

Sanctuary Sunday Lunch | 14 June 2026 | 12:30

BEING CHURCH: LIVING OUT GOSPEL VALUES

We are living in challenging times, with alarming levels of hostility towards people with darker shades of colours of skin, and particularly towards those seeking sanctuary among us – people already traumatised by war and violence.

There are elements in our societies who are stoking up fears and adding to hatred and hostility with misinformation and mythology, some are promoting this with Christian symbols like the Cross of Christ, a desecration.

What is the proper response of followers of Jesus to this? What message do we speak into hatred and hostility? We challenge hostility with hospitality.

In the context of rising fascism in the 1930s, Dietrich Bonhoeffer called on the Church to be the Church. We heed this call now. It means to live out the Gospel, to embody the ministry of Christ, be the body of Christ, a community of sanctuary into which we welcome and enfold and safeguard people with all our differences and diversity, radically insisting we are not all the same or required to be the same. The Church is a house of prayer for people of all nations.

The challenge for followers of Jesus is to stand up to declare and live out his gospel revealed in him insisting that:

- One, God is with us all without discrimination, for all people are made in the image of God, imbued with the grace of God, all people – in spite of our selfishness - have the capacity to know and show love for all
- Two, we emulate Christlikeness and model Jesus' ministry of healing, hospitality and sanctuary for all, for Christ's love transcends all borders
- Three, we affirm that Christ lived and loved and died for all, this is what the cross of Christ declares. The cross of Christ strengthens people in their own experience of suffering and crucifixion
- Four, we keep alive the hope of resurrection, refusing to give in to despair, proclaiming the fulness of life for all, building a better world for all
- Five, we live this out as church, as one body who share one bread, modelled in Holy Communion where all are welcome and included and no one is an outsider, not only as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet but a revelation of the world as God wills it to be

Everyone knows Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan, upholding the capacity of all people to show mercy and compassion, to be human, to live with hospitality and to refuse to live by hatred. Love your neighbour -without exception, this is a rallying and uniting call for all neighbours everywhere.

The Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE