

# BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE

HOLY SPIRIT WATSONIA ❄️ ST ANDREW'S ROSANNA ❄️ ST JOHN'S HEIDELBERG

DECEMBER  
2021

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## PATRICK'S PROCLAMATION

*"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames." (1 Corinthians 3:10–15)*

**W**E are nearing the end of 2021, and last Sunday we entered the liturgical new year with the season of Advent. My time at this parish is drawing to a close, and this is the last entry that I will write for the *Banyule Babble*. I cannot think of a better moment to reflect on my time at the parish!

It is especially suitable to reflect on my ministry at Banyule during Advent. Advent, of course, is the season where we focus our hearts, minds, and wills to the fact that Jesus will return one day to judge the living and the dead, and to establish the kingdom of God. While Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost *look back* in history to what Jesus already accomplished, Advent is the one season that *looks forward* to the future.

That great future day is what the universal church in every time and in every place looks forward to. That day is Freedom Day in the truest sense of the word, when we are freed from all our hurts and disappointments; from evil, suffering, and the final Enemy: death. Ultimately, our lives are not about finding the right spouse, graduating with the best degree, securing the top job, purchasing the dream home or retiring well. Our lives are about the union we enjoy with Jesus, who alone is worthy of our eternal thanks and praise, and who alone can satisfy the deepest longings and aching of our souls.

My ministry at Banyule has been dedicated to this: To point you all to Jesus, to his kind and gentle heart and his majestic power and glory. This is the foundation I have sought to lay (as St Paul describes ministry above). This is all I truly could offer to you. I hope and pray that I have been faithful in this regard, and that all my main activities—my preaching, teaching, service leading and living—have pointed you to Jesus. Any good you have received from me truly belong to him.

I leave the parish of Banyule humbled and grateful. Humbled by the faithfulness of so many saints who have not grown tired but remain steadfast in the Lord; steadfast and faithful despite decades of life in this troublesome world. I leave the parish grateful for the love and encouragement you have shown to me. I have always felt accepted, loved, and welcomed by you. And grateful that I got to learn and imitate Denise, as

she imitated Christ. I do not just leave a parish, I leave friends. And for that I am truly thankful.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, always and forever, until we meet again!

Patrick



## Advent Bible Studies

As well as Catriona's Bible study at 3.30 pm Sundays at Holy Spirit, there is now a Bible study focused on Advent, led by Patrick and Jonathan, at 7.30 pm Wednesdays at St Andrew's. All are welcome!

## 1 pm Sunday service to cease

Because of very low attendance, the 1 pm service at St John's to the unvaccinated will no longer be offered. All face-to-face services will require vaccination proof.

A YouTube Christmas service will be recorded.

## Christmas and beyond!

Friday December 24 5 pm St John's (Children's carols on lawn)  
11 pm St John's  
11 pm St Andrew's (new!)

Saturday December 25 9 am St Andrew's  
9 am Holy Spirit  
10.15 am St John's  
(First time services are at all three centres!)

Sunday December 26 10.15 am St John's (Catriona's farewell)

Sunday January 2 10.15 am St John's

Sunday January 9 9 am St Andrew's (note time)

Sunday January 16 10.15 am St John's

Sunday January 23 9 am St Andrew's (note time)

Sunday January 30 10.15 am St John's

Sunday February 6 10.15 am St John's (Patrick's farewell)

**Wanted:** A member of the parish with a small family is looking for somewhere to rent in the Banyule Primary School area, up to \$500 p.w. Good rental record. If you know of anywhere, please contact the Editor (9459 5852).

## This Month – December

Advent Bible study, led by Patrick or Jonathan, 7.30 pm each Wednesday night at St Andrew's.

**Sunday 5th Advent 2:** 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit  
*Malachi 3:1-4; Song of Zechariah; Phil 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-6*

**Sunday 12th Advent 3:** 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit  
*Zeph 3:14-20a; Song of Isaiah; Phil 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18*

**Sunday 19th Advent 4:** 10.15 am Combined at St John's  
*Micah 5:1-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Luke 1:39-55*

**Wednesday 22nd:** 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers' Union; 11 am Streeton Park and general mid-week service at St John's

**Friday 24th Christmas Eve:** 5 pm Children's carols on St John's lawn; 11 pm St John's; 11 pm St Andrew's

**Saturday 25th Christmas Day:** 9 am St Andrew's; 9 am Holy Spirit; 10.15 am St John's

**Sunday 26th Christmas 1:** 10.15 am Combined at St John's, Catriona's farewell

## Wanted

- At least one more warden. Look, now you know you won't be the only warden, and the work will be shared, how about it, eh?

## Money: October

Income:	Giving:	\$7,667.33
	Other:	\$11,824.30
	Total:	\$19,491.63
Expenses:		\$30,810.97
<b>Deficit:</b>		<b>\$11,319.34</b>

Giving was up, thank you. But expenses were up more.

*Late report from Katrina:* Marvellous news!! Peter and Edwina have been awarded a \$3000 Art and Cultural Grant from Banyule Council for 'Belonging' – an art project to create mosaics and metal welding figures for the community garden. Their theme: *Flora and Fauna of Warringal Parklands*. We are THRILLED!!!

## Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

Our AGM MU meeting was held at Holy Spirit Church at 10 am on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

*Present:* Elizabeth Ryder, Barbara Andrews, Beth Jones, Val Pilkington, Elsie Storr, Coral Bellingham, Sylvia Webb.

*Apologies:* None.

After our COVID-19 clean and sign-on sheet, we enjoyed a cuppa and casual chat.

Elizabeth led us in the MU Service at page 10, starting with a song from *Covenant Songs*. Val did the Bible reading from *The Word for Today*; then we all take it in turns to read a section of the MU Service. Then our AGM: see in the *Banyule Annual Report*.

*Business Arising:* None.

*Correspondence: In:* In our midday prayers for the N/West Deanery, a prayer is for St Andrew's Rosanna: they are continuing as members but not as a group. Our Diaries and Christmas Cards have arrived, via Sylvia Webb (thanks Sylvia).

*Treasurer's Report:* May balance: \$85.92.

*General Business:* Handed 2022 MU Diaries/Christmas Cards. Altona MU will pack the Christmas cards for the Women's Remand Centres this year. Then we had a walk outside in our Memorial Garden to see the Mary Sumner rose called after the founder of MU (it has a pale red flower). The new yellow landing and back steps look great. Thank you Peter Andrews, Barbara Andrews and Holy Spirit Ladies' Guild. The whole area looks good, and many people see it when they are standing in a Click & Collect line at the library.

*Next meeting Nov 24<sup>th</sup>:* Coral will talk on early days at Phillip Island.

We closed our meeting with Midday Prayers. — *Elsie Storr*

## mainly music: December 2021

We started back at Watsonia the first week in November with six families. That was heartening. Another family is due back from USA and anxious to come back too, so it seems we should have a good term to finish the year. With these comparatively small numbers we do not have a problem with safe distancing, and the families are encouraged to 'move around' within their family groups rather than around the room. It seems to work! The new Christmas book from *mainly music* has been ordered and we will be putting together a Christmas package for the families as usual.

*Rosemary Bellair (9459 5394)*



## Blokes Helping Blokes

November's *Blokes Helping Blokes* on Zoom was a bitter-sweet occasion. Like the previous two occasions, there were thirteen members present, reminding one of the Last Supper—but this was to be the Last Break-



fast. Instead of Jesus as host there was Glenn, and instead of the Twelve Apostles there was the usual rag-tag lot of Blokes.

There was however an extraordinary transfiguration in Glenn. Instead of the usual high-vis orange clobber, Glenn was attired in an almost-respectable pink shirt, and instead

of being in his truck he was in a swish-looking hotel. He told us there was a spa bath behind and to the side of him, which had the Editor throughout the proceedings hoping that Glenn would stride about to emphasise his point, then suddenly disappear mid-stride, followed by a splash of water crossing the screen. Alas, it didn't happen.

Glenn also told us that he was about to get a massage from a woman who was not his wife, which we felt was Too Much Information, and we would rather not have known. However he then told us the whole thing was in honour of his and Wendy's 40th wedding anniversary, so we congratulated him, even though we were still not quite sure where the massage fitted in with that. Glenn told us it was the New Trend.

Allan said that the day was his and Joan's 56th anniversary on that very day, which got more congratulations, even though he obviously had not taken Joan to a swanky hotel, or even a backpacker hostel.

Stuart said that his 30th birthday had been while overseas, and his 40th was in lockdown. He felt that he and the world had missed out on proper celebrations of these important events.

Stuart is of course expecting another birthday soon. He did an inadvertent gender reveal of the expected arrival by using the pronoun 'she', but it was pointed out that the new arrival had not yet chosen a suite of pronouns, and indeed may not give consent to being born.

Paul Smith arrived, but by a technological quirk he arrived twice. The second Paul Smith, possibly his evil side, caused havoc for the first Paul Smith by echoing everything said, so much that both Paul Smiths had to leave and come back on in integrated form.

The Blokes discussed the effect of the recent windstorm. Not only had St Andrew's Parish Hall suffered damage, but also Rosanna Uniting, and David's brother's trailer.

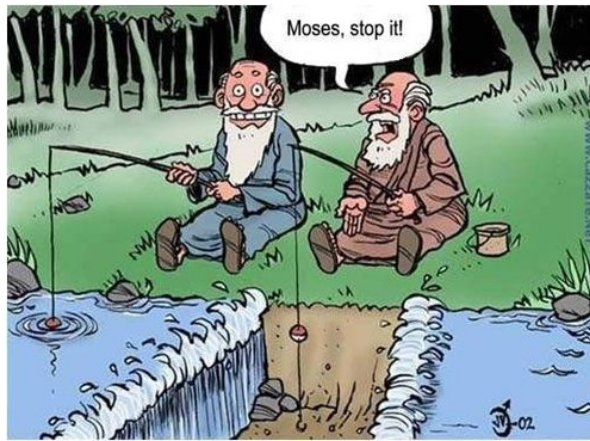
Keith said he was now awash with orange and lemon marmalade, though this was probably not a result of the storm. It did seem a strange choice of liquid to wash in. However he still wanted some of Glenn's Seville marmalade, to be even more awash.

Jon says he is going OK at present. The funeral was nice, even under COVID restrictions. The Editor pointed out that the attendance numbers on the livestream weren't working, and he and others had attended that way.

Glenn now spoke as to why this would be the last meeting of *Blokes Helping Blokes*. There was a range of different reasons, but one was the way that legal responsibility worked. As host he was required to be insured for \$20 million, and insurers were toey about providing this insurance, given the possibilities for COVID transmission among the many elderly members. Cleaning up at the end of the real-life meetings had also not been as good as needed, or as Banyule Council stipulated.

If the meetings had been at a café or house Glenn would have had no liability issue.

Paul said that he had known Glenn and *Blokes Helping Blokes* from the beginning, and one constant was that everyone has enjoyed the occasions. He expected that a number of people would continue catching up with Glenn.



Allan said that the meeting he enjoyed most was the one in Glenn's backyard. It was a fun morning, Glenn's doctor spoke on a serious subject, and the quality of the bacon was 'fair'.

This led to a discussion of Glenn's culinary skills. He has a new technique for baking bread that gives the very best results. Every two years Glenn makes passata and his stock is now down to 50 bottles and he will soon make it again. He said he finds he has to add lemon juice to the tomatoes because nothing is quite as acid as it used to be. Even the Seville oranges need lemon juice.

Paul recalled with pleasure the sausage-making breakfast. Neil said he enjoyed listening to blokes' stories, and what had driven them. He was moved by Glenn's care and compassion and love for people.

Glenn replied that he had an empty head and needed to fill it, and half the time he didn't know what he was doing.

Keith said he appreciated the reports in the *Banyule Babble*, and hearing stories from different areas of life. Glenn said the stories had been great, and two people were alive today, who wouldn't have been if they had not heard the stories.

He said it was extraordinary how two Davids, quite different, had both created wonderful relationships with a third David.

Paul said that Glenn had created an atmosphere in which people could speak from the heart, being real, not putting anything on, not big-timing themselves.

Jon told us that his roofer reported that at his daughter's school the girls were coping OK, but the boys were always talking of suicide and drugs. Blokes needed support, and Glenn deserved much thanks, because nothing happens without a massive amount of work.

Glenn said the number one highlight was Frank's jokes, which had improved over the years. His secret to a successful meeting was to have no agenda, which he thought was very important. He also had no rules or guidelines.

He considered it important to keep the meetings blokes only, and had a big argument about that with a nurse, but it was not the outer gender that mattered, but what was inside. Therefore he specified that one had to have a prostate, or a certificate that it had been removed.

Allan said he appreciated the accuracy of the Editor's reporting—by which testimonial you, gentle reader, may know that everything written about the meetings is completely true, with no exaggeration or distortion—but at this Keith objected that the Editor had described his tennis court as being at North Essendon, when it was at

Flemington and Kensington. (This objection somewhat non-plusses the Editor, as he made no mention at all of North Essendon; he said it was at Rosanna and Macleod.)

It turns out the Editor's descriptions of the Blokes have been read by more women than by men. This may be because the Blokes' wives read every word to see what their husbands are up to; but it may be that the Blokes have an army of adoring women fans who drool over their masculine hunkiness—well, it could be.

Indeed, at least three women's groups have copied the BHB idea of living eulogies, and Glenn thought that a man must be doing well if women copy him.

We were sad that Blokes Helping Blokes was finishing. Glenn said the top of the tree fell the furthest, which spoke very deeply and movingly to the Editor, who has had to deal with the tree that fell on St Andrew's Parish Hall. Glenn also said that there was a door closing, but that can lead to another door opening; which again moved the Editor to tears, as he recalled that changing the locks and nailing doors shut in the said Parish Hall had not prevented thieves from getting in.

Paul said that he was sure many of the Blokes would be getting together. Indeed, it was at this point that Adam got together with the rest of us, having stayed patiently in the Zoom ante-room for 20 minutes, waiting for Glenn (who hadn't noticed him) to let him in.

We thought it best for the meeting to end with one of Frank's jokes. Unfortunately Glenn gave Frank a list of difficult conditions that his joke had to satisfy, including being clean and suitable for publication. Whether it was to cover up Frank's total lack of material satisfying these conditions, or dumbstruck confusion at Glenn of all people issuing such strictures, or merely because of the cognitive dissonance and cosmological collision of the ideas of 'Frank's joke' and 'clean and suitable for publication', is not known; but Frank gave us some minutes of animated exposition while being the entire time on Mute, and we heard not a word.

Peter McKay



## Annual Parish Meeting

The APM for 2021 was another hybrid of a real meeting and a Zoom meeting, like last year. However this year there were more attendees at the real meeting (23) and fewer at the virtual meeting (4), possibly because the meeting was a trifle earlier and there was a chance of getting home before cook declared lunch to be irretrievably spoiled. There were also 15 apologies: it is no part of this reporter's job to estimate the average sincerity of these apologies.

After prayers (11.46 am), Denise flashed the steel of her metaphorical sabre. The first head to fall was the Editor's, as he was swiftly pushed into the minute secretary's chair and firmly attached with cable ties.

Last year's minutes and the parish roll were both rapidly disposed of by a few swift magic passes. 'Abracadabra!' and 'The hand is quicker than the eye!', and we saw them no more. It was, of course, a classic example of misdirection, because they weren't visible to start with.

Then the Vicar gave her Annual Report. Parishioners had been surprised that it wasn't in the printed Annual Report booklet and only came out later, but that did not astonish the Editor, who shall, however, keep silent and say nothing, as the Vicar has promised him a good dinner.

Denise thanked everyone in the parish for getting through another year. She referred to Parish Council as her 'partners in crime', and then later referred to Patrick as her 'partner in crime'. This led us to wonder if there were two different crimes she had been involved in, one requiring several partners and one requiring just one, albeit of high intelligence; or whether there was the one crime with different partners for different aspects (so that, for example, those who helped in the bank robbery wouldn't know where the loot was stashed); or whether there were concentric circles of criminal partnership within the parish.

Denise announced that the Warden would be thanked for his service by a bottle of wine, but immediately added that the bottle was still in her cellar. A former Warden said, "Enjoy it!" in a tone suggesting that he thought it had as much chance of becoming tangible as the parish roll. The Warden indeed feared that the bottle was in danger of being diverted to Getting Through Another Year purposes, but has informed the Editor that it did indeed eventually materialise, and a second one as well, from the capacious vicarage vaults.

Denise thanked Patrick and Helen and Catriona for their clerical support, and said she could not believe that she and Patrick had been ecclesiastical bread-and-butter for four years. This year had been challenging, and we had lost 18 Sundays to COVID, and it seemed like a lot more.

But we have our partnership with Merri Creek, and Jonathan has joined us for at least next year.

Rosanna goes on, in a challenging sort of way. The Watsonia Town Square crept up on us: comments could be made until 3rd December on the awful toilet block (Denise didn't actually say this). Our car park will probably be sold but we hope still to lever our income in some way. St John's will need very

major maintenance, with a crack that the heritage architect was worried about. A separate subcommittee had been sitting on this (hence the crack). The preliminary work could be paid for from Crystal's bequest.

Denise thanked Parish Council, and especially those members who were getting out in time: Judy Thomson, and Chris Hall, whose time is up but will keep doing the hard labour.

But it was the whole lot of the parish who should be thanked, though some had been 'promoted to glory', where they can rest on their laurels for a bit.

Judy Thomson then spoke on Parish Council, which has been meeting entirely by Zoom. Denise commented that attendance was better on Zoom, and the Editor has noticed that it is much easier to attend when one only needs to wear a dressing-gown, rather than struggling putting on the tail-coat, white tie, underwear, etc, needed for the rarefied atmosphere of the vicarage.

The Warden said that his report spoke for itself, and he would not bore the meeting by going through it, but he still managed to do some boring.

It was his last year, thanks to Parish Council and Denise. (At least that is what the Minute Secretary's notes say.) He expected 2022 to be a difficult year for the new wardens, if any. He did not say that was why he was jumping ship, but everyone drew the obvious conclusion. The new wardens would need everyone's support, and good luck to them. The op shop was a problem.

Denise at this point hastily said that the op shop wasn't the problem, it was the negotiations with the Brotherhood. The Warden said that was what he meant, and Barbara was doing a marvellous job, working hard when she had expected to be able to retire. Allan Way pointed the finger firmly at the Brotherhood and made some unambiguous statements. No profits had been distributed because the Brotherhood was still holding on to money from 20 months ago, and he wanted it, but wasn't sure we would ever get it.

Denise said we shall make sure we get it, and she would dig her heels in. The image of Denise's sharp-pointed stilettos being dug deep into the Brotherhood's Head of Social Enterprise was a comforting one for the outgoing warden.

Joan Way said thank you to Peter.

Emmi then spoke to our financial situation. The budget, she said, didn't look good. We didn't get much from the op shop this year, for reasons already explained. She did point out that last year she had predicted a deficit of \$73,000, but in fact there was a \$25,000 surplus. The implication was that she might be equally wildly wrong about the coming year, but the reason had been Job-Keeper, which has now stopped.

Paying three clergy at once for three months would be hard, but some kind people outside the parish had made welcome donations to Jonathan's pay in response to Denise's pleading begging letter. Giving had also risen due to generous online donations. There were also St John's and 57 Gloucester Dve to pay for.

Despite the difficult financial situation, Emmi said Treasuring was a pleasure, and she wanted another year of it (applause). She did not say that her private hobby was

self-flagellation, but she gave that impression. Heather Connor moved a motion of thanks, which was passed with acclamations and applause.

Denise then said people were excited about the group annual reports; but not so much as to speak to them. Katrina did say that hundreds of people came through the Community Garden each day during lockdown, where they could admire the veggie patches, compost heap, etc.

Judy has got some booklets on money cybersafety from the banking association. It is important that parishioners not be scammed of their money before they can give it to the parish. There might be some talks on the subject to come.

Denise said it was sad that the St John's Fellowship had to close, but it was the right time.

We then got to what Denise described as the exciting part of the meeting, by which she of course meant the most exciting part, the excitement of earlier parts being visible by the way that parish members were slumped in their chairs.

Parish Council members were ~~voted in~~ appointed: **Raj Ariyathurai**, **Andrew Fegan** and **Emmi Godau** (Treasurer), who are all old lags, and **Mike Connor**, who is a new lag; plus the new churchwardens: **Rosemary Bellair** and **Katrina Philip**. There should be a third warden, and Denise will continue to carry her warden-hunting net until one is caught. The new wardens were asked if they were comfortable with only two wardens, and Rosemary quickly said she was not comfortable at all, but the other parishioners, getting alarmed, put their fingers in their ears and said loudly, "La, la, la! I can't hear you!" Rosemary vigorously protested that she couldn't understand half of what the old warden said, but Denise said everyone was in that situation, and quickly declared everyone duly elected.

Joan Way thanked Judy for her work on Parish Council (applause), and Denise said she also brought treats for Mabel, which gave her extra points.

The Incumbency Committee contains old lags **Judy Thomson** and **Allan Way**, plus whichever one of the wardens is furthest from the door. Denise assured parishioners she had no plans to leave (but they all say that).

**Judy Thomson** and **Allan Way** are also the current Synod reps.

**Bryce Hoffman** was reappointed auditor.

In 'Any other matters' there was discussion of the new online Synod. Allan Way said it all went smoothly apart from some dinosaur clergy, and everyone agreed it was good to be able to go straight to bed after a gruelling evening session, instead of spending an hour on public transport. Another advantage was that the voting numbers came up immediately, and revealed separately how clergy and laity voted, showing again that the clergy were dinosaurs and less progressive than the laity. It was suggested that future synods should all be run that way, though Patrick regretted not being able to see old friends and would prefer one session to be in-person.

Finally, Kaye Collins proposed a vote of thanks to Denise (applause), and the meeting closed with the grace at 12.40 pm, just in time for the Sunday roast.

*The Editor*

# GIANT BIBLE CROSSWORD

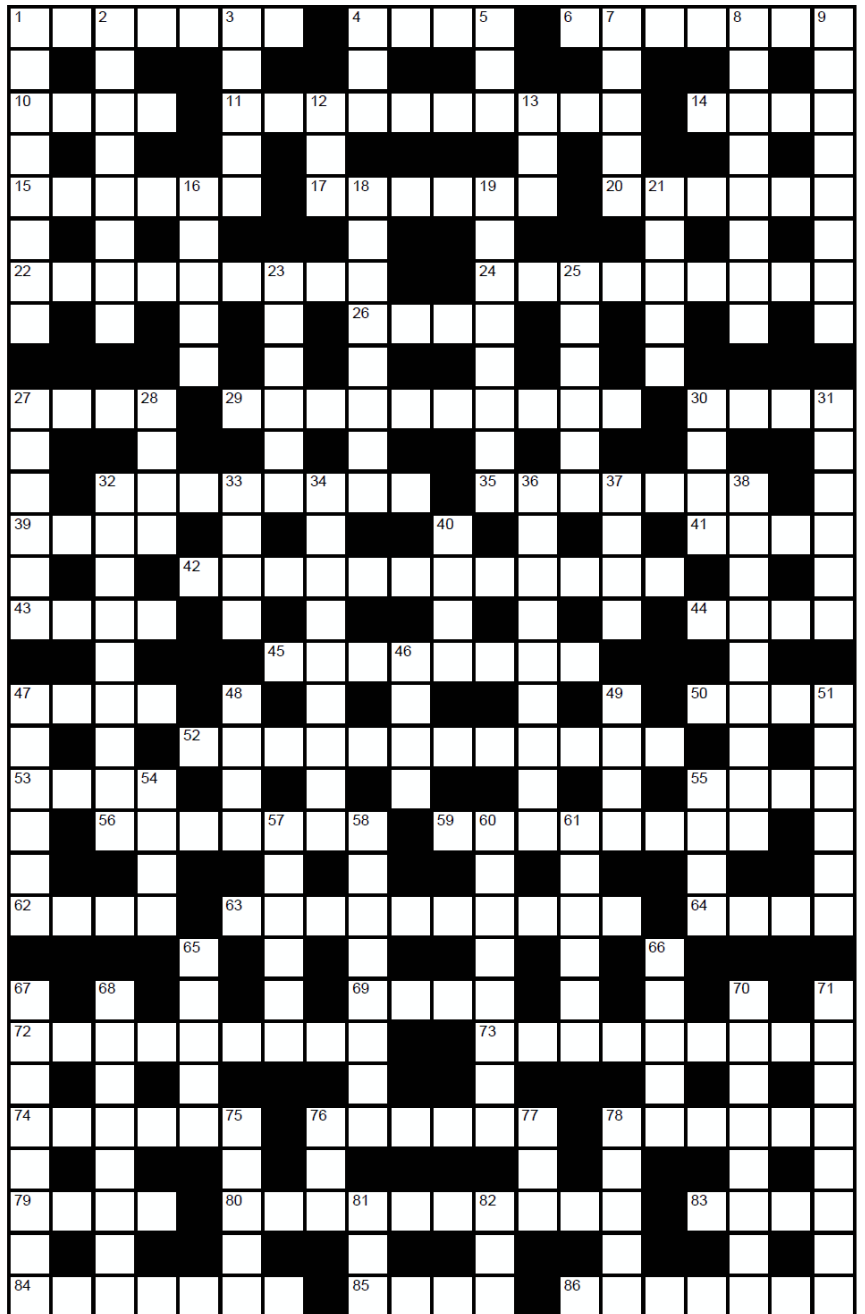
**Across**

- 1 Retaliation (7)
- 4 Phoenician trading center (4)
- 6 Not fixed (7)
- 10 Word written on a wall (4)
- 11 Fruit bearing plant (6,4)
- 14 Urgent request (4)
- 15 Place of worship (6)
- 17 Where the Syrian army was made blind (6)
- 20 Climb (6)
- 22 Instruction (9)
- 24 Splendid (9)
- 26 Work hard (4)
- 27 Unable to speak (4)
- 29 Tattler (10)
- 30 One who raised Cain (4)
- 32 Stains (archaic) (8)
- 35 A disciple in Rome (7)
- 39 Came to an end (4)
- 41 Number of lepers who did not return to thank Jesus (4)
- 42 Old Testament ritual (4,8)
- 43 Burrowing mammal (4)
- 44 Refuse (4)
- 45 Hold back (8)
- 47 Verse writer (4)
- 50 Pesky insect (4)
- 52 Sources of rivers and streams (12)
- 53 Slimy gastropod (4)
- 55 Mix (4)
- 56 Have an inspiration? (7)
- 59 One of the openings in the walls of Jerusalem (4,4)
- 62 Attracted (4)

- 63 A remnant of the Amorites (10)
- 64 Bones (4)
- 69 Likewise (4)
- 72 Governor (9)
- 73 Reinstates (archaic) (9)
- 74 Reflexive pronoun, third person singular (6)
- 76 Help (6)
- 78 Persian queen (6)
- 79 Retain (4)
- 80 Can a camel pass through one? (7,3)
- 83 Snakes (4)
- 84 Suffered (7)
- 85 Middle of the day (4)
- 86 English translator of the Bible (7)

**Down**

- 1 Forgave (8)
- 2 Poisonous (8)
- 3 Fruit of the vine (5)
- 4 Couple (3)
- 5 Consume (3)
- 7 Last letter (5)
- 8 Had faith (8)
- 9 Praises (archaic) (8)
- 12 Daft (3)
- 13 Fled (3)
- 16 Ananias and Sapphira for example (5)
- 18 Balm (8)
- 19 Field of blood (8)
- 21 Psalms interjection (5)
- 23 Babe (6)
- 25 The cross-bearer of Christ, Simon, came from this city (6)
- 27 Crown (6)
- 28 Shiny on top, like Elisha! (4)
- 30 Prayer's end (4)
- 31 Woe (6)



by Philologus

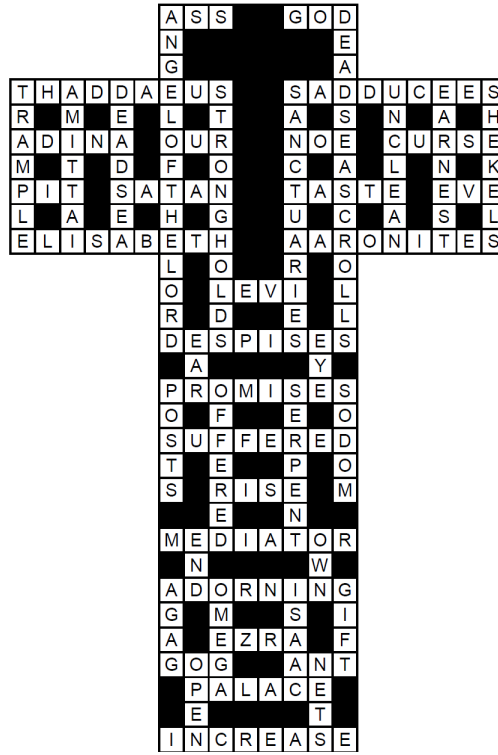
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- 32 Prince of the devils (9)
- 33 Bound (4)
- 34 Respects (archaic) (9)
- 36 Hell (9)
- 37 Yearn (4)
- 38 Member of an Israeli tribe (9)
- 40 From a great distance (4)
- 46 Charge (4)
- 47 Went by (6)
- 48 Site of Jesus' first miracle (4)
- 49 King of the Amalekites (4)
- 51 Birth place of the apostle Paul (6)
- 54 Got bigger (4)
- 55 Celestial body (4)
- 57 There were twelve of them in Israel (6)
- 58 Precious stones (8)
- 60 Biblical animals of great strength (8)
- 61 These people were among the Gentiles (6)
- 65 Seat (5)
- 66 False gods (5)
- 67 Spray (8)
- 68 A successful journey (8)
- 70 This place had a pool and five porches (8)
- 71 Sanctimonious person (8)
- 75 Palisade (5)
- 76 Cutting tool (3)
- 77 Part of foot (3)
- 78 Each (5)
- 81 A son of Jacob (3)
- 82 Transgression (3)

# Lord's Prayer Anagram



- aeelmpx \_\_\_\_\_
- eilmpr \_\_\_\_\_
- aeehnv \_\_\_\_\_
- adily abder \_\_\_\_\_
- eefginorssv \_\_\_\_\_
- aeimnopsttt \_\_\_\_\_
- eoprw \_\_\_\_\_
- aeimnty \_\_\_\_\_
- acceimmnotu \_\_\_\_\_
- aeehnrwy \_\_\_\_\_



## Answers to last month's puzzles

Bible Word Search mystery answer: **JERUSALEM**

Last month's anagram:

- adeeiss \_\_\_\_\_ disease \_\_\_\_\_
- aceilmr \_\_\_\_\_ miracle \_\_\_\_\_
- eloprsy \_\_\_\_\_ leprosy \_\_\_\_\_
- cdehotu \_\_\_\_\_ touched \_\_\_\_\_
- acdeeln \_\_\_\_\_ cleansed \_\_\_\_\_
- behlmu \_\_\_\_\_ humble \_\_\_\_\_
- aeegmss \_\_\_\_\_ message \_\_\_\_\_
- cdorsw \_\_\_\_\_ crowds \_\_\_\_\_
- aadfir \_\_\_\_\_ afraid \_\_\_\_\_
- ceinot \_\_\_\_\_ notice \_\_\_\_\_

## Bible Word Search – Jesus Is Coming Again

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\\_JesusIsComingAgain\\_0.htm](https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_JesusIsComingAgain_0.htm)

- Archangel, Awesome, Bugle, Caring, Clean spirit, Disciples, Earth, Father, Forbearance, Gentleness, God-fearing, Goodness, Guardian, Heart-warmed, Help, Honest, Jerusalem, Joy, Kindness, Lord, Love, Paul, Peacemaker, People, Powerful, Prayer, Precious, Rainbow, Righteous, Self-Control, Treasurer, Trumpet, Truthful, Wonderful



## 1 Thessalonians 4

### 'In Holy Company'

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Trinity, 31<sup>st</sup> October

by Patrick Senn

<sup>1</sup> As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honourable, <sup>5</sup> not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. <sup>10</sup> And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, <sup>11</sup> and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, <sup>12</sup> so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with

the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

### Introduction

For nearly four decades, Denis Handlin was one of the most powerful men in Australia. As the chief executive of Sony Music and chairman of the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) board, he was *the* ruler in Australian music ... until recently. Four Corners uncovered that his reign was characterised by fear, abuse, and intimidation. The company he ran was toxic. According to a former secretary, "The kindest thing I could say about Denis was that he was sort of an equal opportunity abuser. He was as mean to men as he was to women." None of this was secret. Already in the 90s, a comprehensive complaint was filed against him with the Sony executives in New York. Handlin was suspended. But, only three months later, after some investigations, the global head office decreed he would return. For the next two decades, Handlin grew more powerful than ever. A former senior manager described the workplace as a culture where 'laddish language' and objectification of women was accepted.

He said, “*Because of the position of power, it allowed people who wanted to have that laddish view of life the free rein to do it. There were no consequences for doing it because ultimately one person held all the power. He set the tone.*”

That last comment is revealing. The person with power sets the tone. The company you keep shapes and forms you. If you keep toxic company, you will become toxic yourself. If senior executives tolerate abusive leaders, the whole company will eventually be characterised by this. Our passage today shows that the opposite is true, as well. If you keep company with a holy God, you yourself will become holy. If you keep company with a righteous God, your life will come to reflect that righteousness. God sets the tone.

In the letter so far, St Paul has been thanking the Thessalonians, looking to his past visit and what has happened since he left them. At the end of chapter 3, he prayed that they would increase in love and remain blameless in holiness until Jesus returns. Now, he instructs them how they can do this. And, there are three particular areas where they need instruction: sex (vv. 1–8), work (vv. 9–12), and death (vv. 13–18). God sets the tone in each of these. If you keep company with a holy God, each of these areas of life needs to be characterised by holiness.

#### “Do No Wrong” (1 Thess 4:3–8)

Paul says, “*It is God’s will that you should be sanctified*”. His instructions are not personal opinions or suggestions, but they come with the authority of God Himself. When it comes to sexuality, the main point is in verse 6, “*no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.*” The way to do this is to avoid sexual immorality, and to “*learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honourable*”. The culture surrounding the Thessalonians regarded the desire for sex as natural like desire for food. Something you need every day. The free Roman or Greek man married a wife, but this was primarily for rearing children. Sex for pleasure was sought with slaves and prostitutes, and it was not at all frowned upon for a man to have sex with women other than his wife. He indulged himself as much as he pleased.

However, while this may be normal in Roman or Greek culture, this is not God’s will for relationships. To give free reign to your lust is to live like the pagans, those who do not know God. If you are in the company of a holy God, holy and honourable self-control is the norm. Relationships should be characterised by faithfulness, and people not treated like commodities to consume. In fact, Paul says that those who wrong others will be punished. After all, holiness means upholding what is right and punishing what is wrong.

God’s will for our sexuality is as radical today as it was in the first century. Today, our culture accepts the use of pornography. In fact, the use of adult websites has exploded during the pandemic, getting more daily visits than Netflix and Amazon combined. While our culture may accept this, God does not. Those who belong to a holy God cannot continue wronging women and treating them as objects of lust. Moreover, Paul’s warning that God will punish those who sin in this way is good news for all who suffered sexual violence. One in four girls, and one in six boys, have experienced sexual abuse. This

number is staggering. Not even in our Federal Parliament, supposedly the safest building in our nation, is a young woman—Brittany Higgins—safe from the abusive lust of another man. It is good news for our broken world that God avenges exploitation. This is what it means to be holy. A people that possesses the Holy Spirit, a holy community, is one where women are not abused, where everyone practices self-control, and where no one’s body is used as a product to consume. This is what it means to please the Lord in our sexuality.

#### “Work it” (1 Thess 4:9–12)

In verses 9–12, St Paul instructs what holiness in labour looks like. And as with relationships and sex, so also work was very different in the ancient world. Today, so much human interaction happens between the seller and the customer. In the age of consumerism, people mainly sell or buy stuff. But in the ancient world, most relationships were shaped by the patron and the client. The patron was an elite and wealthy man who could assist you in setting up your trade or business. He was basically someone able to give out a loan, or persuade another important man to give you an opportunity. But, if he did, that meant that you owed him one, big time. If you get a loan from a bank today, the bank expects you to pay back the loan plus interest. But a patron demanded everything from you—your allegiance, your work, and your praise. If the patron wants you to visit the pagan temple and make a sacrifice for him, you have a moral obligation to do it.

For Christians, this obviously will create conflicts of interest. This is why Paul instructs: “*You should mind your own business and work with your hands ... so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*” Christians should seek not to be dependent on systems that will create conflicts of interest or violate their conscience. Instead, they should aim to be self-sufficient. More than patrons and clients, Christians are brothers and sisters, and should love each other as such.

Today, the relationship between employee and employer is a lot less like the patron-client relationship. After all, no employer will have the right to force you to worship another god. But Paul’s instructions do give us helpful guidance around our work. Do not seek out work that will later threaten you to violate your conscience. If there is a company that will come against your Christian values, Paul advises us to try and avoid them. Today, an employer cannot make you worship another god, but he or she can keep you from attending church and worshipping God. Holy work, according to Paul, is work that enables you to love your Christian brothers and sister, as God commands us to.

#### Death (1 Thess 4:13–18)

In the final verses, Paul addresses death, and some misunderstandings that the Thessalonians had around it. When Paul was still with them, he taught them the faith, including the hope that “*Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end*”. But, after Paul left the church some members died, and this led the Thessalonians to wonder whether they will be a part of the kingdom that Jesus will bring. They wondered whether those who died will live for eternity. Paul tells them, “*we do not want you to be uninformed about those who*

*sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*” Mourning is a very natural and healthy response to death. But the Thessalonians should not mourn **without hope**. When faced with death, there is a decisive difference between Christians and non-Christians. Jesus died, and rose again. This is the pinnacle of the faith. This is what gives hope even in the deepest tragedy. Death is defeated. And not only that, but when Jesus returns God will also resurrect all Christians who died. This means when Jesus returns, the dead will be raised and we the living will be joined with them. All this will take place on the final day when Jesus returns to earth.

One of the wonderful changes to the lockdown restrictions is that we can have visitors in our home. I have really missed this. In fact, on the first Friday out of lockdown Denise visited our home, and we shared dinner together. Paul tells us that the main thing to expect is that on the final day none other than Jesus will visit the earth. There will be cosmic signs—the voice of an archangel, the trumpet call of God, and so on—but the main thing is that Jesus himself will visit us; the one whom we know and love by faith today, we will finally know by sight. All Christians who have died, all Christians who will be alive on that day, Paul tells us, “*will be with the Lord forever.*” This will be the ultimate family reunion, one that nothing can take away from us, not even the permanent lockdown of death.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, the company that you keep will shape and form your character and behaviour. We heard how the toxic reign of Denis Handlin led to a workplace of fear, abuse, intimidation. As we heard, “*He set the tone.*” Well, in chapter four Paul lays the tone that God Almighty sets for us. To be in the company of a holy God means that our lives—our characters and our choices—will also reflect his holiness. In particular, God’s holiness will impact how we think and engage around sex, work, and death. Just like the Thessalonians, the culture around us will shape and form us in quite different directions. It does not matter what we did in the past. Paul’s concern is the present. No matter what we have done in the past, and how unholy we may have acted. What matters today is that we belong to a holy God, so our lives will be characterised by holiness.

AMEN.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

The 23rd Sunday after Trinity, 7th November

by Denise Nicholls

<sup>13</sup> *Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.* <sup>14</sup> *For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.* <sup>15</sup> *According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.* <sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup>

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

<sup>5:1</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, <sup>2</sup> for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

<sup>4</sup> But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. <sup>6</sup> So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. <sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Well, thanks, Cat. Nice to be back—nice to be on holidays, too. I had a week and a bit away: I was able to go to Rye—found a place where I could take Mabel—and so we had a lovely time playing on the beach in the cold water—it didn't seem to bother her. I was there for a few nights, and then I was able to also visit another friend in Ballarat, which was a great joy: we haven't seen each other since March.

Today I want to speak about 'assurance': knowing that we are one with Christ and will be with the Lord even when we die. When I first began in ministry, way back in the early 1990s, it was an area where there were stacks of young families, so we did lots and lots and lots of baptisms, but very few funerals. I was terrified every time the Vicar went on holidays, because I thought, 'What happens if there's a funeral? I don't know what to do!' It wasn't that I didn't know how to craft a service, but it was the importance of dealing with a family in grief that made me nervous.

As clergy, one of the most privileged positions we have, is to enter into a family at the time of profound grief and sadness—raw emotions. It's a time of life experience that is in one sense the same for every human being on earth—we will all face the death of a loved one, and we ourselves will also die—so it's common to humanity; but also, each person's experience is unique. As ministers of Christ, clergy have the opportunity to bring the comfort of the news of the resurrection of Jesus at the time of profound sadness.

This letter of 1 Thessalonians is a pastoral letter; and in this section the Apostle Paul is answering a number of questions that his friends of Thessalonica have asked him. The first question that they've asked, as Paul replies in this section, is 'What about a person who has died?' And so today we talk about assurance: how can we be sure of their, and even our, destination?

Paul answers this question, and his answer centres on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and what it means for those who know and love him. So I only have two points today, you'll be glad to know: first, 'What about those who have died?' and

secondly, 'When will the return of the Lord Jesus be?'

Well, what about those who have died? Where are they? It's a question for the ages, isn't it? Those whom we can no longer see and experience life with. And it's a time of profound and intense and natural grief. From this great letter, Paul writes to his friends (verse 13): *Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.* <sup>14</sup> For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

It's clear that some of the early believers in Jesus in this city of Thessalonica had died—perhaps because of persecution, perhaps because of illness. What would happen to them? All the early Christians believed that the Lord Jesus would return in their lifetime, so their concern was: what about those who'd already died? Will they miss out on the return of the Lord Jesus? Would Jesus return and he's going into glory with his people—would that only be for those who were alive at his coming?

So Paul answers the question to them. He assures them that Christ's resurrection and his coming, his return—which we'll be starting to celebrate in Advent very soon—were not just for him alone, and were not just for those who are left alive alone.

There are parts of Matthew's Gospel that we remember very easily, about the curtain in the Temple being torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross; but the two verses after that tell us—and I'll read them to us now—from Matthew 27:51–53: <sup>51</sup> *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split <sup>52</sup> and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. <sup>53</sup> They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.* The resurrection of Jesus assures our own resurrection, **and** the resurrection of the Thessalonians who had died.

Yes, there is grief when a person dies. At Christian funerals, the grief is real. We mourn; we cry; we're very sad that the ones we have loved are gone from us. But for those of us who are Christian, there is hope. We are not overcome by despair or hopelessness, but we know that in the midst of our grief—which the Lord Jesus shares: remember he wept at the tomb of Lazarus—we are not overwhelmed because there is hope.

The image of the return of the Lord Jesus that Paul speaks about to his friends in Thessalonians—he speaks of the trumpet of God; a fanfare; the angel shouting; and a mighty procession of people going out to welcome the Lord Jesus when he returns—and first among those are the faithful dead. Just as in a mighty Roman procession, the honoured guests are the first to go out and greet a royal visitor. So it is here: Paul assures his friends that those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise from the dead and go and be with Jesus; then those who are living, whenever it will be, will join with them to welcome the honoured king Jesus.

Those who are alive will join with them, and so the apostle can say to his friends in verse 17: *And so we will be with the Lord forever.* <sup>18</sup> *Therefore encourage one another with these words.* Yes, we grieve in the midst

of death; but we hope in the resurrection to eternal life. The assurance that Christians have, and that Paul spoke to his friends in this letter to the Thessalonians, is that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ assures their, and our own, resurrection to be with the Lord.

Well secondly, the question seems to arise for these early Christians who were wondering: When will Jesus return? When will this be?

This question has occupied the minds of many people, Christian and non-Christian, and it has been a happy hunting ground for everyone from Nostradamus to Dan Brown to Rudolph Steiner, who thought Jesus would return in an 'ethereal' way in the 1930s. Christians also have searched the Scriptures and tried to piece together hints or clues as to what was happening in the ancient world, and in the modern world, to try to figure out the time of Jesus' return. So we have people like Hippolytus of Rome and Irenaeus—great fathers of the faith—who were sure that the Lord Jesus would return in the year 500 AD; or even John Wesley, who thought Jesus would return in the year 1836. People use the Bible, but also other things as well: the great pyramid of Giza, and when that was built, to sort of figure out the time and the date of Jesus' return.

Most recently people have thought about the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 as being a key date from which they could figure out the date of Jesus return. **But what do the Scriptures tell us?** Chapter 5:1–2: *Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, <sup>2</sup> for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.*

There is no need for speculation: in fact Jesus said we can't know when he will return. It is a sure event, but the time is unknown and unpredictable. And Paul uses that very earthy image of the time of when a woman goes into labour, suddenly. They can figure out dates, but the baby decides when the baby is ready to come. So the apostle Paul says to his friends, you don't need to speculate about that.

There is no need for idle speculation; rather the question should be: How are we to live in this 'in between' time?—the 'in between' time between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, and his return.

What does Paul say? Beginning in verse 4 of chapter 5 he says: *But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day [of Christ's return] should surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.* And he continues in verse eight: *since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.*

How are we to live when we don't know the day or the hour of Christ's return? We are to live in readiness as God's people. Here Paul speaks of readiness in terms of putting on armour—defensive armour: a breastplate; a helmet: the breastplate is faith and love, and the helmet, the hope of salvation.

This image of the armour of God we know well from Ephesians, where it's more fully developed, and where we have those weapons of attack as well, such as the sword of the Spirit and the Word of God.

But Paul speaks to his friends and says, there are those who live in darkness, who don't acknowledge God and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; but the Thessalonians are children of light, so keep living in the light: keep trusting in the Lord Jesus, and really live your life, but infuse it with faith and love and hope.

Paul finishes this section with this encouragement to his friends: verse 9—which for me I think is the fulcrum of this section—*For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>10</sup> *He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.*

That's a great couple of verses! It really puts paid to those who say, "Well, the resurrection of Jesus is sort of a side issue in the Christian faith. It's all about his life and good teaching." No, we see from here that from the earliest proclamation of the gospel, from very soon after Jesus was raised and ascended to heaven, the death and resurrection and return of the Lord Jesus has always been considered central to God's gospel.

And so we hold on to that hope, and we can have assurance that we, along with those whom we know, whom we love, and who have died in the faith, will be together with the Lord.

I think it was in the 70s or 80s that the great Billy Graham came out to Australia and was interviewed by Mike Willesee on one of the key TV programs of the time. Mike Willesee, being a good Catholic, asked Billy Graham, "Are you sure of being with God when you die?" and Billy Graham answered, "I'm sure of it." Now this answer took Mike Willesee aback! He replied "But isn't that arrogance, that you can assert that you will be with God in heaven? That you will be part of the new creation of the new earth?" And Billy Graham rightly answered, "No, it's not arrogance. I'm just listening to what the Lord said and promised; because it's not about us, it's about him."

As we age, as we face illness, and some of us face death; when we deal with those whom we know and love who have died even in this past year from our own number; it is right that we grieve their passing. It is right that we're sad and that we weep and that we honour them. But we can also be sure where they are: they are with the Lord, as we will be with the Lord—not because of us, but because of his grace, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his promised return, where we will all be with him together, and rejoice in him. Of that Jesus has spoken: of that we can be sure. Amen.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:12–28

### 'Timeless faithfulness'

14th November

by Catriona Johnson

<sup>12</sup> *Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you.* <sup>13</sup> *Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.* <sup>14</sup> *And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.* <sup>15</sup> *Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.*

<sup>16</sup> *Rejoice always,* <sup>17</sup> *pray continually,* <sup>18</sup> *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

<sup>19</sup> *Do not quench the Spirit.* <sup>20</sup> *Do not treat prophecies with contempt* <sup>21</sup> *but test them all; hold on to what is good,* <sup>22</sup> *reject every kind of evil.*

<sup>23</sup> *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>24</sup> *The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.*

<sup>25</sup> *Brothers and sisters, pray for us.* <sup>26</sup> *Greet all God's people with a holy kiss.* <sup>27</sup> *I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.*

<sup>28</sup> *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Next Sunday, we will be celebrating 170 years of ministry at St John's and the Archbishop will be celebrating alongside us. It's a long time isn't it, and certainly something worth celebrating.

Now, I don't know much about the history of St John's, I'm sure I'll find out more about it next Sunday. But there is one thing that I feel safe to say: that we are able to celebrate this anniversary because of the faithfulness of the congregation over all those years, the people of St John's, and also St Andrew's and Holy Spirit.

Faithful, steadfast worship, by people like you coming each week, worshipping, singing God's praises, loving and serving Jesus and others, living life as Christians together. And even during months of lockdown, we were still able to hold together as a faithful church, thanks and praise to the Lord! This faithfulness that will keep Banyule going for another 170 years. And this is the faith that Paul was praising the Thessalonians for in this letter that we heard from today. This is the faith that will keep their church strong.

Paul longs for this church, indeed any church, to last, and although his encouragement and advice is almost 2000 years old, it is as true today as it was back then. And will continue to be true until the return of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Today, I'm going to speak to you about how this letter, written to a very new church, can teach us about what it means to be faithful, and how being faithful is what turns new churches into old churches and into even older churches.

Over the last few weeks as we've been studying Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, we've got to know these new followers of Jesus. We've felt Paul's concern for them that even though their faith is known everywhere (verse 1:8) it is not always welcome. For as a result of their allegiance to a king other than Caesar, to Christ the King, they are being persecuted, and in many ways, their lives seem harder than before. We learnt that the Thessalonians are worried about those among them who have died, perhaps because of their persecution, and we read of the great care that Paul takes to confirm that their loved ones will be raised from the dead, just as they will be, when Jesus returns. We are there as Paul encourages them, urging them to go on living quietly, living as God wants them to, while waiting in hope for the return of Christ, Christ the Saviour who died so that they, and all believers, can live with him forever.

And so, now that we have walked alongside Paul as he cares for this brand-new church full of faith and hope, but still feeling their way, we come to the end of his letter, and Paul's final advice to them. This advice is not unique to the Thessalonians: in fact this list of instructions in verses 12–22 is very similar to that in Romans 12:12–18, for example. It's a list of things that are fundamental for any new Christian to know, a standard list that Paul could deliver to any number of churches as they learn how to live as Christians in often hostile cultures with a clash of morals. It's a picture of what a faithful church looked like, and one that is well placed to stand the test of time and adversity.

Paul gives instruction in five main areas. His first instruction is that good leaders are crucial to a well-functioning church, and he strongly encourages the Thessalonians to both acknowledge and respect their leaders, that is, *those who work amongst you, care for you, and instruct you* (verses 12–13). We don't know if these leaders were appointed or naturally emerged using the gifts that God had given them. But Paul's message is the same: recognise them as legitimate leaders, hold them in the highest regard, not for who they are, but for the work that they do among you. Be loyal to them and love them. And live in peace with them and with each other. Although Paul does not dwell on it, there was evidently some tension in this church: idle and disruptive people (verse 14), and a hint of retaliation (verse 15), and so Paul specifically calls for intentional peaceful relations among church members. This church needs to be united and conflict free if it is going to withstand persecution from outside.

And secondly, if the church is going to be united and speak with one voice, all members need to participate in caring for their Christian community, not just the leaders (verse 14). As Paul wrote in verse 11, everyone has a mutual responsibility to encourage each other, to build each other up in their faith, and here specifically to warn those who are idle and disruptive (verse 14), to encourage those who are discouraged (in the face of persecution), help those who are weak and who need support from the church, and to be patient particularly with those who are creating conflict within the church.

Thirdly, if there was conflict in this church, there could be temptation to take revenge on those who lay at the root of it and as fallen humans, we are drawn to do this. But Paul teaches to always do good both within the church and to those outside (verse 15).

Fourthly, not only should the Thessalonians do good, but they should also be constant in joy, prayer, and gratitude: at all times and in every situation (Paul uses the words "always," "continually," "in all circumstances" (verses 16–18)) even in the face of suffering and persecution. I don't know about you, but for me, being intentional about these things over the last few months has really helped me focus on God and on his faithfulness to me, on how much his presence through his Spirit fills me with so much hope and joy. And I also resonate with Paul's encouragement to the Thessalonians, not only to pray, rejoice and give thanks, but to do so continually so that these things are always on their minds, part of their daily lives, confident that they can come before God as children to their

Father, knowing that his desire for them is always good.

And lastly, some members of the church were rejecting all prophecy, with a blanket ban, and Paul addresses this in verses 19–22. Paul teaches (1 Cor 14) that the main purpose of Christian prophecy was not to foretell the future, but to strengthen, encourage, comfort, and build up the community. Here, Paul teaches them to be discerning and listen to the Holy Spirit. And in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, we hear that later there were problems with false prophecies when this church embraced a false teaching regarding the day of the Lord. Paul suspected that a prophecy had possibly been the source of this erroneous belief. This was a danger to a new church of new believers who were just feeling their way as they learnt about their new Christian life and Paul wanted to alert them to beware.

So this is the list of basic Christian teachings that Paul believes are things that the Thessalonians need to do to be a faithful church. It is these sorts of actions that will help them lead holy lives, how they are to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

But perhaps it is in Paul's final prayer in this letter that he gives his best piece of advice to the Thessalonians (verses 23–24). It is his assurance that God is faithful. That he is the one who is working in all believers to make them holy, sanctifying them. And he does this completely, spirit, soul and body, so completely that they will be blameless, that they will be able to be with our Lord Jesus Christ when he returns. God is faithful and he will do this, of that Paul has no doubt.

Have you ever been let down? It hurts, doesn't it? I remember as a kid growing up in Devonport asking Mum and Dad time and time again if I could meet Dad's parents. I never did and it hurt me deeply. But I know that God will never do this to me. He will never let me down.

So why is this so important to the Thessalonians? Because they, like us, want to have faith in a trustworthy God. They are a new church, they are being persecuted, they are being challenged by fake apostles who are saying that they speak the word of God, and they are uncertain that their loved ones are going to heaven. They want God to be faithful; otherwise, if he is untrustworthy, what is this mess that Paul has gotten them in to. Paul's prayer in verses 23–24 is a very simple prayer but it is so powerful to allay the concerns that the Thessalonians might have.

Paul's prayer life is rich and his list of prayer points must have been huge, after all he often mentions in his letters that he is praying for all those to whom he writes. But he doesn't just pray for these new churches, he encourages them to pray for him as well. Living together as brothers and sisters in Christ is not, for Paul, about living separate individual lives, even if separated by distance, but it is instead a rich involvement in each other's lives and walk with Christ, thanking God for each other and raising each other up to him in prayer. So after praying for his brothers and sisters, Paul asks them to pray for him and his ministry co-workers (verse 25).

Paul intended that his letters would be read aloud to the church assembly as it gathered together, and as part of these meetings Paul encourages the churches, to greet each other with a holy kiss (verse 26) and he encourages the Thessalonians to do likewise.

A holy kiss was a bit like passing the peace for us, that shows that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, it reinforces the bond between us, a form of solidarity, and is something that Paul mentions quite a lot (e.g. 2 Cor 13:12, Romans 16:16).

And in these gatherings of the church, Paul didn't just encourage, rather he charges the Thessalonians to ensure that his letter is read to all believers in the church. This is a letter that Paul wants everyone to hear, those who can't read, those who are causing disruption, those who need admonishing, those who are causing conflict. He wants everyone to hear what he has to say, so that not only would his letter instruct, encourage, and correct the Thessalonians, but it would also bring them together. And it would also reinforce Paul's relationship with them, representing both his presence and authority.

Finally, as he so often does, Paul closes with a blessing that our Lord's grace is with them. This is the foundation of their faith and ours, that God's grace flows from Jesus, our sole Saviour and King.

So, looking back at this letter, on the one hand, we have Paul, the faithful apostle, mature in his faith, saturated with the gospel and deeply convicted that Jesus is Lord. He has been, and will continue to be, tested and persecuted as he brings the good news of Jesus to the ends of the known ancient world. He understands his faults, in fact he boasts of his own weakness, because God's power is made perfect in his weakness.

And on the other, we have the Thessalonians, new Christians with eager faith, fanned by the Holy Spirit, talked about everywhere (verse 1:8), and who Paul is grateful to God for because of their 'work produced by faith, their labour prompted by love, and their endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ' (verse 1:3). Through Paul, they are learning the ways of their Lord Jesus Christ, how they are to live, and what it means to be faithful. Paul encouraging the Thessalonians: mature faith, encouraging new faith, all resting on the faithfulness of God, the one who calls all believers to him, the one who transforms us all into the likeness of Christ, and the one who will come again to be with us for eternity.

It's the beginnings of the church, that has only been in existence for just a few years, but already Paul is teaching them how to be faithful and to be there for the long haul. Paul's advice is as valid today as it was those 2000 years ago. It is as valid to a church that is celebrating 170 years of ministry as it was to one only a few years old. And as valid to St John's now as it will be when it celebrates its 200 years of ministry, or 300 years, or 400 ...

Let's revisit Paul's list of attributes of a faithful church, and I'll leave it up to you to rate Banyule, how we are going.

- Are we grateful for leaders, and do we respect them, hold them in the highest regard, encourage them, and nurture new leaders;
- Do we all take responsibility to encourage others, help others, instruct others, and do it patiently;
- Is conflict minimised and worked through with openness, respect and love, and do we always strive to do good;
- Do we have an attitude of rejoicing, prayer and gratitude, confident that God's presence

always gives us something to be joyful about, no matter what happens;

- Do we trust the Holy Spirit, and can we discern God's word.

If you haven't scored Banyule 10 out of 10, then there are things that we can do. I think that Banyule scores pretty high, but we are human after all, so there are always things that we can improve on. God is the one who is sanctifying us after all.

What might these things be? How can you help? What excites you about St John's being here, faithfully worshipping for another 170 years, and how can you help that happen?

This passage is the end of a letter from a faithful follower of Jesus to new believers growing in their faith in Jesus. And in a sense, this sermon also marks an ending. It is my last sermon to you. Although I will still be with Banyule until December 26 and I look forward to celebrating our faithful Saviour's birth with you over the coming weeks. You have been the faithful, more mature Christians who have nurtured, taught, and encouraged me, as Paul did with the Thessalonians, and like the Thessalonians were to Paul. I am so very grateful to you all. As Paul would encourage them to do, I ask that you continue to hold me in your prayers. And with that thought, let me close in prayer.

*Heavenly Father, We ask that you, God of peace, sanctify us through and through. May our whole spirits, souls and bodies be kept blameless at the coming of you Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. May you help us remember that you have called us and that you are faithful, and you will do this. We continually ask that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us.*

*And we ask for this in the name of your Son and in the power of your Spirit, Amen*

## 'Real News'

The First Sunday in Advent, 28 November  
**Jer 33:14–16; Ps 25:1–10; Luke 21:25–36**

by Patrick Senn

<sup>25</sup> "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup> He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. <sup>31</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

<sup>32</sup> "Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

<sup>34</sup> "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

## Introduction

'The Bad Guys are Winning'. This is the title of the December issue of *The Atlantic*, the flagship current events magazine. The cover of the magazine glows with a dark, almost blood-like red. And standing beside each other in one row are five men: Nicolas Maduro, Alexander Lukashenko, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and Recep Erdogan. All of them national leaders, all of them autocrats. The main essay of the December issue of *The Atlantic*, written by Anne Applebaum, informs us that while the story of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a slow, uneven victory of liberal democracy over authoritarian ideologies like communism and fascism, the story of our current century is one where the opposite is true. Liberal democracy is losing, authoritarian ideologies are winning.

## Housewife President

At the start of the essay, we meet Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, a Belarusian refugee living in Lithuania. She is an ordinary woman, married with two children. She also is unofficially the winner of last year's Belarusian presidential election. She never intended to run for president. It actually was her husband who began the presidential campaign. After trying to buy a house, he ran into corruption and bureaucracy. He began documenting and publishing it online. This struck a chord. More and more people joined him, and he drove around the country collecting their stories in a car with the phrase 'Real News' plastered on the side.

But, as his campaign gained momentum, the government clamped down, arrested him and put him in prison, where he still is as I am speaking. His wife took over the growing campaign and was going to win. The election was held, and Lukashenko announced he won 80 percent of the vote. Mass protests erupted, with all kinds of people participating; pensioners, mums, factory workers, and even members of the police and military. Over a million people joined in, in the country of 10 million people.

However, things turned ugly. The police started forcibly detaining civilians, torturing them, raping them, and even murdering them. This sudden and violent turn, Lukashenko owes to Putin, who the article tells us, *'figured out a long time ago, mass arrests are unnecessary if you can jail, torture, or possibly murder just a few key people.'* This will frighten the public to stay home, to become apathetic, and to lose hope. Lukashenko and Putin are now working closely together. While Europe and most Western countries have put heavy sanctions on Belarus, the country gets by with heavy Russian investments.

## Deportations for Immunisations

In 2009, Turkey's then PM Erdogan accused the CCP of genocide repression against the Uighurs. This makes sense. The Uighurs are ethnically distant cousins of the Turks. Of course he would stand up for them. However, in recent years, as Erdogan has relied more on financial investments and COVID-19 vaccines from China, his tone has shifted. His own state sponsored newspaper recently hailed the glorious success of the CCP for its 100-year anniversary. Now, Uighurs in Turkey who fled China report being handed bogus terrorism charges and being deported back.

All of this is happening while we started realising that we might not be the good guys we thought we are. The fall of Afghanistan

into the hands of the Taliban was not just a devastating betrayal of a war-torn country. It also marks the end of American/Western exceptionalism, the idea that liberal democratic values—our values—can be exported and applied all over the world. And who can forget that instead of sending soldiers to protect and save, our taxes paid for blood-thirsty aggressors who murdered civilians for sport. Not only are the bad guys winning, it turns out we are part of them. All of this makes for disheartening, disappointing news.

## The Most Disagreeable City to Live in

Even in our own city, we are not immune from the evil that tears the world apart. Since we emerged from the lockdown, the peace of our city has been disturbed over the controversial pandemic bill. MPs receiving death threats, people walking our streets with make-shift gallows, and a neo-Nazi arrested for inciting others to murder the premier. And if the chaos in our city is not enough, we all face our individual trials. Many of you are still mourning the death of your husband and wife, you feel lonely as your relatives are too busy to contact you, you suffer from your ageing and weakening body, and you already are dreading how everyone will behave during the Christmas day lunch, let alone how to deal with your anti-vaxxer relatives. Despite the tinsel, the Christmas trees, the long summer days, our world is in darkness.

## Advent begins in the Dark

And this is the place where our church year begins anew. Advent begins in the dark. Before we can really receive the joy and the good news of Christmas, we acknowledge and gaze into the darkness. Before we can rejoice that a Saviour is born, we must realise that we really need to be saved. Before we rejoice that the angels sing, we must lament that the demons roar. In our Gospel reading, Jesus informs us that none of the trials and tribulations of this world are a surprise. Just as Sviatlana's husband drove around Belarus with a car that proclaimed 'Real news', so Jesus gives us the real news about what we can expect in this world.

## "Not one Stone"

Our passage is part of what is called the Temple Discourse. It appears in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and it is called this because it takes place at the Jerusalem temple. Earlier in verse 5 we read, *"Some of [Jesus'] disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."* Among the many radical things that Jesus said, this was perhaps one of the most radical. To Jews, the Jerusalem Temple was one of the most important sites in the world, their crowning achievement. Jews still, to this day, every year mourn and lament its destruction. It was the cultural, political, and religious centre of life. Like the MCG, Parliament House, and the Arts centre combined into one. The temple was not just a building, it was a visible promise that God chose Israel and will dwell with his people forever. It was sacred. And yet, Jesus prophesied that it would be destroyed and that the nations will be in anguish, the people fainting from terror, and even the heavenly bodies will be shaken. And that is exactly what happened in the year

70, when the Romans entered Jerusalem and destroyed the holy city. The stones of the temple that have been thrown down you can still see today.

## "My Kingdom is done!"

We also are experiencing the destruction of our crowning achievements. No matter what we build, we see it ruined. Australians, we hold liberal democracy sacred. And as *The Atlantic* reports, it is falling to pieces. The Andrews Government has been riding a wave of legislative success, passing new Acts and 'getting on with the job', and one rogue MP shows up and shatters the Pandemic Bill that was expected to pass. As individuals, we just managed to bounce back from the long lockdown last year, re-building our friendships and businesses, and yet, another lockdown happened and one by one it all came crushing down. The kingdoms that we build do not last. The trophies that we receive begin to rust.

But the promise of God and the good news for us is that there is one who will remain strong and one who will overcome the decay of the world: Jesus, our Lord who currently is seated in heaven with power and great glory. As he said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*

Advent begins in the dark. It is the season where we acknowledge head on all the bad news in the world, the suffering, and death, and the times of trial. But it is also the time when we receive anew the real news: That Jesus is enthroned in heaven, and will one day return to defeat all evil, to judge the living and the dead, and to establish the perfect kingdom of God. This is the real news. This is what we re-orient our lives, our dreams, and our hopes around this season. And Jesus tells us how we do this in the last few verses, *"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ... Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."*

I mentioned before, during the Belarusian democracy protests, there were some soldiers and police officers who joined the protests. What they actually did was cast off their uniforms and burn them in fire. That is as good a picture of Advent as anything. This is the season where, as we pray in the collect, we cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light. Just as the soldiers and police officers realised they were serving an evil and tyrannical regime, so we Christians put off everything that takes our allegiance away from Jesus. We renew our hope and expectation in Jesus alone. Democracy will not save us. The president of the USA will not save us. Jesus alone will save us.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the bad guys are winning. And more often than not, we find ourselves actually to be part of them. And that is because, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, the line between good and evil does not run between different people but between every human heart. However, Jesus rescued us from the realm of darkness, and is currently seated in heaven as the Power over all powers, the King over all kings, the Almighty over all autocrats. The bad guys will not win. Jesus will.

# Parish Council Notes

## Special meeting Tuesday 9th November

### St John's Heidelberg maintenance

- Peter Harper initially:
  - \$50,000 to make safe the stained glass windows, flashing for the roof, and bell tower
  - Stage 2 – further \$100,000–\$150,000
- Diocese advised a heritage architect (David Wagner) be consulted, who advised:
  - Any works at St John's need to comply with the overlay of Heritage Victoria
  - A conservation management plan is needed
  - Permits from HV can take 6–12 months
  - HV will probably insist on restoring Colorbond downpipes/gutters to original copper and lead
  - DW VERY concerned about large crack in the middle of the building wall on the northern side
  - Lots of symptoms; cause unknown, but could be water: direct away from building
  - DW was asked to provide a quote for a report into the needs of the St John's building.
- Heritage Victoria Conservation Management Plan a **must** as needed to secure approval for any work; also guide for future maintenance.
- The estimated cost for the reports and advice would be around \$60,000.
- The cost of any actual work on the building will be probably \$660,000.
- Heritage grants only cover 50% of costs: how are we to pay for this?
  - \$60k to find out the problems we have.
  - \$60k for repairs to stop further deterioration.
  - Then we will have the info to apply for grants and to go to fundraising.
- Heritage grants will only be considered when there is a heritage conservation management plan: need to be in dialogue with HV.
- We can use Crystal's bequest for the preparatory work. Have \$129,000 (Crystal's bequest) and \$10,000 (Heritage fund). Fits Crystals' love for St John's. Not an option to do nothing.
- If we need to move the memorial garden – mooted by DW – we could make it in honour of Crystal, in SW corner of the property – 'Crystal's Corner' with gazebo, sensitively done.
- Should we get other quotes? Diana of Dio thinks these amounts are reasonable.
- Before signing, need to let Dio know:
  - We are under-resourced
  - We need their technical advice
  - We are a small parish with 3 big jobs on the go: how can we get assistance?
- We must supply a report on this to the APM.
- Motions:
  - Parish Council agrees in principle to undertake, in close consultation with the Diocese of Melbourne, the necessary preparatory work on St John's Heidelberg Church Building up to and including a Heritage Victoria Permit.
  - Parish Council empowers the Subcommittee consisting of Chris Hall, Andrew Fegan and the Vicar to speak with the Diocese and the area Bishop about this work.
  - Parish Council authorises the drawing down of up to \$60,000 from the bequest of Crystal Dunn to pay for the report and the other investigations within the preparatory work.

### St Andrew's Hall, tree through the roof

- Everything will be covered by Dio insurance
- Tarp is on the roof, temporary patch to come
- It is not yet safe to occupy
- An asbestos roof cannot be patched. Re-roof or demolish? Dio may want our opinion.

## Zoom meeting of Monday 15th November

Final PC meeting for Peter and Judy. Thank you to them for their service and ministry!

## Correspondence

- Ascent Church – request to use Holy Spirit Sunday morns. Denise hesitant. Consecrated for Anglican services. Watsonia population to boom: possible future Sunday am service at Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit too small for Ascent? Short-term financial gain, but long-term may hinder our ministry. Jonathan knows minister: meet but no promises. Alpha at HS next year?

## Preventing Violence Against Women

- Received 60 'Safe and Savvy' booklets, to help vulnerable people escape scams. Told a speaker not possible. Many scams; perhaps distribute at APM.
- Upcoming service at St Paul's Cathedral with a focus on preventing family violence.

## Diocesan standards: progressing.

**OH&S:** COVID-19 Dio advice emailed to PC.

## Vicar's report

- Thanks to Peter McKay (Churchwarden) and Judy Thomson (Secretary), both ending terms of service. Contributions and service to parish and PC have been a great blessing.
- Great to be able to meet together again yesterday. Numbers down for St John's and Holy Spirit; expect these to grow in coming weeks.
- Joyous to be present for baptism of Jiawen Ren – grateful for the support of this parish.
- Additional service for unvaccinated/not disclosing 1 pm Sundays at St John's – two held so far – no-one in attendance.
- Rev Jonathan Lopez began with us on 1 Nov. Attended all three services Sunday 14 Nov.
- Peter Carolane + 3 from Merri Creek attending 170 years bash 21 Nov, leading two songs.
- Watsonia Town Square meeting 21 October. Banyule Council will send offer of purchase to Diocese – Matt will contact us after Diocesan evaluation. Community consultation now open.
- Rosanna Development meeting 21 October. Bishop Kate did not attend, but I did keep her in the loop. Notes sent to PC. Emailed Nick White 12 Nov – he replied he is 'on it'.
- Emailed Mark Lane again to request info on state of play; got Store Manager meeting notice.
- Prep for Annual Parish Meeting progressing – papers out by 21 Nov.
- In day 3 of the Parish Support Team training with ADOM: teams deployed when requested by Vicar to help a parish through a difficult time.
- My week off (25 Oct – 1 Nov) was terrific and timely break; I was able to spend time with a friend who has terminal cancer, and another who is moving to Qld in December.
- I plan to take time off to visit my family from 28 December – 23 January.

## Curate's report

- Verbally presented. Continue offering online services to wider community? Denise & Jono talking. Parishioners without internet? DVDs as during lockdown not feasible time-wise.

## Warden's report

- Signed up Syncom Auditing for annual smoke alarm, biennial electrical and gas safety checks now required: \$680 per 2 years per property.
- Lawn-mowing fees have increased.
- Glenn is downsizing his work: will continue our mowing, but not guttering. Recommends Roger Curry, Four Seasons Lawns & Gardens.
- Problem with the asset of \$591,663.48 in the balance sheet (not Emmi's doing): cost of Holy Spirit, as land value improvement; but not our land, so incorrect. Explain in report to APM.
- Succession
  - Trying to keep Rosemary Bellair informed of matters going onto the next wardens' watch.

## 18/12–16 Jika St

- Back door sticking. Recommended adjusting hinges rather than planing the door.

## 57 Gloucester Drive

- Guttering: Council plans received. Include roof plans, but lacking in detail. Peter Harper and I will inspect soon to discuss what to do.
- Lease expires 17th January, offering another 12-month lease; rent the same.

## St John's

- Church building works reported separately.
- Banyule Council grant application successful, giving us the maximum \$10,000 for asphaltting car park, but cost of work was \$49,852. Were going to pay the difference out of Crystal's bequest, but this is now committed to the church work. Unhappily recommend polite refusal. PC decided: contact Council, ask for extension of time to consider. [Council contacted: refusal now would allow future requests without impact, extension would cause bad feeling, so refused.]
- Asked for advice and quotes on garden retaining wall from six specialists. Three: no reply; two: not interested; one gave name of bricklayer, who became a close contact of a Covid case, then uncontactable.
- Melbourne Water have orally accepted responsibility for tree down on tennis court fencing. Work probably in December. Will prune other trees also; might remove some & plant natives. Tennis courts will have to be closed that day. After, need to settle with them over repairs.

## St Andrew's

- Northern side fence done, at no cost to us, thanks to good neighbour Andrew SkoroBogaty.
- Parish Hall light circuit cannot be fixed until Hall is declared safe.
- Retaining wall near Fellowship Hall: same as for the St John's retaining wall.
- Big blue spruce came down on night of 28th October, onto the Parish Hall. No damage to brickwork, but asbestos-cement roofing broken. Diocesan insurance covering and organising the work. The tree has been craned off, but regrettably during this some branches of the nearby, significant, Cedar of Lebanon were broken. A tarp has been put over the hole in the roof. Might need better temporary patch, remove sagging guttering, & replace damaged ceiling panels, before the building considered safe to re-occupy. No time-line for this: getting suitable people and equipment is difficult.

## 80 Watsonia Rd

- The shed door I wanted (non-rotting) has to be specially-made for the size. Unfortunately very large premium: \$1036.54 (plus installation). Cheaper options considered, but not recommended: PC defers to judgement of warden.

## 72 Watsonia Rd (car park)

- 12-Month lease extension paperwork being sorted out; rent \$16,406.40 for the 12 months.

## Holy Spirit

- Still waiting on Mark Lane for new op shop draft.
- Telstra have sent Allan Way a bill for the phone after it was ported to Aussie Broadband, plus a reconnection fee (!!!). Allan will not pay and has written to them. If necessary could go to the Telecommunications Ombudsman.

- Thanks to Parish Council for its support of my work, and Emmi for prompt payments.

## Op shop report: tabled

## Finance report

- Ca \$11,000 loss for October.
- \$7000 grant from diocese for Jono's position.

## St John's building subcommittee: update

## Watsonia Town Square

- Another meeting 16 Nov – Denise will attend.

## General business

- Archbishop Philip here Sunday 21 November for 170 years of St John's confirmed.

*Minutes by Denise & Patrick, précis by Editor*