

BANYULE BABBLE

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

OCTOBER
2023

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DENISE'S DATELINE

Onward and upward

I'm that strange creature that loves roller coasters: the slow climb up to the top, and then the terrifying but exhilarating feeling of when we reach the peak, only to go hurtling down the track towards the bottom at great speed. I just love that feeling, because I know that it is an adrenaline rush that is short, safe, and makes me feel alive, despite my screams on the way down.

I've been thinking lately about the ups and downs of our parish life; the joy of new children being born to those we know and love, then the unexpected death of our Organist Syd; the beautiful blossoms on the trees in spring, and the declining health of many of our number; our trust in God's plans for us, and the reality of our parish financial situation.

In all this, I have not lost heart, or faith in God's goodness and his plans for his Church and THIS parish to not only survive but thrive; but to do so I need to keep looking upward to God and forward to God's plans for our future.

Which brings me back to roller coasters – because it is on the 'downs' that we can pick up enough speed for the 'ups' hills that rise before us! We all remember that from riding our bikes when we were younger...but I won't push the analogy too far.

When I studied singing, my teacher said that to reach the high notes, I had to think low in my diaphragm, and for the low notes, to think up higher in my head; likewise at the gym I need

to keep my eyes open and ahead to go down lower in my squats...looking downwards only throws me off balance.

Our challenge in the 'down' times, is to not think that we will end up sinking ever downward, that all will be lost, that *'We'll all be rooned'* as Hanrahan said.

I admit that I am an optimist by nature, which stands me in good stead for ministry! And yes, I must heed the careful words of our Parish Councillors about the need for more funds to be found so we can engage the services of another minister for 2024 and beyond. So we must look to God to provide the money we need to fulfil our part in God's mission: and remember Jesus' words about the world around us: *'...open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.'* (John 4:35)

Let us continue to look upwards and onwards; by trusting in God's purposes, we can endure these times as the Psalmist did: *¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? ² My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.* (Ps 121:1-2)

Please pray that God will keep us focussed upon our Lord Jesus, and that God will provide what we need.

And if you haven't read it for a while, do check out the poem *'Said Hanrahan'* written by Australian bush poet John O'Brien – the pen name of a Roman Catholic priest, Patrick Joseph Hartigan. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Said_Hanrahan

Denise

SAID HANRAHAN by John O'Brien

"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
In accents most forlorn,
Outside the church, ere Mass began,
One frosty Sunday morn.

The congregation stood about,
Coat-collars to the ears,
And talked of stock, and crops, and drought,
As it had done for years.

"It's looking crook," said Daniel Croke;
"Bedad, it's cruke, me lad,
For never since the banks went broke
Has seasons been so bad."

"It's dry, all right," said young O'Neil,
With which astute remark
He squatted down upon his heel
And chewed a piece of bark.

And so around the chorus ran
"It's keepin' dry, no doubt."
"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"Before the year is out."

"The crops are done; ye'll have your work
To save one bag of grain;
From here way out to Back-o'-Bourke
They're singin' out for rain.

"They're singin' out for rain," he said,
"And all the tanks are dry."
The congregation scratched its head,
And gazed around the sky.

"There won't be grass, in any case,
Enough to feed an ass;
There's not a blade on Casey's place
As I came down to Mass."

"If rain don't come this month," said Dan,
And cleared his throat to speak -
"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"If rain don't come this week."

A heavy silence seemed to steal
On all at this remark;
And each man squatted on his heel,
And chewed a piece of bark.

"We want an inch of rain, we do,"
O'Neil observed at last;
But Croke "maintained" we wanted two
To put the danger past.

"If we don't get three inches, man,
Or four to break this drought,
We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"Before the year is out."

In God's good time down came the rain;
And all the afternoon
On iron roof and window-pane
It drummed a homely tune.

And through the night it pattered still,
And lightsome, gladsome elves
On dripping spout and window-sill
Kept talking to themselves.

It pelted, pelted all day long,
A-singing at its work,
Till every heart took up the song
Way out to Back-o'-Bourke.

And every creek a banker ran,
And dams filled overtop;
"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"If this rain doesn't stop."

And stop it did, in God's good time;
And spring came in to fold
A mantle o'er the hills sublime
Of green and pink and gold.

And days went by on dancing feet,
With harvest-hopes immense,
And laughing eyes beheld the wheat
Nid-nodding o'er the fence.

And, oh, the smiles on every face,
As happy lad and lass
Through grass knee-deep on Casey's place
Went riding down to Mass.

While round the church in clothes genteel
Discoursed the men of mark,
And each man squatted on his heel,
And chewed his piece of bark.

"There'll be bush-fires for sure, me man,
There will, without a doubt;
We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"Before the year is out."

Around the Boree Log and Other Verses, 1921

This Month – October

Sunday 1st Pentecost 18: 9.30 am St John's (all-age service), 5 pm Holy Spirit

Exodus 17:1–7; Matthew 21:23–32

Wednesday 4th: 11 am Iris Grange; 3.30 pm Strathalan

Sunday 8th Pentecost 19: 9.30 am St John's, 5 pm Holy Spirit

Exodus 20:1–21; Matthew 21:33–46

Sunday 15th Pentecost 20: 9.30 am Combined, St John's

Exodus 32:1–14; Matthew 22:1–14

Sunday 22nd Pentecost 21: 9.30 am St John's, 5 pm Holy Spirit

Exodus 33:12–23; Matthew 22:15–33

Wednesday 25th: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers' Union; 11 am Streeton Park & general mid-week service at St John's; 3.30 pm Regis Macleod

Sunday 29th Pentecost 22: 9.30 am Combined, St John's

Deuteronomy 34:1–12; Matthew 22:34–46

Next Month – November

Sunday 19th: Annual Parish Meeting

Wanted

- More *mainly music* volunteers
- Musicians

Money: August

Income:	Giving:	\$8,217.00
	Other:	\$66,932.85
	Total:	\$75,149.85
Expenses:		\$44,208.21
Surplus:		\$30,941.64

Giving was down again. Other income included \$40,000 transferred from the Crystal Dunn fund; without that there would have been a \$9000 deficit.

We had a new Bloke, Rob, who told us about sports clubs that he was associated with. A few years ago a new scoreboard had been built at their ground, which however had two small disadvantages. One was that it didn't work very well for cricket, and the other was that when the light was shining on it, which was practically all the time because it faced the sun, you couldn't read it. But despite the relative newness of that scoreboard they had been able to get a grant for a new board (I think through the North-East link, which seems to have money for everything except road-building), and were pleased with the result. Not only is it now readable, but now it is no longer necessary to have someone in or at the board working it: it can be operated from anywhere by a mobile phone. The question whether it could be operated by supporters' mobile phones was not raised, but the Editor wonders. People have already been able to electronically hijack self-driving cars, so it would appear that hacking a scoreboard would be quite plausible. . .

It was commented that grant applications are not easy to write. Indeed, of the many many thousands of sporting clubs that were invited to apply for grants, only a few hundred were able to negotiate the Byzantine requirements and actually apply—but all who did, got grants. It looked as if this was their selection process, whether you were scared off by the gobbledygook or not. The Editor suspected that the small country clubs, which didn't have a big pool of people available who were trained in public service gobbledygook, were the ones particularly who would miss out.

Our Community Garden has had the great fortune to have one of the Blokes, Jon Buttery, available to help, who by his extraordinary skill in knowing what the granting agencies are looking for (which includes finding out their published corporate strategies so he can induce them to pretend they are following them) has brought in many grants we would not otherwise have achieved. Jon is no longer in the Public Service, but he said that it had been very useful to be there, because he had learnt their language, a language not used elsewhere, and specially designed to avoid all responsibility for anything.

Keith Tupper gave us an image of a Good Bloke by reading us Henry Lawsons' *Tambaroora Jim*, about a generous pub-keeper (for the text, see <https://allpoetry.com/%27Tambaroora-Jim%27>). Glen gave us a short history of *Blokes Helping Blokes*, and then we moved onto the main topic of discussion, movies we saw that we would like to see on the big screen again. I shall not go into the details of this discussion, except to say that most of the Blokes were unfamiliar with Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*. The Philistines!

The next *Blokes Helping Blokes* will be at 8.45 am on Saturday 7th October at Open House. All blokes are welcome; please ring Glen 0487 852 808 for catering purposes.

Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

Wednesday August 23rd 2023 at 10 am: After our usual cuppa and chat, Val led us in our service, all members taking part. Then minutes were passed around and passed. Our MU Headquarters/shop has moved, because after the lockdown the rent of the shop increased greatly; so now we have a mail box.) I was able to forward Elizabeth Ryder into our MU Remembrance Book.

I posted 20 Beanies to the Seafarers. Thank you to all the Knitters.

I also posted more Christmas cards to Altona for the Women's Remand Centres.

We finished our meeting with Midday Prayers, for St Mary's Sunbury, St Mary's Broughty Ferry Scotland, Wellington New Zealand, Chaplains: Airforce and Seafarers.

Our next meeting will be September 27th. Speaker: Barbara, speaking on the new XPT train.

Elsie Storr

mainly music: October 2023

The celebration of Father's Day went very well with great fun and yummy food. Of the families who attended, the adults outnumbered the children, including four dads and several grand-dads. *mainly music* is very popular and, as we reduce our waiting list at the top, it keeps increasing at the bottom!!

Returning after a break I was struck by just how much everybody, Mums and children, were enjoying the Lycra. They were working together and the teddies were bounced *over* the projector!!

Rosemary Bellair (0428 595 394)

Blokes Helping Blokes

The Blokes met as usual at 8.45 am on Saturday 2nd September at Open House. Our former churchwarden, Paul Smith, was there, commenting to one or two others that the previous generation, by stoically saying nothing, had not prepared him adequately for the horrors of old age—which the Editor found easy to agree with.

Someone else spoke of a summer spent in London, during which the temperature never exceeded 17°, and how they had been identified by the locals as non-natives by wearing jackets and jumpers while the locals were in light summer gear.



191A BISHOPS COURT
CLARENDON ST, EAST MELBOURNE
G. HODG PHOTO

Community Garden News

Thought you might like to read the following email from John Hawker, the heritage tree advisor. He has gifted us a River Red Gum seedling from Bishops Court to plant near the creek adjacent to the car park. I've also left the link in FYI that he provided re one of the revegetation plants we're growing: the Bushy Needlewood (*Hakea decurrens*).

Katrina

It was good to see all the great work that has been done at St John's. What a massive change that has been done in 12 months.

The *E. camaldulensis* is a seedling from a tree at Bishops Court, the original tree (rhs above) was removed in 1990s and replanted about 10 yrs ago, and there is a large tree on the Clarendon St fence (grown from the original tree).

These River Red Gums are trees that occur along the Yarra River corridor, Fitzroy gardens, nearby Yarra Park, Royal Botanic Gardens, and Burnley gardens, Fairfield, to Heidelberg and beyond.

As suggested a good location for this River Red Gum is where the post and car tyre is now located.

I'm not familiar with Bushy Needlewood, it looks to be a good shrub, <https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/9e041a12-c521-4e23-8d3a-8318be8c7bf8>

regards John

From Katrina:
Hi Peter,

Thought you might like to advertise this in the Babble. Our community garden is one of the destinations for the Banyule City Council's Community Garden Tour!

All five community gardens would like to be involved which is great!

The date for the Community Garden Tour will be Saturday 28th October 2023, 10 am-2:30 pm.

The aim of the tour is to showcase and connect Banyule's community gardens.

Please see the event link below for booking (it would be lovely if you can come!)

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/banyule-community-garden-tour-tickets-696392908937?aff=oddtcreator>

There will be 40 minutes at St John's Riverside Community Garden for a tour and maybe a small activity (i.e. talk on hot compost).

Please see further information as below.

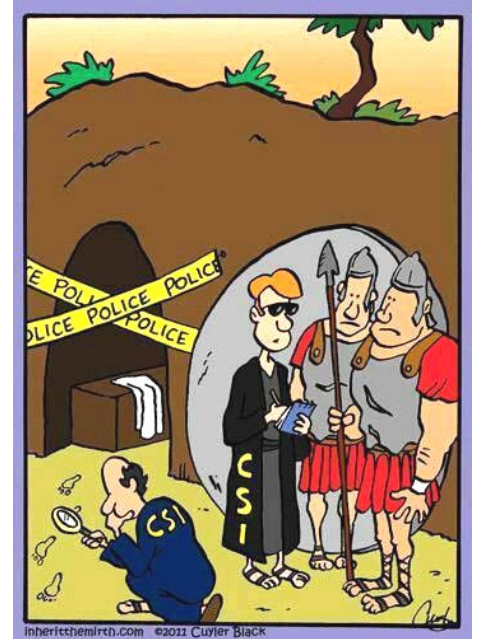
- Electric bus to be hired to take 30/40 participants to 5 x community garden locations in Banyule
- People interested can also meet at the community gardens at the scheduled times
- Bus to leave at 10 am from BCG and event to finish at BCG at 2:30 pm
- Catering lunch to be provided by Banyule City Council
- \$10 registration fee from participants will be donated back to the community gardens
- Banyule City Council to pay for materials for activities
- MC on the bus (TBC)

Syd Simpson

The *Babble* regrets to record the unexpected passing of our organist, Syd Simpson.

There will be a report on his funeral (11 am 27th September, at St John's) in next month's *Babble*.

We shall do our best to provide music at services. Please see Denise if you can help in any way.



Itinerary

Leave	10:00 am	15 min (travel)	Bellfield Community Garden
Arrive	10:15 am	30 min (tour and talk)	BUNA Community Garden
Leave	10:45 am	15 min (travel)	
Arrive	11:00 am	30 min (tour and talk)	Watsonia Library Community Garden
Leave	11:30 am	15 min (travel)	
Arrive	11:45 am	40 min (tour and activity)	Sustainable Macleod Community Garden
Leave	12:25 pm	15 min (travel)	
Arrive	12:40 pm	40 min (tour and activity)	St John's Riverside Community Garden
Leave	1:20 pm	10 min (travel)	
Arrive	1:30 pm	60 mins (tour and lunch)	Bellfield Community Garden
	1:45 pm	Lunch served	Bellfield Community Garden
Finish	2:30 pm		

Our activity will be 'Hot Composting', which sounds interesting.

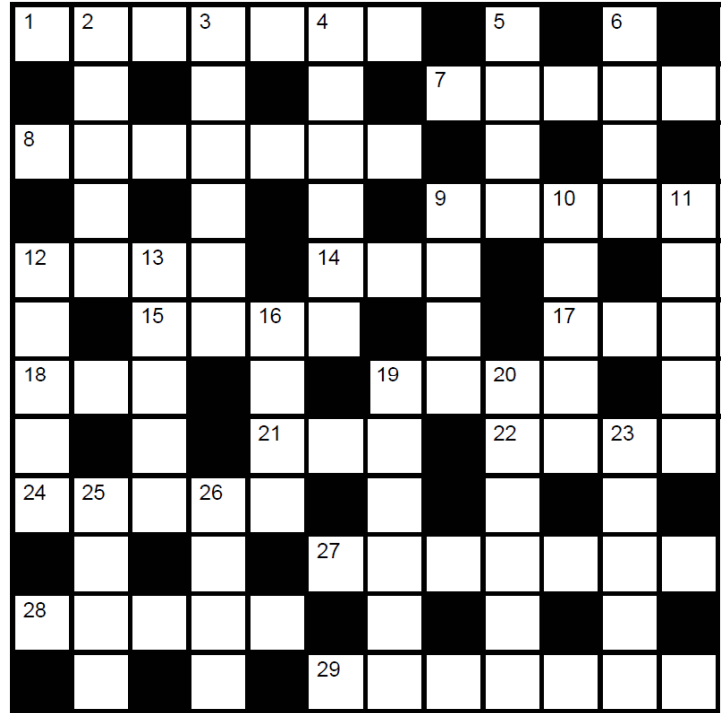
Katrina says: 'BTW in the last month community garden volunteers have planted 260+ plants along Salt Creek at St John's. In a few years it will transform the place!'

Across

- 1 Story of Jesus (7)
- 7 Roman Procurator (5)
- 8 Early Christian city (7)
- 9 Propose (5)
- 12 Appeal (4)
- 14 Greater light (3)
- 15 Secret plan (4)
- 17 Pot (3)
- 18 Fire remnant (3)
- 19 Yoked pair (4)
- 21 Thief (3)
- 22 Lazy (4)
- 24 Walls (5)
- 27 Bathsheba, when David saw her (7)
- 28 Flat (5)
- 29 Loosening (7)

Down

- 2 Bring to naught (5)
- 3 Ark passenger (6)
- 4 Pest (6)
- 5 Not hearing (4)
- 6 Last supper drink (4)
- 9 Precious stone (4)
- 10 Lost no more (5)
- 11 Run under water (5)
- 12 Talks to God (5)
- 13 Sacred vestment (5)
- 16 Belonging to us (4)
- 19 Acquire (6)
- 20 Moses' age when he spoke to Pharaoh (6)
- 23 Sheets (5)
- 25 Land in the water (4)
- 26 Wicked (4)



by Philologus

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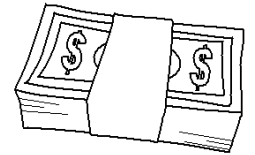
Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

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

Unmerciful Servant Anagram

(Apologies for American spelling)

www.dltk-kids.com



- inoprs _____
- iillmnos _____
- aenrstv _____
- behorrt _____
- accdeeln _____
- aeinptt _____
- cdeikw _____
- eenstvy _____
- deefrsu _____
- efgiornv _____

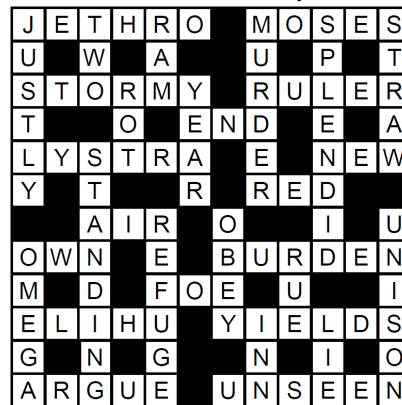
Bible Word Search – Parables

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_Parables_0.htm

- Brother, Builders, Conceal, Debtors, Disciples, Drachma,
- Figurative, Friend, Gospels, Jesus, Journey, Kingdom, Laborers,
- Lazarus, Love, Marriage, Mercy, Metaphor, Mustard, Pearl,
- Pharisees, Prodigal, Publican, Reveal, Salvation, Samaritan,
- Servants, Sheep, Shepherd, Sinners, Steward, Talents, Teaching,
- Treasure, Vineyard, Yeast

Answers to last month's puzzles



Bible Word Search mystery answer:
PLAGUES

Last month's anagram:

- hnoor _____ honor
- ceeprst _____ respect
- beoy _____ obey
- aelnr _____ learn
- adhiloy _____ holiday
- aceilps _____ special
- acdemmnanot _____ commandment
- eilnst _____ listen
- ahknt _____ thank
- aimnoprtt _____ important

Matthew 18: 10–20

10th September 2023

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

¹⁰ 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.'

¹² 'What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.'

¹⁵ 'If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.'

¹⁶ 'But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.'

¹⁸ 'Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

¹⁹ 'Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.'

Intro

If you look at the reading of Matt 18:10–20 you might ask yourself, are they two separate teachings?

1. Parable of the one lost sheep
2. Dealing with church sin

Perhaps they can be seen as separate, but let me propose they are connected, with the intent to teach about church restoration/being restored back into the family of God.

In part 1 (vv 10–14), the parable of the wandering sheep, Jesus uses the metaphor of a shepherd looking for one lost sheep, and if found, the shepherd is happy, he rejoices, he is glad. But then Jesus seems to switch gears in part 2 (vv 15–20), now speaking on sin in the church and the process of reconciliation. I believe in both parts Jesus is expressing *what lengths God is willing to go through so that we his children, his sheep, can be restored if we wander and when we sin.*

Part 1: Wandering

I have very vivid memories of the PA system in a shopping centre's being used to call people's attention. The memory is like this: 'Excuse me customers. Thank you for your attention. We have a child who has lost their parent/s. The child's name is Mark. He is six years old. He says his mum is Mary and Dad is Bill. He is wearing a black t-shirt and green shorts. If this is your child please come to the exchange desk to collect your child.'

Sound familiar? Were you one of the kids? You could imagine the parent: as they have their child returned they are overjoyed! Relieved!! Perhaps embarrassed? *Rejoicing or happy* as v 13 in our reading tells us when the shepherd finds that one lost sheep.

This owner (shepherd) in v 12 alludes to Ezekiel 34: that Jesus is unlike the false shepherds of Israel who seek their own gain at the expense of the flock. Jesus over and over, as he healed, performed miracles, experienced the joy of seeing the lost sheep restored.

¹³ And if he finds it (that one lost sheep), truly I tell you, he is happier (rejoices) about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

POINT 1: The rejoicing a parent experiences is similar to God's, the good shepherd's, if we wander off and are found by him.

For the found wandering sheep: God kept looking for you.

Like the parable of the lost coin, or the parable of the prodigal son, there is rejoicing in God's plan of restoration.

APPLICATION:

- i. Have we wandered?
- ii. Are we wandering?
- iii. What do we do when others wander and we don't?
 - i. It is good to remember that we were once lost. We need to share that with the others: we were once lost. Our testimonies of God at work in our lives should never be something to be ashamed about. Tell others of what life was like LOST and SEPARATED from God and the difference it made when we were FOUND, RESTORED.
 - ii. Are we wandering off? – Are we going through a 'wilderness' experience? A time, a season, where we feel distant from God? *You must remember that you are on God's heart and he desires that you would return.* As Joel 2:12 expresses it: "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart." This verse always encourages me when I sin. I believe it expresses the Father's heart for all his children.
 - iii. What do we do when others wander and we don't? – It's challenging to see friends and family who were once believers wander off or even be so antagonistic towards any Christian beliefs and the church. It is hard. I encourage you to be an unwavering presence in their lives – be there in the joys and the rough times. Be present. Be praying. Through this God's presence in their lives will be undeniable for them. Be present. Be praying. Be praying. Be present. E.g. St Monica?

Part 2: Sin in the Church

Vv 15–20 expresses a poorly used teaching of Jesus in the church. I read one of the last books Timothy Keller wrote—'Forgiveness'—and in it I learnt that forgiveness in the church should be a community goal and not just individualistic.

Have we been part of a church split / conflict?

... if you haven't, take note

...if you have did you apply what Jesus says here?

What did Jesus say?

¹⁵ 'If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.'

17 years in the Pentecostal church, 3 splits:

1. over buying property
2. over a new church plant
3. over leadership integrity

In my previous five years of ordained ministry I have unfortunately seen these words of Jesus not applied in times of conflict, or poorly applied to issues of sin in the church.

Look at the stages:

STAGE 1: *If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.*

STAGE 2: *But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."*

STAGE 3: *If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church*

STAGE 4: *and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

You might ask, why have these words of Jesus been poorly applied? The pattern has been to go to stage 2 or 3 or 4 before stage 1: one to one discussion about sin. (Point 2)

C Blomberg, who wrote a commentary on Matthew, says this:

In an age in which churches can be sued for disciplining their members unless procedures have been stated in writing and disseminated and explained to all the congregation, it is imperative to think carefully about how to implement Jesus' instructions. Many churches avoid the problem simply by disobeying Jesus and making no attempt to follow his principles.

Application also proves difficult because our society for the most part is not made up of those tightly knit communities whose welcome or rejection had a powerful impact on individuals in the ancient world.

Today, church members who are disciplined often leave one congregation for another that accepts them with no questions asked. Only as we re-create intimate community within the local church and networks of accountability among different churches can we hope to apply these verses effectively. But without this application, sin in the church will continue to compromise the unity and testimony of God's people.

Now I am not going even to try to unpack all the logistics in all four stages of conflict Jesus is dealing with here; but I want to highlight two matters that relate to my main point: being RESTORED.

- i. Church as family
- ii. Stage 1 (application)

i. We all have different experiences of church. Over a lifetime of attending church you might have experienced different cultures within churches. Some churches have a real focus on community—sharing life together—social events, camps, celebrating all of life's ups and downs: baptism to funerals. Some don't: it's a walk in, walk out after the hour. Some churches are so big it's hard to get to know anyone. In vv 10–20 I believe God is expressing the need to see the church as a family.

We long to see the wandering sheep come back to the family. We care for one another so much that we are willing to tell them the truth about sin.

Note the way v 15 expresses family: 'If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you.' We're meant to care for that brother or sister so much that we will point out sin (yes, have an awkward conversation), not for our benefit but for theirs. If they have not been aware that they are sinning we tell them lovingly, carefully, prayerfully. On the other hand when we

sin we need to listen not with just our ears and intellect but with our hearts and consider how the Holy Spirit might be speaking.

ii. Stage 1: It is not nice to be spoken about badly. It hurts when you hear from another person that you have sinned or hurt them in some way and you were completely unaware you did something wrong.

One of our friends living in community served as a priest at a parish and she shared an experience of parishioners coming up during notices. The parish was made up of mostly middle-aged African women. The first lady came up and said: 'Just letting you know the toilets are not in a good state at the moment. Perhaps we can work on keeping the toilets clean.' The following person got up and said 'Hi my name is _____. I clean the toilets on a regular basis and you can speak with me if there is an issue.'

Ask yourself and the Holy Spirit why we respond this way? Why do we feel the need to speak with another person before speaking to the person who has wronged us? (Silence for 1 minute.)

The reason that God might reveal to you may not be the same as someone else's.

A practical response to stage 1 is often to catch up with that person. Get to know what has been happening for them of late. More often than not there is something personal that they are going through. Remember John 15:16 that God chooses us as his children AND chooses our brothers and sisters in church as our family.

Conclusion: Restoration

Restoration for all of God's children is his plan – for the wanderer and the sinner.

The last of the four stages of conflict in the church that Jesus proposes is (v 17) *If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

Sadly we know that there are sheep that do not come back. We know there are former brothers and sisters (church members) that do not repent of the sin and are thus 'treated like a pagan or a tax collector' which means that they are outsiders. This is a very hard decision to make as a church.

Some in the church have used this verse to justify excommunication. However we need to remember that Jesus ministered to pagans and tax collectors: the Samaritan woman at the well, Zacchaeus. So what does it mean? Like I mentioned at the start:

Jesus is expressing *what lengths God is willing to go through so that we, his children, his sheep, can be restored if we wander and when we sin.* I was reading James yesterday (James 5: 19–20):

¹⁹ *My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back,* ²⁰ *remember this: whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*

We should continue to pursue, through prayer, through relationship, the same desire God has: that none should perish *but be restored.*

For restoration is for the wanderer and the sinner.

Living Your Life for Jesus — A Transformational Relationship

17th September 2023

Joel 2:27–30; Psalm 100; Acts 2:1–13

Sermon by Julie-anne Laird

Acts 2:1–13

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?' 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

¹³ *Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'*

In these passages what we're seeing is what happens when the disciples are filled with Spirit. They boldly get up and preach about Jesus. And they take this to the world. They can't contain it and they are transformed!

If you're anything like me, you look at these passages and think... hmmm yeah, that's not me! Or you might think, I wish I was more like that, why am I not bold enough?

What we see here is that the disciples were transformed by the Spirit at work in them.

The thing is we do experience relationships that transform us.

Transformational relationship

Every relationship changes you in some way. It might challenge how you think, or it might persuade you to do something you wish you hadn't. Or it might lead you to a more destructive way of doing things, Or it might influence you in a good way

Terry Woodall

Do you remember your first crush???

When I was 8 we moved from one town to another in the country in SA. I was super shy and found it really difficult to make friends as it was a pretty clique group of people.

By the time I was 13, I had developed a massive crush on this guy. He was gorgeous. He was sporty and smart and outgoing but I realised at one point—I thought, he doesn't even know who I am. So one day I bravely said hello to him. He looked me in the eye and said "Hello Julie-anne".

I was sooo thrilled that he knew who I was and felt so impacted, that I thought, why don't I do that to other people? Why don't I just be friendly and treat everyone how I'd like to be treated? So I basically just started

saying hello to everyone in High School and remembered their names and I ended up just really liking a lot of people and having some great friendships and ended up just coming out of my shell. So much so, the teachers had to tell me to 'be quiet' A LOT!!

That interaction had transformed me.

So what happens with the disciples? There is an obvious change but there's something deeper.

The disciples had just been hanging out with Jesus, who'd risen from the dead and he'd been teaching them for 40 days, proving that he was real and had conquered death. And he tells them in 1:8

⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Passover: The week before. Jesus washes their feet

Festival of Weeks: God came down to speak on Mt Sinai

Tower of Babel: they tried to reach God by their own efforts

And the Gospel went out, to the end of the Earth.

They basically changed so much that they reprioritised everything to help others know Jesus!!

How does transformation happen?

So can we have this sort of transformation? And would we want it?

You need transformation, just as the disciples did, and how Paul did. In fact, all of us want and need transformation. Every single one of us. Because we can't flourish as human beings until we submit and become whom we're meant to be.

So how does this exactly happen?

Let's find out about the Spirit.

Hover

So up until this point, the Spirit had been around: so in the Old Testament, the Spirit hovered over the waters. And then he came upon significant leaders, e.g. Saul, and then David. But he was only on them for a specific time and there was always the danger that the Spirit was going to go.

Indwell

But what we see in Acts is something different. The Spirit doesn't just come UPON us. In fact, Jesus says, it's better for me to go, so you can have the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is 'indwelling' in each person. And the Spirit can help transform us.

So here are some things the Holy Spirit does:

1. **He convicts us of our sin** – so if you feel guilt or shame at any point, that's the Holy Spirit. It's saying, hey, that's not right. This isn't how we're going to live!

(But you can keep ignoring him, and his voice gets quieter and quieter)

The Spirit alerts us to when things aren't right (some would call this a conscience). But it's a good thing when we feel guilt and shame: it means the Holy Spirit is at work in us. He wants us to be so convicted we're on our knees and we're ready to repent and say sorry! Because this is when we're ready for the next step that the Spirit does in us.

2. **So** after he convicts us of our sin, **He points us to Jesus – forgiveness.** He goes, hey! You don't have to live with guilt and shame anymore. You can be forgiven! That's what Jesus came to do. Jesus completely frees you of your guilt and shame when he died on the cross. He took all your sin with him, so when you repent and are sorry, he takes it with him, so you don't need to be punished any more! So he helps us see the transforming work of Jesus and its impact on our lives. You are free, so much so that your heart is transformed and you are able to forgive others!

3. **He helps us understand and put Jesus first.** It's like the Disciples, all of a sudden, UNDERSTOOD!! It's like scales come off our eyes and they got it!! You'll also start to understand the Bible better. It's like it comes alive. The Bible becomes God's spoken word to you!!

My brother had grown up as a Christian and he slowly started drinking heaps and showing off to his friends but one night you could see that something was different. When I asked him about it he said the night before he'd been paralytic drunk and he cried out to God and he committed his life to him. He said he couldn't really understand why our whole family were so into Jesus, but he said, it all of a sudden made sense!

I run Alpha regularly at our Church and you can tell when the Spirit is working in people, because you see lights coming on and they understand who and what Jesus is and the Bible comes alive.

4. After our sin has been dealt with, **the Spirit then fills our hearts.** He restores us and transforms us into the flourishing human being that God created us to be, and overflows us with the gifts of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22–23: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*

- Overwhelming love
- Out of this world peace
- Off the charts joy
- Incredible kindness
- Surprising generosity
- Patience & gentleness
- Self-control – goodness
- Forever faithfulness

Now these are a work in progress but it's the Spirit who slowly changes us to be who we're meant to be.

In fact, there's been so much study done about wellbeing, and all of these qualities, like generosity, and even meditation, are things that are now considered good for us. The studies also say that actually doing things for others is the best way of caring for yourself! People are working out how God has made us and how we're meant to flourish.

5. **And the Holy Spirit is our comforter and healer.**

- He's massively interested in our wellbeing and he wants to heal your heart from all the brokenness and hurt.
- He is with us and surrounds us and it's like he is giving us a big hug. He knows and understand any pain we've felt and he heals and restores our brokenness.

6. **He emboldens us and he gives us courage.** This is what we see in the disciples and with Paul. But sort of why wouldn't they! They'd just received the Holy Spirit who was now embedded into their hearts forever, it was transforming. And do you know what, it's happening in you. When people see you they see the Spirit.

You are a witness for Jesus whether you say anything or not. You're his representative. In fact, a friend of mine rang me late one night and said, 'You wouldn't believe what just happened, Julie-anne. I've been friends with Vanessa for 2 years and haven't mentioned my faith at all but she knows I'm a Christian. She actually asked me tonight, if I really was a Christian because I never talk about it! She said if I really believed it, I would talk about it! And she was interested to know why it didn't impact my life!! She laughed as she told me! She'd just been scared.

Why doesn't this transformation happen sometimes, that we're bold?

The problem for us is we want it to be something big but I think God often uses small things to make a ripple effect.

Ann-marie & Andrew – become Christians.

Whatever we see as the important thing that we live our lives for, then we will slowly deposit towards that....

- So we consider people being welcome in our home a priority
 - Why? Because we want people to know and love Jesus
 - And a home is one of the places people need to have
 - So for 25/30 years of our married life we've had people live with us
- We consider Church really important
 - For 26 years we've been at our Church, we've just gone every week
 - Why? Because it helps build relationships with God and with others....
- I consider having Christian friends and having accountability important
 - Every month for 20 years I've prayed with two other women and we've been completely honest with each other
 - Why? Because I need friends who pray for me and whom I'm accountable to!
 - I consider having non-Christian friends really important, so I prioritise my time to make sure there are unbelievers in my life
 - Why? Because it's good for me because they're amazing
 - But it's also good for them to see what God is doing and to hear what it's like to know Jesus

What are you putting in your savings deposit? Are you banking on something else transforming you?

But do you know what, there were moments when I didn't like being at Church, I wasn't getting much out of it and I found some people particularly annoying.

There were times when we had 11 in our house, and only one toilet and I was busting thinking... why are we doing this?

Or when I just couldn't be bothered going out another evening to catch up with my friends and to confess yet again, the same sin. It was humiliating...

Or when I've had such a busy week, I fill it with other things and don't make time for my friends.

But because of Christ, I have a home already, with Him, for eternity.

But because of Christ, I am already right with Him, even though, I'm sure he finds me particularly annoying at times.

But because of Christ, my sin is already known, it's dealt with and I am free....

But because of Christ, he's created me to be relational and to be an ambassador for him.

The thing is, when Jesus died on the cross, he filled my savings deposit box so full, it was bursting.

Everything I've been living my life for, he's already guaranteed through Jesus' death on the cross and through the Holy Spirit.

And the Spirit does the transforming work by securing our savings deposit in Christ.

If we put our DEPOSIT into other things, we have to keep giving and giving and it will keep taking and taking.

If we put it in Jesus, he's guaranteed it. He doesn't take anything. He gives us the deposit. It's a big deposit into our worth, our value and who we are in Jesus.

This is such a freeing thing!! For you this could look like . . .

You don't HAVE to be the centre of attention, to get likes, to add into your savings deposit. You can enjoy others and see their value.

Or it might be that you don't want any attention drawn to you and to protect your safety deposit, you hide and try and blend in and you're anxious.

But for Christ to have deposited so much into your safety deposit, you can actually be who you are, without worrying about what others think.

Often, I'm asked by my non-Christian friends, how are you so confident and sure of yourself?

I just say, for my whole life I've known unconditional love and I've been known deeply and I've belonged into God's family every second of my life. I've also known God made me this way, and I want to flourish in all who he's made me to be. And I'm confident in who I am because of God.

If you're not a Christian, I want you to know that you can be transformed from the inside out. The Holy Spirit wants for you to know Jesus and his forgiveness and for you to be totally transformed. He wants to get into your heart and do the work.

Or are you trusting in your own savings deposit?

Now for some of you, you will already be Christians, you have already received the deposit of the Holy Spirit, but unlike Steve Rogers becoming Captain America you actually feel weak, and you'd like the Spirit to help you every day to take small steps into living for Jesus. But why don't you ask that the Holy Spirit will give you courage.

Parish Council Notes

Meeting of Monday 18th September

Minutes August 2023

- Number attending St Andrew's deconsecration around 50, not 70.

Business arising

- Diocese asked to review draft hire contracts with St Peter's Knanaya Church, DAA. Relevant person was away: still awaiting response.
- Discussions with DAA re new arrangements, details still to be finalised. Terms 3 & 4 this year at current rates; new agreement only 2024.
- Still waiting for response from Diocese to our document re Land Tax. Diocese is apparently currently reviewing land tax issues: probably have to wait for this to be finished.
- Correspondence about Diocesan Assessment for 2022/23 continuing. No response to latest email suggesting small further reductions.
- Helpful advice and recommendations from Sonali in Diocese about accounting packages we could consider. Further information needed.

Watsonia revitalisation

- Fortnightly prayers continuing Sundays 11.30 am at Holy Spirit. Typical attendance 8–10.
- Jonathan & Denise meet at Watsonia at 11 am on Thursdays to pray about and plan activities.
- Denise and Jonathan still seeking ways to increase the number of services at Holy Spirit.

CMS commitment

- Agreed to further defer CMS commitment until we have a clearer financial picture for 2023/24.

Music

- Syd Simpson's sad and unexpected death has left us without an organist. Denise exploring ways to provide music during future services.

Finance report

- August: surplus of \$30,942, due to transfer of \$40,000 from Crystal Dunn fund, to reimburse operating account for capital outlays. Year-to-date: surplus of \$87,651—includes unexpended grants, so actual situation a lot less rosy.
- Comparison of non-project figures for October 2022 to August 2023 with projections in the 2022/23 budget suggests we are on track.
- \$5,000 budget for 'Mission' not spent. Agreed \$3,000 should go to CMS and \$2,000 to BCA.
- Still no response from Diocese to request to use monies from the sale of the Watsonia car park to pay off the two property-related loans we had to take out with them. Formal motion passed expressing great concern that monies allocated us have not been released.

Submission to Diocese re Rosanna

- Formal approval from Archbishop-in-Council for sale of Rosanna to go ahead.
- Yet to hear back from Finance Investments Committee re allocation of Rosanna sale proceeds.

Watsonia Town Square

- Discussions with Banyule City Council re maintaining access to Holy Spirit and op shop during redevelopment. We were told temporary access would be provided but as yet no details.

Watsonia op shop

- Op shop paid their share of annual electricity.

ADOM Compliance Calendar

September extract circulated.

Vicar's report

- Unexpected death of our organist Syd Simpson a shock to us all.
- Dad with me for two weeks – a great time together – but tiring.
- Nora is a 'Houdini' dog – I have contacted two fence contractors about replacing the brush fence between Vicarage and church.
- The prospect of being the only staff member in 2024 is very challenging for me.
- Synod is on 11–14 October
 - Our reps: Judy Thomson and Rachael Lopez
 - Wed 11 Oct: in person 7 pm for Synod Service and first session
 - Thurs 12 Oct: online 7 pm – 10:30 pm
 - Fri 13 Oct: online 7 pm – 10:30 pm
 - Sat 14 Oct: in person 9:30 am – 5:00 pm
- I have offered myself for election for:
 - Board of Nominators (names for election of new Archbishop)
 - Canon of the Cathedral
- *Ministry*
 - Many of our folk are unwell and others facing the issues of ageing
 - I am confident in God's plans for our parish; however, we are going through a time of declining numbers and so declining giving
 - We MUST pray and commit to trusting in God to achieve his purposes for us and through us
 - Plans for Watsonia am service must continue
- *Added in discussion:* Since last meeting we have received a generous bequest from a former parishioner. Will re-evaluate appointing someone to assist Denise next year as soon as financial data for 2022/23 available.

Associate's report

- *Summary:*
 - Prayer meetings at Watsonia 11:30 am every fortnight: 13/08, 27/08, 10/09
 - Set up of PC desktop to live stream (26/08): currently testing stability. Quote from Jim's re: cabling in St John's for internet 22/08.
 - Mid week service 23/08
 - Privacy policy uploaded 24/08. See [HERE](#)
 - Prayer day 30/08
 - Unwell Sun 03/09
 - Discussion (05/09) re Shincheonji
 - Youth outing rescheduled 24/09: bike ride
 - Pastoral follow-ups

• Thanks:

- Ministry and the way God is at work.

• Prayers:

- Prayer meetings for Watsonia revitalisation will bear fruit.
- 2024 plans for my family

• Goals next month:

- Prayer meeting for Watsonia revitalisation

• Goals next quarter (Oct–Dec):

- Finishing well
- Handover of responsibilities: Child safe, COVID safe, Livestream, Youth Admin, Watsonia Revitalisation etc.

Wardens' report

• Parish

- Bruce Selleck of Risk Strategies visited, checked all safety measures, tested and tagged all electrical equipment, reported on asbestos: all found compliant at St John's and Holy Spirit.

• Heidelberg:

- Melbourne Water removed more trees and weeds alongside the tennis courts.
- Acquittal of grant for heating/cooling.
- Andrew Fegan attached new door closer at ladies' toilets, thanks Andrew.
- Met with DAA re lease arrangement for use of halls, decisions pending.
- John Ryan and Ace Drainage quote to re-line sewer pipe accepted, work starting 18th Sept, toilets, basins and sinks not to be used for 5 days. *Added in discussion:* Commenced.
- Community Garden revegetating Salt Creek, guided by George Paras.
- Quotes being obtained to renew paling fence between Jika St property and church.
- John Hawker, heritage tree advisor, has gifted us a River Red Gum seedling from Bishops-court to plant near creek adjacent to car park.
- Greg from Habitat Land Management sprayed weeds in the native garden opposite church.

• Rosanna:

- Sunday 20th August at 2 pm St Andrew's deconsecrated.
- Organ removed from St Andrew's.

• Watsonia:

- Cisterns in toilets needed new part to repair flush mechanism.
- Met Nick McKay (Banyule Council) re access to Holy Spirit church car park when Ibbotson St is closed off (October?). Temporary access probably from other end of Ibbotson St, then permanent access from Watsonia Rd.
- Graffiti on Holy Spirit link wall cleaned, painted over. *Added in discussion:* Kaye thanked.

General business

- Concerns about cleaning at Watsonia taken up with cleaner.
- Timeline document: tasks before Annual Parish Meeting, Sunday November 19.

Minutes by Mike Connor, précis by Editor

A little boy asked his dad, "Did you go to Sunday school every week when you were a kid?" His father replied, "I sure did son." The little boy responded, "I'll bet it won't do me any good either."

A woman who lived next door to a preacher was puzzled by his personality change in the pulpit.

At home he was shy, quiet and retiring, but in the church he was a real fire and brimstone orator, rousing the masses in the name of God. It was as if he was two different people.

One day she asked him about the dramatic transformation that came over him when he preached.

"Ah," he said, "That's my altar ego."

A little boy asked his father, "What does it mean when the preacher takes off his watch and puts it on the pulpit when he starts his sermons?" His father replied, "Absolutely nothing son, absolutely nothing."

A woman is sitting at her deceased husband's funeral. A man leans in to her and asks, "Do you mind if I say a word?"

"No, go right ahead", the woman replies.

The man stands, clears his throat, says, "Plethora", and sits back down.

"Thank you", the woman says, "that means a lot".

(Various sources)