

BANYULE BABBLE

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

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2023

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DENISE'S DATELINE

GROWTH

In the Scriptures the concept of the GROWTH of God's kingdom abounds.

Jesus used the Parable of the Sower to show the different responses people have to the Word of God being sown in their hearts (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8)

St Paul wrote to the Church about the growth of the Church and said

'...the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world – just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace' (Colossians 1:6)

⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. (1 Cor 3:6)

As God's people we are to seek to grow in our knowledge and love of God both individually, and corporately; and part of being Christians is about praying that God would continue to grow the Kingdom, and our own Church, in numbers as well.

Recently Jonathan and I attended the Diocese-sponsored 3-day conference called **Leading Your Church into Growth** (LYCiG). It was so encouraging on many levels, and especially that our Archbishop Philip and our own area Bishop Kate attended all three days of the conference. The presenters from the UK and encouraged us all with some key reminders of how we can think and pray about our Church growing – something we all want to happen.

Over our three days together, we prayed and discussed, and then workshopped at our tables some possible ways that each of our Churches can bless our own communities in our own ways.

Across the three days we looked at a few different tools and techniques that can help churches prayerfully consider each of our own areas of being God's Church in our own communities.

Of course, everything MUST start with PRAYER – since the growth of the Church (in godliness and number) is God's work, yet God chooses to use us, his children, and our work of connecting with people in our own networks.

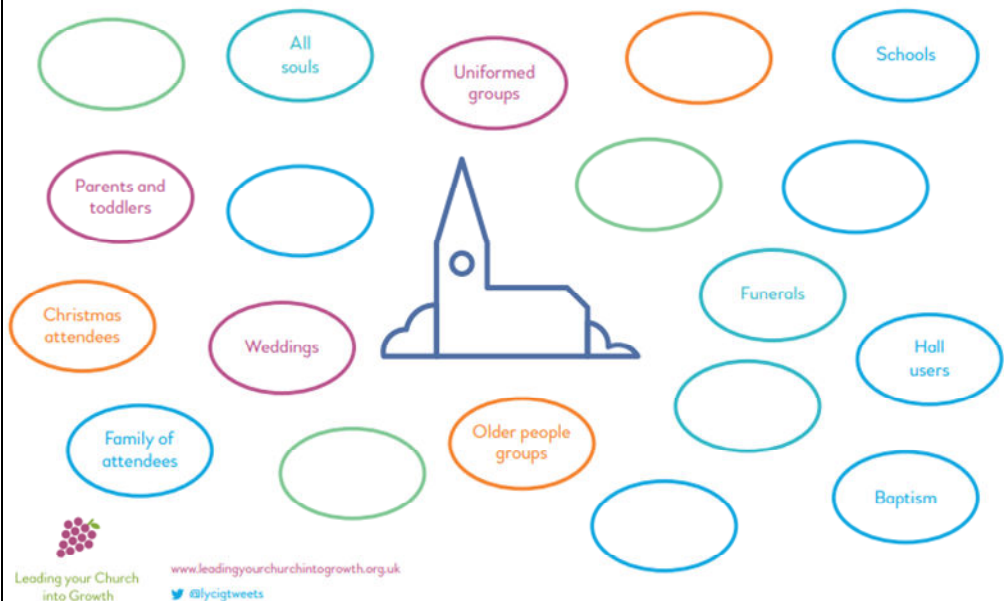
The 7 points we looked at were:

1. Creating a prayerful Culture of Growth
2. Implementing a strategy of Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion
3. Practice Fruitful Evangelism
4. Developing Engaging Worship
5. Becoming an Inviting and Welcoming Church
6. Making a Pathway for Seekers to become Disciples
7. Begin a planned Journey for Growth

One image that captured me was that of thinking about Jesus' ministry in the area of Galilee; how he ministered to lots of different small communities around the area of Galilee. LYCiG then encouraged us to think about our OWN 'Galilee' areas, and of mapping these natural connections we have, and thinking about how we can best connect with, serve, bless and share the message of Jesus with people in our own areas.

Here is an example from the LYCiG workbook:

Mapping our Galilee



Leading your Church into Growth www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk
@lycigtweets

https://www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/data/resource_files/Galilee%20Map.pdf

I want to be clear that this is NOT about us as a Church becoming busier! Rather it is about us as a Church becoming more prayerful and intentional about what we do and how we can use our natural connections to bless and serve our communities.

One simple thing that struck me was that even though we have hundreds of people coming onto our Church sites each week (dance classes, tennis, AA, *mainly music*, Community Garden), we don't have a notice of welcome, or information about our service times in the spaces they use. Perhaps some simple signage across our parish can indicate that we welcome people into our Church spaces.

We have issued an invitation to our communities to join us for a special meal at Holy Spirit Watsonia on Maundy Thursday where we can remember Jesus' last meal

with his friends – DO please come along and invite your neighbours too (RSVP to Jonathan for numbers please). Also, last Saturday 18 March we participated in the Watsonia Family Fun Day; and on a predicted very hot day, we offered hospitality to families to enjoy the coolness of Holy Spirit Church who were waiting in line for face-painting – as well as an Easter Egg hunt in our garden. The Watsonia Traders were effusive in their thanks to us for providing this option on that day – a sign that we are a

welcoming Church (and thanks to Rachael and Jono for suggesting this!).

So across the coming months, can I ask you to be praying that God will grow his Church, and our own Church.

Here is a prayer you can use:

God of Mission,
who alone brings growth to your Church,
send your Holy Spirit to give
vision to our planning,
wisdom to our actions,
joy to our worship
and power to our witness.

Help our church to grow in numbers,
in spiritual commitment to you,
and in service to our local community,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Denise

This Month – April

Sunday 2nd Palm Sunday: 9.30 am St John's, 5 pm Holy Spirit

Philippians 2:5–11; Matthew 27:11–54

Wednesday 5th: 11 am Iris Grange; 3.30 pm Strathalan

Thursday 6th Maundy Thursday: 7.30 pm Service and Community Meal at Holy Spirit

Friday 7th Good Friday: 9.30 am Holy Spirit

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; John 18:1 – 19:42

Sunday 9th Easter Day: 9.30 am St John's

Jeremiah 31:1–6; Hymn to the Risen Christ; Matt 28:1–10

Sunday 16th Easter 2: 9.30 am Combined at St John's

Acts 2:14a,22–32; John 20:19–31

Sunday 23rd Easter 3: 9.30 am St John's, 5 pm Holy Spirit

TBA: 'Growing on the Vine' series

Tuesday 25th Anzac Day

Wednesday 26th: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers' Union; 11 am Streeton Park & general mid-week service at St John's; 3.30 pm Regis Macleod

Sunday 30th Easter 4: 9.30 am Combined at St John's with Bishop Kate, big morning tea

TBA: 'Growing on the Vine' series

Wanted

- Two more Synod representatives

Money: February

Income: Giving: \$19,230.10
Other: \$18,173.76
Total: \$37,403.86

Expenses: \$42,873.50

Deficit: \$5,469.64

Giving was very much increased, thank you very much.

mainly music: April 2023

We are now at the stage where we have as many families as we can cope with. There are now 16 on the register with 22 children. Of course, they never all come to a session but even with one or two families missing it can be quite 'crowded' and noisy as well. How we would love to have a second session to cater for some of these and those five families on our waiting list. However, we have to accept that we do not have the team members to do this and so encourage those waiting to try elsewhere, although I do believe that many of those sessions around us also have waiting lists.

With Easter to be celebrated this term we are trying to prepare small gifts for the children. It is not an easy task with the shops all full of rabbits and roosters (this year, though where they come in, I've no idea). Empty chocolate eggs remind us of the empty tomb, and little chicks remind us of new life so we are able to tell the Easter story using some of the current merchandise. Please pray that we might be inspired with the right words to present the true meaning of Easter.

Rosemary Bellair (0428 595 394)

Two Synod reps still needed

Judy Thomson has put her hand up, but we still need two more Synod representatives by 16th April. No experience necessary! Talk to Denise.



It's our
20th Birthday!!



The Parish of Banyule is 20 years old on 1st April!

Maundy Thursday, 6th April

The Service of Shadows at St John's previously advertised will not take place. Instead, at 7.30 pm at **Holy Spirit** there will be a service followed by a meal, in remembrance of the Last Supper. There is no cost for the meal, so please invite neighbours and friends.

We do need to know how many are coming, so there will be a sheet at each centre, or let the clergy know. Lamb and roast potatoes will be provided, but we do need a few people to bring a salad, a dessert, or some drinks.

Holy Week and Easter

2 April	<i>Palm Sunday; Daylight Saving ends</i>	9.30 am St John's 5.00 pm Holy Spirit
6 April	<i>Maundy Thursday: Service and meal</i>	7.30 pm Holy Spirit
7 April	<i>Good Friday</i>	9.30 am Holy Spirit
9 April	<i>Easter Day</i>	9.30 am St John's



Good Friday, Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Holy Spirit Happenings

Sylvia Webb,

THANK YOU, Sylvia, for being our rep from the Banyule Parish for the Women's World Day of Prayer 2023. It was a refreshing service: Bible reading Ephesians 1:15–20, and learning about the women in Taiwan—most interesting. Then, looking through their booklet, we learnt about their forests with native animals: black bears, leopard cats, beautiful birds and butterflies.

There was good fellowship with other churches in the area.

Elsie Storr

Holy Spirit Watsonia Mothers' Union

Meeting held in church 22nd February 2023 at 10 am:

Service: Page 10 from MU Service book, Covenant Songs 149 & 104.

General Business: Elsie attended MU Diocesan meeting. Rent for MU shop at Frankston has gone up—may need to go on-line. MU Melbourne Disaster Fund: sent \$750 to Bendigo for mosquito repellent; also will send funds to the church and community in Tonga and Fiji to help equip youth to prepare their communities in times of disaster.

The meeting ended with Midday Prayers—for St Mary's Sunbury, St Mary's Broughty Ferry Scotland, Defence Anglican, prayer for wisdom and courage in decision making.

Next Meeting: Wednesday March 23, 10 am.

Elsie Storr

Very sad news

The Editor is distressed to inform readers that Denise's dog Mabel has died at only four years old.

The Editor was taking her for her usual Thursday walk when she suddenly lost energy and started vomiting bile. Denise rushed back, but Mabel very rapidly deteriorated and she died in the car as Denise and the Editor were taking her for treatment. Although no snake was seen, it appears that a particularly venomous snakebite was the cause.

Please pray for our Vicar in her sorrow.



Celebrate Watsonia!

Thanks, everyone who participated!

Despite predicted 37° weather the event was well attended, many families enjoying stalls and rides and live music. We did not initially plan to use Holy Spirit, apart from using the garden for an Easter egg hunt, but because of the heat we offered the space for other events. There was kids' face painting, balloon making and the first aider. Crafting was also just outside. At the church marquee there was a table for kids to make Easter egg baskets and then we would bring kids to the church for an Easter egg hunt at 11 am and 1 pm. The result of this was there were hundreds of parents and kids in the church. We gave out many flyers, and Jonathan and a volunteer from the Launch Team Bible study engaged with many people about faith and what the church is doing.

The organisers were very grateful for the cool space and this is a significant shift in our future possibilities working with the Watsonia Traders. We do need more church members present at these events.
— Jonathan, Editor and others



Email from Denise:

Rev Denise with 2022 AFL cup

Denise: Wrong coloured ribbons, but still fun to hold!

Editor: But how did you get to hold it, Denise? Where are you exactly? You're quite close to an open door, so someone was taking a big risk!

Denise: At Point Lonsdale with Bishop Kate and the Oodthenong team. There was someone from Geelong taking it around the cafés here for people to hold.



Clean Up Australia day photos from 5th March



Albert Harvey

24 Jan 1937 – 12 Feb 2023



Albert's funeral was held on 8th March at Ballara Receptions in Eltham. Helen McAlley and the Editor attended from Banyule. Albert's family are in Ireland and I believe the (civil) funeral was organised by some friends.

Talking to people afterwards we got the impression that Albert moved in several circles that were unaware of each other's existence. Indeed, while we in the parish knew him as Albert, the friends who organised the funeral knew him as 'Bert'. And a few days after Albert's death a tribute appeared in the *Herald-Sun* to Albert 'Irish' Harvey:

A tribute to a retired member of the United Firefighters Union. Deepest Sympathy is extended to his family and friends.

The President, Secretary, Branch Committee of Management, Members & Staff of the United Firefighters Union.

Rest in Peace

That was another aspect of Albert's life that I had not been aware of.

Albert was born in Belfast in 1937. He had a twin brother Archie and two sisters Irene and Ann(e) who are still living (another sister, Grace, died at the age of three). They grew up in a tiny single-fronted house at 37 London Rd. There was much illness and Albert had to stay with a cousin for some time.

After basic schooling, in March 1952 at the age of 15 Albert joined the shop-fitting firm of Andrew & Sons as an apprentice joiner. He later learnt cabinet-making at the College of Technology and elsewhere.

Albert decided to emigrate, and left his home in Northern Ireland on the ferry on 10th November 1960, with a trunk and a box of tools, and sailed from Britain on the TSS Orion on 22nd November, finally disembarking in Melbourne, where an aunt and other family lived. He was eventually to become an Australian citizen.

After staying with them at first and various jobs and moves, Albert bought his own home at 7 Cherrywood Court Bundoora, where he lived for the last half a century of his life.

Albert got a job with the Melbourne Fire Brigade as a maintenance carpenter, until he could retire at 54 to avoid changes that were being brought in.

Albert attended St Andrew's, and more recently All Saints' Preston.

Albert was described as loving and caring, with a good sense of humour, dry wit, and a cheeky but welcoming

smile. Sociable, open-hearted and generous, he was a man of principles and values that he lived by. You could trust him. He was honest and intelligent.

He was also described as a 'bit of a homebody', and a hoarder of tools and of wood. He was punctual and a hard worker, proud of his heritage but also his move. He did some pier fishing and liked vegetable gardening. He revisited Northern Ireland a few times, visited New Zealand, and travelled very widely in Australia.

As a hobby he built kitchen cabinets and stools at home. He kept cats (most described as 'vicious'), and bred budgies and cockatiels. He liked Irish music and military brass bands. He read the *Herald-Sun* daily, but only if he didn't have to pay for it. He read history books, especially on the *Titanic*, and autobiographies. He liked *Mrs Brown's Boys*, old English sit-coms, and Westerns.

Albert was a very decent cook, as those who attended the St Andrew's Men's Society meetings can attest.

His friends said they had learnt respect and honesty from Albert, and to enjoy life to its fullest.

Albert's health deteriorated in the last year, though he was still able to look after himself at home. However he was unexpectedly called from 7 Cherrywood Crt to his permanent home on about 12th February.

The funeral is available online at <https://livestream.com/accounts/9402209/events/10787427/videos/235348348> until early April.

Wing Commander Ernest Dallas Scott



In April 2021 the *Babble* reported on the Scott brothers, Russell Noel and James Byerley from St John's, who joined the Armed Forces six months before the start of the Second World War, and who both died on the very first day the Australian Army saw action in that war.

Some people may have noticed that there was another Scott from St John's who died in the Second World War, and wondered if he were another relative.

Unfortunately, unlike the First World War, the primary documents from the Second World War have mostly not yet been digitised, and it is more difficult to get information. However we know that Ernest Dallas Scott was not a brother of the Scotts previously mentioned. If he was any relative it

was probably a distant one, as the families seem to have been in very different places and very different circumstances. Russell and James were born in Highett, educated at Moorabbin State School and Mordialloc High, and in 1939 were living in Moorabbin, though their parents had moved to what is now Heidelberg Heights. They were manual workers for a gas company.

Ernest Dallas Scott (apparently known as 'Dallas?') was born to Ernest William and Gwendolyn Scott on 5th October 1913 somewhere in Melbourne, but Heidelberg is given as his home town. He attended school at Melbourne Grammar. On 1st January 1939, aged 25, long before the outbreak of war (and even before Russell and James enlisted) he enlisted in the Air Force at Point Cook, as a Pilot Officer, Service Number 101 (later changed to 250101). By the time he entered the war on 3rd September, he was already a Wing Commander. Since Wing Commander is considered equivalent to Lieutenant-Colonel in the army, this was an astonishingly meteoric rise.

At some point he got married. His wife's name was Enid and she lived in Toorak.

On 1st January 1942 he was awarded the Air Force Cross. I have not been able to find the official reason, but in mid-December 1941 he was sent with twelve Lockheed Hudson Mk 2 light bombers to defend the strategically important port and airbase at Ambon in Indonesia. Six of the aircraft were stationed with Scott at the Ambon airbase at Laha, and the other six were sent to another island.

After Pearl Harbour (7th December 1941 US time, 8th December Asian/Australian time) the Japanese had immediately invaded South-East Asia with devastating effect. The need to defend Ambon had long been recognised, but with the rest of the war, allied forces were spread very thinly. The leader of the Australian contingent (Gull Force, 1100 men), Lt-Col Roach, complained when he arrived on 17th December, and again on the 23rd, about lack of supplies and equipment. On 6th January, when territories to the north had fallen and they were under aerial bombing, he said that once attacked by land they could only hold out for one day without reinforcements. The result was the usual effect of speaking an unpalatable truth, and he was immediately relieved of command, and replaced by Lt-Col John Scott (no relation), who had no prior knowledge of the situation or the forces he was to deal with (many of whom became sick that month with malaria or dysentery).

The land assault started at four different points on the island on 30th January. In the air all the fighters had been lost, and only a few US Navy patrol seaplanes were left to support the Australian light bombers, which were now trying to evacuate as many as possible. The Japanese had mastery of the air. The defenders, with negligible air or artillery support, were nearly encircled by troops that were well supplied with both, and defeat was inevitable.

Defeat was hastened by an incident on 31st January when a motorbike with sidecar was seen in the Dutch-defended area, flying white flags and heading towards the Japanese. The local Dutch officers, assuming terms of surrender were being negotiated, ordered their men to stop firing and take some rest. It transpired that none of the Dutch commanders had authorised surrender negotiations, but when the commanders went to tell the men to resume firing, they discovered they had all been taken prisoner, and were taken prisoner themselves.

The Australians, in an impossible position, nevertheless held on until 3rd February, when the last allied positions fell.

To return to 30th January at Laha airbase, by the evening only two of the Hudson bombers were left, held back by Dallas Scott so he could get last-minute reconnaissance reports of the Japanese invasion force, but now to take the last 30 people, including pilots, back to Darwin. The two pilots were discussing the loading when a stream of petrol was seen coming from the main fuel line of one of the aircraft: the line had been shattered by an enemy bullet and the fuel was running from the tank side of the main fuel cock, which meant that all tanks would be drained.

Scott ordered that 17 people plus the pilot and co-pilot board the other plane—as many as he dared—which left at about midnight, leaving 11 behind. Scott's party then went to work on the damaged aircraft, but with the equipment they had, it was beyond them. Scott radioed to call in a flying-boat, but it was not possible. His last signal, sent on the 31st, read: 'All cyphers burned. Demolition completed. Known Japanese landing at Leahari and Hukurila (about 3 miles apart on the east coast of the island and 5 to 6 miles from the town). Japanese have reached Laha from overland and engagement proceeding. Will call whenever possible.'

Following a pre-arranged escape plan, Dallas led his men north through the Japanese-occupied jungle hills to the north coast, then on a native boat to get to the island of Seram, but the boat was intercepted by a Japanese patrol vessel and all on board were captured and brought back to Ambon.

There followed what is known as the Laha massacre. On five occasions between 6th and 20th February, groups of prisoners of war, mostly Australians but also some Dutch, were taken by the Japanese to various killing fields and executed: over 300 in all. This included the whole of Dallas Scott's group, who, along with 49 or 50 other prisoners of war, were killed on the evening of the 6th, probably very soon after they arrived back in Ambon. Most of the bodies could not be identified when examiners came after the war, but one of the

few that could, by his identity tag, was that of Wing Commander Ernest Dallas Scott. His body now lies in the Ambon War Cemetery. He was 28. I can find no photograph.

Prisoners of war who were not summarily executed still suffered horribly. Ambon was one of the very worst PoW camps, and three-quarters of the Australians there did not survive the war, dying either there, or at Hainan, where some of the Ambon prisoners were sent in late 1942. Eddie Ireland's father was one, and died in Hainan.

The capture of the Ambon airbase was of great use to the Japanese: the bombings of Darwin were launched from there.

After the war 93 Japanese personnel were tried by an Australian military tribunal at Ambon for war crimes, and several were hanged.

Sources:

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2171958/ernest-dallas-scott/>

<https://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/veteran?id=1062796&c=WW2#R>

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/35399/supplement/42>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C198707>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10815898>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1716986>

<https://aviationmuseumwa.org.au/afcraaf-roll/scott-ernest-dallas-250101/>

<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/646389>

<https://ne-np.facebook.com/raafasa/posts/2222824104518468>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ambon

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/NAAMedia/ShowImage.aspx?B=1061160&T=PDF>



Where Dallas Scott's body was found (Australian War Memorial)



Ambon War Cemetery (Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

Across

- 1 Exultant (6)
- 4 Verity (5)
- 7 Something to build on (10)
- 8 Path (4)
- 9 Feeling regret (5)
- 11 Leftover (7)
- 13 Urim's partner (7)
- 15 Place for change (5)
- 17 Prophetess (4)
- 18 Bestowers (10)
- 20 Surrounded (5)
- 21 Seek (6)

- 2 Sustenance (4)
- 3 Sparing the rod (7)
- 4 Drops of sadness (5)
- 5 Son of Hur (3)
- 6 Subject of Samson's riddle (5)
- 7 Husbandman (6)
- 10 Paul's longest letter (6)
- 12 They take things the wrong way (7)
- 14 Daughter of Absalom (6)
- 15 One of 150 (5)
- 16 Minimum age in days for a sacrificial lamb (5)

Down

- 1 Mocker (6)
- 17 Region (4)
- 19 Angry (3)

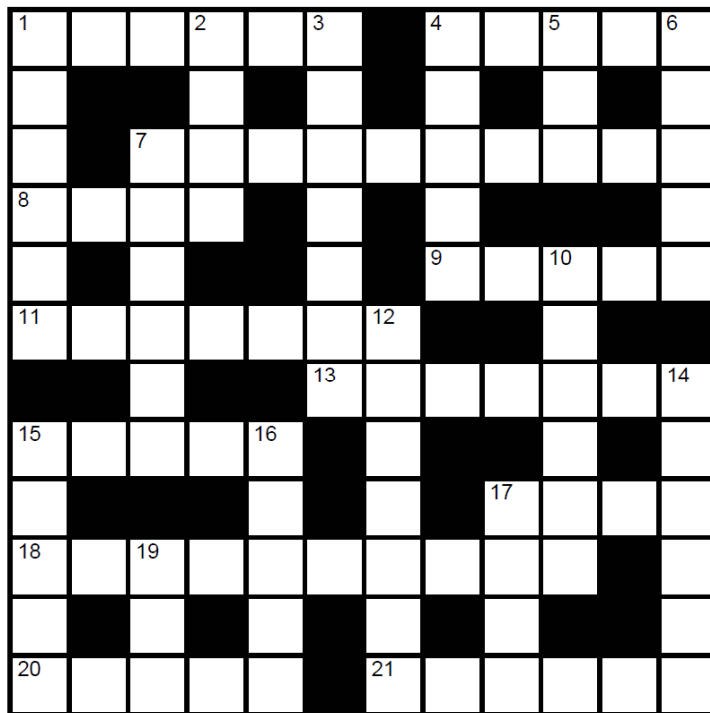
T N R E T E P I N N O C E N T
 R E E R N T O I R A C S I O N
 I D B M O T C T L S T C H I D
 A R E S F O E A C A O A R T A
 L A T T L J S O I D T D S A E
 Y G R N O E U T E A E E M V R
 R N A A G R Y M E H P S A L B
 A I Y N G U U S N R O H T A P
 V K E E E S B A R A B B A S R
 L G D V D A S O L D I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

Bible Word Search – Good Friday

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_GoodFriday_0.htm

- Arrest, Barabbas, Betrayed, Blasphemy, Bread, Caiaphas,
- Calvary, Covenant, Elders, Flogged, Garden, Golgotha, Herod,
- Innocent, Iscariot, Jerusalem, Jesus, King, Kiss, Mary, Mocked,
- Nicodemus, Passover, Peter, Pilate, Prayer, Priests, Romans,
- Rooster, Salvation, Sanhedrin, Satan, Scourged, Soldiers,
- Sorrow, Thorns, Tomb, Trial, Vinegar



by *Philologus*

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Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

David & Goliath Anagram

www.dltk-kids.com

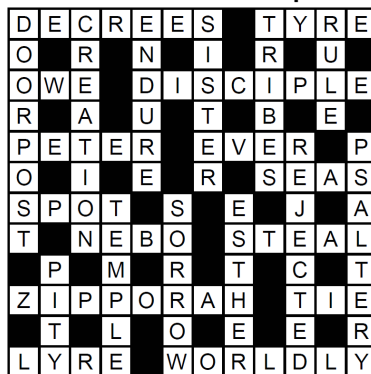


- aehrt _____
- egnostuy _____
- deehprs _____
- agint _____
- fghit _____
- ghilnosst _____
- enosst _____
- ehiilnpsst _____
- ehor _____
- aberv _____

Last month's anagram:

- eehinrv _____ Nineveh
- hips _____ ship
- morst _____ storm
- adellosww _____ swallowed
- hnortw _____ thrown
- aehlw _____ whale
- ipst _____ spit
- aeprry _____ prayer
- eenprt _____ repent
- efginorv _____ forgiven

Answers to last month's puzzles



Bible Word Search mystery answer:

BEATITUDES

Matthew 4: 1–11

26th February 2023

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'

4 Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple. 6 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

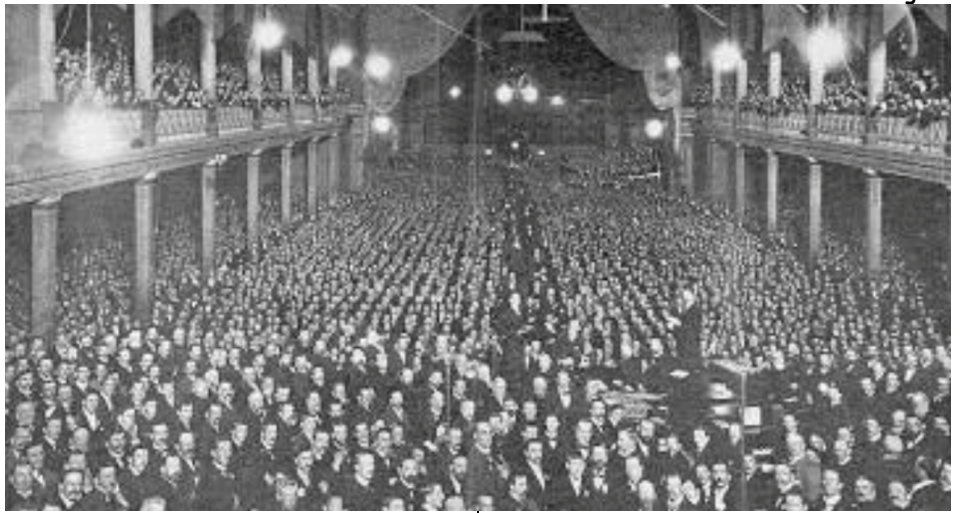
8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 9 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'

10 Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Intro

Some of you may be hearing news of revival breaking out in a place called Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky USA. Where the population is normally 6000 they have had over 50,000 people come to visit over the past few weeks.



Does anyone know what this is a picture of?

It is our very own Royal Melbourne Exhibition Building in the Carlton Gardens.

Yes, there was a revival in Melbourne in 1902 and many other subsequent revivals. I was told the account of this by the former Principal of Ridley, Peter Adam, who is teaching our placement student Sarah Coe preaching this semester.

Why am I mentioning this in relation to today's passage?

Well, just before Jesus was led by the spirit to the wilderness, he had a 'Holy Spirit' moment in the River Jordan, being baptised and God announcing (Matt 3:13–17) 'This (Jesus) is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased'.

A significant moment (like a revival) when the barrier between heaven and earth

becomes thin. We get a glimpse of and experience things that are heavenly. This is what people are experiencing in revival.

What was it like after being baptised or coming to discover faith in Jesus for the first time?

For Jesus, he seems to be plunged right into the drama of being tested just after being baptised. In other gospel accounts: Matthew is similar to Luke's gospel in the extended dialogue that Jesus has with the devil. Mark only has a few words of Jesus being led into the desert to be tested by Satan. John does not include this account.

For some of us we may have felt we have been tested at times when we have just had a time of spiritual renewal. The classic case is when people attend Christian gatherings where you may have experienced a spiritual renewal in your relationship with Jesus and were full of ideas and joy, and then the enemy comes to test you a bit. Maybe even a leader tried to smother your zeal.

As Jesus was tested we too will also be tested. In particular in this Lent season when you have chosen to give up something for Lent.

As we go through these verses in Matthew I want us pay particular attention to the way the devil is tempting Jesus and the way the devil does the same to us:

- The devil loves to tempt when we are most vulnerable: when we are physically, emotionally exhausted.
- He even knows the Word of God and can use it against us—very sneaky. This is why discernment of God's words is so important.
- He tries to test what we know about God's Word: again this is why it is important to read what God's word actually says and in the context it is being said.
- He loves to offer you and me more of what we are tempted by: money, power, influence.

Part 1: When are we most vulnerable? (vv 1–4)

How do we define being tempted?

When are we most likely to be tempted?

I met Mike Pilavachi at State Youth Games in 2014. He started a movement of Christian youth gatherings called 'Soul Survivor' 1993–2019. Basically it was a youth camp in nature with fun, games, community, music, teaching and presenting the Gospel to youth. I ended up sitting next to him in a gathering and we talked about his next chapter in ministry: being ordained in the Church of England. I mentioned I was also thinking of doing that same stupid thing: LOL.



'Woodstock' for Christians: Revival Draws Thousands to Kentucky Town

Above: A picture from a recent NY Times article

Below: There are many watching from outside



Mike has a favourite 'go-to' illustration: his famous 'chocolate cake' temptation message. I suspect he might be addicted to chocolate. He uses the analogy of being tempted late at night to eat a chocolate cake in the fridge that starts speaking to him—to lure him into indulging: perhaps one bite, or two, or more. I am sure some here can relate.

Now I have only heard him speak that one time so I hear his go-to is to speak about a chocolate cake to explain temptation.

Verse 1 tells us that Jesus was led out to the wilderness, by the spirit, to be tempted by the devil. Although we might think of the wilderness as a place that is desolate, dry, not many restaurants around, to the Jews it was a place where God did many great miracles and refined them to be ready to enter the promised land. Jesus has just been baptised in the river Jordan in the wilderness, Israel crossed the mighty river Jordan to the promised land: a crossing over from death to life. But Jesus is led out to deal with the devil himself. v2: The devil comes at the weakest point 'after fasting 40 days and nights'. The human body can only survive a few weeks: Ghandi got to 21 days. v3: The devil comes to tempt Jesus at his weakest and most vulnerable point. *Turn rocks into bread.* All throughout these temptations Jesus is physically exhausted and finds sustenance only in God's words.

Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."' v 4 (*Deut 8:3*)

There is a curious phrase the devil uses: 'If you are the son of God'. As we know even demons knew who Jesus was, it isn't so much whether the devil questioned Jesus' sonship, but rather, what is in doubt is what type of Son Jesus will be.

APPLICATION: The reality is that we have various vulnerabilities, weakness and times we are weak (let our guard down). Be aware when God is growing you, renewing you, you will be put to the test and this is an opportunity to grow in knowing the tricks of the enemy: be on guard.

1 Peter 5:8: *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Respond with God's words when we are tempted. This why it is crucial we continue to feed on God's word, the Bible. To memorise. To re-write Scripture in places: in our car when we know we can get road rage, or on our work/study desk, or at the dinner table.

I always remind myself in such times of 1 John 4:4: *'...because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.'*

Part 2: Do we test God? (vv 5–7)

When the front door is closed to the devil, because it may seem the easiest way to get in, the devil uses the back door. He looks for another way: another weakness or vulnerability.

vv 5–7 and vv 8–11 seem to portray the surround of Mt Temptation. vv 5–7 is at a Holy City at the highest point of the temple. Some would say that this is Jerusalem.

The next weakness Satan tries to exploit is a messianic Psalm (91: 11–12) about Jesus. It might surprise you but the devil even knows Scriptures!

First temptation: Change rocks into bread: you've finished your fasting, Jesus, and therefore there is nothing wrong with doing so. But the issues are not about bread but whom Jesus is relying on: remember Jesus never performed any self-serving miracles.

Second temptation: Here again there is nothing particularly sinful about angels coming to protect Jesus. But the issue is trying to test God's word needlessly.

How does Jesus respond? Jesus replies by quoting Deut 6:16 on not testing God. The original context alluded to Israel's rebellion against the Lord at Massah (demanding water) (again harking back to Exod 17:1–7).

APPLICATION: God's character is consistent and does not need to be tested. He is compassionate, he is merciful, and above all knows the needs of his children. (Matt 6:25–34)

The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, and maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. (Deut 34:6–7)

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. (Ps 25:10)

God's nature is to be compassionate and show mercy, but at the core of God's character is GRACE: he is gracious.

But from time to time we take this grace for granted. We cheapen grace. What is cheap grace?

'... grace without discipline, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ: forgiveness without repentance' (D Bonhoeffer)

How often do we make deals with God or bargain with him?

We might say at times:

I know this is a 'little sin' but God will forgive me later.

God, if I win Tattsлото, I'll give the church half! (My family's classic motto)

If we learn anything from God's dealings with Israel, we know that despite God being consistent, Israel is not and tests God's love and care, his grace, for them over and over.

Conclusion: A kingdom without a King (vv 8–11)

The third temptation:

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour.

9 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'

What is wrong with this offer? How is this a temptation? Didn't Jesus come to bring in his kingdom to earthly kingdoms? He can have it all in an instant!

What is particularly notable is that all the earthly Kingdoms have come under Satan's power. What God has created has bit by bit come under the rule of the devil. Note the way these kingdoms are described: their splendour, the grandeur, opulence, impressiveness. But they are far from what God's kingdom will be.

Satan now makes the most brazen offer of all. He will give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in return for worship. Ironically, Jesus would receive this glory anyway after his death and resurrection; but here the devil tries to seduce him with instant power, authority, and wealth apart from the way of the cross. (Blomberg)

APPLICATION: Bishop Justin Duckworth of Wellington observed an interesting desire amongst young people he ministered to: they want a kingdom without a King, a Saviour... We live in a world that is just satisfied with receiving things of the Kingdom but don't want to deal with a King. In other words, in Jesus' case what Satan is presenting as a temptation and opportunity is to not have to go to the cross. Jesus was being offered all the kingdoms of the world! And that is part of why Jesus came: to set the captives free from the enslaved sin lifestyle they've been living. However what did Satan want in exchange? Worship. Worship of things of this world. Worship of creation not the creator.

Mark 8:36: *What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*

I remember having to explain this to a young man I met at a youth gathering of Burmese youth. I asked him about what he studies: he said business. He asked me about my work experience and told him about my hospitality background. He aspired to make something of himself—get rich, be powerful. I asked him if he knew the words of Jesus:

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

He said no.

I asked, what do you think Jesus meant in saying this. He did not know what to say.

A kingdom without a king. . .

No amount of wealth can satisfy the greedy. No amount of fame and power can quench the appetite of those climbing the ladders of world success.

As believers of Jesus we must point people to the King: our King Jesus.

A king who does not serve his own purposes, but provides us our daily bread.

A king who makes Scriptures known to us, that we are not to put our God to the test.

A king who will not bow down to another, for he is the one to be worshipped.

How will you respond to temptations, *not if but when* they come?

I mentioned those revivals earlier, and other Christians have been sceptical of what has occurred in Asbury which has now spread to other universities, as that NY times article reports. I mentioned them because we have tasted, we have experienced a life walking with Jesus. We need to pray for those who come to the Lord in revivals like Asbury and the impact revivals have had in Melbourne. PRAY that these Gen Zers can grow and stand firm in the faith when the devil comes. Pray for a life, not just a fleeting moment, that continues to seek to grow in Jesus and a life that bears fruit.

FOLLOW in the way Jesus stands on God's word. Stand firm on his word. It will be your solid ground that will not disappoint. It will be the light out of darkness when we get lost and confused.

PRAY.



Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, *The Temptation of Christ*

John 3:1-17

5th March 2023

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.'

3 Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.'

4 'How can someone be born when they are old?' Nicodemus asked. 'Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!'

5 Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'

9 'How can this be?' Nicodemus asked.

10 'You are Israel's teacher,' said Jesus, 'and do you not understand these things?'

11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.'

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Hey, I wonder if you have a favourite book or film that you can re-read or re-watch all the time? When I was growing up, whenever a particular movie came on telly, I watched it all the time. My brother and I, every Christmas, would watch *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*. It was a brilliant, brilliant film, and it featured Bobby and Betty who were kidnapped by aliens from Mars, along with Santa. And it was it was such a high point of film, it was just fabulous.

But I also had another favourite film that I would watch. Now kids, you won't know this, but years and years and years ago you could record things off the telly, and I used to record and watch again and again and again a James Cagney movie called *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. Now you may not know that James Cagney, the fabulous gangster movie star, was actually a song-and-dance man; and I tell you, if I started watching that again, I could say every word from beginning to end. It was such a fabulous movie.

I wonder if anyone else has a favourite book, or reads books more than once because they really enjoy it, or if you've got a favourite film that you can just watch again and again and again? Sarah, what's your favourite film that you can watch again and again and again? Sarah: Well maybe . . . the one film that I have watched many times in cinemas was *Cinderella*, the live action film in

2015. Denise: The 2015 *Cinderella*! I haven't seen it. Do you recommend it? Sarah: The dress was fabulous.

Denise: OK, so *Cinderella*. What about anybody else? Have you got a film, or a book that you can just re-read again and again? Josh and Will, have you got a favourite book, or a song that you love to listen to? No? You're just saying, 'Denise, leave me alone', aren't you Josh? Yes, yes. Will, do you have something favourite that you love to read again and again and again, or do again and again and again? No. I know Zion has a favourite book called *Wolfred*. That's a fabulous book—I've read that a few times. Pat? Pat: *The Sound of Music*. Denise: You've seen that more than once? Pat: 50 or 60 times. Denise: Wonderful!

Now I had a lovely afternoon tea with Jan and Neville during the week, and Jan was telling me that she re-reads books a few times. Why do you do it, Jan? Jan: I just get a different experience each time. Denise: A different experience each time! Yeah! Other people do that too.

Well, when we see something and we really love it, we can become very familiar with it. But sometimes when we look at it again, we can learn something new, or be reminded of something, or something can be very comforting for us.

So today, we're looking at the most famous verse in the Bible. People know it all over the world. If you watch *The Simpsons*, in the crowd scenes they always have someone holding up the sign, *John 3:16*. So that's what we're looking at today.

BENGALI.

Bengali char.

করুন বিশ্ব জগৎকে এমন প্রেম করিবেন যে, আপনাদের একমাত্র পুত্রকে দান করিবেন, যে, যে কেহ তাঁহাতে বিশ্বাস করে, সে বিনষ্ট না হয়, কিন্তু অনন্ত জীবন পায়।

CHINESE: Kuoyu Colloquial: Nanking Dial.

人 命, 得 免 使 兒 上
如 上 着 得 那 子, 帝
此. 帝 永 滅 信 賜 把
愛 遠 亡, 他 給 獨
惜 的 可 的 世 生
世 生 以 人, 人, 的

So this is in a number of versions. I wonder if anybody can read any of the um the languages that are up there? Oh, is it out of focus a bit? Oh, that's the reason you can't read it in the Chinese, I'm sure, and the modern Greek, or the German—I'm sure Emmi could read it in the German for us. Yeah, Emmi could read it in the German. There was an Afrikaans one as well too.

So it's a verse that we all know so well. But that's all I'm talking about today: one verse—John chapter 3, verse 16. So let's say this first together. Josh, Will, join in with us: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Now whenever we look at the Bible, what we want to do is as we read through it—of course we could take any verse out of context, like, you know, go and poke your eye out, or go and do likewise—so what we want to do is look at it in context. So who's speaking? Peter read it for us from the Bible: who's saying this verse? Who remembers? Jesus! Thank you, Elizabeth.

So Jesus is speaking this verse. Do you remember who he was talking to, as he said this verse? [*Voices.*] Nicodemus! So he's having a conversation with someone. And what part of the Bible is it from, do we remember? [*No voices.*] It tells us up there! What book of the Bible? [*Hasty voices.*] John! The Gospel of John, so one of the biographies of Jesus. So is it in the Old Testament—before Jesus—or is it in the New Testament—about Jesus and the church? [*Confident voices.*] New!

OK, so already the context we've got is: it's Jesus speaking; he's in a conversation with someone; it's in one of the Gospels; it's in the New Testament. So whenever we're looking at any portion of Scripture, as we look at it we want to be asking ourselves two questions. And the two questions are: *What does this tell us about God?* and *What does it tell us about us?* And that's for any part of our Bible reading that we're doing during the week. If we're hearing it, or watching it on television, or hearing it through a podcast, or reading it off our phone on our e-pray app (which we all have access to, because our church subscribes to it): *What does it tell us about God?* and *What does it tell us about us?* Well, we're going to do that same exercise today, just looking at that one verse.

So, what does it tell us about God? Well, first of all this wonderful verse, that's so familiar to us, tells us that it's all about **God**; and it's about God who is the creator of the world. He's separate from the world, but created the world.

FRENCH.

Car Dieu a tellement aimé le monde, qu'il a donné son Fils unique que quiconque croit en lui ne périsse point, mais qu'il éternelle.

GERMAN.

Gothic char.

Allo hat Gott die Welt geliebet, daß er seinen eingebornen Sohn gab, auf daß alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben.

GREEK: Modern.

Greek char.

Διότι τόσοον αγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε ἔδωκε τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, διὰ τὰ μὴ ἀπολεσθῆ ἅπας ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ νὰ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

And it also tells us about God's attitude towards the world. So does it say 'God so tolerated the world' or 'God was so angry with the world' or 'God was so sick of the world'? No, what does it say? *God so loved the world*. Isn't that interesting? I know that God would love me, because hey, who wouldn't? —but when we think about that thing of God loving the world, that means not just me, or people like me, and not just us and people like us, but that God loves *all* the people of the world—even the ones we find awkward, difficult, hard to love; even our enemies. God has an attitude of **love** to all people in **the world**, and he is interested in the fate of humanity. Even when hard things happen, even when people rebel against God, even when there are earthquakes and disasters, God does care about the human race.

How much so? How much does God love the world? **He gave his one and only Son**, to be lifted up, as we heard in the Bible. And we know that that is about Jesus suffering and dying on the cross, which we'll celebrate in Easter very soon, and also his

resurrection. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son for the world—for everyone who will believe in him.

So that's what this verse tells us about God. What does it tell us about us, though? Well, what is the next bit? 'Whoever believes in him'. Anyone who puts their trust in the resurrection of Jesus. Anyone who acknowledges Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. This message, the Christian message, isn't just for older people like us, and a few young people scattered in our church. It is for every single person on the earth to hear this life-saving message, for it's for all people across the world, or languages, or ethnicities, men and women, boys and girls, whether we're old, whether we're young, this message is for everyone.

And what does this message do for us? It's so that whoever **believes in him**—that means, trusts in Jesus—will have **eternal life**, not perish. Now of course we know that we all will die. Hopefully it's when we're old—a lot older than any of us here; but we know that that happens, through our pets, through our great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents, and all the people we read about in history: they have lived, and died. But the amazing thing about Jesus is that, because God loves the world so much, he gave Jesus, so that anyone who believes in him will not die forever, but we can have eternal life: not just our physical life, but that spiritual life that we heard about in the reading. Because we know we need to be born not just physically, but also spiritually.

And it means we can have eternal life that starts *now*, not just when we die. Because Jesus' death on the cross and his mighty resurrection reversed death, so that we don't stay dead. We can be with God forever. Eternal life starts the minute we start believing in Jesus, because our spiritual life goes on past death on to eternity.

So that's the verse—John 3:16. We've learned about, we've considered, what it tells us about God, and what it tells us about us. So even though it's a verse that we might be able to rattle off very quickly, even though it's a verse we know is known throughout the world, it's not something that's not special. It's like those special things that we love to read and dwell upon, or those songs that we love to sing. It's comforting, yes. It's profound, because Jesus tells us this wonderful verse about God and about us.

So let's say it together. John chapter 3 verse 16 says: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* It would be a good idea to try to memorise that, if you don't know it already. You might know it in the older version. Maybe you can speak another language—maybe you could learn another language—maybe you could share it with a friend who speaks another language. Because remember, this verse tells us that this is for all people.

For God so loved the world, that he
gave his
one and only
Son, that whoever believes in him should
not perish, but have
eternal
life

- John 3:16, World English Bible, public domain

John 4:4–42

12th March 2023

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

¹¹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?'

¹³ Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'

¹⁶ He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.'

¹⁷ 'I have no husband,' she replied.

Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'

¹⁹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

²¹ 'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.'

²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

²⁵ The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you – I am he.'

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, 'What do you want?' or 'Why are you talking with her?'

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ 'Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the Messiah?' ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way towards him.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, 'Rabbi, eat something.'

³² But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about.'

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, 'Could someone have brought him food?'

³⁴ 'My food,' said Jesus, 'is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don't you have a saying, "It's still four months until harvest"? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying "One sows and another reaps" is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.'

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I've ever done.' ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.'

Instead of the allocated gospel reading today we watched *The Chosen* TV series that depicts this scene between Jesus and Photini.

Intro – knowing

I myself have not watched *The Chosen* and this was in fact my first real look at it: the woman at the well. I believe it is on Netflix and is free on other sites like: Angel Studio: there are three seasons. (www.angel.com – search 'The Chosen'.)

Q: How do you get to **know** someone?

- Spend time with them
- You ask questions about their lives/experiences OR you share your own experiences
- Eat/drink with them over a lunch/dinner: coffee or tea or preferred beverage (in our reading today it was water) – so hospitality

This Samaritan woman at the well says:

²⁵ The woman said, 'I **know** that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'

AND

v 29 and 39: 'Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done...'

v39: 'He told me everything I've ever done.' .. she declares this to the Samaritan village.

For some of you today it might surprise you that **JESUS KNOWS EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAVE DONE**. Some may not be surprised, because we know Jesus is 'all knowing' (omniscient).

Knowing this about Jesus might also be scary, unsettling (as the Samaritan woman at the well may have been feeling); but for some it might be comforting and affirming as we think of things we have done: prayers and acts of love and care that no one other than God hears and sees.

A short explanation regarding the division between Jews and Samaritans:

Jesus knew that there was clearly a deep division between Jews and Samaritans for various reasons, but the most relevant to our reading was that the Samaritans rejected the Jerusalem temple, and that they had an exclusive claim that they were the true descendants of Jacob and keepers of the Torah. The word 'Samaria' means 'keeper of the law' (שמרים, *shmarym*).

Part 1: Nico, Photini, you

Today I want to make one point:

Jesus knows YOU: he REALLY KNOWS YOU like no else does!

He knows our joys, our pains, our hurts, our **desires**, our sins, our need for wisdom.

What was the woman at the well's deepest desire?

On the surface we might say it was just water, or to secretly get water without other Samaritan women judging her on her lifestyle.

We might even say her desire was to find real love: we all want that.

Last week we met Nicodemus: what was his desire, coming to meet Jesus at night?

Though an aristocratic Jewish leader, and in high standing with the Jewish community, he comes to Jesus with some questions. What was his desire?

Was it really just to know who Jesus was? Or what Jesus really knew about God and how one is born from above (born anew or BORN AGAIN)?

Some believe Photini is actually the first to evangelise in the bible.

APPLICATION: So what do we do with this *knowledge* that God knows us, God knows our desires?

In the case of Nicodemus it was life-altering. He came to **know** who Jesus was and became a secret disciple of Jesus. Sharing with our youth last week – John 3 was a pivotal and life changing passage of scripture for me! I had told my Catholic family I was 'born again' and they all thought I'd joined a cult, but they wanted to know really: how will Johnny change his ways: he's been a ratbag all his life! But through John 3, God **knew** I was looking for clear meaning and redemption and *what it meant to be a Christian* – to be born again (John 3:3).

In the case of Photini it was the desire to **know** the Messiah, who reveals explicitly to her, in the flesh, his identity. What she believes, as the Samaritans do, is that the Messiah will explain everything to us. What will Photini and the Samaritan village do with such *knowledge*?

²¹ 'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

Do we worship God in SPIRIT and TRUTH?

Spirit

Do we yearn, do we desire to give thanks for the multitude of blessings we receive? Do we trust and place our desires in the hands of God and say, 'Lord, your will be done'? Do we worship the one true God of the universe whom we can call *Abba*, Father, because of Jesus?

Truth

Do we give thanks for the miraculous way God has placed *everything we need to know*

in our hands as we read Scripture? Do we uphold the Bible as *the* truth and not as society tells us: live your truth? Do we worship because as his children, like Photini, like Nicodemus, you and I *have a deep desire for truth* that *only* comes from the Father, not the lies of enemy?

Conclusion: Jesus knows YOU deeply like no other

There are many layers of meaning to the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. On one level, it is a story about the transformative power of Jesus Christ. The woman comes to the well looking for physical water, but she leaves with something far more valuable: the living water that Jesus offers. This living water represents the grace and forgiveness that Jesus offers to all who come to him.

On another level, the story is a powerful example of Jesus breaking down social barriers. Jesus was willing to speak to a Samaritan woman, even though it was socially unacceptable. **He saw her as a human being, created in the image of God, and he treated her with love and respect.**

The story also reveals Jesus as more than a prophet, but the one both Jews and Samaritans were searching for. He reveals the woman's past and present, which leads her to believe that he is a prophet. This recognition opens her heart to the truth of his message, and she becomes one of the first witnesses to proclaim HE has arrived. The Messiah has come and draws people inside Judaism and outside of it to him.

How might God be opening your heart today like Photini? (Perhaps imagine for a moment you are Nicodemus and Photini's position.)

What would your conversation with Jesus be like?

WHAT IS THE LONGING OF OUR HEART?

WHAT IS IT WE THIRST AND HUNGER FOR ULTIMATELY?

SILENCE 2 mins.

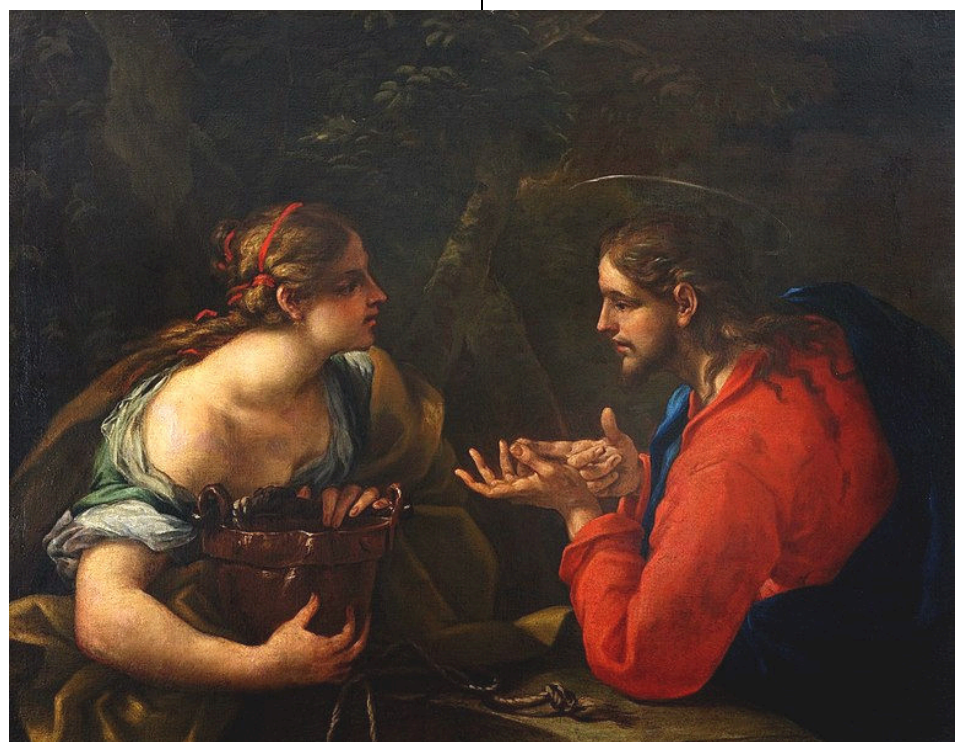
PRAY.



By the way you probably wondering who this person is. Well, in certain Eastern Orthodox traditions the Samaritan woman at the well is remembered and they have actually given her a name: *Photini*. A given name by the Orthodox church and perhaps not her real name.

As we remember this past week—International Women's Day—it might be a bit challenging and difficult that we read and know this story of the woman at the well without a name. Why do I mention this? Well, this is the longest recorded conversation of Jesus with anyone, and holds HUGE significance to how Jesus treated women and how Jesus eliminates our views of how God is worshipped.

Photini (Gk) meaning: the enlightened one.



Carlo Maratta (1625–1713), *Christ and the Samaritan woman*

Parish Council Notes

Meeting of Monday 20th March

Business arising

- Eventually met Dance Artistry Australia (DAA).
- Discussed DAA issues with Adrian Lane of BCA.
- Judy Thomson to continue on Synod but still need two reps. Raise with congregation.
- Dio has a Land Tax Assessment Notice from State Revenue Office → parish soon. Review and prepare response.

Leading Your Church into Growth conference

- Denise and Jonathan attended. Very good, very practical, excellent presentations, opportunity for discussion. Encouraging to see Abp and bishops present. Report for *Babble*.
- Clergy following up ideas. Special Parish Council meeting to be organised: also on ideas by Cathedral Dean on future development.

Watsonia revitalisation

- Jonathan reported re ongoing activities.
- Celebrate Watsonia event on March 18 had been very worthwhile, promoting Holy Spirit church in the community. The late decision to open up the church for activities had meant many people spent time there: opportunities for discussions on what the church is about.
- In future, needs a larger support team from the parish: more pro-active recruiting needed.

Easter services

- A new approach: traditional Maundy Thursday service replaced by a community meal at Watsonia. Anyone welcome to attend, but let Jonathan know ahead of time for catering.
- St Peter's Knanaya holding extended Easter service on Wed before Easter, at St John's.

Church ministry initiatives

- Youth Group, presently three Year 7 boys, will meet on the first Sunday of every month.
- Planned to hold four Parish Lunches during the year: first was on March 19.
- Jonathan to organise trivia night later in year.
- Rev. Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey to be invited to speak on the proposed Voice to Parliament; opportunity for questions afterwards.
- A forthcoming program 'The Vine – Growing in Faith' starting Sunday April 23rd.

Finance report

- February: deficit of \$5,470. Year-to-date: surplus of \$84,496. In line with expectations. Favourable year-to-date due to a number of one-off inflows early in the financial year.
- Setting up account with Diocese for our share of the sale of Watsonia car park.

St John's

- The top of the ladder in the tower has come away from the wall: no safe access route to the top. Wardens looking into.
- Yet to receive any of the \$100,000 granted by NELP for repairing the car park. Following up.
- Advised hall roof not strong enough to support proposed solar panels, so plan shelved.
- Expression of interest lodged for a grant for heating and cooling in halls.

St Andrew's

- Discussions go on with owner of house next to vicarage re pruning vegetation along boundary.
- Getting power to St Andrew's site disconnected a bureaucratic nightmare.

Holy Spirit

- Got surveyor's report for Watsonia → Wagner.
- Holy Spirit garden needs more attention than congregation can provide, including planning.
- Need to review costs for mowing/gardening at all sites. Review recent itemised invoices, get quotes from others.

St Peter's Knanaya

- Service time arrangements working well.
- To take care all doors locked before leaving.

Hall hirers and property users

- Remind tennis coaches they can't use the courts on Sunday mornings.
- Beekeepers asked to notify us each time they plan to open the hives.
- Continue to have a good relationship with AA.
- Productive meeting with DAA. Progress made towards a schedule acceptable to BCA. DAA are prepared to install a soundproof wall in the lower hall between BCA and rest of the hall.
- Agreed in principle to installation in the lower hall by DAA of the special floor needed by advanced level dancers. Colour must be approved and detailed description provided. A formal agreement needed in which DAA confirms they would remove the floor if needed.
- DAA gave list of dates of concerts and events.
- Fees paid by DAA to be reviewed.
- Dio has changed Hall Hire insurance requirements. People hiring halls privately must now prove their own public liability insurance: buy from www.anglicanhalls.com.au (\$60). Implications for users to be worked out. Confirm certificates of currency of long-term hall users.

ADOM Compliance Calendar

- March extract from latest ADOM Compliance Calendar [!] circulated. Parish Risk Management Plan needs reviewing.

Child safety

- Dodgy man [not Editor], smoking and carrying a bottle, hanging around St John's halls Sunday. Nothing to suggest children at risk, but brought to St Peter's attention.

Vicar's report

- Great to be in Hobart 24–26 Feb to support Catriona Johnson at her ordination as deacon.
- The following week I spent one night at Austin Hospital after a cleaning accident! No lasting damage, walked home from Austin at 5:30 am!
- Jono and I 7–9 March at *Leading Your Church into Growth* conference. Good to be there together → work on growth together.
- 14–15 March at 'O-Team' conference with Bp Kate, Oodethnong Deans & Archdeacons, and our new Bishop Brad Billings.
- Bp Kate's visit 30 April her last day as Bishop of Oodthenong: she will move on 1 May to be Bishop of Monomeeth: oversight of recruiting, training, equipping and supporting clergy.
- To invite Assoc Prof. Rev Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey (Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council) to speak at our Parish.
- The first Youth event Sunday 5 March: two Yr 7 boys joined Sarah Coe and Jono at Bounce and pizza and chatting about faith. We plan to do this each month with these young men.
- First Parish Lunches 19 March: about 20 people stayed for a relaxed lunch in the hall – 3 more for 2023, but perhaps not on 3rd Sun, due to Community Garden working bee?
- Sarah Coe has started well, has asked four people to be on her Field Committee.
- Great to see increasing numbers of people returning to Church this year.
- Watsonia Family Fun Day 18 March a great community event.
- Alpha continuing with solid attendance.
- Sale of car park going through: funds for parish.
- Thanks to Wardens for progressing St John's church building and halls issues.

Talk with Bp Kate re St Andrew's deconsecration:

- Needs a public service – a Saturday afternoon in May or June?
- Bp Kate will conduct this: a service of prayer and thanksgiving, with prayers at pulpit, font, prayer desk, memorial garden.
 - Will send a couple of versions of service
 - Leave things in place until after this service

Goods and chattels of St Andrew's:

- HC vessels already taken to St John's: we can keep some and gift some to another parish
- Stained glass: to be removed
- Memorial book to be rehoused at St John's
- Stations of the Cross: offer to another Church – Denise to take pics and write a blurb
- Gifts given to St Andrew's – garden seats etc: give the families the choice of having them taken to St John's or Holy Spirit or reclaimed
- Memorial Garden:
 - Bp Kate will advise if a Memorial Garden needs to be adjacent to a Church
 - If we need to move St John's Mem Garden, we will relocate BOTH St John's and St Andrew's in a designated spot within St John's grounds
 - If we don't need to move St John's Mem garden, we could locate the St Andrew's section next to the two St John's sections.

Associate's report

Summary:

- Alpha in progress, pray to run it with youth
- Celebrate Watsonia 18th Mar: separate report
- Regular weekly boxing at barracks resumed
- 21/02: needed to remove items/belongings of a homeless woman at entrance of Holy Spirit
- First Church Revitalisation prayer meeting 04/03 at Finn's espresso and Holy Spirit
- First Youth outing 5th Mar: Bounce, pizza, talk
- Prayer day away 01/03.
- Assisting with admin
- Continuing Launch Team Bible study fortnightly, then weekly in term 2 (after Alpha)
- Attended LYCiG conference with Denise
- Planning Maundy Thurs event
- Design, produce Easter 2023 boards and ads
- 4 sessions pre-marriage prep: wedding 21 Apr

Thanks:

- Celebrate Watsonia event, future possibilities working with Watsonia Traders
- Regular Alpha 6 attendees

Prayers:

- Easter, esp Maundy Thurs: to invite people to

Goals next month:

- Complete Alpha and pray about youth Alpha
- Maundy Thurs, Good Fri, Easter Day

Goals next quarter (Apr – June):

- Assess progress for Church revitalisation
- Follow up people on recent events I have met

Wardens' report

Heidelberg

- Structural engineer and architect visited.
- Meeting with DAA re new terms of agreement
- Very positive 'Clean Up Australia' Day: 17 sacks of rubbish collected.
- Independent Plumbing Inspections used drone to inspect church roof. Report on payment.
- Engaging Meyer Consulting on (1) works to stabilise cracking and movement of the church (2) stormwater discharge from the new carpark and working drawings.
- More info needed to assess structural capacity of the church bell tower and bell support.
- Gloucester Drive dishwasher repaired, exhaust fan installed in shower.

Rosanna

- Multiple attempts to disconnect electricity, now referred to ombudsman. Water and gas off.
- Reps from Prestige Pianos and Melbourne Theatre Organ Society assessed the organ. Analogue technology too old for another church. Plan to donate to Melbourne Theatre Organ Society for renovation or use of parts so still provides pleasure through music.
- Footscape now surpassed 70,000 items of footwear, socks and foot care kits distributed.

Watsonia

- Received Peter Richard's surveyor's report.

General business

- Position held by Matt Wilson in Dio eliminated in restructure. Parish Council expressed deep disappointment as Matt most helpful. To write letter of appreciation to Matt.

Minutes by Mike Connor, précis by Editor