. Mark 12: 28-34

3. **Coming near the Kingdom of God.** Considering those sequences when something clicks, and you understand on a new level.

4. Isaiah 25: 6-9

4. **Taking our seat at the table.** God invites us to a feast where there is room for all. When we participate in Communion we are given a foretaste of this heavenly meal...

5. Psalm 24

5. **Opening that door.** Those moments when we choose to throw open the door and let God in.

6. John 11: 32-44

6. **Sacred tears.** Sometimes our tears are sacred — allowing us to recognise the end of one thing and the start of something else.

7. Your choice...

7. **Our Daily Worship writer is invited to choose a scripture reading that relates to making a decision or coming to a new realisation.** If you are using this material for personal reflection we invite you to likewise choose your own passage to conclude the week.

Sites of the Sacred (7 November)

A baby's cry, a carefully laid cornerstone, a little jug, the selfless love of Christ, a long bitter road, a couple of copper coins. Sometimes we encounter the sacred where we are expecting to and sometimes where we are least expecting to...

1. Ruth 3:1-5; *(the verses in between and...)* 4:13-17

2. Psalm 127: 1-2

3. 1 Kings 17: 8-16

4. Hebrews 9: 24-28

5. Luke 24: 13-35

6. Mark 12: 38-44

7. Your choice...

1. **Birth and rebirth.** The book of Ruth begins with death and loss and ends with new life and restoration. In between there is the resourcefulness of two women trying to negotiate strange and traumatic circumstances. Naomi accepts her loss and then accepts Ruth while Ruth accepts Naomi's God and then she accepts Boaz. She makes a new life for herself and in that life a new life is born... little Obed.
2. **Labouring in vain.** Considering our buildings, urban spaces and infrastructure with and without God... Putting to one side churches — in what other buildings do you see signs of the sacred?
3. **A little sacred jug.** A wee jug that just does not fail. What are other moments when ordinary, unassuming objects become sites of the sacred?
4. **Through Christ.** Jesus for us, once and for all.
5. **Sacred roads.** Walking the sacred road of discovery.
6. **Long robes and copper coins.** Contemplating the danger of supposedly 'sacred stuff' that is worthless and the 'copper coins' that can be nothing and everything...
7. **Our Daily Worship writer is invited to choose a scripture reading that relates to a significant place or time.** If you are using this material for personal reflection we invite you to likewise choose your own passage to conclude the week.

Sacred Surprises (14 November)

When the sacred challenges, expands, unnerves and surprises us. Oh and a bit of punk...

1. 1 Samuel 1:
9-20

2. 1 Samuel 2:
1-10

3. Psalm 16

4. Hebrews 10:
11-18

5. Hebrews 10:
19-25

6. Mark 13: 1-8

7. Your choice...

1. **When you're writing somebody off and suddenly you have to stop writing...** Eli is going to write Hannah off, send her packing, when something makes him stop — Hannah herself! She checks him and reminds her to treat him with dignity. In our lives we have these sacred moments when we're in the middle of dismissing someone out of hand and then something makes us stop and realise their dignity and our own folly.
2. **Hannah plugs in the amplifier.** She switches up the gain to full, throws down a few power chords as the waves of feedback screech back and so begins her punk praise. Hannah's language and sentiments are vehement, passionate and personal. A sacred punk moment from millennia ago.
3. **The path of life has many forms.** The path of life does not go in a straight line and does not always stay the same. Sometimes it might be a multilane highway, or a high speed rail link... and at other times it might be a handful of small stones as way-markers or just some beaten grass pressed down by those who have walked before you.
4. **Being made holy.** The sacrifice was once and for all but being made holy in the light of that sacrifice is an ongoing process.
5. **Being sanctified signs for others.** How can we as sanctified sinners, in the process of being made holy, be signs for others spurring them on toward love and good deeds?
6. **Learning to look in the right places** Are we faithfully following God and searching out the sacred, or are we gawping at big stones...
7. **Our Daily Worship writer is invited to choose a scripture reading that relates to a change in perspective or understanding.** If you are using this material for personal reflection we invite you to likewise choose your own passage to conclude the week.

Sacred Seasons (21 November)

We come now to the end of the church year. Soon it will be Advent and everything will begin again. But here, at the precipice of year's end, we consider beginnings, endings, and the transformational power of the sacred.

1. 2 Samuel 23: 1-7

1. **Last words.** The haunting words of a complex man, looking back on his life and considering sweet morning light and sharp bitter thorns.

2. Psalm 142

2. **Rock bottom.** In the midst of despair, and abandonment, and trial the sacred can still be found.

3. Daniel 3: 13-28

3. **The fourth man.** Sometimes when you think all is lost and ruined, about to be burnt up, a fourth man shows up and things go a different way...

4. Romans 12: 1-2

4. **Transformed from the inside out.** Tuning in to the sacred, the holy and the eternal, season after season.

5. Revelation 1: 4-8

5. **Alpha and Omega.** The sacred cloud-borne thread running through everything.

6. **Belonging to the truth.** Listening to what the voice is saying this season.

6. John 18: 33-37

7. **Our Daily Worship writer is invited to choose a scripture reading that relates to sacredness, time, or both.** If you are using this material for personal reflection we invite you to likewise choose your own passage to conclude the week.

7. Your choice...