

BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE
ST JOHN'S HEIDELBERG ❄️ HOLY SPIRIT WATSONIA

MAY
2023

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J IS FOR JIREH

You may or may not be familiar with the term 'Jireh'. For those who are not, it is an attribute of God in Hebrew: the God who provides.

In this Eastertide season (Easter Sunday, 9th April, to Pentecost, 28th May) this is a significant portion of time in which we can reflect of how much God provides for us. We celebrate ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost: God provides victory over death and the power of his very presence in us.

I have been particularly struck by the two gospel readings we have had at Easter Sunday (Matthew 28:1-10) and last week, 16th April (John 20:19-31): the two accounts of the resurrection. God provides the two Marys transformation in their fear to joy and God provides a response to doubt in the famous 'Doubting Thomas scene'.

How has God provided for you personally during Easter?

I have personally been encouraged by the many people God provided at each Easter worship service we had. The past few years have meant many people are still tentative in gathering publicly after COVID lockdowns but our worship services this year have been well attended.

I am grateful for the way it has provided a source of joy in this season seeing our son Zion grow up and learn so much of late: writing, drawing, maths, music and learning to play 'Uno' even if it is according to 'his' rules.

God provides in the small things of life and the larger. In Easter we know the 'Jehovah Jireh' of old, where this term finds its origins (Genesis 22: God providing the sacrificial lamb).

God also provides the means by which atonement for sin in Jesus is given, assurance of the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit also.

In this Eastertide season how can the resurrection provide new hope, new opportunities? Are we willing to risk a bit more by knowing our lives do not end here? How can the continuous in-filling of



the Holy Spirit in our lives give us confidence and insight into how God might be guiding us in praying for the healing and needs of others?

Jonathan

mainly music:
May 2023



Our waiting list now stands at 11 families with little real chance of us being able to take any of them. There are two families from last year who, for various reasons, deferred their return until Term 2 which will then give us 18 families.

The families were given a book about signs which culminated in the cross being the sign of love! It is one we have used in the past and just happened to have sufficient left over for this year. Our next celebration is Mother's Day which comes fast after the beginning of Term 2.

Please pray that the team keep well over the winter months and that we will be able to keep going. None of us is getting any younger!!!

Rosemary Bellair (0428 595 394)

Good Friday Ecumenical Walk of Witness

Over 30 people did the walk from Mary Immaculate Catholic Church up to St James' Anglican in Ivanhoe and St George's East Ivanhoe.

Prayers were said from all churches in Ivanhoe: Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Ivanhoe Uniting Church, St James Anglican Church.

We sang the hymn *When I survey the wondrous cross* at stops on the walk.

The weather was good to us all the way, until we got to St James, then it bucketed down while we said the last prayers.

We were invited into St James' hall and met their new vicar Mike.

We were given biscuits and offered tea and coffee, and we were able to socialise.

When the rain stopped Frank and I walked down to our parked car. We noticed the changes in the shopping centre. Airlie Hospital, where our boys were all born, has been replaced with accommodation units.

Sylvia Webb

This Month – May

Wednesday 3rd: 11 am Iris Grange; 3.30 pm Strathalan

Sunday 7th Easter 5: 9.30 am St John’s, 5 pm Holy Spirit
Psalm 150; Colossians 3:15–17; Revelation 5:11–14

Sunday 14th Easter 6, Mother’s Day: 9.30 am Combined at St John’s, Glenn Loughrey speaking
Psalm 42; Luke 11:1–13; Ephesians 6:18–20

Thursday 18th Ascension Day

Sunday 21st Ascension 1, Easter 7: 9.30 am Combined at St John’s
Psalm 119:9–16; Matthew 4:1–11; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Wednesday 24th: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers’ Union; 11 am Streeton Park & general mid-week service at St John’s; 3.30 pm Regis Macleod

Sunday 28th Pentecost: 9.30 am Combined at Holy Spirit
Isaiah 61:1–3; Matthew 13:1–23; Romans 10:14–17

Wanted

- More mainly music volunteers

Money: March

Income:	Giving:	\$9,404.00
	Other:	\$26,695.00
	Total:	\$36,099.00
Expenses:		\$40,551.51
Deficit:		\$4,452.51

Giving was down.

Holy Week

Below left: Maundy Thursday meal, one of two tables.

Below right: Good Friday. Stones representing our sins lie at the foot of the Cross.



Elsie Storr

Combining a lot

There will be a lot of Combined Services in May:

May 7th: Services at both centres as usual.

May 14: A Combined Service at St John’s, to hear from Glenn Loughrey. Glenn is a Wiradjuri man who is also an Anglican priest, Vicar of St Oswald’s Glen Iris since 2015, and since 2021 the first Indigenous canon of St Paul’s Cathedral. He is also an artist, and is artist-in-residence at St Paul’s. As well as working in acrylic paint, he also designed the glass panels in the narthex screen of St Paul’s. He is the author of two books: ‘Another Time Another Place: Towards An Australian Church’ (2019) and ‘On Being Blackfella’s Young Fella’ (2020). He will be speaking to us about the proposed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

May 21: A Combined Service at St John’s, because it is the third Sunday in the month.

May 28: Because it is the day of Pentecost, we shall be all together in one place, at Holy Spirit Watsonia, at 9.30 am. It is Holy Spirit’s Patronal Festival. It is traditional, but not compulsory, to wear something red.

Holy Spirit Mothers’ Union

Our meeting was held in church on March 22nd at 10 am, starting with a cuppa and chat. Val led us in our service from the MU Service Book, with all reading part of the service. We sang two songs from *Covenant Songs* (149 & 104).

Thank you to our minister Rev Denise for baking our Simnel cake. You don’t need to be an MU member to bake the Simnel cake: for many years it was baked by the Holy Spirit Sunday School.

Elsie was able to attend the MU Lady Service at St Paul’s Cathedral. It was a Choral Service. The Lady Day Service is honouring when the Angel visited Mary.

The MU Shop has gone on line. The April meeting will be a time to send out funding.

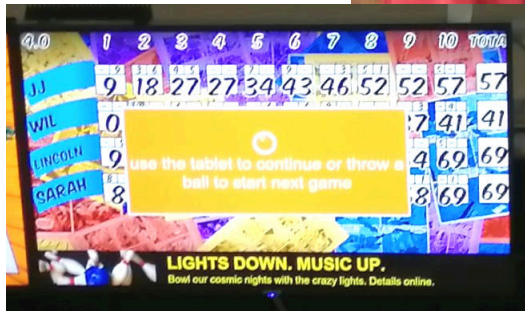
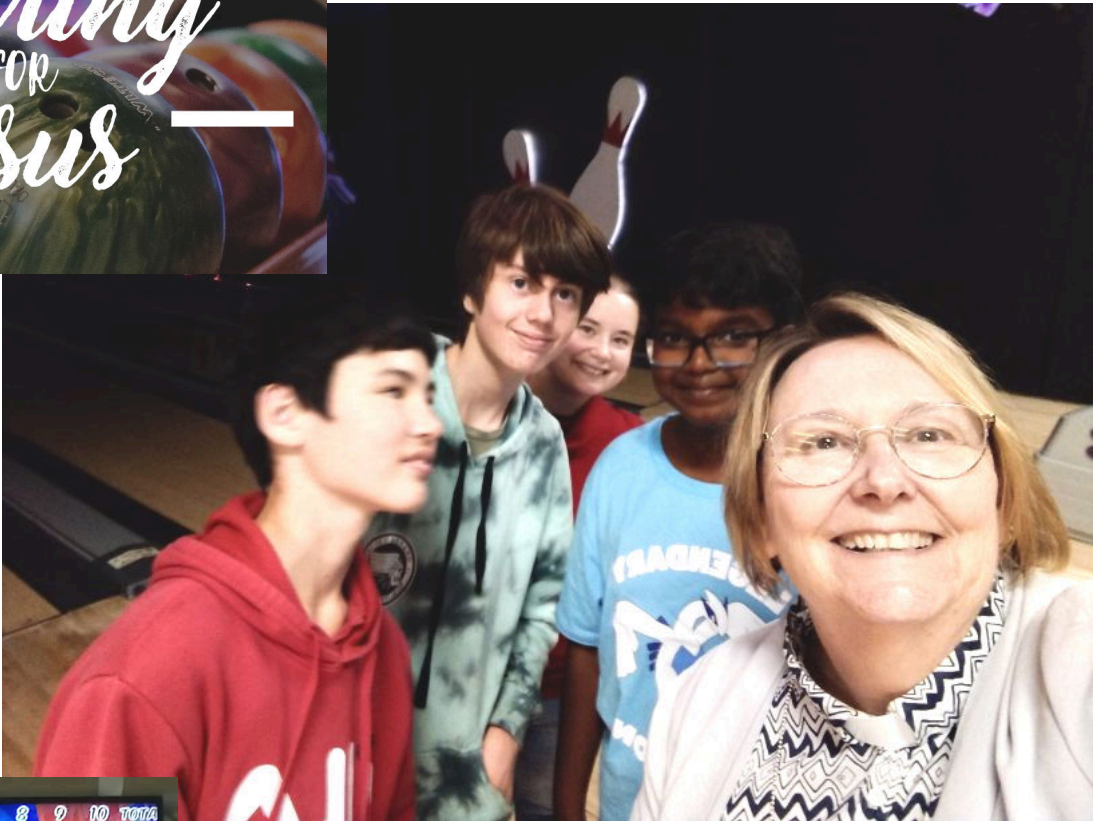
The meeting closed with Midday Prayers. The next meeting will be Wednesday April 26th.

Report by Sarah Coe

(← Title card from Church of Hope, Corpus Christi Texas)



Banyule's fledgling youth group met on Palm Sunday to the thunder of bowling balls and clash of tumbling pins, with Josh, Will, and Lincoln battling the team of vicar Denise and sidekick Sarah. The young gentlemen put up a good fight in the first game as a final hiccup – a mere 1 point bowl – took Lachlan and the ladies to a draw of 69, while Josh finished at 57 points and Will at 41.



Game two saw a solid effort from Josh and Lincoln, who scored 66 and 62 respectively, while Will's valiant swings swerved into the gutter time and again, finishing with an 8. Sarah scored the first strike of the day and Denise soon followed with a spare and a strike. The ladies ultimately triumphed with 96 points.

Post-game lunch featured a surfeit of chips

and a Bible discussion. Vicar Denise quizzed the young men and Sarah on the Lord's Prayer and was quizzed in turn on church practices. Overall, the occasion was counted a success as the vicar expressed pleasure in the lads' conduct and curiosity.



Further discussion by email:

Peter, I may have forgotten to add that of our ladies' team, Denise scored 85 points and I contributed 80 points, for those who urged me to beat her. Don't know if you want to put that in. :D

Cheers, Sarah

Editor:

I shall certainly include that, and I note the gentle hint that you could have easily beaten her if you had allowed it, but you felt it more decorous and behooving to let her slightly win . . .

Sarah:

Peter, I must confess my shame. I was definitely planning to beat Denise as well as everyone else. I had scored more points in the first game, but in the second I did not concentrate and scored a 1 point bowl, and shortly afterwards Denise got her spare and strike. If it wasn't for those incidents, I would have beaten her in points . . .

Blokes Helping Blokes

Blokes Helping Blokes now operates as a morning tea for blokes for an hour and a half from 8.45 am on the first Saturday of the month, at Open House (67–71 Strathallan Rd, Macleod).

Another change is that while the old *Blokes Helping Blokes* was organised by Glenn Farrington, the new version is organised by a Glen Farrington, who however bears an uncanny resemblance to the old Glenn.

April 1 theme: 'The world through my eyes'.

Glen passed around a photo of him giving a 'masterclass' in Hot Cross Bun Making. The Editor noted that 'masterclass' meant exactly the same as 'class', but Glen said people paid more for it. Allan Way said he would have to drop his classes in wood-turning and give masterclasses instead.

The photo showed Glen in a remarkably professional-looking double-breasted chef's white jacket sort of thing, and the Editor wondered if he had hired it, perhaps from a theatrical costumier; but Glen said he had charged it to his firm, presumably as a tax dodge.

Allan Way then told the assembled company that he had a curious little thing, which he would like to show them. The company wondered what this was, and why they would want to see it, while Allan went off to try to find it. He came back with a plastic bag, from which he removed some wooden articles of his construction. This, he announced, would demonstrate a bit of his wood-turning rolling uphill.

He had some difficulty with the demonstration, as his turned double-cone kept on rolling downhill and thereby failing to amaze. However, he did eventually, by muttering magical incantations and finding the right spot on the table, manage to achieve uphill rolling, by which time everyone was well used to the idea before they saw it.

(For those not familiar with how this works, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4xTbyfQgps>)

Unlike in the YouTube video linked above, Allan's double-cone had no end handles, and the Editor wondered how he had made it. Allan said that after turning one end to a cone, he had turned a matching socket in another small piece of wood in his chuck, attached the cone with a few temporary dabs of glue, then turned the other end to an exactly similar cone.

This remarkable woodworking feat of Allan's reminded Keith Tupper of something in his own life, and he ejaculated 'Exploding dunny!' That certainly got everyone's attention, but Keith, while making it quite clear this was a Real Thing, was unable to explain exactly what it was, or what it did, so Keith's Exploding Dunny will go down in BHB lore as an Unfathomable Mystery.

The air of deep mystery further deepened when Glen called David Taylor 'Brian' (or possibly 'Bryan'). It seemed that Glen's uncertainty about his own name was now spookily rippling out into the portions of the universe immediately adjacent to himself.

This talk of something nearby being not quite as expected led David Woods to describe his recent tour of the South Island of New Zealand. The problem was, he said, that people had so talked up to him how much better the South Island was than the North, that he was disappointed, because it had failed to live up to the embiggened estimation his mind had developed.

It was suggested to him that Milford Sound was worth seeing. 'Ho hum', said David, 'the Norwegian fiords are better.' The Editor suggested the glaciers. 'Better in Alaska', said David, 'and you don't have to walk as far.'

However on further interrogation one possible cause for this world-weariness was discovered: the tour David had been on lasted for four weeks, and they kept getting him up at 6 am (4 am Melbourne time), or earlier, to get on things, and then making him do something after that.

Glen said that for holidays he and Wendy saved their pennies until they had enough to spend some days in a really fancy hotel. They then indulged in the on-site luxuries—including a sort of airport first-class lounge with free food and drink—without having to set foot outside the hotel, and returned refreshed from the luxury.

The Editor said he applied a different philosophy to his holidays, and when he returned to his own hovel, it now seemed highly luxurious compared with the places he had stayed at.

Frank Webb described an adventure he had had in a hotel. He had left two suitcases outside his room, and the next morning one of them was missing, and was eventually found, intact and unrifled-through, three floors down. The Editor asked what on earth he was doing putting suitcases outside in the hallway, but apparently that was the done thing. The Editor has heard of putting boots outside overnight to get them cleaned (though no hotel he has stayed at would dream of offering such a thing), but not suitcases. Do armies of footmen buff them up, and polish the Louis Vuitton badge? Also 'three floors down' in the Editor's places would be at the bottom of a well. But the Editor was sure that if he left two suitcases outside his room in any place he stayed at, they would both disappear very smartly, and they and their contents would be quickly on sale at a local market.

After this the meeting degenerated into complaints that there weren't any singers, etc, as good as there used to be. The Editor urged that we were out of touch with modern culture, which was based on social media and streaming services. On that note of creeping irrelevancy we disbanded until 6th May.



Above: The grand entrance of one of the Editor's hotels. One leaves one's thongs on the stairway, but they are not cleaned. Note on the right, a lady 'known by repute'.

Bottom left next page: A top room at the same hotel. The picture shows nearly the whole room. The lady stayed the night.

Glen's hot cross buns

Glen Farrington held a press conference on Easter Monday in the half of his house still extant after the earthquake, on his Hot Cross Buns fundraising achievement.

Now Barry Humphries once said that if you want journalists to come to your press conference, just make sure that the invitation includes the words 'refreshments provided'. Glen's invitation included 'hot cross buns provided', so the Editor was there.

Glen started the press conference with the vexed question of his name. His mother had named him after the actor Glenn Ford, or possibly the astronaut John Glenn—the story was not always consistent, but it included two *ns*. (His second name was David because he was very sick and not expected to survive, but was like David to the Goliath of Death.) However, when his birth certificate showed up, some officious nurse or doctor had 'corrected' it to Glen with one *n*. His mother was horrified, and the discrepancy has dogged him all his life: he used Glenn for normal purposes but Glen for all official records. With myGov and the increasing officialisation of so much of daily life, this was getting more and more awkward, with people assuming he was engaged in shady dealing of some sort or other. So he has finally decided to use only the official name, with the approval of his mother (to the extent that she was able to understand the question).

(The Editor here mentioned to the assembled throng his wife, who had trouble getting a passport in the double-barrelled surname she had long ago assumed on marriage. Eventually they found on a dusty high shelf a form 'Person known by repute', so she has always since been known to the Editor by that soubriquet.)

When Glen was Glenn and a youth worker, he used to ask his youth group how to pronounce his name with the correct number of *ns*. The 'gang leader' type always got it wrong, with one or three *ns*, while the quiet kid who needed encouragement was the one who got it right.

Readers of the *Babble* will be aware that Glen is a master of making food, not just through the art of cookery, but in re-inventing the most fundamental processes, often on an heroic scale. So he has lately been making bread. Not only is he making baguettes that are circular and therefore go on and on in an endless loop, feeding multitudes, but he is also grinding his own grain. Fortunately he is not making Wendy hand-crank a quern, nor is a donkey driving a horse-mill, but instead it is done by a small electrically-driven pilot plant.

Glen says that the taste is nothing like that of normal flour, and is exceptionally nutty. He is using as much whole grain as possible, but says if you start with 100% whole grain you get the runs something awful, and it is necessary to work your way up to it in gradual steps.



For his hot cross buns, Glen was never going to make them the same as in the shops. Shop-bought hot cross buns usually have 0.1–0.2 kg of fruit per 1 kg of flour. If you go to a really specialist shop you might, if you are very lucky, find 0.3 kg of fruit per 1 kg flour. Glen uses 0.8 kg.

And it is the same with Glen's chocolate hot cross buns, which contain 0.8 kg of chocolate per kg of flour, and I can record they are highly chocolaty, plus extra chocolate. (N.B. The Editor did not get the runs.)

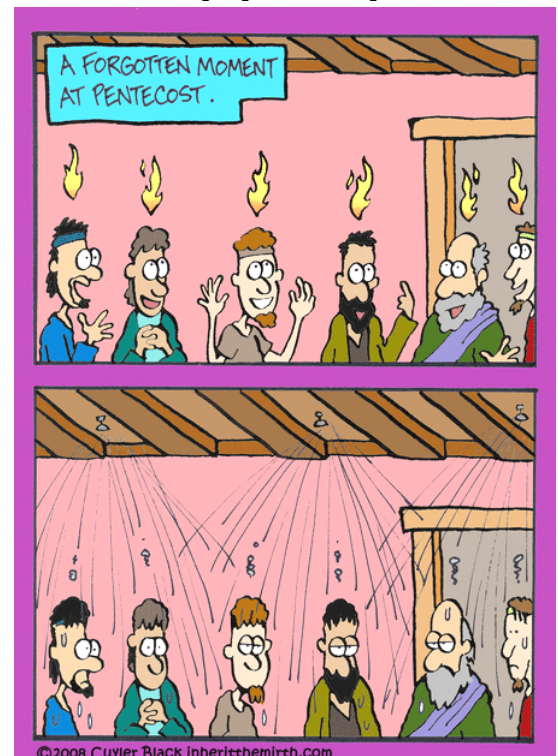
Wendy explained why the buns were important. Open House, the Christian support organisation in Macleod, runs two groups that were founded by Glen's mother: the Wednesday club and the Friday club. The reason for these unimaginative names is that it makes it easy for the members, many of whom have learning or other disabilities, to remember when to attend. These groups are part of Open House's support for older adults: the lonely, the isolated, people with special needs. Open House started in 1971 and the clubs have been running since 1973. One of the present members has been coming since 1974.

Glen said that Open House sees people as people, and not just clients. In particular, its support is not limited to office hours, but when it is needed.

Glen determined to make and sell hot cross buns to raise funds for these groups. This was by no means a trivial process. Fifty dozen were made, which required working in many batches. Glen's 'Training Now' people helped in the preparation, a couple of club people put buns into bags, and some people from *Blokes Helping Blokes* helped with packing and delivery. While gourmet hot cross buns sell at \$30 a dozen, these buns were priced at \$20 a dozen, and were offered to people from Open House, *Blokes Helping Blokes*, 'Training Now' and Glen's neighbours. There was no need to offer them more widely, because they were all sold out in only three days, and a lot of people (including the Editor) missed out because they were too slow.

Not only did this raise \$1000, but also the challenge of making so many buns generated great community spirit from a shared task. There were no arguments and everyone worked together for a common goal. Everyone, no matter what they did, came and helped.

Glen also gave demonstrations of hot cross bun making to the Open House clubs. He was accompanied in the demonstrations by 'Training Now' people in chef's uniforms. This was great for their self-esteem, and it was helpful for the club members to see other people with special needs in professional rôles.



Margaret Louise Billett

19 February 1932 – 31 March 2023



Margaret's funeral was held on Thursday 13th April at St John's. There was a substantial attendance. Denise took the service, Helen McAlley preached, and even our student Sarah came, though it was not on her roster.

Margaret's family placed symbols of Margaret at the front, and there were many. Denise pointed out that Margaret had worshipped at St John's since 1974, and what was now the vicar's residence had been Margaret's home. Margaret had planned the whole Order of Service, the hymns and readings and everything.

The first hymn was *Great is Thy faithfulness*, and it was followed by a eulogy by Margaret's daughter Helen:

Mum was a planner. She liked control. And, full disclosure, when I was a teenager Mum had a sign on the fridge, 'The views expressed by Helen are not necessarily those of the management.' The hymns, the readings today were all chosen by Mum: I got them from the list she gave me, dated 1984. The one thing missing was the 'management's' version of her eulogy, so I am just going to have to do my best. I guess I have graduated to 'management' status now. I hope I do her justice.

Margaret Billett was born in 1932 to Marjorie Alice and Clifford Gordon Baglin. Her birth was much anticipated. Both her parents had lost a potential partner during WW1, and both had needed time to recover and 'married late'. Which meant they had their children in their 30s! Strange how times change. I think there had been a miscarriage before Mum was born. And so, her arrival was a time of great joy. Her aunt, her father's sister, told me that Mum was a big baby who always smiled, and she used to love to take her out in the pram because she was stopped by everyone who complimented her on 'her' bonny baby. A couple of years later Mum acquired a sister (June Allison) and so the family was complete.

Those of you who knew her well, won't be surprised to learn that she was a feisty child. Perhaps because she was one of those natural left-handers who were forced to be right-handed. At any rate she felt that she needed to assert herself where she could. So, this bright, feisty child was sent to Lowther Hall.

You'd have to agree with me that the Margaret we knew was (in the nicest way) pretty strait-laced. But, did you know that she was expelled from school in prep? Well, a polio epidemic hit and school was disbanded (sound familiar?); her parents were told then that it would be better if she didn't return. So, I've always said she was expelled. Please note, Mum disputed this claim and said that being asked not to return was different from being asked to leave. Semantics Mum. However, going to the state school turned out to be a great thing. Because she loved it, made life-long friends, and found her academic passions: literature and history. She then transitioned to Essendon High School where she also thrived.

Of course, you know your history and you've worked out that she was born in the depression and grew up in war years. In fact, she had a relatively comfortable time during the depression because her father was employed as a senior public servant, but just to give you an idea of the family she came from: when my grandfather was told in the 30s that he had to retrench 20% of his staff, he came up with a different proposal. He presented his idea, and it was enacted in his department. He suggested that everyone take a 20% pay cut (including himself) and that no-one be retrenched, and that's what happened. No-one in his department lost their jobs. Even so Mum felt the deprivation of those years and the rationing of the war and never ceased to enjoy the 'good times' when they came. She loved the finer things in life, clothes, food, antiques and books.

Life was necessarily quiet during those years. The family used to gather every Sunday and the men discussed the war. Her father had fought in World War 1 and her uncle fought in WW2. The women discussed domestic issues, rationing and cooking, in the kitchen on those afternoons. Mum gravitated to the discussions of politics and war and who can blame her.

She went, with her family, to the football, every Saturday, at Essendon, of course—wasn't it nice to see them win for her last week—not because she loved it, but because that was what everyone did in her context; so it's surprising how little she managed to know about football or indeed any sport. I guess that shows what a total lack of interest will do. Sundays were for church. She joined the Anglican Church and her faith sustained her throughout her life. She enjoyed church as a girl, partly because she became a Sunday School teacher at 14. She used to take her class on excursions to the zoo and the Melbourne Show. Imagine the Health and Safety assessment on that now. So, you can see from an early age she knew her calling as a teacher. She also enjoyed being a guide and camping and she used to go on hitchhiking holidays with her girlfriends! They hitchhiked as far as Queensland! You're seeing a new side of Margaret today!

She loved Essendon High, but had she matriculated there her only option would have been to study straight science. She could have done this because she was a good allrounder, but she knew it wasn't her passion. So, she investigated options and discovered that if she went to a school called MLC, she could study the Arts in Forms 5 and 6. So, she landed herself a scholarship, took the paperwork to her parents and presented it as a 'done deal'.

My grandfather was hugely supportive because he was a big believer in educating girls and helping them enter the professions. So, Mum went to MLC. Again, she thrived. Again, she found lifelong friends and she did get to study literature and history.

Of course, it was MLC in the 1940s, so she only got to study the parts of history that were thought appropriate and the parts of literature that would not corrupt a young girl. Famously Mum wrote in her HSC Literature exam that *The Canterbury Tales* were sweet little stories that served as a moral guide to children. And she cited the 'Miller's Tale' as an example of this—you'll remember, it is not just full of hilarious flatulence jokes, but even broad-minded people call it raunchy. Of course, when she read the non-MLC-censored-and-abridged version, which was about a sweet tale of misunderstanding, she was horrified at what the examiner must have thought of her suggesting children might learn moral lessons from the events that transpired at that window, and amazed that she passed.

Despite the MLC version of Chaucer, Mum did well in her matric. So well that she won a scholarship to Melbourne University. However, Mum did not hesitate in turning that down because she knew she wanted to be a primary school teacher, so instead she went to Melbourne Teachers' College. There she found her vocation.

At the ripe age of 19 she was sent, as a fully-fledged teacher, to a school in a tiny town called Clear Lake and she taught Prep to Grade 8 all in one class. She was the only teacher in the school and for miles around. Can you imagine the Health and Safety audit on that today! She did brilliantly there. Barb and I used to love to hear the stories of the farmers' children who came to school with their animals. She was there for two years before she returned to the city.

It was about this time that she met Ronald Billett and married. And, through him she met Auntie Claire, who is watching today and who was such a good friend and whom she loved so much.

There was gender discrimination everywhere in those days. Mum told the story of going to her health insurer after she married and asking for a refund because Dad belonged to a different insurer, and she had paid a whole year on her insurance just before they married. They refused to reimburse her because, they said, 'That person (Margaret Baglin) had ceased to exist'. It's not surprising that Mum became a bit of a feminist.

In those days when you had a child you left the teaching profession and so when Mum had Barbara she resigned. She loved Barbara, who was a much longed-for child, but she struggled with being stuck only in the domestic space. I came along a few years later and when I was two, Barbara started school. In the end it proved too much for Mum to take Barbara to school, but not be a part of a school herself. She started working for the Catholic system because motherhood made her ineligible to teach for the state. At that time the Catholic system of education was very much the poor relation; rates of pay were very low. That was why they were prepared to employ a married woman with a child, whom she brought along to school with her. Margaret had to do this if she wanted to work because everyone, even her own mother,

was appalled at the idea of a mother working and refused to help her with childcare. Margaret was a pioneer of middle-class working mothers, and it was a tough road. (A generation later Mum looked after Barbara's sons and later my children so that we could continue to work when we became mothers. I know that her decision to do that is something that Barbara and I are deeply grateful for and so are the grandchildren because they had a gifted teacher's total attention focused on them while she cared for them.) Despite all the objections Mum persisted and moved from emergency teaching to having her own class. She used to have 50 preps in a class. I am not making that up! 50 preps, and a two-year-old in the back of the room. Those who follow the reading wars would be interested to note that she used her own mix of phonics, (*Words in Colour* was the Catholic system's reading program) and whole word immersion where she read to the students and listened to each child read every day. Imagine that! I don't need to because I was there until I started school and I remember seeing it. She had all her 50 preps reading by the end of every year. Perhaps her foot-in-both-camps is a lesson others could learn from.

Mum was a gifted teacher.

Against everyone's advice Mum bought herself a car and obtained all the freedom that goes with having your own wheels. That was the beauty of being a working woman. You called the economic shots. Mum paved the way for lots of what we now take for granted. She strongly encouraged Barb and me to be economically independent. 'Able to look after yourself' was the way she put it.

She continued to study as Barb and I were growing up. She did this working full-time, raising two children with a husband who, while actively involved in the family, travelled extensively for work, and while looking after her parents. No easy feat! No wonder she enjoyed little luxuries. Do you remember her hair always looked as if she had just come from the hairdresser? That was because she had. She had her hair 'done' every week. I swear Mum didn't even know you could buy shampoo in the supermarket and wash it yourself. Mum had her hair 'done' the day she died. I'm so pleased about that! She was also a great believer in travel, massages, and a sherry or two before dinner.

At times like this in a mother's eulogy it is expected that you list all the foods that your mother cooked. The ones that no one could do better. Unfortunately, the domestic was not Mum's sphere and she is to be admired for battling away and keeping her family fed. Grills were her specialty because they were easy. This was of course the time where fast food was a can of soup. And Barb and I ate a lot of canned soup. Mum thought if you put celery in Heinz Cream of Celery soup it counted as a meal. The first fast food that came along to help the working woman, like Mum, was the barbecued chicken. There used to be shops that sold them—just barbecued chickens, nothing else. Barb and I really thought we were going to die of barbecued chicken poisoning when they first came out because Mum loved the ease and simplicity of not having to cook. Mum could make a decent meal, but she didn't enjoy cooking much. However, she did make brilliant rock-cakes. They were fabulous and she took them

along to every family function—and church function: I know the Shands and the Millers will remember them. There have been lots of Mum's rock-cakes served in St John's church hall. Mum was rightfully proud of them and kept the recipe quiet. In fact, Barb and I used to joke that Mum's funeral was the last family function that people would come to. We joked that people would arrive and say, 'Where are the rock cakes?' and Barb and I would explain that the rock-cakes came from Mum and then they'd say 'Well, we're not coming to any more Billett functions. We only came for the rock-cakes.' Who knows, it might prove to be true. They were a highlight. While you are warmly invited to afternoon tea with our family later, there will be no rock-cakes. I know I will look at every afternoon tea spread in the future and find it a bit lacking.

Mum might not have been a good cook, but she loved food and bought great food. As you can imagine, knowing Margaret, there were plenty of cakes in our house and biscuits and all the sweet things she loved. Mum sourced food well. She, meanwhile, was busy being a mother and a teacher and an attentive daughter as well as working on the vestry here and (after she had done post-grad work in teaching English as a Second Language) tutoring refugee women in English, volunteering for the Melbourne Museum, and running an after-school care program at a disadvantaged school with some of her teaching colleagues. Those children learned to read too. I've sometimes wondered, if you added them up, how many people she taught to read. There would be hundreds. What a legacy! Even in recent years, at the nursing home, she was getting me to bring in readers that she could use with the nurses' children in the school holidays. Mum used to read to Barbara and to me frequently when we were little, but I liked it best on a wet Sunday morning. Because if it was wet, we didn't walk to church—Mum was a great believer that wet feet could kill you—and so we stayed home and she read to us all morning. Barb on one side, me on the other and Mum and a book in between: 'Marjorie Pym' and 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang', 'Ballet Shoes' and 'The Magic Faraway Tree'. That was in the days when we lived next door to Auntie Anne, another great friend of Mum's, whom Mum loved and valued and who is here today.

Later she read to her grandchildren. Ian was her first, very special, grandchild and she bought all the stuffed versions of the Winnie the Pooh animals so they could act out the stories. The grandchildren have all brought along mementos of their grandmother and placed them on the Table of Symbols today. She was proud of them all: of Ian her first and much-loved grandchild whose sweetness of character won everyone's heart; of Andrew, whom she loved to chat to at family functions, who she always said inherited the Heward charm and who has followed her footsteps and become a teacher; and Emma, who is with us on the live-streaming link from Oxford where she is studying, and who is alone today, on the other side of the world, and we are missing her as she is missing us—the only girl in the generation continuing the tradition of strong, independent women in the family; Max whose exploits made her laugh so heartily and whose *joie de vivre* she so admired; and Edward, who was her philosopher, and who she always said had the most beautiful soul. She was proud

of her daughters: of Barbara, her first born, who has continued Mum's tradition of selfless community service and whom Mum admired for her effortless ability to manage all the details of work and of domestic organisation that she struggled with and who reminded her so much of her own much-loved mother. She loved to talk 'education' with me, and I learned so much about her years as an educator in those talks. And yet, I realise now there is so much I did not ask – and now never can.

Most recently Mum was in a nursing home in Donvale and some of the carers have come today—in their time off. Barb and I would like to thank them for their skill and kindness in attending to Mum for the past five years, and Kay and Helen who visited her. Barbara and I are so very grateful that our mother's life was filled with so many good people and good friends. In the nursing home she sat in a chair diagonally opposite the door and her face used to light up when you came in, and she'd wriggle into a more comfortable position as she settled down for a chat. Recently Barb and David, and Roger and I celebrated her 91st birthday with her. She was very, very fond of her sons-in-law and gave them her highest accolade that they were 'good husbands' and 'good fathers'. And she was right.

There's more, of course, but how do you cram 91 years' worth of living into a speech. Mum lived a rich life. She left a legacy in the literacy of literally hundreds of people; in the people she helped in her community; in her friends and family and in the path she forged for women who wanted careers as well as families. We have a great deal to be grateful to her for.

So, the last word goes to Mum. Mum loved this quote. She had it framed and gave it to all her grandchildren. It's by Grantland Rice and was given to her in a letter on her wedding day by a much-loved uncle. She valued it and kept it with her until the 31st of March 2023.

'For when the One Great Scorer comes to mark against your name, He writes—not that you won or lost—but how you played the Game.'

I think we can agree. The game might be over, but you played it well Mum. Rest now Mum, job well done!

We then sang *The Lord's my Shepherd*, and heard Psalm 121 and John 14:1–14. Helen McAlley told us how she first met Margaret in 2017 when Banyule was between vicars, and they found they lived close, and Helen became a regular visitor.

Helen told us that Jesus could have thought of himself that Last Supper, but instead thought of how he could give support to his disciples for when he was no longer with them. Thomas wanted everything cut-and-dried, but it was enough to know that Jesus was faithful. Philip wanted to see the Father, but the Father is like Jesus.

Margaret trusted Jesus, and is safe with him. We cannot get to heaven by being good, but we can with Jesus.

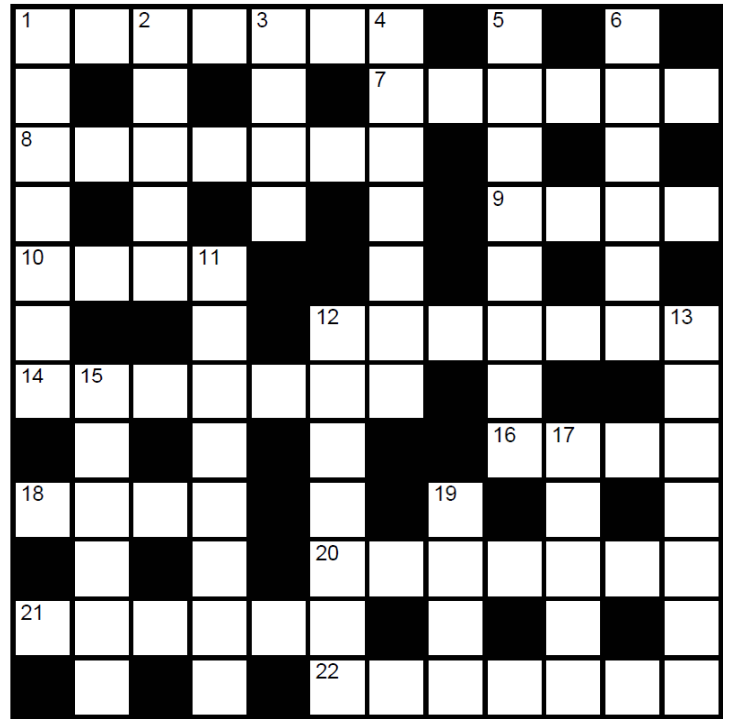
We sang *The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended*, saw a slide show, prayed, and sang *Morning has broken* before the final farewell.

Across

- 1 Creatures (7)
- 7 Procession (6)
- 8 Defeat (7)
- 9 Zacchaeus' lookout (4)
- 10 They're found near temples (4)
- 12 God rested on this day (7)
- 14 Bundles of wheat (7)
- 16 King spared by Saul (4)
- 18 Mideast native (4)
- 20 Descendant of Ham (7)
- 21 Valley between Mt of Olives and Mt Moriah (6)
- 22 Storm (7)

Down

- 1 Bowmen (7)
- 2 Hidden (5)
- 3 Fever (4)
- 4 Writers (7)
- 5 Curse (8)
- 6 Most shameful (6)
- 11 Sword holder (8)
- 12 Handmaid, for example (7)
- 13 Opposite of 6D (7)
- 15 Injured (6)
- 17 Craftiness (5)
- 19 Destroyer of Jonah's shade (4)



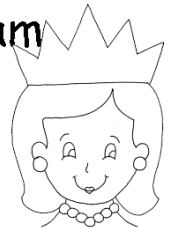
by *Philologus* © BiblePuzzles.org.uk
Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

D C D E S A H C R U P N A M J
 W D C H G N I Z A G E P E S U
 E E M O P R A Y E R P L U U D
 L Z O L N N O E H E A P V D A
 L I O Y E V R T A S P P D D S
 E T R G N E E R U L I N I E T
 R P R H W R E R I H I S C N E
 S A E O B D E C S W C L E L A
 A B P S T J A E Y I O S A Y D
 M D P T O T L T P U O S L G F
 A R U H I T H L D H F N G U A
 R O N O S G E Y C I J E S U S
 I C N O I S S E R G S N A R T
 A C P M U T T E R A N C E E L
 L A N G U A G E S E M A J O Y

Mother's Day Anagram

(Apologies for American spelling)

www.dltk-kids.com



- hnoor _____
- bdeelss _____
- ceeprst _____
- adhiloy _____
- elov _____
- acdemmmnnost _____
- aaceeipprt _____
- eilnst _____
- efgiorv _____
- aeelmpx _____

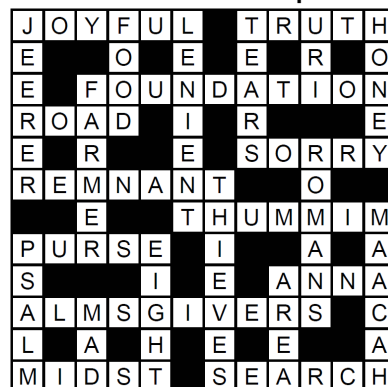
Bible Word Search – The Holy Ghost

All the words listed below are in the puzzle – left, right, up, down or diagonally. Find each word and circle each letter of the words you find. After you have found all the words, the leftover letters form the **mystery answer**.

https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_TheHolyGhost_0.htm

- Accord, Apostleship, Appeared, Baptized, Brethren, Chosen,
- Cloud, Conversions, Disciples, Dwellers, Fire, Galileans,
- Gazing, Holy Ghost, James, Jerusalem, Jesus, John, Judas,
- Languages, Mary, Mighty wind, Power, Prayer, Purchased,
- Samaria, Steadfastly, Suddenly, Supplication, Transgression,
- Upper room, Utterance

Answers to last month's puzzles



Bible Word Search mystery answer:
GETHSEMANE

Last month's anagram:

- aehrt heart
- egnostuy youngest
- deehhrs shepherd
- agint giant
- fgiht fight
- ghilnosst slingshot
- enosst stones
- ehiilnpsst Philistines
- ehor hero
- aberv brave

John 11:1–45

26th March 2023

Sermon by Sarah Coe

11 Now a man named Lazarus was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay ill, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.)³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, 'Lord, the one you love is ill.'

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, 'This illness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.'⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was two more days,⁷ and then he said to his disciples, 'Let us go back to Judea.'

⁸ 'But Rabbi,' they said, 'a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?'

⁹ Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the day-time will not stumble, for they see by this world's light.¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.'

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.'

¹² His disciples replied, 'Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.'¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead,¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.'

¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ 'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died.²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.'

²³ Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

²⁴ Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'

²⁵ Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

²⁷ 'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'

²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. 'The Teacher is here,' she said, 'and is asking for you.'

²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.³⁴ 'Where have you laid him?' he asked.

'Come and see, Lord,' they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!'

³⁷ But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.³⁹ 'Take away the stone,' he said.

'But, Lord,' said Martha, the sister of the dead man, 'by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.'

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?'

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth round his face.

Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

If Lazarus were raised from the dead today, how would we respond? What questions would we ask? 'Lazarus! Did you see heaven? What was it like?'

Books upon books have been written to assure us that 'Heaven is for Real!' Or that at least there's a light at the end of our journey. We crave assurance that there is life after death.

But in this miraculous resurrection story, the big question is

Do you believe in Jesus?

Because we are told from start to finish that this is about Jesus.

The whole purpose of Lazarus' death is to glorify God so that we will believe Jesus is God's Son, and that through believing we receive eternal life in Jesus.

Let's look at what happens.

Jesus is away on the far side of the Jordan River, staying away from Jerusalem because of people who want to kill him.

In the village of Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, lives a family who are dear friends of Jesus, a brother and two sisters. Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.

Lazarus falls sick, and in spite of the danger to Jesus, Mary and Martha send a message pleading for help.

'Jesus! Your beloved friend is sick!'

How does Jesus answer their plea?

From verse 4: 'When he heard this, Jesus said, 'This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.' And he stays put for another two days.

Imagine you are Martha, and that's the message Jesus sends. 'This sickness will not end in death. It is for God's glory.' Your brother is lying in his bed, suffering and getting weaker and weaker. And then he dies. What would you be thinking?

Back to Jesus. He says to his disciples, 'Let's go back to Judea.' They reply, 'What? You were about to be killed and you want to go back?' There's some cryptic conversation about walking in light and Lazarus being asleep, and then he comes right out and says, 'Lazarus is dead. And for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.'

So that they may believe what, exactly? We now have two purposes for poor Lazarus' suffering and death. It is for God's glory, so that God's Son will be glorified, and it is for the disciples to believe.

So Jesus and his disciples travel to Bethany and find out that Lazarus has already been buried four days ago and everyone is in mourning. And Martha comes out to meet Jesus.

Let's look carefully at Jesus and Martha's conversation in verses 21 to 27.

Martha says to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' She knows Jesus and she is absolutely confident in Jesus' divine ability to heal. 'But I know,' she continues, 'that even now God will give you whatever you ask.' She shows here that she is confident Jesus has God's ear. 'Even now, even now,' after Lazarus has been dead four days, she says, 'God will give you whatever you ask.'

And Jesus says to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

Martha says, 'I know he will rise again, in the resurrection, at the last day. At the last day.'

Let's pause for a moment. Martha has just asserted that whatever Jesus asks, God will give. But when Jesus says to her, 'Your brother will rise again,' her confidence, her imagination stops. She falls back on what she already knows of God. Yes, Lazarus will rise again. At the last day, the resurrection at the end of time. Of course she agrees. Absolutely! Yes, Lazarus will rise again.

But now we come to the heart of what Jesus is trying to teach.

Verse 25: Jesus says to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.' Then he challenges her. 'Do you believe this?'

Do you believe in me? Do you believe that I am the resurrection? Do you believe that I am the resurrection and the life?

What does Martha say to that?

'Yes, Lord,' she replied. 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'

Now I'd like to point out a couple of things. Martha already believes in Jesus. She knows he is the Son of God. She knows God the Father will give Jesus whatever Jesus asks. I think we are safe in saying that Martha is as much of a Christian as she can be before Jesus dies on the cross.

But Jesus has more to teach her – and his disciples. And us.

Do you, like Martha, who believe in Jesus and believe that he is the Son of God ... do you believe that he is the resurrection and the life? Do you believe in him, the source of life, abundant life, eternal life? Do you stand on his promises, confident that he is indeed who he says he is?

I'm sure we have all known of those times when a truth we have long agreed we believed becomes suddenly a truth we know for ourselves, true and deep in our hearts. Often they are times of struggle and pain, heartbreak and trial, when God challenges us and we discover in stunning freshness a depth to our faith we had not known before. Perhaps we come to a crisis point where we have to step out in daring faith on something we say we believe. We realise how shaky our faith actually is, but how wonderful is God when we do step out and find we can trust him! We have moved from simply agreeing to a fact we are taught to applying our faith, to knowing in our beings from our own experience with God that this fact is true.

Martha and her sister Mary get to experience that here.

Mary comes out to see Jesus. 'Lord! If you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

And as Jesus responds emotionally to the mourning, the nearby Jews comment, 'Couldn't Jesus, who had opened the eyes of the blind, couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?'

Now they all arrive at Lazarus' tomb.

'Take away the stone,' Jesus says.

'But Lord,' said Martha, 'by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.'

And Jesus reminds her of his response to the original message that Lazarus was ill.

'Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?'

They take away the stone.

Jesus looks up and prays, 'Father, I thank you that you have always heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'

Finally, Jesus calls: 'Lazarus, come out!' And Lazarus comes out.

Now, we will probably never see people raised from the dead in our lives here on earth. But our faith rests on Jesus' resurrection. As the Creed says: *On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

'I am the resurrection and the life,' Jesus says to us. He died and rose to life. He conquered death and reigns in glory. Believe in the One who lives! He rose to eternal life, and he raises us to eternal life in him!

We have in this story of Lazarus a glorious, hopeful story, pointing us to our eternal destiny. Believe in Jesus! And you will have eternal life, glorious life, powerful resurrection life in Jesus Christ.

About a month ago, God spoke to me through the story of Peter walking on water. He challenged me. Though I thought I believed in him – I was calling out to him 'Lord, help me!' – he showed me that I was not standing on what I knew to be true. And I needed to pray, and say 'Lord, I accept what you say is true. And I'm now going to live in confident trust on the basis of that truth.'

Do you believe in Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the resurrection and the life? Are you confident that in Jesus you have eternal life?

Let us pray.

Isaiah 52:13–53:12; John 18:1–19:42

Good Friday, 7th April 2023

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

Today is Good Friday, when we remember the trial, crucifixion, death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The account of these events in John's gospel is spare: Jesus speaks only twice, saying 'I thirst' and 'it is finished'.

What we read in this account is how these events around Jesus are the fulfilment of Scripture, the fulfilment of prophecy. Three times, when the soldiers dividing the spoils and gamble for Jesus' undergarment (verse 24); when Jesus says 'I thirst' (verse 28); and when Jesus' body is pierced but his legs are not broken (verse 36) we read that these things were the fulfilment of Scripture, of God's plan.

The events of Good Friday are also the fulfilment of Jesus' mission, which seems strange, for how could success of Jesus' mission end in crucifixion?

It is a success because it was **The Great Swap**; again and again Jesus had told his disciples that this was his intent, his mission: that he would go to Jerusalem, be arrested and put to death, only to rise again.

This too was the fulfilment of prophecy, that of Isaiah, who foretold the Great Swap, the Great exchange that God's Suffering Servant would bring. Christians believe that Jesus was this servant, whose suffering would bring us to God.

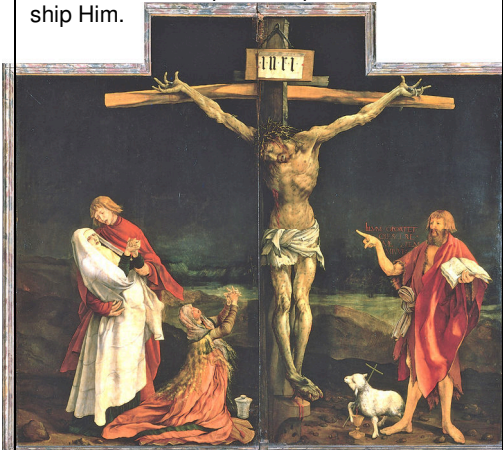
Our Isaiah reading tells us that our pain, He took; our suffering, he bore. And while people considered him stricken and punished by God, He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. So the peace and healing we have before God was brought about by His punishment and His wounds.

As it says in our Isaiah reading, *For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors* (v. 12); and again *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* (v.6)

This is our King, our Lord Jesus whom we celebrate this day. Our response? To consider and worship him as our Saviour.

Yes, we also look forward to Easter day...but not too quickly, not too quickly.

Today, we sit with the reality of our forgiveness through Christ Jesus; we remember the cost, and the price he paid; and we worship Him.



Matthew 28:1–10

Easter Day, 9th April 2023

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him." Now I have told you.'

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

Intro – fear and joy in Alpha

This past term a small group has been meeting at Holy Spirit Watsonia to conduct the Alpha film series which will conclude in the coming weeks.

Last Saturday we had the Alpha week-end away, traditionally known as Alpha Holy Spirit weekend.

If you are visiting and have never heard of Alpha, it is a film series on basic topics on the Christian faith and has a goal of explaining God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If you'd like to know more feel free to speak with me or Denise (Vicar) after the service.

I have conducted a number of Alphas and I am always struck by something new in its delivery.

This time around I was amazed at the genuine testimonies of many interviewed in the film series. I started to see a recurring pattern: **fear that turns to joy**

- Hesitation about exploring what faith in Jesus is, then a turn around, a conversion occurs
- A scientist, a sceptic, a criminal all turn from their preconceived ideas and God turns their fears into joy, hope and peace in a living relationship with Jesus.

This is what I want us to focus on from the Matthew reading.

Verses 5, 8, 10 all speak of *fear that turns into joy*.

Today? Two particular women in the Alpha film series spoke of their desire to distribute Bibles in their city: Marziyeh and Mariyam (picture). They were in the Middle East where it was illegal to practice Christianity. They spoke vividly about their persecution and imprisonment because they were Christians. Despite this they just still kept practicing their faith. They distributed over 20,000 Bibles in their community. *They lived in fear of persecution but because of their trust in Jesus (perhaps like the two Marys today) their FEAR would turn into JOY when they saw their house church grow AND that years down the track they would come across some recipients of these 20,000 Bibles who did become followers of Jesus.*

Fear



Today (picture), we celebrate the most significant event in human history: the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith, the foundation upon which our HOPE is built, and is the source of our joy and no fear.

From the fear and darkness we perhaps reflect on Good Friday and the silence of Saturday to joy and hope of today: Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday.

Part 1: Fear and joy (vv 1–4)

These two Marys along with the many followers of Jesus after his crucifixion would have all been certainly feeling a bit of fear to say the least.

Their leader has just been executed! What fate befalls them now?

Put yourself in their shoes..or sandals

They have all been seen publicly with Jesus. There are many witnesses who would of seen who Jesus' followers were. They have been exposed!

It would be the same fear the Roman Christians felt during the early centuries of the church... fear of persecution and execution. The same fear our two sisters from the Middle East, Marziyeh and Mariyam, would have felt.

Fear of torture and death. Fear of exclusion.

The two Marys in our readings are eye-witnesses AND recipients of Jesus' ministry. Remember Mary Magdalene was delivered from seven demons by Jesus (Luke 8:2) The other Mary in our reading was the mother of James, one of the disciples.

Some of you might ask: what were they doing at the tomb? The other gospel accounts tell us they were there to embalm Jesus' body.

They are visited by an angel of God at the tomb who rolls back the stone (boulder: large stone) that is demanded by the Jews to be placed there so no one could steal Jesus' body. But the angel rolls it back.

An amazing bookend! Mary (Jesus' mother) has an angel proclaim to her that Jesus would arrive and to the two Marys here an angel announces his victory over the grave!

Perhaps the two Marys were feeling amazement at the sight of the angel appearing but for the guards it was just too much, to the point they had lost the ability to move, let alone react: they were like dead men.

What sticks out to you about vv 1–4? (Picture)

- The amazing sight of an angel?
- The reaction of the men/the guards?
- Perhaps that God chose two women (whose testimonies were not seriously considered) to proclaim the most significant event in human history?



Joy

APPLICATION: Fear—how do we overcome it? How did the two Marys?

Are you one who faces your fears? Or would you rather avoid them?

For the two Marys, they, like the guards, are afraid, as the angel points out and Jesus does also.

I believe the key for them and us to overcome many of our fears is **TRUSTING IN THE WORDS OF JESUS:** what he has said will come to pass. He demonstrates this over and over again with his disciples. Have you trusted in the words of Jesus?

What are those words, those Bible verses that remind you when you fear that you can turn to Jesus? For me it has always been Matt 6:25–34—some might be familiar with these words of Jesus. These verses speak of God's concern for our lives: our welfare, our dignity, our future. We are all precious to God. ²⁵ 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ 'And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Those words over the past few years have been repeating and reverberating in my heart.

What did the Marys do next?

These two Marys seem to face their fear: they are brave regardless of what society thought of them.

You may not consider yourself as brave as the two Marys. I want to encourage you to continue to pray for ways God may be working on your fear, your anxieties, your doubts... Jesus says we can come to him with these burdens. Matt 11:28:

²⁸ Come to me, all of you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

When we fear, turn to God, turn to the eternal words of Jesus.

Part 2: Transformation (vv 5–10)

Verse 8 expresses what the two Marys are feeling: 'afraid yet filled with joy'

But both the angel and Jesus identify their feelings:

⁵ The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.

and

⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

Μη φοβείσθε = do not be afraid: an imperative

This is a call—an imperative—TO BE TRANSFORMED. Why? For the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a call to be transformed by his love. The women who went to the tomb were filled with fear and great joy when they saw the angel and heard the good news of the resurrection. This encounter with the angel and with Jesus himself transformed them, and they became faithful witnesses to his love and grace. Their fears were transformed into JOY and HOPE.

We too are called to be transformed by his love, to be renewed in our minds and hearts, and to be empowered by his Spirit to live a life that reflects his love and grace to others. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is also a symbol of hope and new life. It offers us a promise of eternal life, a life that is free from sin and death. The resurrection is a reminder that death is not the end, but a new beginning.

Denise and I have had to do many funerals last year. In my meetings with the surviving family members I am always keen to hear the hope the deceased had. The faith they expressed and lived out. This really helps our homilies and shaping the funeral service. But the funeral is not the end. It should be a celebration of the life of person but also point to hope. As Sarah posed the question to us a few weeks ago: Do you believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life: the way to eternal life?

APPLICATION: Today, Easter Sunday, is an opportunity for all to see, hear and experience the hope that sets us apart. Today is again an opportunity to have our questions of fear of death, our fears of exclusion, our fears of the unknown, answered by Jesus:

whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life John 3:16

Conclusion:

What will you do?

Will you exchange fear for joy?

Will you tell others of the joy, the hope of the resurrection that literally sets us apart from all other faiths?

PRAY

- Fears of telling and inviting others to know Jesus
- Perhaps fears that we've been a bad witness But we hope
- We can confess our sins
- We hope that the Holy Spirit can transform us into new creations

Come Holy Spirit!—the most ancient of prayers—transform us, renew us, revive in us the desire to share the hope and joy we have in Jesus, the courage to speak your eternal truth and love to all who do not know you.

IN JESUS who is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25–26) we pray!

AMEN.

John 20:19–31

16th April 2023

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'

²² And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!'

But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'

²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Intro

Last Sunday—Easter Sunday/Resurrection Sunday—I focused on the idea of fear and joy.

In the account of the two Marys in Matt 28:1–10 they experienced *fear* that was transformed into *joy*.

Fear that has been transformed by God: in the form of the resurrected Jesus appearing physically and speaking with the two Marys who now have joy.

Today, however, the men, the other disciples, were yet to experience this transformation.

Along with the transformation from fear to joy today we see the disciples:

- Receive the Holy Spirit
- Be commissioned to show grace through forgiveness
- See how Jesus responds to doubts.

PRAY

You may have noticed this very vivid painting: who has seen this before? 'The Incredulity of Saint Thomas' by Caravaggio: he was commissioned by the Roman Catholic church to paint religious art in 1599. This painting I believe is in Potsdam, Germany.

For me it is one of the paintings that got me interested in the artist who painted it: Michelangelo Caravaggio, who is known for his vivid (some say vulgar) Biblical scenes.

What do you notice about this painting?

- The dark backdrop: Caravaggio had a theme of dark v light

- The rugged clothing of the disciples: perhaps depicting they were locked up in fear of the Jewish leaders after Jesus' crucifixion
- The expression on the person's face depicting Jesus. (Just so you know, Caravaggio would use everyday Italians as his models to paint: perhaps he did get a moon-tanned Italian man to emphasise Jesus' ghostly complexion.) Italian Jesus looks sad. Despite some calling his work vulgar, he was asked to produce many works for a reason: a response to reformation—'to dazzle', to appeal to the emotions—art as evangelism and appealing to the everyday Italian.
- The not-so-evident marks on Jesus' hands (perhaps where nails pierced him).
- The raised eyebrows of the disciples as they see with their very eyes Jesus' pierced side.
- Perhaps Thomas looks like he is focused on what he is feeling: a real wound that would have killed Jesus, but he is certainly alive! A deeper or spiritual observation is that Thomas' doubts are met with the risen Lord Jesus' response who says to him (v 27) 'Stop doubting and believe'.

Part 1: Despite fear and joy we are commissioned: the disciples (vv 19–23)

In the scene described in the Bible and this painting is what I called last week *the most significant event in human history*. Why? Because it is the belief of Christians then in Jesus' time, and throughout the ages to today, that **our mortal bodies will die here but we live on**. Traditionally this scene is known as 'Lord's Day'. This first day of the week became the dividing day in history (v 19), the day when God revealed his power in an unmistakable manner.

But the disciples at this point of the story were still gripped with fear. They were still terrified that security forces would find them.

After all, their enemies found Jesus at night and came after him with torches and weapons (18:3). Now they were locked in a room and undoubtedly were reviewing their uncomfortable situation. (Borchert)

Last week Jesus responded to the two Marys' fear by having an angel meet them at the tomb and proclaim he has risen from the dead as he said he would; and he then meets them in the flesh: they clasp his hands and

his feet, he speaks with them. *He responds to their fear: do not be afraid.*

Today, as he appears to his disciples who are in fear, cooped away, Jesus seems to pass through the physical boundaries of doors and walls and he responds to their fear by greeting them 3x over: 'Peace be with you'.

Q: How would you respond?

- Shocked!
- Afraid
- Amazed?
- Thankful: faith and belief have become sight!!

I would be amazed I think and yes glad that what I have believed about Jesus is true.

When Jesus appears among the disciples, the first words out of his mouth are "Peace be with you!" This is not just a greeting, but a profound message of hope and comfort, to respond to their *fear*. It is a reminder that in the midst of our fears and anxieties, God is present with us, offering us peace that passes all understanding.

Twice Jesus greets them in vv 19–23: 'Peace be with you' or in rougher translation: 'peace to you'. *Shalom*: which would have been Jesus' actual words

But this peace is not just a feeling or a state of mind. **It is rooted in the reality of the resurrection, in the knowledge that death has been defeated and that we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.** This peace is a gift that we can receive and share with others, *a peace that can transform our relationships, our communities, and our world. This is our mission: God's peace, his Shalom, his will be done on earth.*

When messengers of God appear in Scripture there is often a pattern:

1. A response to fear
2. Words of calm
3. Words of commission

APPLICATION:

The disciples are now commissioned by Jesus himself:

²¹ Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'





Effectively what Jesus is saying is that as God sent him, we are sent into this world. As God in Gen 2:7 breathed life into our flesh as humans, now Jesus sends the disciples, you and me, as the new breath and to let the Holy Spirit loose among his followers, so that we might be empowered to do his will.

What is his will? We are to be agents of **grace** in this world.

How? To forgive as God forgives (Col 3:13, Eph 4:32). And we will need the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to be at work in our hearts when we think we can't forgive.

NOTE: I don't believe Jesus is giving individuals the power to forgive sin... but rather speaking on the church's duty to proclaim that forgiveness and to warn the unrepentant that they are forfeiting the mercy of God.

Part 2: Believing: Thomas (vv 24–29)

Throughout the gospel of John there is a wonderful way John has woven together his gospel. It stands distinct from the others—Matthew, Mark, Luke—as we see another perspective.

One distinctive, as you might pick up, is John is proclaiming Jesus' various titles (Son of God, Saviour of the world) and how he fulfills prophecy (the coming Messiah, the king). All throughout John he is telling us Jesus' identity and what he has done and will do. This is the basis of why John concludes chapter 20 with saying that these things were written so YOU may **believe** Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah.

So the second part of our reading now tells of the famous 'doubting Thomas' scene as we see in the Caravaggio picture.

Q: Have you doubted your faith in Jesus?

I have. I remember early in my 20s I doubted. I struggled with various distractions in life. I would say to myself: this Christian stuff: is it really for me? Friends who saw the changes I made in life—partying, drinking and all that goes along with it—they would tempt me, they would question me: why the change? They would say: 'You really need to stop going to church because it is stopping you from having all this fun!'

I questioned: Are they right? Am I wasting my time? Can I be a Christian and still have the same life?

For Thomas it was doubt in the evidence of the resurrection.

Thomas has often been vilified by Christians because of his early doubts expressed in these verses. But throughout this Gospel he has been presented as a realist, a person who evaluated situations on the basis of what he could perceive. But he was also willing to take risks, e.g. John 11:16: willing to die with Lazarus.

v 25: Thomas says: *'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'*

Although this statement of Thomas may seem to be quite obstinate, there is a sense in which contemporary believers ought to thank God that someone like Thomas was there to do the reality check for us. (Borchert)

vv 26–27 seem to present a repeat of the exact same experience the other disciples had, but this time with Thomas. Again that cycle:

1. A response to fear: Thomas does not believe and is still living in fear.
2. Words of calm: a third time Jesus says 'Peace be with you'.
3. Words of commission: Thomas, stop doubting and believe.

Last week I said that sometimes the response to fear is *trusting in the words of Jesus*. That is certainly the Christian hope we affirm over and over in a funeral.

APPLICATION:

Are we still doubting?
Are we still in fear?

Maybe, though you've been a follower of Jesus, there are times you let that particular weakness to a certain sin back in. You might doubt God's help in overcoming this.

Maybe like the disciples you fear still what people will think of you if you told them you were a Christian. Perhaps we fear the reaction they would have if you told them you believe Jesus rose from the dead.

Where is the evidence that he did?

We can look to Thomas who witnessed it:

²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

We are, as the later part of v 29 says, **'blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'**.

An additional beatitude! (As Gerald Borchert, NT scholar, identifies.) And we can place our trust in the words of Jesus and not something we have just made up.

This NEW beatitude is both a striking challenge and a powerful promise of divine blessing upon our authentic lives as believers who wait for the coming Age to witness first hand the unseen reality of the risen Lord Jesus. (Borchert)

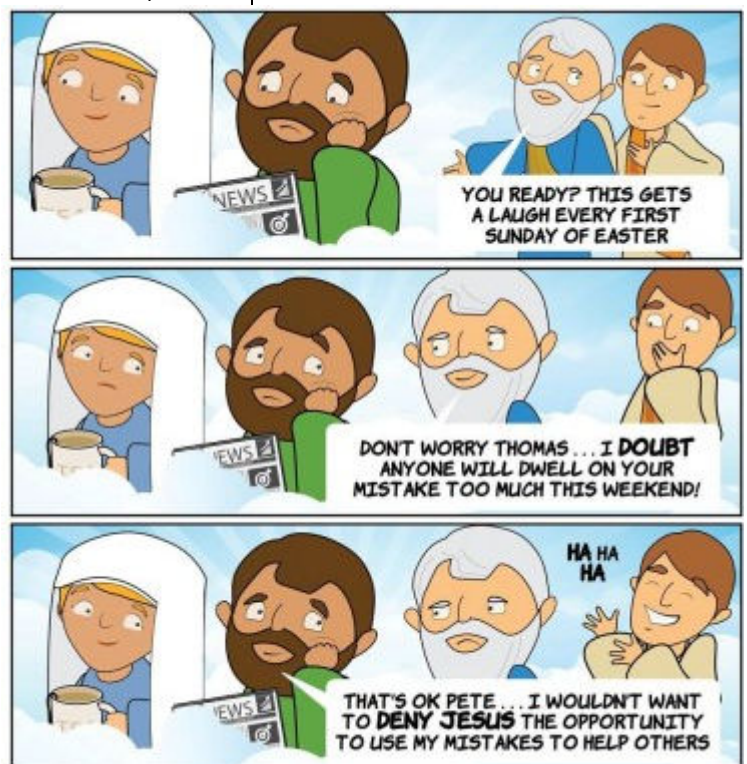
Conclusion: though not seeing, do you believe? (vv 30–31)

The chapter ends by stating the purpose of John's writing: so YOU and I and ALL would believe that Jesus is who he claimed to be:

1. The one who responds to our fears
2. The one who brings us ultimate peace: shalom
3. The one who commissions and sends millions of believers who have come before AND US into a world that needs reconciliation: to proclaim forgiveness and to forgive as God has done in Jesus.

Be assured of our eternal HOPE: our faith WILL become sight (Heb 11:1)

PRAY.



Parish Council Notes

Meeting of Monday 17th April

Business arising

- DAA advised we agree in principle to special floor installation in Lower Hall. DAA keen to go ahead but agreement yet to be drawn up.
- Still need to appoint two further Synod reps.
- Advised previously the Diocese had received a Land Tax Notice and the Parish would shortly receive a copy of relevant sections—not yet received. All we have so far is a land tax bill for Invermay Grove, for 50% more than last year. On our assessment the parish will have to make substantial additional land tax payments. Diocese to be contacted.
- Denise reported in *Babble* on the *Leading Your Church into Growth* conference.
- Garden maintenance expenses circulated. Getting quotes from others.

Watsonia revitalisation

- See Jonathan's report.
- Denise now attending the Launch group Bible Study, will take a more active role in Launch.

Easter services

- Very encouraging to see so many attendees (Good Friday 60; Easter Sunday 101): greater than since before COVID.
- Maundy Thursday meal went very well, 34 attending: thanks to Jonathan. Want more outsiders: next time extensively publicise.

Church ministry initiatives

- A Youth Group, presently 3 Yr 7 boys, has begun meeting first Sunday of every month.
- Date yet to be set for the trivia night Jonathan will be organising later in the year.
- Rev. Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey will preach on May 14 and afterwards answer questions on the proposed Voice to Parliament.
- A new Preaching Program, 'The Vine – Growing in Faith', commencing on Sunday April 23rd. A linked series of Bible studies will be run. Details in recent weekly newsletters.

Finance report

- March: deficit of \$4,453. Year-to-date: surplus of \$65,164, due to early one-off inflows. As the year progresses we are drawing more heavily on these early inflows: year-to-date surpluses expected to trend downwards.
- Spreadsheet comparing budget with money received and paid out during first six months of financial year. Largely in line with expected, but *giving* still significantly lower than projected. Income from the Op Shop was well below expected because had no payments from BSL yet this year. [BSL has since asked for an invoice for the unpaid money, and promised to pay.] Emmi thanked for helpful spreadsheet.
- Rundown on the state of parish's other funds.
- Contracts with St Peter's Knanaya Church and Footscape need to be reviewed.
- Sale of the Watsonia car park, finalised in Feb, meant that we had to pay back to City Council a little over half of the money that it had paid late last year to renew the lease. Try to recover this from the proceeds of the sale.
- Diocesan Assessment sheets for 2023 had been completed, submitted. No correspondence received querying the accuracy of our estimated assessment. However, the monthly charges we are being required to pay suggest that the Diocese has unilaterally increased the size of our assessment. Follow up.
- Request that a portion of each wedding and funeral fee be made available to clergy for use in ministry and other discretionary purposes given in principle approval.

St John's

- Denise & Maureen Shand managed to unearth detailed reports on work done at St John's during 1960s and 1980s restorations. Reports and drawings forwarded to David Wagner.

- Peter Harper has reattached the ladder at the top of the bell tower: now have safe access.
- First instalment (\$55,000) of \$100,000 grant by NELP for the car park has been received.
- Melbourne Water Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program, has given us a grant of \$9570 for clearing weeds from the creek area around the tennis courts & revegetating. Banyule City Council also contributing around \$5,000. Will be managed by Katrina and the Community Garden.

St Andrew's

- Power to the St Andrew's site expected to be disconnected soon.
- Tentative date of 2 pm 17 June for deconsecration service. Needs bishop's availability, and approval by Archbishop-in-Council (AIC).
- Delays in getting hold of all documents needed for submission to AIC for substantial share of proceeds from sale of Rosanna. Agreed submit proposal to July meeting of AIC, not May.

Holy Spirit

- Ongoing need for help maintaining the garden.
- BSL has asked for reports on any asbestos and combustible cladding issues affecting the Op Shop premises. Being dealt with.

Watsonia op shop

- Meeting 18 April with BSL to:
 - Tell them our plans for developing the site and give them opportunity to have an input.
 - Ask we receive regular and timely payments of our share of profits (not the case at present).
 - Discuss reviewing the current MOU.

St Peter's Knanaya

- Service arrangements continuing to work well.

Hall hirers and property users

- No review yet of the fees paid by DAA—to do.

ADOM Compliance Calendar

- April extract circulated.

Preventing Violence Against Women

- Details of training day at Cathedral 29 April.

Vicar's report

- Easter celebrations were terrific – in prayerful and thoughtful worship, in the good number of attendees, and the great Thursday night meal.
- I am very thankful for the support I have received from so many in our parish following the death of my dog Mabel due to snakebite on 23 March. She was a great companion to me, and friendly to everyone who met her. I have been surprised that my grief and sadness have lasted so long.
- My parents continue to muddle along; Mum is up and down in her health. Thankful that I can go and see them next week for a few days, after Mum has surgery for a leg skin graft.
- *Ministry matters*
 - Helen McAlley offered to take the Iris Grange services each month.
 - Helen is also now rostered to take the 5 pm Watsonia service monthly on the 1st Sunday.
 - Helen also took a major part in the funeral for Margaret Billet, and Sarah Coe came along and observed.
 - *Added in discussion:* Parish Council expressed their great appreciation of all the help Helen provides to the Parish.
 - The monthly prayer breakfast continues to meet on 3rd Saturday of each month – a small but faithful group of pray-ers attend.

Watsonia

- *mainly music* is full! Demand continues.
- After discussion, Jonathan has asked I attend 'Launch Bible study', Watsonia Focus group.

Heidelberg

- Rachael Lopez and I sorted, organised the children's room. We have culled a lot; our plan is for an inviting and cheerful room for children's ministry, and a place for nursing mothers to still engage with our service if we can livestream it onto the TV in that room.

Rosanna

- I am waiting on Bishop Kate about issues we discussed, so that I can, with her, organise a date for the deconsecrating service and determine where the St Andrew's memorial garden should be relocated.
- A trickle of sales continue: chairs etc.

Associate's report

Summary:

- Alpha day away complete, last session 17/04.
- Attended Bible League dinner 21/04/23: Chris Waghorn of Bible League speaking 29/10/23; is a Melb Diocese training ordinand in Eltham.
- Organise 2nd youth outing: Oz Bowl Greensborough 02/04/23.
- Organised and co-ordinated Maundy Thursday.
- Attended 'Together for the North' ecumenical church leaders in the north 30/03/23.
- Church Revitalisation prayer meeting: coffee and prayer 02/04 on Zoom.
- Prayer day away 29/03.
- Assisted with admin: emailed newsletter, print outs, PowerPoint etc.
- Continuing Launch Team Bible study fortnightly and then weekly in term 2 (after Alpha).
- Wedding at St John's 21st April.

Thanks:

- Sustaining me throughout Easter, as I have been feeling unwell.
- Alpha concluding and what God has done in the attendees.
- Well attended Easter events.

Prayers:

- Easter events: that God will open the hearts of the people that attended and that as a church we would respond to their needs.

Goals next month:

- Annual leave 22/04–12/04.
- Weekly Launch Team Bible studies.

Goals next quarter (Apr–June):

- Assessment of Church revitalisation progress.
- Follow-ups with people I have met recently.

Wardens' report

Heidelberg

- Peter Harper repaired ladder from organ loft to bell chamber: drilled out where the brackets were loose, put in a 'cam set' with the brackets placed in it and let it 'go off'; tested holding firm.
- Andrew repaired the door knob on the door to the lower hall. Thanks, Andrew.
- A wasps' nest was located in front of the main church door and another near tennis courts. The beekeepers will deal with them. *Added in discussion:* Now done.
- Beehives moved offsite in prep for relocation at the top of the escarpment in a month.
- The leaking tap near the pathway entrance was replaced.
- We have received a Melbourne Water Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways Grant for \$9570 to clear the creek area around the tennis court of weeds/blackberries etc and revegetate. This is jointly with Banyule City Council who will be contributing approx. \$5000 to clear woody weeds and provide tree guards. Community gardeners/church members and other interested people will be assisting.
- Still awaiting quote for the trimming of overhanging branches at Gloucester Dve.

Rosanna

- Booking requested to disconnect the power—awaiting the date.

Watsonia

- BSL requested another Asbestos Report. Reports for each centre now in the Wardens' pigeonhole in the office.
- Still problems with their payment of our share of the profits.

General business

- Jonathan on Annual Leave Saturday April 22 to Friday May 12.
- Denise spending Monday 24 April to Saturday 29 April with her parents (carer's leave).

Minutes by Mike Connor, précis by Editor