BANYULE BABBLE

The Newsletter of the Anglican Parish of Banyule
St John's Heidelberg ⁂ Holy Spirit Watsonia

DECEMBER 2025

Office: 1 Burgundy Street Heidelberg 3084 ph. 9457 1144
Ministers: Canon **Denise Nicholls** 0438 856 376 **Xiaoxi Lou** 0400 063 307
Weiyi Lou 0415 959 861 **Helen McAlley** 0447 372 972
Internet: www.banyuleparish.org.au email banyuleparish@gmail.com
Editor (author of all unsigned articles): Peter McKay 9459 5852 petergmckay@hotmail.com

THE X FACTOR

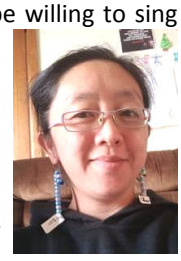
Well, it's DECEMBER! And you all know what that means, right? Time for a busy buying of gifts, of preparing meals, and uniquely…a time to SING TOGETHER. There are not many times everyone willingly sings along and wants to join choirs but singing Christmas carols together is one of those rare times.

We know that music brings many people together; helps us to rejoice and grieve; express our emotion; and even teach us theological truths (often without our even realizing it!). Denise's recent request for everyone's favourite hymns now has become a list that lives on the office computer so that as we prepare services, we can refer to it! Please know that your requests have been received!

About 10 years ago (in only 2015…! Where has the time gone?) at a special family-focused service, we were thinking of how to celebrate Christmas. In the main service, they were preaching through the songs we find in the Gospel of Luke, as different people like Mary (Luke 1:46–56), Zechariah (Luke 1:67–79) and Simeon's song (Luke 2:29–32) celebrated Jesus' coming through song. And so, we decided to modify some of the kid's songs we were singing, and change some lyrics so that they sounded like very simple versions of Mary, Simeon, and Zechariah's songs. They all involved a lot of 'ehoh' similar to soccer matches, arm waving and fun! The kids loved it! Well, why am I telling you this? Because these songs weren't carols but they WERE songs that spoke about Jesus. Just as those songs might have been modified to suit our kids: let's make sure to take this time of Advent to make sure we are singing songs in celebration of Jesus. Maybe you'll sing songs from our favourite hymn list; maybe some carols that others know. Maybe, like our little 2015 group, you might make up some new songs! Either way, this Advent…let's make sure we keep singing about the birth of our Lord and Saviour. Let us join with the angels and shepherds as they sang:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

During this special Advent season of celebration around the birth of Jesus, it's a time to sing and rejoice. It's also a time for us to make full use of the fact that many will be willing to sing about Jesus! So, let's make sure we warm up our voices; dust off our favourite carols; take a close look at the lyrics and be ready to explain them to those who might not know the meaning behind them all that well. Let's keep singing about the goodness of our Lord!



Xiaoxi

Annual Parish Meeting

The Editor regrettably missed the meeting, and cannot report on it. Fortunately Rhonda Taylor took the minutes; a précis can be found on the last page.

mainly music: December 2025

This is a **SAD** occasion, as this will be my last *mainly music* article for the foreseeable future. As intimated in Denise's annual report, a very difficult and disappointing decision has been made. After seventeen years of focussing on connecting with and making ourselves known to people in our community, our parish will cease offering this valuable ministry from next year.

Despite numerous attempts, in a variety of ways, to recruit new families, the numbers attending has remained **LOW** between four and six families for most of the year.

It will be especially disappointing for the current families, as this year's core group are quite young and the social interaction between both adults and children is very well established, such that they probably would wish to return in 2026.

Regrettably, this means we'll (parish, church and volunteers) no longer be participating in the lives of the families in our community – encouraging them, providing care, establishing friendships, introducing them to other families, praying for them and providing wonderful sessions for all to delight in. Over many years, countless families who have attended have commented on the welcoming and friendly atmosphere that they have experienced. For many, this was the highlight of their week and a chance to interact with others on a more than superficial level.

There is a formal process that must be followed with *mainly music* International and I'll commence that soon.

I thank every current team member and those who have served in the past, including those from Heidelberg and Rosanna in the pre-Covid era. You have been a blessing to those around you; volunteering brings about a space that enriches the lives of people. I extend my whole-hearted gratitude for all the energy, constant and tireless work, in many different roles, to all those involved. There are too many names to mention, but you know who you are.

I'm sure everyone who has served as a team member considers that it has been a privilege to serve the community and the parish.

Rhonda Taylor

Editor: *This is the end of an era, an era of remarkable service by many volunteers, and very much appreciated over many years, both by the parish and by children and parents.*

Thank you, Rhonda and Rosemary and all the volunteers, for all you have done.

This Month – December

Wednesday 3rd: 11 am Iris Grange; 3.00 pm Strathalan

Sunday 7th *Advent 2:* 9.30 am St John's (all-age); 5 pm Holy Spirit
Isaiah 11:1–10; Matthew 3:1–12

Saturday 13th: 3–6 pm Christmas cheer at Vicarage

Sunday 14th *Advent 3:* 9.30 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit
Isaiah 35:1–10; Song of Mary APBA p.9; Matthew 11:2–11

Wednesday 17th: 3.30 pm Roshana

Sunday 21st *Advent 4:* 9.30 am Combined: **Holy Spirit** (carols)
Isaiah 7:10–16; Matthew 1:18–25

Wednesday 24th *Christmas Eve:* 5 pm St John's Children's Service; 9 pm St John's Communion

Thursday 25th *Christmas Day:* 9.30 am St John's; 9.30 am Holy Spirit
Isaiah 9:2–7; Hebrews 1:1–4; John 1:1–14

Sunday 28th *Christmas 1:* 9.30 am Combined: **Holy Spirit**
Isaiah 63:7–9; Matthew 2:13–23

Wanted

• More op shop volunteers

Money: October

Income:	Giving:	$105,734.42
	Other:	$1,682,759.34
	Total:	$1,788,493.76
Expenses:		$34,584.07
Surplus:		**$1,753,909.69**

Giving was up hugely, thank you to very generous donors. We also had $1,669,957.69 transferred from the sale proceeds from St Andrew's: this money can only be used for building works and renovation.

St John's and St Andrew's Memorial Garden

Bishop Brad will visit us on Sunday 1 February 2026 for his pastoral visit to our parish. This will include the consecration of the new, beautiful St John's and St Andrew's Memorial Garden. Please advise anyone that you know who would like to be invited. We will send an invitation to all people interested *if* we have their email or street address.

Please email Denise at denise.banyule@gmail.com with the subject heading 'Memorial Garden'.

Ordination of Sarah Coe and Michelle Loveday

Sarah Coe, our student minister in 2023, will be ordained Deacon at St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne on **Saturday 7 February 2026**. Also ordained that day will be Michelle Loveday, who spent two months with us here earlier this year. All are welcome to attend.

Gun Soo Senn

The *Babble* regrets to record the death of Patrick Senn's mother on 30th October in Switzerland. Her husband Assad and children Patrick and Deborah were by her side. The funeral was at Geneva on 7th November.

Christmas and beyond!

Sunday December 21	**9.30 am** Holy Spirit: Carols Service
Wednesday December 24	**5 pm** St John's: Children's carols **9 pm** St John's
Thursday December 25	**9.30 am** Holy Spirit **9.30 am** St John's
Sunday December 28	**9.30 am** Holy Spirit
Sunday January 4	**9.30 am** St John's
Sunday January 11	**9.30 am** Holy Spirit
Sunday January 18	**9.30 am** St John's
Sunday January 25	**9.30 am** Holy Spirit
Sunday February 1	**9.30 am** St John's: Commissioning

Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

Wednesday November 26th is our last meeting for 2025. After our Cuppa & Service, then our business meeting, Elsie will continue her talk on her three days' air trip to Coober Pedy in 2013. We'll finish our meeting with Midday Prayers, then celebrate over lunch at the Watsonia RSL. Our next meeting will be on 28th January 2026 at 10 am. *—Elsie Storr*

Christmas cheer with the Vicar

On Saturday 13 December 3 – 6 pm there will be an open house at the Jika St vicarage for Christmas celebrations. All are welcome!

Thank you from the Editor

The Editor wishes to apologise to the parish for making a spectacle of himself on Sunday 16th (see page 22), and to thank parishioners for their help and support and concern and prayers. The Editor found himself surrounded by nurses and doctors and a wife and wasn't able to fight them all off, and all he could do was continue disrupting the service.

The Editor was taken to the Urgent Care Clinic, where they checked he hadn't had a stroke and then sent him home to bed to stop him bothering them.

Archbishop installed 30th November

The 14th Archbishop of Melbourne, Ric Thorpe, will be installed at 4 pm at St Paul's Cathedral on Advent Sunday 30 November 2025. The parish synod reps (Judy Thomson and the Editor) will be there. We are warned that the service will be 'rich with traditional and contemporary music and worship', and will include 'Psalm Drummers'.

Ric is quoted as saying that energising churches will be a large part of his ministry: 'seeing the whole Church of God thrive, and enabling churches to be healthy, new congregations planted, and struggling churches revitalised'.

The service can be seen at youtube.com/live/W957vtVI50Q

The Diocesan offices are noted for their bright modernity

Mission News

Jude & Andy Benton, Croajingalong Parish, East Gippsland

Jude writes: *'The most exciting news for the Parish of Croajingolong in 2025 was the ordination of Ken Spackman (one of our Mallacoota Wardens) as a Deacon. On Saturday 18 October, a group of around 10 or so from the parish travelled to Sale Cathedral to witness Ken's ordination.'*

Ken Spackman's name has been well known for some time in the Diocese, as he has held various senior administrative positions: General Manager Business Services, Registrar, Chief Executive Officer of the Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation. In August 2021 he stepped down from the Diocese and took up a sea-change, moving to Mallacoota to be a local bank manager (though Jude now refers to his working in a hardware store he owns).

It is perhaps significant that, in his exit interview with *The Melbourne Anglican* at the time, although he spoke a lot about administrative matters, Ken also said, 'Personally, that of which I feel most satisfied is my work with individual survivors of sexual abuse in a church context. I have been privileged to meet around 200 survivors and their advocates leading up to and following the Royal Commission. To hear their story, to tell them that they are believed and to offer an apology on behalf of the institution that I represented was always a profound and moving experience. I will likely never forget the courage and vulnerability of those that came forward after 20 or 30 years to seek redress.'

Although he said, 'It is hard to be involved in the diocese and not to be challenged in one's faith!', he also said that the good had outweighed the bad; and his faith journey has continued in Croajingolong. Jude says, *'Ken is an excellent home group leader and preacher and also has a particular ability to pastorally care for men . . . It has been a privilege to walk alongside Ken through his discernment and ordination preparation.'*

Jude, Ken Spackman, and Bishop Richard at the ordination

Jude also writes: *'While most people have spring, summer, autumn & winter, in Croajingolong, the seasons could be termed,* ***Tourism*** *(December till Easter),* ***Get it done before winter*** *(April/May),* ***Where is everyone?*** *(June – September) and* ***Frantic*** *(October/November).'* In the 'Where is everyone?' season the locals travel north or overseas and, if still at home, stay home because of the bad weather.

Nevertheless, things have happened: *'As part of HOPE25, we hosted a series of movie screenings on Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings. Surprisingly, the Friday morning sessions became the most popular, with several nonchurchgoing locals attending to watch the movie, enjoy refreshments and take part in discussions afterwards.'*

Jude is also finding that holiday home owners are engaging with the church more. And they have had a successful combined home group working through 'Ripple Effect', an Australian-developed series on sharing our faith. *'The series invites participants to intentionally pray each day for five people; that they may have open doors to share their faith with them and the courage to speak when the opportunity arises. We've heard people sharing about the most remarkable God encounters and conversations with their prayed for friends, and we pray these relationships grow.'*

It is now 'Frantic' season. Jude is grateful that as well as Ken's ordination, they have had a visit from the Bishop of Gippsland Richard Treloar, and from Greg Harris, National Director of Bush Church Aid, and his wife Karen. Jude says, 'Sometimes being in the far corner of the state can feel isolating, which is why we appreciate our connections with the Diocese of Gippsland and BCA.'

Jude and Andy are also upgrading their flying skills so they can be used in mission work.

PRAYER POINTS:

- For energy, strength, safety and enough support for our op shop volunteers, during the upcoming busy summer season.
- For ongoing open doors to evangelism and sharing our faith that have been awakened during the 'Ripple Effect' series.
- Safety on the roads and waterways, in the caravan parks and accommodation; may those travelling find peace and enjoyment in their time away.
- Blessing on the SUFM and Theos teams as they will be here over the New Year again.

Jude says, *'We are thankful to each person and parish for their ongoing support and prayer for us here in Croajingolong.'*

Rowan in Indonesia

Rowan had a recent meeting of his Church Council where they prayed and discussed how to invite neighbours and friends to join them at church at Christmas. They also took a photo of Council 'in silly hats':

Rowan spent a weekend in Singapore for Synod (Friday evening and Saturday morning), which was an opportunity to meet other clergy in the diocese in person, including Indonesian clergy that he normally only sees online; and hearing about the work of the diocese in Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam, as well as Indonesia:

On the Sunday afternoon there was an ordination service at the cathedral. Four deacons and seven priests, two (second and third from left) from Indonesia, were ordained:

Also, says Rowan, *'A few weeks ago the young adults group at church asked me to talk about the Anglican services of Morning Prayer and Holy Communion.*

We had a great time talking about the church year and colours, prayer and praise and worship, the creeds, and the Anglican understanding of Holy Communion.

And ... they asked me to come back and speak about the Reformation and the history of the Anglican Church.'

PRAYER POINTS:

- I would appreciate your prayers thanking God for:
  - The opportunity to go to synod and the ordination service;
  - The interest of the young adults in going deeper into worship.
- I would also appreciate your prayers for:
  - Members inviting friends and family to Christmas services;
  - The leadership transition in the Deanery of Indonesia to go smoothly.

Lyn Pearson with Interserve

We are now adding our friend the Rev'd Dr Lyn Pearson to our missions list for regular prayer.

Interserve is an international agency. Its website (https://www.interserve.org/) says: *Our purpose is to make Jesus Christ known through wholistic ministry, in partnership with the global church, amongst the neediest peoples of Asia and the Arab World. Our vision is to see lives and communities transformed through encounter with Jesus Christ.*

At Interserve we seek to serve the neediest peoples of Asia and the Arab world by loving the whole person through word and deed. We are an international and interdenominational organization that serves in partnership with the local church. We currently enjoy members of our Fellowship from over 20 nationalities serving in over 35 national contexts.

In March this year, Lyn was made International Co-Director of Interserve. Interview on the website (edited):

Tell us a bit about yourselves…

I'm based in Australia and call myself ABC, 'Australian born Chinese.' – I'm fourth generation Australian on my mum's side and my dad is from Malaysia. We have a very multicultural, multi-generational family. I'm married to Richbek who has a British background, and we have two Central Asian sons. I enjoy archery and winning at board games – we're all quite competitive! I like coffee and tea. I don't like to study, but I love to learn.

How have you been involved up to now?

I began supporting Interserve when I was a student. I went on to serve as a Partner in Central Asia, where I was also involved as a medical advisor and placements coordinator, and in member care and various other roles. My last role was as Regional Director for East Asia and the South Pacific.

How did you discern that this shared role as International Co-Directors was the way forward?

The most significant thing, from a theological point of view, is who God is. He is God in Trinity, three in one. Being in a relationship with Him, and with each other, is foundational. And it fits Interserve's values. Mission across the globe is becoming more collaborative. As a fellowship, we've seen an increase in shared positions over the last ten years. We see God at work this way across Interserve. It's an exploration, because it's not a job share, it is that we're both International Directors.

What does partnership mean for you?

Partnership is more than collaboration, and it's more than that it 'helps to get the job done'. I think it's mutual submission, love, and grace. Partnership takes place at many different levels, and we partner with God in the gospel – we are co-labourers with Him. It's an amazing privilege.

Going forward, what makes you excited to be part of Interserve?

We have such fantastic people. There's a sense of belonging – when I connect it always feels like 'these are my people'. I can see that despite chaos in our world, God is still on his throne. We hear about amazing things that God is doing through his Church, through Interserve and the wider community. I'm excited to discover what God has in store for us…

What do you think we'll need to navigate in coming years?

One thing that immediately comes to mind is learning to love and listen to people who think very differently to us. Not just from different cultures – perhaps also from the same culture. How can we listen and love, and not just dismiss?

How can we be praying in this new season?

Pray for good listening – not just ears but listening hearts and minds. And pray for the grace and patience to wait and listen to what God wants us to focus on or take up.

https://interserve.org.au/news/introducing-international-co-directors/

A 2011 article by Lyn appears on page 5.

PRAYER POINTS:

- Give thanks that God is building his church, and that we can be part of his mission.
- Pray for wisdom and discernment in leading, and for good relationships with Chris and others on the international Leadership Team.
- Pray for wisdom for what to take on, and what to leave.
- Praise God for a great visit to partners in Chile and Brazil.
- Pray for safe travel and the many online meetings Lyn has each week.
- Pray for good visits with Lyn's dad Robert who is 96 & in care.

A Different Way of Doing Medicine

Lyn Pearson, 1 January 2011

https://interserve.org.au/story/160-a-different-way-of-doing-medicine/

I was only fourteen when I decided I was going to become a medical missionary. In my fourth year of medical school, when it was time to decide where to spend my elective term, I assumed I would be going to Africa – back then I thought all missionaries went to Africa.

But I was surprised to learn that female medical personnel were most needed in Muslim countries, where many women died because there were no women doctors to attend them.

So I ended up doing my medical elective term at the Pennell Memorial Hospital in Bannu, north-west Pakistan. It was in a compound with high fences and armed guards. Women were not allowed outside the compound alone, and we had to cover every part of our body including our head. I have pictures in my mind of old rusty beds, surgical gloves hanging out to dry after use, hot sweet tea and lots of kids with thin mums. Women would travel great distances to come to this hospital, some even on horseback from Afghanistan, to see the famous obstetrician Dr Ruth Coggan.

Stomping on Baby's Bottles

I started to think about holistic health and doing medicine in a different way, after I witnessed a nurse at Pennell Hospital stomping a baby's bottle under her foot. Her strange action started making sense after I learned that bottle-feeding contributed to the malnutrition, infection, growth retardation – and even the death – of babies there.

Big multinational companies sold their milk formulas cheaply, and promoted bottle-feeding as the way of the West, until it became a common belief that good mothers bottle-fed rather than breast-fed. However, many poor village women watered down the formula to make it last longer, depriving their babies of the nutrition necessary for growth. Not only that, the lack of clean water and inability to sterilise bottles frequently led to infection and diarrhoea, then dehydration and death.

My brief time at Pennell Memorial Hospital taught me so much. I learnt the importance of preventative and community medicine. I learnt that even though curative hospital care was exhilarating and necessary, prevention is better than cure. I began to understand that people's health is more than physical, and that it is bound to their poverty, education level, status, economic means, gender and religious beliefs. In short, I had begun to understand about holism.

I probably could not articulate it at the time, but it was there I first understood that being healthy is not as straightforward as I had previously thought. As I began to consider the type of medicine I wanted to be involved in, it was very clear that, even though I enjoyed hands-on healing, my future lay in primary health care, community medicine, teaching and training.

Theological study

I reached another turning point in my Christian journey in Pakistan. While visiting Multan Christian Women's Hospital I had the opportunity to go on an evangelistic ward round. The hospital evangelist would share the gospel with the captive audience of the patients' friends and relatives, who stayed there to care for, wash and feed the patient. I thought it was great that the gospel was shared, but I was uncomfortable with the division: doctors dealt only with the physical, and evangelists dealt only with the spiritual. I didn't want to restrict myself to being only a doctor; I wanted to share the message of Christ myself, and to teach from the Word of God. I realised two major things then: I did not want to do medicine full-time, and I was going to need more theological training than I'd previously thought.

So in 1990 I began full-time theological study, while also working part-time as a GP to help pay my bills. After I finished my theological training, I worked in churches and as an itinerant speaker, still juggling that with part-time GP work. During this time of doing two jobs I was able to reflect on the interaction of the physical, emotional and spiritual. I also did a counselling course which was based on an integrated understanding of the person. We are complex beings and being healthy is a complicated business. Our emotions, hidden or conscious, have a powerful effect on our wellbeing and our perception of the world, and the way we impact others.

Community development

When I applied to become an Interserve Partner, I was willing to go where I was most needed. That turned out to be Central Asia, where the church had grown exponentially since the fall of the Soviet Union, but leaders were young in years and young in faith. I would be serving there as a General Practitioner training other GPs.

This role was a concern to me. Even though the GP training programme was vitally important (it was part of a reform of the whole health system from being very hospital-based to one that is more primary health-care based), it was not the grassroots, community-based medicine that I wanted to do.

My first year there was focused on learning Russian, but I also attended community development training. This was another significant turning point, as I caught the vision of impacting communities in a holistic and grassroots way, where they could be empowered not only to recognise their own problems, but also to solve them with local resources.

By the time my language learning ended, there was a breakthrough in my work situation: my organisation decided to start a community development department. It meant that I got the opportunity to work in a small team that, among other things, did health screening and trained village health workers. Working in the project team was quite a cross-cultural experience, with sometimes four languages needed for everyone to understand what we were going to do, or what we were thinking. I would say something in Russian, for example, then my Russian-speaking friend would translate it into the local language for my Korean colleague to understand, then she would say something in Korean to her husband, and he would then respond in English! It was a wonderful experience, but needed lots of patience.

Initially there were two doctors (myself and another) available to meet the villagers' needs: we would see patients in the morning, then move on to teaching the local health workers how to prevent and treat common problems. However, I came to realise that I was undermining what we were trying to achieve in the project: as long as there was a doctor available, people wouldn't bother to learn how to prevent the problems themselves. That is when I decided my main role would be to train and coordinate the work of our community development workers, rather than be directly involved in the community myself.

We had a few different ways of selecting communities and entering them. One involved doing health screening at schools and then presenting the findings to the parents at a public meeting. We then offered to help them, but made it clear that we offered training, not money. We began by training the people in identifying needs and problem solving. Our lessons covered many topics, such as physical health, income generation, agriculture, emotional issues and moral values like honesty and forgiveness.

Sometimes we were able to incorporate stories from the Bible in our teaching. One very powerful lesson on forgiveness was taught by using the story of the prodigal son, but adapting it to 'the prodigal daughter-in-law'. This seems to be the relationship with the most strain here, the one between the wife and her husband's mother. Wives go to live with their husband's family, and the wife has to do the bidding of the family matriarch – her mother-in-law. Most women are not free from this until they become mothers-in-law themselves. We saw many people recognise the destructiveness of unforgiveness after this lesson, and many were willing to do the homework we set them, which was to forgive someone!

Most of the communities we worked with knew we were followers of Jesus, and through years of interaction they developed a more positive understanding of Christianity. We do this work not as a means to evangelise or plant churches, but because it is good in itself and demonstrates the love of Jesus to broken people. In many places around the world, however, the natural consequence of such holistic community development is that, over time, churches are planted.

TEE and discipleship

A great number of local church leaders, when surveyed, said the biggest need in their church was for discipleship. The local church is great at evangelism and church planting, but after people turn to Jesus there are many obstacles that prevent them from growing in their faith. Many groups are started in small and isolated communities as people respond to the good news, but without local leadership they often go for months without receiving any Biblical teaching.

Theological Education by Extension, or TEE for short, addresses this issue. Group members can study the Bible wherever they are. Books of self-study material become the tutor. Someone needs to know how to be a facilitator or group leader, but basically the group learns together, has home-study tasks and practical ministry assignments.

In my last term overseas I was asked to help develop a TEE programme for one of the Bible Colleges. A few of my former students were keen to work with me on this, as they realised that TEE was the best way to help the church grow, especially in remote areas. Mars, a gifted church planter, used to be a Muslim mullah until he encountered Jesus as he was saying his prayers. As Mars began small groups, he found he didn't have the time or resources to follow them all up. Now, through TEE, the groups are provided with the resources they need to grow in Christ.

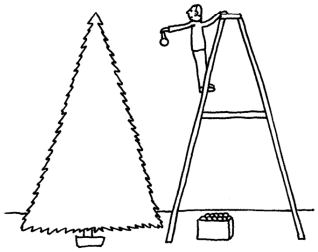
We have a big vision for our TEE groups: we want to use them to address the needs of the whole person. We plan not only to offer theological training in these groups, but also to pass on life-skills and knowledge in the areas of health, parenting, intensive gardening, income generation and so on. It is our hope that group members will become lights in the community which others are drawn to and want to learn from. This is still in process as change is slow.

When there is harmony between people and God (the spiritual dimension), among people (the social dimension), within the person (the emotional dimension) and between people and their environment (the physical dimension), we have holistic health. Illness is a breakdown of these relationships. As Christians we work to reveal the reconciliation that Jesus achieved through His death on the cross. He is Lord of all and has reconciled all things in heaven and earth to Himself (see Colossians 1:15–20). If He is Lord of all, He is Lord of every aspect of this world and of our lives. That's holism.

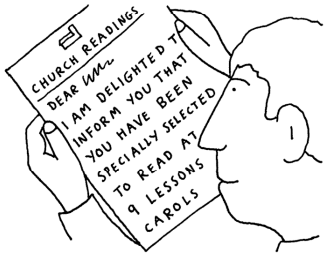
THE CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

FOR CHURCHES

DIG OUT THE CRIB FIGURES ☐



DECORATE THE TREE AND CHURCH ☐

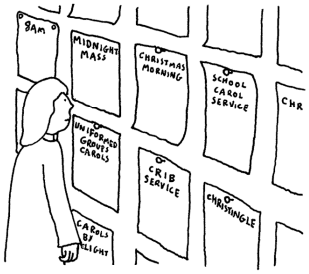


CHOOSE PEOPLE TO READ THE LESSONS ☐

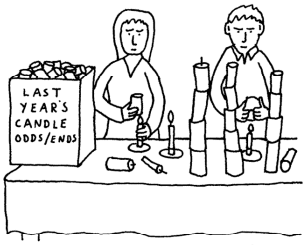
CLEAN EVERYWHERE ☐

DECIDE WHICH CLERGY DO WHICH SERVICES ☐

BUY PRESENTS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD ☐

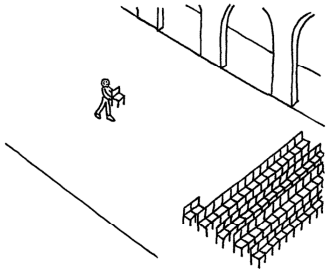


WRITE ALL OF THE SERMONS ☐

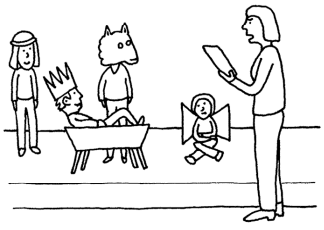


PREPARE THE CANDLES ☐

MAKE SURE THE CHOIR IS READY ☐

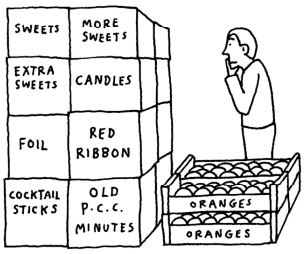


CARRY IN EXTRA CHAIRS ☐



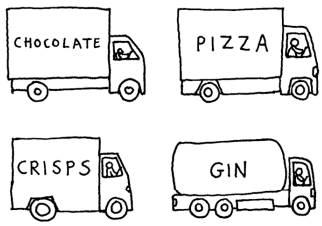
REHEARSE THE NATIVITY PLAY ☐

DELIVER THE CHRISTMAS PUBLICITY LEAFLETS ☐



MAKE THE CHRISTINGLES ☐

COPY THE ORDERS OF SERVICE ☐



ORDER SUPPLIES FOR VICAR'S POST-CHRISTMAS BREAK ☐

CartoonChurch.com

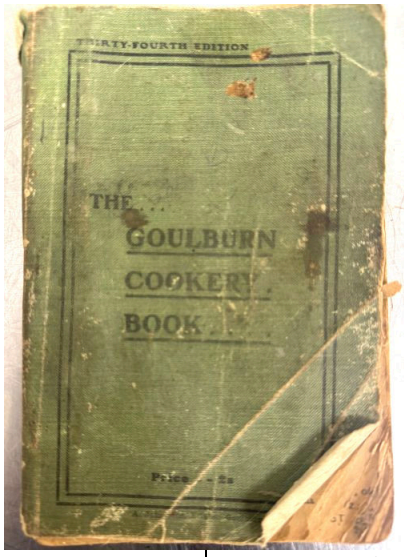
Blokes Helping Blokes

When on 1st November they approached their secret lair, the Blokes could smell the scent of bacon and eggs tantalisingly wafted towards them a considerable distance up the drive. When they arrived, they found that this was supplemented by fruit bread, home-made by Glen.

There was a bit of an issue with the toaster because the bread was going through it but not coming out toasted. It turned out that it was on stand-by, a setting that Glen didn't use and was not familiar with. He blamed Jon for playing with the controls.

Allan said that Glen had a stunned look.

David F was not with us because he was having a family day, and no doubt enjoying his wife's cooking.



Glen read out a letter from Selma, Len Edwards' wife:

To Glen, Thank you for your birthday greetings to Len, he is now in full time care, a cake was made and shared at lunchtime on the day, and two members from our church visited and we shared a lovely time concluding with a hymn and prayer. Our family celebrated on Sunday and we were not able to light the candles as the cost of a fire alarm alert is over $3,000.

The staff are very kind and helpful, and Len is slowly coming to terms knowing he is unable to be home. He attends activities, and quite often wins a round of 'bingo'.

Len really enjoyed his time with Blokes Helping Blokes, and looked forward to the first Saturday of each month. Thank you for the interest you have taken, during what has been a challenging time, and we know there has been much prayer offered for him, and our family, and we are most thankful.

Kind regards, Selma Edwards

Glen had set the topic for discussion as 'What has changed in forty years?' He said that one Bloke would be particularly sharing the changes in the food industry: that one Bloke turned out to be himself.

He started by averring that breakfast 40 years ago was very different, because the majority had bacon and eggs. The Blokes, having just finished their breakfast of bacon and eggs, were astonished. The Editor was also astonished, because he knew that in 1985 he was having muesli with milk for breakfast in the house in Geelong he and his wife had just recently bought, their first house. He remembers it well, because at about that time they were having trouble with mice in the house, and the mice got into the muesli; but the Editor found that you could separate the mouse droppings from the muesli because the muesli sank in the milk while the droppings floated, so you could easily skim them off with your spoon.

Before he bought that house he was living in Trinity College and breakfast was dominated by stodgy College Porridge. And if he went further back to childhood, breakfast was very variable but was sometimes grapefruit, sometimes boiled rice with milk, and sometimes, the best times, fried brains. It almost never included bacon.

Glen trained as a pastrycook, and he has always had a keen interest in food preparation. He has set up a commercial kitchen in his garage, and is currently working on old recipes, including one that is two thousand years old. (The Editor, who has been known to eat food that had been languishing on his shelves for mere decades, was impressed.) Glen said there had been enormous changes in the food industry in the 1970s, with some changes starting in the 1960s, and they had affected the quality of our food.

Glen started by putting on white gloves, and the Blokes wondered what was coming next. But he did so in order to read from a book in his library, the 34th edition of the *Goulburn Cookery Book*, 1930, which was in a fragile state.

The *Goulburn Cookery Book* first came out in 1899. Its compiler was 'Mrs Forster Rutledge': Jean Rutledge (née Morphy) of Goulburn, using her husband's name, even after he died (usually widows reverted to their own first name). From the beginning, she gifted the copyright to the Church Society of the Anglican Diocese of Goulburn to assist in fundraising; it was sometimes known as the 'Church of England Cookbook'.

The cookbook was very popular: editions came out each year (usually) and were sold only locally, and yet each sold 5000–10,000 copies in a town whose population was only 10,000 in 1911 and 15,000 in 1933.

The 34th edition in 1930 was the first to have an article at the end on 'Health Foods'. This must have been one of her last editions; Jean Rutledge died in 1932. After her death a 'New Goulburn Cookery Book' was published, 'revised by Mrs Walton McCarthy', but carrying on the edition numbers: the '38th edition' came out in 1937. A '40th edition' was published in 1973.

Glen read to us from the Health Foods article. "[T]he women of Australia", it said, "are the Loaf Givers and on them depends the health and well being of their families". Glen was interested in the implication that the women of Australia were central to the health of Australian men.

Mrs Rutledge goes on to excoriate the use of white bread, saying "it is absolutely deficient in the 16 mineral salts that are necessary for human health, and which are contained in whole grains". "White flour", she says, "is . . . treated so thoroughly that only starch remains, and the crumbling, flavourless loaf is the result. As bread is about a third of the food we eat, it is deplorable that it contains no nourishment, the vital part of the wheat goes to the fowls and pigs in bran and pollard*". With this view Glen was fully in agreement. The good stuff went to animals, he said, the crap stuff went to humans. (Rob: So it should.)

Mrs Rutledge blamed white bread for people's bad teeth, and said "Mussolini, the Dictator of Italy, has made it penal† for a baker to make white bread". Google's AI disagrees with that, but he did go to extraordinary lengths to encourage wholegrain and discourage white bread; however Britain did indeed ban bakers from making white bread from 1942 to 1953, as a war economy measure.

Glen did a demonstration comparing the toasting ability of a wholegrain wheat and rye bread that he had made, compared with the white bread he bought for the Blokes. There was an issue because Glen could no longer trust the toaster settings (for which he blamed Jon), but he showed that the white bread toasted more easily. The wholegrain bread, he said, needed two or three passes to toast, which meant it was better. The Blokes were impressed by this demonstration, showing that if you want toast, it is quicker to use white bread.

Glen educated us in the terminology that the industry uses to mislead the public. 'Wholemeal' apparently is not the same as 'wholegrain'. Wholemeal bread is made from a mixture of wholegrain flour and white flour, and is therefore

---

* 'The fine cell layer between bran layers and endosperm, used for animal feed'.

† The Editor has not seen this adjective used predicatively before.

not as good as wholegrain bread, though better than white bread. 'Brown bread' lies in between white and 'wholemeal'.

Glen gave us more wisdom he had learnt in his apprentice days from his boss (whom apprentices had to address as 'master'). In the 1960s pastry ingredients were cheap, but labour was expensive. In the 1970s ingredients were dear, but labour was relatively cheap. By the 1980s both were expensive. This changed the industry enormously.

When Glen was an apprentice he started work at 2 am (his boss had started at midnight). Before he had left the previous afternoon he had made the shells for custard tarts. Now at 2 am he put in the filling, which he made from milk, eggs, vanilla and nutmeg, and put the tarts in a very slow oven at 120°. As the day wore on the oven got hotter and other things were cooked: for example, meat pies were made at 240°, and were not kept in pie warmers, but everyone knew when in the day they were made and came and bought them all immediately.

The big change was that premixed ingredients became available. Now, for example, instead of making the custard tart shells, the baker bought them pre-made. And instead of making the filling, that was also bought premixed, then mixed with hot water and poured into prebaked tarts. The result was that everyone's custard tarts tasted exactly the same, and not nearly as good as they used to, as they were full of preservatives, emulsifies and binding agents.

The big manufacturers cut costs as much as they could, for example using margarine, made by hydrogenation of oils, instead of healthier but more expensive butter.

Glen said that now you might find the odd specialist bakery that still did things the old way, but it was very rare, and bakeries that seem traditional old-fashioned places may still use premix. He did say that he believed that Portuguese egg tarts were still made the old-fashioned way.

Now even scones, which are very easy to make from the basic ingredients, are bought in as premix. Hot-cross buns, which used to be good only for one day, can now be sold for a week and can last six weeks, because of all the preservatives.

Glen told a story about how an apprentice made a mistake making a premixed dough and his fellow workers told him to dig a hole and bury it so the boss wouldn't see. Twelve months later there was some building work and the builders dug into the hole. The dough was still good.

You can expect now that all pies and pastries are made using premix.

Coffee scrolls, said Glen, were traditionally made to use up left-over stale cakes. The cakes were dried and minced and that was the filling of the coffee scrolls.

Glen said when he worked on a farm they used to give stale bread to the animals; however it was so bad you couldn't feed it to animals for long because it would bind them up. Raspberry jam substitute was water flavouring and gelatine plus wood chips to simulate the seeds; the 'cherries' in mixed fruit are made from bleached pumpkin. Pears are substituted for apple, and in general there is a lot of substitution.

Rob asked where he could get a good custard tart. Glen said, out of his own oven. He said you *could* try a place that is in *very* old ownership.

Glen said that if you saw a cake with icing sugar on top, it was to cover something that went wrong. The same was true of a pie with mashed potato on top.

Allan said that pastrycooks were a devious lot. Rob said it was our fault, for settling for it. Glen said that he thought the tables may be turning now. He noticed that when he baked, all the neighbours came around.

He said he thought that modern large portions were a compensation for the poor quality.

The changes had meant that bread, which used to take three days to make, now only took a couple of hours.

Glen is carrying out experiments to try to use wild sourdough yeasts with wholegrain flour. Usually the result is very heavy and while people used to eat bread like that, he doesn't think the world is now ready for it, so he is trying to make something lighter.

Jon commented that modern days were very bureaucratic, with lots of certification required. This led Glen to discuss food inspectors, but what he said concerning their honesty probably cannot be repeated in this journal. Apparently they must give a week's notice of an inspection, which allows time to make preparations.

Glen recounted that he once lived on a farm in St Andrew's, and one of his workmates at the bakehouse asked if he could get them a baby rabbit for them to keep. Glen brought the baby rabbit into work that morning but it escaped. Several weeks later he discovered his boss standing on a table, saying he had encountered the biggest giant rat he had ever seen.

Rob told of a pie shop with a backyard full of Pal dog food cans.

There was discussion of 'use by' and 'best by' dates: Glen said they were usually sooner than they needed to be. But he gave a story of the development in Australia of 'Rocky Road' in 1883 by a businessman on his way from England to Australia. Because the boat took a long time to reach Australia, on arrival he found all his ingredients were rancid, so he mixed the rancid stuff up with other stuff and covered it with chocolate.*

Rob mentioned the smell of bacon and eggs that had greeted the Blokes up the drive, and expressed his appreciation to Glen and Allan for their cooking. Not only had the Blokes noticed and appreciated the smell, but also some workers who are painting the roofs of all the Viewbank Gardens buildings (Allan tells me it is not paint, it is a 'coating'). Glen made some bacon and egg sandwiches and chucked them up to the workers on the roof, so they could share the breakfast without losing any work time.

Due to unforeseen circumstances there will regrettably be no *Blokes Helping Blokes* in December.

* This story might be a libel, or an urban legend.

David Thomas Bellair

06/11/1942 – 18/10/2025

Husband of Rosemary, father of Alison, Judith and Catherine, brother of Michael and Terry, David died unexpectedly on Saturday 18th October after a very short illness, to the shock of us all. His funeral was held at St John's on Friday 24 October, and a livestream can be seen at https://www.vividstream.com.au/live/david-bellair for six months.

Denise took the service, with Peter Guy* on the organ. He played 'Nimrod', the ninth of the *Enigma Variations* by Elgar.

After the introduction, verses from Scripture (John 11:25–26a, Ecclesiastes 5:15–16a, John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 2:9) and prayers, we sang *Make me a channel of your peace*. Then Michael, David's oldest brother, spoke:

David was born in 1942 when I was 5 and Terry was 3.

Soon after David's birth there were concerns about a Japanese invasion of Australia. Our mother's parents lived nearby in Heidelberg and our mother's father had a 40 acre 'hobby farm' at Gisborne with a small cottage. I can remember going to Gisborne with the family to discuss with grandpa how we could all fit into this cottage in the event of an invasion. There were also our mother's two sisters and a sister-in-law whose husbands were away at the war to accommodate, and also their children as well. Our father had an essential occupation and was unable to serve in the armed forces but he was a member of the VDF (Volunteer Defence Force), a Dad's Army type of organisation, and we have memories of them training on the farmland bordering the Yarra immediately below our family home on The Boulevard in Heidelberg, not very far from Banksia Street and just a kilometre from this church.

We had a couple of holidays towards the end of the war at a house in Frankston owned by a friend of our father's. In those days there used to be a small zoo in Frankston and our father had taken us there with David in a pushchair. There was a cage of cockatoos and we were getting handfuls of grass and feeding the cockatoos through the wire mesh on their enclosure. We gave David some so he could feed them too, and while doing this a cockatoo almost bit the end off David's little finger. Our mother bandaged the wound when we got home and it healed very quickly. Later, from 1944 or 45 we began to go to Point Lonsdale for our holidays each summer, travelling there in our father's 1937 Morris 8/40 tourer. David squeezed in between our parents in the front, while Terry and I sat in the back on top of two layers of suitcases with our heads against the canvas roof.

I was 8 years old when the war in the Pacific ended. David was 3 and Terry was 6.

Terry and I went to the East Ivanhoe state school which was a kilometre and a half away. I can remember Terry and me taking David to this school on his first day. My mother did not have a car so we took David on the bus but we all walked home together.

When we started school the class sizes were about 25. Later with the surge in migration David had class sizes of about 40. David took his schooling in his stride. Later at Scotch College where he got a scholarship David was always in the top class and brilliant with maths and physics. He never needed to study, just remembering everything he had been taught. He was almost dux of the school in year 12. The boy who just beat him studied endlessly.

As a student, David was very interested in telecommunications and had a ham radio and also a teleprinter with which he could tap into the domestic aircraft flight control monitoring system. When we were young phone calls outside of Melbourne had to be made through an operator. Later, when the telephone system was upgraded to Subscriber Trunk Dialling, or STD, we were able to use area codes to dial anywhere in Australia. These calls were very expensive. While a teenager, David devised a way of getting around this system by finding a system weakness that allowed him to dial progressively from adjoining areas, thus fooling the system into thinking it was a local call. Our father then got a call from the telephone people saying our phone was being used for naughty activities. Later David found a way to dial into a telephone head office switchboard that allowed all outgoing calls to be free, then dialling out from there for free, again due to a defect David found in their system. The long number that facilitated these free STD phone calls throughout Australia was circulated widely among our friends. When David was 20 and a third-year electronic engineering student at Melbourne University, he was a member of the Astronautical Society. David wrote a simple computer program run on the CSIRO computer that accurately forecast the location of weather satellites. Previously these forecasts had been done by hand by a tedious, complicated and error-prone method. Terry remembers that the Astronautical Society caused some embarrassment because the Society was able to access and distribute the weather satellite data faster than the BOM. A colleague of David's at this time, Richard Tonkin, who is here today, advised me that while with the Astronautical Society, David made a major contribution to the building of the first satellite made in Australia, *Australis*. David designed and built the command encoder, a vital piece of equipment, which worked perfectly after the satellite was launched by NASA in 1970. Its estimated life in orbit is another 100,000 years, so a little piece of David's craftsmanship is going to outlast us all. Dr Frank Hirst, head of the CSIRO computer department, was very encouraging and supportive of David. It is suggested that working with Dr. Hirst made David realise that computing was the career for him. David completed his B.App.Sc (Electronics) at Melbourne University in 1964. David then began his PhD studies.

David's PhD research related to ionospheric physics, conducted at the RAAF Academy at Point Cook, under the supervision of Prof Vic Hopper, a leading expert in the reflection of radio (and radar?) signals by atmospheric phenomena.

Terry has for most of his life been a very accomplished glider pilot. David took up gliding for a time with the Geelong Gliding Club after Terry left for the USA (in late 1965), but Terry doesn't recall that David ever flew solo.

Our mother had a very early Morris Minor and later when David had to commute to the Point Cook RAAF Academy most days while doing his PhD, he bought a similar but rather tired Morris Minor. Later on we had to fit a second-hand engine to David's Morris Minor to keep it going. Unlike Terry and me who made something of a hobby out of cars, David just regarded them as just a means of getting around. Some years later my mother gave my wife Wendy her Morris Minor and later our daughter Melissa had it as her first car after she turned 18. I recently sold this Morris Minor to a friend of my younger daughter's husband. I had kept the engine we took out of David's Morris Minor as a spare and have very recently passed it on to my son in law's friend.

David and Rosemary's daughters, Alison, Judith and Catherine, now gave a joint eulogy:

When Mum emigrated from England and began attending church here at St John's, an English couple, our Aunty Barbara and Uncle Noel, took her under their wing. This couple lived next door to the Bellair family and it wasn't long before Mum was introduced to the Bellair family, including their youngest son, David, our Dad.

While it wasn't love at first sight, over time one thing led to another and eventually Dad proposed to Mum on Sealers' Cove beach at Wilson's Promontory. The wedding here at St John's followed, with Aunty Barbara and Uncle Noel standing in for Mum's parents who couldn't make the trip out from England.

Mum and Dad started out living in a little unit in Lower Plenty while Dad completed his PhD – something to do with radio waves in the outer atmosphere, and Mum typed it all up for him – before Dad and Mum built our family home on the Golf Links estate in Rosanna, near Rosanna parklands, where they lived for 27 years and raised us. We spent most of our holidays in Apollo Bay, and in 1983 they

* For 15 years Organist and Master of the Choristers at Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle; established the Newcastle Cathedral College of Music; lectured in harmony and pipe organ at the University of Newcastle; Master of Theological Studies (University of Divinity); recently Masters and Post-Masters at the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Academy of Music, Hungary; recipient of many awards.

built a holiday home at nearby Skenes Creek so we would always have somewhere to go on holiday as a family. Family was very important to Dad, not just his Australian family but also his in-laws in England. As a family, we visited the UK twice when we were young, and as we grew up and spread out around the world, Dad and Mum continued to visit the overseas members of our family whenever possible.

While we were growing up, Dad made time for each of us individually and was always happy to go along with whatever we wanted to do. He would play whatever games we wanted to play at the park. He would let us choose where to go when riding our bikes and follow along, on foot, no matter where we went. He even actively campaigned for us to be able to get ice creams in the middle of winter from the Bluebird café in Apollo Bay when we were on holiday, no matter how cold Mum thought it was. Dad showed us how important we, his family, were to him by spending time with us.

Dad was one of the first ever geeks. When at university, Dad was part of the team that launched the first amateur satellite from the Southern Hemisphere. He worked on one of the first computers in Australia, and when we were young, he built us a home-made computer and taught us how to program. Since his retirement, he was involved in open source programming, and continued to attend conferences in the USA – probably as one of the eldest attendees. Mum would often join him towards the end and they would spend a few days sightseeing before flying over to England to visit Mum's mother. On one such visit, we discovered an old computer he had worked on in the National Computer Museum at Bletchley Park, and the volunteers there were excited to have someone representing 'living history' to explain it to them.

He taught us that we could do whatever we wanted to do, and gave us the confidence to try and the independence to do it on our own. He was proud of everything we did.

In 1990, Dad and Mum moved to Clyde Court, and then in 2021 into their newly built apartment in Strathalan, a move they've had zero regrets about. Dad, as he has always done, found things to get involved in, such as the University of the Third Age, he started playing cards weekly, and joined the new Grumpy Old Men's Club, which we imagine he enjoyed immensely. Travel had become a bigger part of their life together once the three of us were older, with trips to New Zealand, the UK, the USA, various places in Australia. Dad loved exploring the history and nature of every area they visited. Most recently was their trip to Kalgoorlie which was very important to him, to explore his own family history, which we are all so happy he got to do.

Dad was always interested in history, politics and in science. When you started a discussion with him, he always had something to say, and while he was always happy to listen to others, he also always had his own perspective and ideas to contribute. You couldn't have much of a discussion with him without experiencing his dry sense of humour or a timely one-liner!

Dad showed us – rather than told us – the importance of contributing to your community, and standing up for what is right. He joined groups such as the Graduate Union, the Committee of Convocation, and the Prostate Support group, and always found ways to actively contribute, not just attend. He was always willing to make a stand when he thought something was wrong and never just left it to others to speak out. As a member of the church community he always contributed in many different ways over the years, and was always happy to help out with things whenever asked, especially if it was computer-related or technical in any way. He hated being the centre of attention and never needed or wanted thanks for anything he did: he was just happy to be there, supporting and helping other people in small ways whenever he saw the opportunity. His example has influenced who each of us has become. We all consider ourselves very lucky to have had a father whom we not only love but also respect in so many ways.

The community here at St John's has always been a very important part of Dad's and Mum's life together, and he truly valued being a part of, and contributing to, the church community over the last five decades (and then some). We'd like to thank Denise and the St John's congregation for all the support they are showing to Mum at this time.

We sang *In Christ alone*, then we heard Psalm 121 and John 14:1–6. Denise then spoke, saying it was a day too soon in coming. Although death comes to all, it can still bee a shock when it comes, especially to David, so suddenly. Yes, he got to fourscore and a bit, but it was still not enough for us who loved him.

Not enough time, he was so loved. We long for one more conversation, one more laugh. Death does not stop us loving, yet we believe in eternal life: we can trust in the Lord Jesus, who has conquered death.

Denise appreciated his thoughtful, enquiring mind. Peta Sherlock told her that David always asked the best questions after her sermon. Denise appreciated his thoughtfulness about the interaction between science and the Christian faith. She also loved his cheeky sense of humour, and his willingness to help out with all her computer problems. He could always find a work-around. And she appreciated his words of encouragement, even over small things. He was a gentle man, a true gentleman.

All who have known David express sadness, grief, memories, laughter, and tears.

Rosemary, on being asked what readings she wanted, immediately chose Psalm 121, on lifting our eyes to the hills, knowing where our help comes from.

And John 14:1–6: the Father's house has many rooms. David's favourite room was his study, where he could work and read his many technical magazines. His room was a place of industry and great enjoyment.

And this church room, where he was contributing for over 50 years.

Jesus promises to prepare a particular place, a suitable place, for everyone. Unlike in the Christmas story, where there was no room, Jesus makes lots of room for all.

Jesus makes the way open. Thomas didn't know the way, so Jesus tells him and us, 'I am the way'.

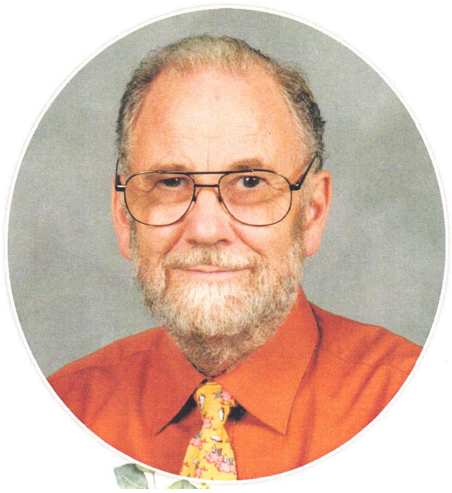
It is sad for us, but we can have trust and faith in God, and can leave David in God's care. There are rooms for anyone who accepts his invitation.

Denise urged us to turn to God, entrust our sad hearts to him, and he will give us peace.

We remembered David while listening to music from Jars of Clay, then Xiaoxi led us in prayer. We sang *The day thou gavest, Lord, has ended*, and farewelled David, whose remains left the church to the sound of *You'll never walk alone.*

Clive McCrae Murdoch

01/02/1941 – 17/10/2025



Clive Murdoch and his family were former members of Holy Spirit Watsonia. A memorial service for Clive was held on Tuesday October 28 at his last parish, All Saints' Greensborough. The service was taken by the Vicar, the Rev'd Julie Blinco-Smith.

After a welcome, John 11:25–26 and Romans 8:38–39 were read, we prayed, then sang *How great thou art.* We heard Isaiah 40:28–31 on how those who trust in the Lord will find new strength; and then an Australian version of Psalm 23:

The Lord is my drover, I travel well.
On outback tracks He finds green feed.
He guides me safely to cool waterholes;
His understanding revives my dusty life.
He remembers the best stock routes,
For which His name is well known.
In deep gullies, shadowed by death,
I am not frightened.
You, my Lord, are with me,
Your camp fires comfort me.
You make sure there is food for me,
Even in the times of drought.
You provide midday shade for my head,
Your water tanks overflow.

Care and kindness ride beside me
every day of my journey,
And I will rest in the pound
of my Lord forever.

(Ascribed to Rev'd Bruce Prewer
'More Australian Psalms', 51)

We then had a reading from 1 Peter 1:3–9. All these readings had been chosen by Clive.

Then the Vicar told us Clive had asked specifically for an address on the goodness of God. So she started by asking us whether there was somewhere we hadn't been to, but had heard much about. She also asked us if we had moved home.

Clive, she said, had lived well, well aware of his heavenly 'home from home'. But he lived humbly, for others. He had a purpose and direction to his life: he wanted others to know how good God is.

He lived with a deep love for Jesus. He travelled long distances to help others find homes, and invited them to his home.

God invites us to be with him, even in hard, sick, grieving seasons of life. He gives us comfort. Julie spoke of Wilpena Pound, a large natural amphitheatre in the Flinders Ranges, as the 'pound' of Prewer's version of Psalm 23.

Julie asked whether this was the God that we know. In our spiritual journey, do we have a sense of being known and loved? God invites us to know and love him, and has given us many ways we can taste his heaven.

One is through his creation, and Clive loved photography, gardening, science and Nature.

Another is through God's Son, the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. We can know what God is like by looking at Jesus, the all-powerful servant king who died for the forgiveness of our sins.

Another is through God's living word. Clive knew the goodness of God, and wanted to share it.

Julie noted that Peter tells us to be 'truly glad', even though we are grieving. We will all miss him, but our hope is in the Risen Christ.

Clive knew of his heavenly home from home. He knew about moving home. We can be sure he is receiving his inheritance, and has the inexpressible joy of seeing Jesus face to face. His memory is a blessing that draws us all closer to God.

Simon Murdoch now gave a eulogy on behalf of the family, which I have in point form:

Brief Clive's family history

- Born in Castlemaine Hospital 1/2/1941
- Parents Marge and Charles (Ray) Murdoch
- Oldest of three. Younger siblings were Margaret Foo and John Murdoch
- Lived in Muckleford until he was 17 and moved to Melbourne
- He lived in a CMS youth hostel where he made many long-term friends, and that was where he fully discovered Christ (which you'll hear more about later)
- Met Mum at St Jude's Carlton. Mum started going to St Jude's when she was at Melbourne Uni. She started helping at Corner Club which met on Friday night for primary aged children. Clive was one of the Jude's club leaders (teenagers). They got married at St John's Ivanhoe not Heidelberg...
- Had three kids, Naomi, myself (Simon) and then Rachel
- Although he didn't want pets as it would limit camping trips, we had a few: fish, budgies, a snake neck turtle, a wolf spider we found in a tent when we were camping. But later when I was old enough and could pay for it, I got a dog named Sally. She had him worked out in no time and he loved her very much.
- Now, to his joy he has a daughter-in-law Audrey and two grandchildren Edward and Polly, whom he loved more than ever and enjoyed watching them grow physically and was so proud of how smart they are. He would always say, 'Those kids are soo smart'
- He also has a special spot for our two dogs and especially Rachel's dog Winnie
- But none of our pets compete with his bantams...

Chicken & eggs

- They live in the Taj Mahal of chicken coops: a kids' cubby and recycled pool fencing. Multiple sets of chickens over the years
- He would sit out in the sun with them
- Chicken diaries: he weighed eggs daily. He left us a list of detailed instructions for them.

Camera, lens, film, album

- Not many photos of dad, as he was the one behind the camera
- Nikon for film, then Fujifilm for digital as their CCD was a different shape to get better quality
- Wedding photographer in the 60s and 70s
- Australian photographic society from 1965
- Diamond Valley Photographic Society (Camera Club) — multiple roles including president, meetings, trips/outings, competitions, modelling for workshops
- Darkroom: developing own photos, helped with science project with me
- Loved slide photography, OCF weddings, their own wedding photos weren't printed until we did it for their 30th anniversary. Dad almost lost them. Mum would then take that album everywhere
- We all had cameras, still do

Fishing rod

- Fishing in Port Phillip Bay with a coke bottle and line catching heaps of flatheads
- He loved the idea of it, never really caught much. Enjoyed the 'idea' of it
- He would go camping on weekends with me to fish for 10 mins and then move on as we were 'only scoping it out for next time'
- Doesn't like fish! Always gets bones, only person I know of who found a bone in a fillet-o-fish from McDonalds

Small backpack & hat

- Love of nature, especially native flora and fauna
- Day trips to get the car serviced in Richmond at Universal Motors (Peugeot): visiting all the camping and camera shops in the city, fresh juice from Melbourne Central, salted peanuts from Myer and all-you-can-fit-on-your-plate Chinese in Bourke Street mall
- Caravan and camping shows: dreaming of all the caravans/trailers/boats
- Long car trips: central Australia
- Grampians: family camps
- Farm visits: Franks, planting trees, and all the things he got up to as a boy
- Overseas: especially Singapore and China

Silverbeet & Lemons

- Gardening outside: creating the mostly complicated way of doing something (over-engineered). Heirloom veggies that even he wouldn't eat. Such a variety of fruit and vegetables that he was proud of. Bunnings trips: had a list but still had to browse, took a break in the café
- If he had a garden tool or any tool I'd get something different because he would want me to share his first

Bible& book set

- Massive book collection. Books were treasures
- Attending all three services at All Saints: normal for us to see Dad up the front at any church service. Always last to leave
- Often did gardening or working on the cars in his church clothes

Random

- Quiet observer
- Often wore a shirt and tie, no matter where he was going. Even in tracksuit pants
- Science-focused: wanted to know how things worked
- Always willing to try to fix or build anything and make it more complex
- Schools: lab tech, sound and lighting for productions
- Mentoring program
- Teaching us to 'drive' on dirt roads
- Falling asleep usually after food at a family function, at one stage, we started to play a game with it of who could toss a cashew in his mouth
- Always cold, heater would be on most of the year with him sitting on a stool in front of it, would wear lots of layers. Often find him on a sunny day napping outside
- Garage full of stuff that 'might be useful one day' and sometimes it was! But couldn't let him know :P

Simon's eulogy was followed by a eulogy from Weiyi Lou, on behalf of the church:

It's a great privilege to be able to be up here speaking about Clive. Even though I have only known him for a short time — and only in his more tired years — Clive is a brother in Christ who has caused me to praise God and his amazing goodness to his people.

Talking to Clive was always good. I think the first time I had an extended conversation with him was at community lunch, sitting across from him and Janet. But at the same time, talking to Clive could be very confusing,

because whenever I asked him about his journey, he was involved in so many things. My brain would end up overwhelmed. You were where? And then you did what, with who? There were too many things for me to keep track of. And so what I have tried to remember here was assembled with help from others, especially Janet.

Why did he do all these things? It looks like God led and Clive followed. Where did God bring Clive?

When he came to Melbourne as a young boy, Clive's mother wanted him to find a Christian home to board in. And when he went to put an ad in the *Herald-Sun,* a person there gave him a place to ring. That place, as you have heard, turned out to be the Church Missionary Society Hostel on Queensberry St.

And there, God called Clive to himself. Clive gave his life to Christ, and Christ taught him lots through the Overseas Christian Fellowship forming in the hostel! We'll get to hear about Clive's time in OCF soon. But later he would be involved in St Jude's, the Anglican Inner City Ministry team, and then would arrive in Holy Spirit Anglican Church Watsonia, which he and Janet attended, responding to needs there: running Bible studies, youth group, and Clive also got to serve as a lay reader. He must have been a pretty good lay reader, as he also got on the Anglican Church's Lay Readers Board, equipping others.

For a while he was a chaplain in St Paul's Cathedral. And he kept involved in God's international mission as Prayer Secretary at Overseas Mission Fellowship, served in the Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany in Little Bourke St, preached at Holy Trinity Coburg, and of course, finally in the mid-90s he and Janet would come to All Saints' Greensborough… where, of course, he was also involved in the life of the church in various ways!

You know, it was actually only at the end of August this year that he was finally taken off his last roster role, telling me he felt he was no longer able to help in after-service prayer.

That God truly captured Clive's heart all those years ago in the CMS Hostel is shown, I think, by the years of faithful and fruitful service. God led, and Clive followed.

It should be no surprise then, that Clive followed God all the way to the end of his life. We visited him on the Wednesday before he passed, and Pastor Julie asked him what Bible passage spoke to him. I was not expecting him to say 'David and Goliath'. But, it was appropriate! David was a shepherd, and Clive had been a shepherd of God's people, imitating Jesus, his shepherd. And Clive was also protected by his shepherd.

What I remember most of that time in hospital: I was quickly searching up the Bible reference on the internet, and then felt I should read a part of 1 Samuel 17, David asking Saul to let him face Goliath. David was saying, Let me go! But Saul was unsure, and didn't want to send a boy to his death. But David had an unwavering faith and confidence in God, and he says to the quivering Saul, 'The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine giant!'

I was holding Clive's hand while reading, and that point, he gripped my hand with surprising strength, as though in wholehearted agreement: 'Yes, the Lord, the Lord almighty!' And his doing that made me realise that although Clive couldn't physically walk very much at all anymore, it was plain to see that he was still running after his God.

I had to leave, and as I left, I said, 'Goodbye brother, I'll come see you again soon. Take care!' I don't remember the exact words, but as I was walking out, he pepped up in bed and said to me, 'See you! If not here, then we'll see each other there.'

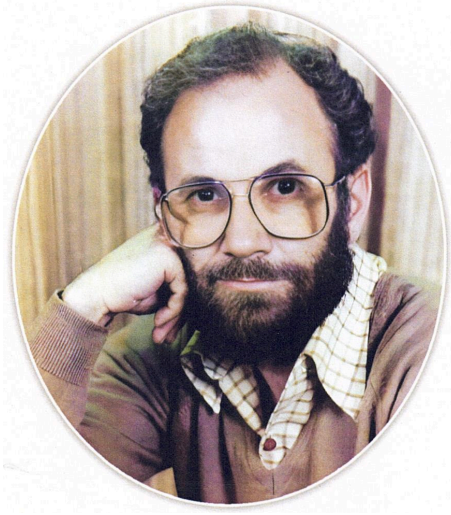
Well, brothers and sisters, that's where we'll see our dear brother Clive again. Well done, good and faithful servant. I hope that when I am on my deathbed, I will be clinging to my God as Clive did, having lived a life of faithfully running after him.

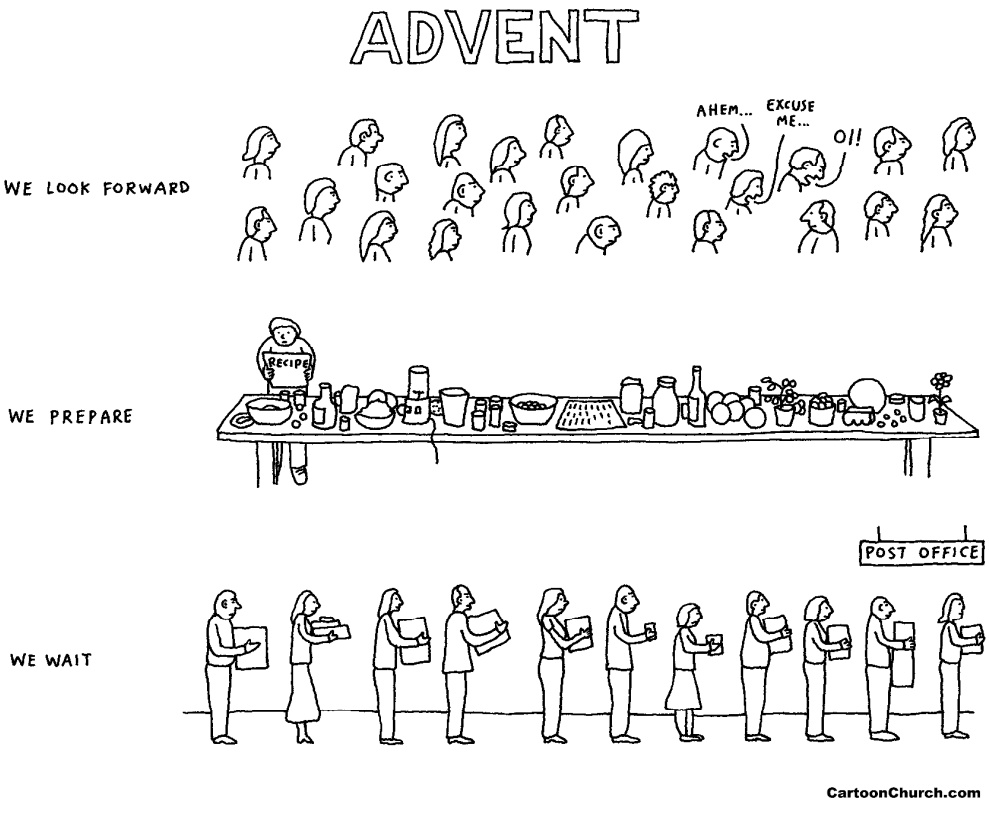
Finally, the Rev'd Joy Sandefeur spoke on behalf of the Overseas Christian Fellowship, with which Clive worked for 60 years, from his first days in the CMS Hostel, which hosted many overseas students. He set up a photographic studio at La Trobe. He went on overseas trips to visit them in Malaysia, Singapore, and one memorable trip to China.

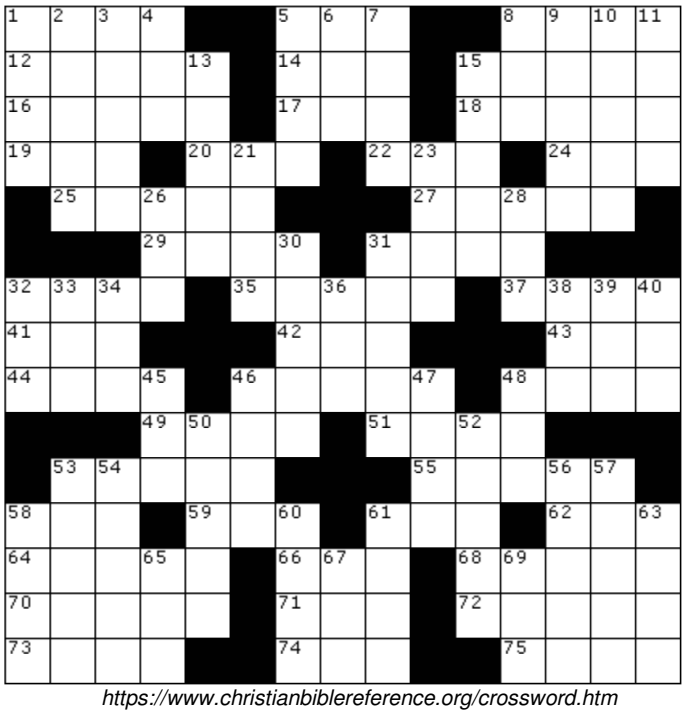
OCF's purpose was discipling students who arrived to study, both those who were Christian when they came, and those who became Christians. Many teachers gave their time voluntarily, including Leon Morris.

Clive served in the Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany for nine years. He was a kind friend to many. His long, quiet service has produced much fruit.

We saw a photo tribute, we sang *Be thou my vision*, we prayed and committed Clive to God's care. Then we sang *It is well with my soul*, and before we left there were readings of Ephesians 4:11–13 and Revelation 1:5b–6, reflecting Clive's work as an evangelist and teacher.







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

ACROSS
1 Dense
5 Ball holder
8 El __ (Texas city)
12 Toothbrush brand
14 She
15 Muscle
16 Formal statements
17 Samuel's mentor
18 Musical
19 Canoe propeller
20 Farewell
22 Central Intelligence Agency
24 Only
25 Book after Daniel
27 KJV possessive pronoun
29 Charity
31 Mexican money
32 Yellow metal
35 Quake
37 He built the ark
41 Veneration
42 Communication Workers of America (abr.)
43 Food and drug administration
44 Feat
46 Coral reef
48 Particle
49 Helps
51 A Gospel
53 What Israelites ate in desert
55 Popinjay
58 Failure
59 Greenwich Time
61 Recede
62 Travellers' aid
64 'Remember the __'
66 Sum
68 Holy book
70 Dismiss
71 Fear
72 Recess
73 Association (abr)
74 Billion years
75 Loch __ monster

DOWN
1 Extinct bird
2 First husband of Bathsheba
3 Large (prefix)
4 Sandwich
5 KJV pronoun
6 Snake like fish
7 Little Mermaid's love
8 Be nosey
9 Brother of Moses
10 Unclean animals
11 One time
13 Tower of __
15 Boredom
21 Sweet potatoes
23 Object
26 Disappointed
28 Charged particle
30 Religious divisions
31 Hymn of praise
32 Tribe of Israel
33 To be in debt
34 Downwind
36 Other half of Jima
38 Often poetically
39 Hubbub
40 Youngest son of Noah
45 Tribe of Israel
46 Father of Abel
47 The __ of God (Jesus)
48 American Kennel Club (abbr.)
50 Block of metal
52 Jewish teacher
53 Beasts of burden
54 John __ (U.S. Pres)
56 Mosey
57 What Charles was prince of
58 19th C art philosophy
60 Biblical weed
61 Garden of __
63 Domestic friends
65 Least amount
67 Pair
69 No room for them in the __

Bible Word Search: I Am God Of

https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_IAmGodOf_0.htm

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***.

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

Alpha and omega, Bread of life, Consolation, Cornerstone, Counselor, Deliverer, Door, Eternal life, First and last, Forerunner, Foundation, Grace, Head, Heaven, Hope, King of kings, Lion of Judah, Lord of Lords, Love, Mediator, Messiah, Prince of peace, Resurrection, Rock, Salvation, Servant king, Son of God

Answers to last month's puzzles:

Bible Word Search mystery answer:
CHOIR DIRECTOR

Last month's cryptogram:

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU,
BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU,
PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ILL-TREAT YOU

Luke 6:27–28

Cryptogram *(https://www.dltk-bible.com/cryptograms/cryptogram-index.htm)*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
24				23				16						5						17					

A __ __ E __ __ O __ E A __ O __ __ E __ , __ __ E __ ,
24 25 25 23 9 22 5 7 23 24 7 5 22 10 23 18 22 10 23 7

__ U __ __ A __ __ __ __ I __ __ A __ __ E __ __ E __
12 17 1 22 24 1 25 10 18 16 1 22 24 25 25 23 9 22 23 21

__ O U , I __ O __ __ E __ __ O __ __ I __ __
2 5 17 16 7 5 18 21 23 18 22 5 26 18 16 7 4

__ __ A I __ E __ O __ O __ .
9 18 24 16 1 23 22 5 4 5 21

Romans 15:7

Upended Expectations

26th October 2025

Luke 18:15–30

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'

18 A certain ruler asked him, 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

19 'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good – except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother."'

21 'All these I have kept since I was a boy,' he said.

22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'

23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

26 Those who heard this asked, 'Who then can be saved?'

27 Jesus replied, 'What is impossible with man is possible with God.'

28 Peter said to him, 'We have left all we had to follow you!'

29 'Truly I tell you,' Jesus said to them, 'no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.'

Please sit down everyone. Hello live streamers, Lilian and everyone else! Hello everyone here in church today! I've entitled today's reflection on the Scriptures 'Upended Expectations'.

This week I was able to be a stand-in grandparent at an afternoon tea for Phoebe and Lucy Senn, two little people, five and three. I was expecting to go and be greeted by the girls, as I was, very warmly, but one of the teachers said, 'Oh, you're the fairy godmother.' And I said, 'No, I'm Phoebe's godmother.' She said, 'Oh, yes, but she told me you're the fairy godmother.' Okay, I'll take that, that's pretty good.

We didn't have these sorts of things in my day, I don't think, when I was in primary school. Well, we didn't have day-care very much at all. And modern expectations on grandparents are quite different. Whether you're a real grandparent or an honorary grandparent, the expectations are a bit different from what they were 30, 40, 50 years ago.

I had my expectations about Collingwood supporters upended when I came to Melbourne. Because at first I was told that they don't have any teeth. And yet we have Neville here, and probably some others—any other Coll . . . Oh, Frank. Oh, Helen. Oh my! Oh no! Oh my goodness! I'm surrounded by them, and they're all smiling at me with their teeth! Isn't that great?

I was expecting when I came to Melbourne that people would be paying out on me, because I'd come from Sydney. Not at all. They were all very pleased that I'd finally seen the light. And also people I met in my first job when I was in a ministry position I held here in Melbourne: I got to travel around the great state of Victoria, and the amount of people that I met who said, 'Oh yes, I used to live in Sydney'. I think half of Victoria is now populated from people who used to live in New South Wales.

Our passage today continues on in the section of Luke's gospel where the people's expectations of Jesus are upended; and their expectation of what is the kingdom of God and God's desire for people is upended. In today's readings that we've had from Jan, we have two real incidents in the life of Jesus where the disciples' expectations, and the expectations of everyone listening, were turned upside down. The first one about the children; and the second about the rich young ruler, probably a magistrate in those days.

So let's look firstly at verses 15 to 17. People were bringing even babies to Jesus so that he might touch them, so that he might bless them. Isn't it interesting that, you know, today we honour little people? Back in these days, it was very much that thing of 'children seen and not heard', or children even being workers or slaves or much lower down the pecking order within society. And so the disciples rebuked the people. We're not told why they did this. Perhaps they thought Jesus was too important; or that having the children there was taking away from the focus on Jesus' important work of teaching adults.

But did you hear what Jesus did? He called and welcomed the babies and the children to him. He said, 'It's those like these who will receive the kingdom of God'. Babies and children! Not only those particular babies on that day, but people who are childlike in their trust in Jesus.

Children have no merit that they hang on to, to show how special they are, or to show what they have earned or accomplished in life. They are mostly powerless and trusting and accepting.

Jesus makes one of his shocking pronouncements when he says, 'Truly I tell you'. Whenever Jesus says those words, it's followed by a shocking or upending truth. He's saying to them, 'Listen up!' 'Listen up!' he says: 'Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' So rather than rejecting a child's being able to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus uses them as a model to what all people should be like.

Not that we can't use our minds. Not that we shouldn't use our minds to ponder, and think, and question issues of faith—not at all—but rather that childlike trust in a good and loving Father. I was reminded of that hymn: 'Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the Cross I cling'.

Also we do well to remember that little ones can have their own spirituality as well. Last night I was with Beth and the Senn girls, we were having dinner and the question arose as to whose turn was it to say grace? Well, Lucy said it was her turn, so she said grace first, and then Phoebe. Lucy's three: Her grace was 'blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Amen'. Phoebe's was, 'Dear God, thank you for this lovely food. Please bless Mummy and Bapi and Lucy and Amelia and please bring Bapi back. Amen.' A beautiful little prayer from a five-year-old. An understanding of the God whom they know and love and who provides for them. This is the sort of childlike trust Jesus encourages his followers to have: not unthinking, but knowing that they bring nothing of merit to Jesus.

The very next account Luke gives is a very clear example of someone who exemplifies this point, the rich young ruler: in verses 18 to 30, if you're following along in your Bible. He comes with a question: *What must I do to inherit eternal life?* It's clear from Jesus' interaction with the rich young ruler that here was a righteous law-keeper. The expectation of all the people was that because he was also blessed by God and he was rich and powerful, God must be very, very pleased with him.

Yet Jesus uses the interaction with him to show that one must come to Jesus humbly, relying on nothing of our own merit, but simply trusting in God and his goodness. When the man says, 'I've kept all these commandments,' Jesus mentions five of the ten, the ones that relate to other people. And he says, *'I've kept all of these since my youth'*—since he had gone through that bar mitzvah ceremony of becoming a man and responsible for his own spiritual undertaking, his own spiritual walk. It's not that he's boasting: he's saying, 'Yeah, I've been very serious about this.'

But Jesus pointedly looks at him and says, 'But you . . .'—and then Jesus puts his finger on the thing that the man held most dear. And for him, it was his wealth. 'You . . . *go sell everything you have and distribute it to the poor, and come follow me*.' The imperative is the 'follow me' part. And the getting rid of his wealth, was what Jesus called on him to do to show that he was truly following and trusting in Jesus.

I love the way Luke records he was very sad because he was very wealthy. Jesus put his finger on that which the man relied upon. It was sort of an enactment of 'unless you become like one of these little babies, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven'. Jesus, still speaking, says, 'How hard is it for the rich, for *you* to get into the kingdom of heaven? It's like a camel going through the eye of a needle.' The biggest animal in Palestine, a camel, and the smallest opening.

I find eyes of needles are getting smaller as I get older. I don't think that's true, but I think that's my experience of it. Even with my glasses on, I find I have to go into some good light. So, I really love those little wire things where you can thread a needle: it makes it a little bit easier.

Jesus says how hard it is for those who are wealthy, like that man, to enter the kingdom of heaven. An upended expectation, for the disciples asked, *'Who then can be saved?'* If someone who's been blessed by God—you know, a righteous person, blessed with wealth . . . who then can be saved? And Jesus says it's not possible with human beings; but this is God's doing: the impossible made true.

In the next chapter in Luke, chapter 19, we see exactly that happening, with the account of Zacchaeus turning from his way of wickedness and corruption, to following Jesus, his salvation.

Then an implied question in a statement from one of the disciples: 'We've left everything we had'. 'What about us?' is the implication. And Jesus makes clear that God is no one's debtor. He does not hold out on people at all. And Jesus says another shocking pronouncement, another 'listen up!', when he says, *'Truly I tell you, no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.'*

As I was thinking about this pronouncement, it's one that's been always very important to me, as a single person with no children. But I had this image of the disciples, most of whom—well, nearly all of whom—would have been married. Some were able to take their wives with them, but not all of them. I can imagine Jesus looking at them, and knowing what they had left behind to follow him and to be involved in his ministry. 'No one who has left wife, or brother, or sisters, or children.' God blesses those whom he loves. God blesses those who trust in him. As the prophet Joel said, *'You will praise the name of the Lord your God who has worked wonders for you.'*

Notice that Jesus says, the things that you have left behind (or not relied upon) for the sake of the kingdom of God—you will receive an abundance of blessings. Blessings of the homes and the comfort of family and friends. I never thought I would have a home to call my own, a property in which I could live when I retired. But God has provided for me. I have a home that I'm paying off, and I have some lovely renters who are helping me do that, as they pay rent each week. God has provided that for me.

Though not having children of my own, God has given me the privileged position of being involved in extended families. So that people I knew as babies and little children, whom I have known their whole lives, are now grown women with children of their own: and I'm involved in their lives. Still at 63, I have the joy of being referred to as a 'young lady' by my goddaughter Phoebe. And she said, 'Come on, young lady', as we were playing keepy-uppy with a balloon. She said, 'I'm calling you young, because I know people don't like being called old.' I said, 'That's very kind; but I don't mind being called old, because I'm older than you.' She said, 'Okay, you can be my big sister then.' So now she is big sister and I am little sister.

I also have sisters and brothers in Christ in front of me here, and throughout places I have served, and people who are family to me, much bigger than my immediate family of my brother and my Dad. I have a big family, a church family, here and in Sydney. People upon whom I rely (and have just documented in updating my Will, as my medical decision makers and powers of attorney) whom I trust to be my medical decision makers if I fall ill or in my old age. God doesn't hold out on us at all.

How do we receive the good news of Jesus of the kingdom of God? Childlike. Thinking, yes, but trusting like a child trusts a good and loving father. Childlike in knowing that we don't have anything: no merit, no ticking off a list, no being good enough, but simply answering the call of Jesus and following him. As Jesus said to the rich young ruler, 'Follow me'. So Jesus says to us all to continue to have that childlike faith, that trust in him; as he has done everything for us to be saved, and to be his children, which is such a blessing.

Let's pray. *Heavenly Father, we do thank you for our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for your love shown to us in his life and death and mighty resurrection. Lord, as we think of the little ones whom we know, as we see little babies and their trust in their loving parents, help us to know that Jesus calls on us to have that childlike trust in him as well. We thank you that we bring nothing to you, Lord Jesus, but simply cling to you, and follow you. Help us to do that every day. Amen.*

Upended Expectations (2)

2nd November 2025, St John's

Luke 19:1–10

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

19 [1-4] Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho. There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus, the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way—he was a short man and couldn't see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by.

[5-7] When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, 'Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home.' Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him. Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped, 'What business does he have getting cosy with this crook?'

[8] Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, 'Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I'm caught cheating, I pay four times the damages.'

[9-10] Jesus said, 'Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.' (The Message translation)

Today, I'm going to start off by talking about two men. Two blokes. In fact, they were two very rich blokes. The first one we heard about last week, and we don't know his name, but he was just called 'the rich young ruler'. Now we heard about him in Luke chapter 18. He was a guy who said to Jesus, '*What must I do to inherit eternal life?'* And Jesus told him, *'Give away everything you have, and then come follow me.'* The Bible tells us he went away from Jesus very sad, because he was very rich. He couldn't give up his money. And then Jesus made this great pronouncement: *'It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.'*

So, where does that leave us? We are richer than nearly anyone else in the world. Hands up if you've had something to eat today. Most of us. Most people in the world will eat once a day. We'll eat, we'll go to somewhere for Maccas or, you know, at Northland we'll find something to eat, and if you're like me, you'll get a choc-top while we're watching a movie. So people were saying, 'Wow, a rich person, can they be saved?' But Jesus said, 'Yep, it's impossible with humans, but with God, it is possible.'

And then in the very next chapter, the very next encounter, we have Jesus meeting another rich man. His name is Zacchaeus. That's in Luke 19, and Cam read that for us so well just then. Jesus said to him, *'This is salvation day in your house. This guy is a son of Abraham—which means he's in God's family. For the Son of Man* (a term that Jesus used of himself) *came to find and restore the lost.'* Here from a kids' Bible is a picture of Zacchaeus up a tree:

Sue Bentley, https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jesus-zacchaeus-preschool/

So it brings us to the question: we've got two rich people. One encounter—he goes away from Jesus sad. The next person, another rich person in the time of Jesus—and he comes into the kingdom of God. So it leaves us with the question, who is the good news of Jesus for?

Well, first of all, what is the good news? Well, it's sometimes called the gospel or in Greek it's εὐαγγέλιον (euangélion) which means 'good news'. And that good news is *Jesus saves* or *Jesus rescues us*. It's sort of a summary of what Jesus has done for us.

Now, any Simpsons fans here? I always used to like to watch the Simpsons. In all the crowd scenes in the Simpsons, you will see somebody holding up a sign that says 'John 3:16'. John 3:16 is from the Bible. It's one of the most well-known verses. (Also, in some of the other crowd scenes, they have various people of other religions holding up signs of verses from other faith traditions as well.)

https://mcgarnagle.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/vlcsnap-00091.jpg

This is what John 3:16 says. You've probably heard this before: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* So that's from the book of John, chapter 3, verse 16. Jesus said these words himself.

This is a summary of the good news that Jesus says: God loves us so much that he sent Jesus, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

So if we go back to thinking about those two rich men, the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus, who was also rich, who qualifies for God's kingdom? Is there anyone who is disqualified? Now, we know what it is to be disqualified, don't we? If you're in a race and you break, you might get a warning, but then you might be disqualified; or you might lose a point in tennis for bad behaviour. But if you're disqualified, that means you're totally out. You're out of the race.

So, who is disqualified? What about someone who's a traitor? Someone who works with the enemy, who robs their own people, who appears to be a friend, or appears to be in the same family, but is lying and sort of stabs us in the back. Can that person qualify?

Today we're going to think about the 'J-Z encounter'. Not that Jay-Z* who's married to Beyoncé†. Are they still married or have they broken up? Who knows? I don't know. Anyway, that guy's name is Jay-Z, but I thought I'd call this the J-Z encounter because we're looking at the encounter that Jesus had with Zacchaeus.

So, let's have a think about this. The reason I mentioned a traitor is that Zacchaeus was a rich man, he was a head tax man, and he was very short. Now, his stature has nothing to do with his character, but I think people probably made fun of him because he was so short. But he was rich; and he became rich because he was a rip-off merchant. He was a traitor because he worked with the Roman occupying force. So he was a contractor for them, and had to collect taxes that the Romans had ordered him to collect. So, he went to his own people and he probably had subcontractors working under him as well—but each of them wanted their cut. The Romans said, 'You need to collect this much from each person.' So they didn't just collect that much. They got that much plus their own profit. And then Zacchaeus put his profit on top of that. He was hated. He was seen as someone not within God's family, out of reach of God.

But what does the Bible tell us? He wanted to see Jesus. Now in these days, when someone who was very important was coming into a town, all the dignitaries would go out of the town to welcome the person in. What's interesting is, Jesus seemed not to go into any of the dignitaries' homes; but everyone was crowding around to see this person, Jesus. And because he was so short, Zacchaeus couldn't see.

Do you think people in the crowd would be letting him through? No! That'd be a good opportunity to give him a bit of an elbow, wouldn't it? So, what does he do? He throws his dignity aside, he wanted to see Jesus, so he goes and climbs a tree.

Jesus came as our saviour. He met lots of people; he knew people's hearts. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but Jesus *saw* Zacchaeus. And he not only saw him: he said, 'Come down. Hurry down. I want to come and stay at your house.' Not at any of the dignitaries' houses. He wants to go and stay at the house of Zacchaeus. It's pretty interesting.

Here are a couple of different versions of this same verse:

Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped, 'What business does he have getting cosy with this crook?' (The Message)

Or the same verse, different wording:

All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.' (NIV-UK)

Now, when eating with someone, we don't usually eat with our enemies. We eat with our friends, our family, people that we know, people we're in community with. What people were offended at was, Jesus' going to his house is like, 'You're approving of this one, this traitor?' Remember what Jesus' message was? *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*

So we don't know much about the conversation that took place, but what we do know is what the Scripture tells us. How did Zacchaeus respond to his encounter with Jesus? The Bible tells us that he said, *'Master, I give away half of my income to the poor, and if I'm caught cheating, I pay back four times the damages.'* Jesus didn't say to him, 'Give away your money.' He simply said, 'I want to spend time with you. I want you to know the good news about God.'

Now, that's pretty amazing, isn't it? *'I'll give away half of what I have.'* I wonder what you've got in your bank? What would it be like to give away half of what's in your bank? Maybe a lot, maybe a little, but half! Quite a lot, isn't it?

And he said he'd pay back four times the damages. In the Old Testament law, it said if someone had defrauded another person, as it says here from Leviticus 6:5: *or whatever it was they swore falsely about, they must make restitution in full and add a fifth of a value to it and give it to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering.* So, they were told in the Old Testament, before you come before God, go and make things right. Pay back the person you conned money out of. Don't just give them the money, but give them back 20% more. A fifth. So, for example, $100: you don't just give back the $100, you give back $120. What did Zacchaeus say? *'Master, I give away half of my income. And if I'm caught cheating, I pay four times the damages.'* So that's a $100 back plus 400%. $100 + $400, he would give back $500. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

Now, Zacchaeus, by doing this, is not trying to buy Jesus' approval. We know this from what Jesus said. Jesus said, 'Today is salvation day. Zacchaeus is part of God's family.' And then referring to himself, he said, *'For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.'* One who was lost is now found. He was found by the Lord Jesus.

So back to our question, who qualifies for the kingdom of God? Is there anyone who is disqualified? Well, the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus teaches us a few things. First of all, anyone who responds to the message of Jesus—*all* who respond to the message of Jesus—can be friends with God. Or putting it another way, all who call on Jesus as their Saviour and Lord are friends of God. Or again putting it another way, all who ask Jesus into their lives as their King, are welcomed into God's kingdom.

This encounter also teaches us that God is interested in how we live, but he saves us because of the Lord Jesus. We never earn our place in God's kingdom. It's a gift. It's called grace. It's one of those words we use in church. G.R.A.C.E: God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

So Jesus encountered this man who was shunned by his community, and he said to him, 'You there up the tree? Come down. I'm interested even in you. I'm interested in you.' Everyone else: scandalised. But Zacchaeus shows us that Jesus welcomes all who will listen to him, who come to him, who say, 'Yep, I want to be on your team, Jesus.'

So whether you count yourself rich or not, rich or poor, doesn't matter to God. Male or female, whoever we are, God loves us all, wants us to be in his family. And Jesus makes that possible. And this great story of Zacchaeus shows us that if we trust in Jesus, no-one is disqualified from being in God's family.

The Beatitudes

2nd November 2025, Holy Spirit

Luke 6:20–31

Sermon by Helen McAlley

20 Looking at his disciples, he said:
'Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
21 Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
22 Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.
23 'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.
24 'But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.
25 Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.
26 Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.
27 'But to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

SCAMMERS

We've all heard of terrible scams that take place so regularly. I remember seeing a romance scam on the television. A woman believed that the person who was in contact with her was in love with her and she certainly believed she was in love with that person even though she had never seen him (or was it her?) Something always seemed to prevent them getting together. She believed the he was being held somewhere against his will and frequently sent money to him to help him out. She sent so much money that she had to sell her house and she was in danger of becoming homeless.

TWO OPPOSITE KINGDOMS

I sometimes think of these scammers and ponder how they think they will be happy if they defraud people of their money. I think of activities like this as part of the kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of darkness is very strong in our world today. In contrast, we have God's kingdom, which I think of as the kingdom of light. Jesus, referring to Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of darkness said, 'The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly'. Those in the kingdom of darkness think they will be happy stealing from people, but we in the kingdom of light know that we are happiest when we are giving to others and caring for people.

* A rapper, the Editor believes.
† A singer.

Our values as Christians are very different, we could say the opposite of the values in the world today. In the Beatitudes, which we have in our Gospel reading today, Jesus speaks with His disciples about how they will be blessed and happy if they are poor, hungry, sad, weeping and even persecuted. How would the world or the kingdom of darkness make sense of that?

THE POOR

Jesus explains, 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.' I sometimes think of Christian people who are in palliative care. They are poor in the sense that they have nothing left of the good things of this world. And yet, if they have Jesus, they have everything. We had All Saints' Day yesterday, when we remembered the special people who have been recognised in the church for their service to Jesus. And today, November 2nd, is called All Souls' Day, when we remember ordinary Christian people, including our loved ones who have gone to heaven to be with the Lord. In Jesus, they have everything and are far more happy than we are.

Christians who trust in the Lord and give generously to His work never need to be afraid of being without, whatever their circumstances, for the Lord will supply their every need. Paul, the apostle, commended the Ephesians for their generosity to him and wrote, 'Your generosity is like a loving fragrance, a sacrifice that pleases the very heart of God. My God will supply all that you need from His glorious resources in Christ Jesus (Eph 4:18,19). Even those who are poor in the things of this world are rich if they belong to Jesus, because they have everything they need not only materially but spiritually.

The apostle Matthew writes, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' We experience many trials and difficulties in this life, but when we belong to Jesus, He helps us through each one and promises that we will not be tempted beyond our strength. Unlike those who do not belong to Jesus, we have the hope of heaven where every tear will be wiped from our eyes and we will live in perfect love, joy and happiness.

THOSE WHO HUNGER

Luke continues, 'Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.' Matthew says, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.' I remember as a young person, how I did not understand a lot about the victorious life in Jesus, but I was really hungering and thirsting for it. And I am so grateful for what the Lord has taught me over the years, especially that we cannot live victoriously in Jesus in our own strength. When I feel overwhelmed by what the future might hold and wonder if I could be true to Jesus in this or that situation, I remind myself that He will be with me and help me in every situation. I remember too that He will give me the strength to face any situation at the time, not ahead of time. When I am feeling weak with temptations, I can immediately ask the Lord to help me not to be greedy or jealous, to be more loving or forgiving, or to help me with whatever I am tempted with. When I am feeling sinful and condemned, I can remind myself that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Whatever our problem, we can simply bring it to Jesus and ask Him to help us and He is always so loving and willing to do just that.

I love the verse that says, 'When I am weak, then I am strong'. And the fact that Jesus said, 'Without Me you can do nothing.' And I also love that line from the hymn which says, 'I am weak but Thou art mighty' as well as the hymn, 'I need Thee every hour.' They remind me that I do not have to trust in my own weak resources, but on the Lord's never-failing and ever present resources. Just a simple prayer, 'Lord I need your help in this situation which I can't manage on my own' and then making the decision to trust the Lord in that situation, opens the door for the Lord's resources to be available to us.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WEEP

Those who do not belong to the Lord would also find the next the next beatitude difficult to understand. 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh'. Although the sadness we experience here on earth is very real, God's word says that it is not worthy to be compared to the joys that await us in heaven, and even in the midst of our sorrows here on earth, the Lord helps us by giving us His joy. This is a supernatural fruit of the Holy Spirit that enables us to face whatever happens to us. In the Old Testament, we read that 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

PERSECUTION

Jesus went on to say, 'Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers persecuted the prophets.'

It is not suffering in general that Jesus is speaking about here, but suffering because we are disciples of Jesus. When we are slighted or regarded with contempt because we are followers of Jesus, we need to remind ourselves that we will have a reward in heaven. But even here, we can be happy and blessed because the Lord gives us His comfort and joy, as well as His peace that passes understanding in spite of our circumstances.

In Australia, we do not experience persecution like those in many other countries of the world. It is important that we all pray for those in the persecuted church throughout the world. Many are in prison for their faith. They have had homes or churches destroyed, been injured or their loved ones have been killed simply because they were Christians. The apostle Paul exhorted his readers to remember those in prison as if they were there themselves.

WOE TO YOU

Jesus has been talking to His disciples, but now He turns to the crowds around Him and addresses those who are rich, well-fed, happy in this life and well-spoken of, but who do not care about the things of God. 'Woe to you,' He says. The world's blessings may encourage us to develop an independent or self-sufficient attitude which is fatal to spiritual growth.

The word 'woe' could be translated 'alas' or 'how terrible.' It is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat. Here we see Jesus tenderly trying to turn people's attention away from their own resources to a dependence upon Him.

LOVING OUR ENEMIES

Jesus continues His discourse, emphasising the need to love others, even our enemies. The Greek word for 'love' here is 'agape' which means unconditional love regardless of whether the person loved deserves it or not. God loves each of us with that agape love. We can only love others with that love as we choose to do so and as we ask the Lord to give us that love for others. And it is not enough to abstain from hostile acts. We need to actively do good to our enemies.

The Romans were the enemies of the Jews. They had occupied their land and acted cruelly and unjustly towards the Jewish people. How could they love them?

Jesus gives some practical ways to show love and His words are a help to us today. 'Bless those who curse you.' If someone wrongs us, we can choose to say with God's help, 'Lord, bless that person. Give them good health, happiness in their family and a knowledge of you.' We should get to the point where it is automatic to bless those who wrong us.

Similarly, as an act of the will, we pray for those who mistreat us. And if there is something helpful we can do for that person, we do it for them. We are also to give to those who ask us

CONCLUSION

We see that these values of God's kingdom are very different from those of the kingdom of darkness. Jesus summed up His sermon by saying, 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.' How different we are to be from many in the world who scam to get money from others, who try to have all the best things for themselves, who choose to seek revenge on those who mistreat them and who will not forgive. We are to be the very opposite, and in spite of everything, we have joy and happiness that those who do not belong to Jesus can never have.

Shall we pray: *Dear Lord, we thank you that we are citizens of your heavenly kingdom. Help us to remember that wonderful things are in store for us even though we may have trouble and persecution here. Help us to show your agape love to all we meet and, as your children, treat others as we would like to be treated. We pray in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

Good and Bad Boxes

9th November 2025

Haggai 1:5–2:9; Luke 20:20–40

Sermon by Xiaoxi Lu

Haggai 1:5–2:9

5 Now this is what the LORD Almighty says:
'Give careful thought to your ways. 6 You have
planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but
never have enough. You drink, but never have
your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm.
You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with
holes in it.'

7 This is what the LORD Almighty says:
'Give careful thought to your ways. 8 Go up into
the mountains and bring down timber and build
my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and
be honoured,' says the LORD. 9 'You expected
much, but see, it turned out to be little. What
you brought home, I blew away. Why?' declares
the LORD Almighty. 'Because of my house, which
remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with
your own house. 10 Therefore, because of you
the heavens have withheld their dew and the
earth its crops. 11 I called for a drought on the
fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new
wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground
produces, on people and livestock, and on all
the labour of your hands.'

12 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua
son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole
remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the
LORD their God and the message of the prophet
Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent
him. And the people feared the LORD.

13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave
this message of the LORD to the people: 'I am
with you,' declares the LORD. 14 So the LORD stirred
up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, gover-
nor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of
Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole
remnant of the people. They came and began to
work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their
God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

In the second year of King Darius, 2 1 on
the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the
word of the LORD came through the prophet
Haggai: 2 'Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,
governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak,
the high priest, and to the remnant of the people.
Ask them, 3 "Who of you is left who saw this
house in its former glory? How does it look to
you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?
4 But now be strong, Zerubbabel," declares the
LORD. "Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high
priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,"
declares the LORD, "and work. For I am with you,"
declares the LORD Almighty. 5 "This is what I
covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt.
And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear."

6 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In
a little while I will once more shake the heavens
and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will
shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations
will come, and I will fill this house with glory,"
says the LORD Almighty. 8 "The silver is mine and
the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty.
9 "The glory of this present house will be greater
than the glory of the former house," says the
LORD Almighty. "And in this place I will grant
peace," declares the LORD Almighty.'

Luke 20:20–40

20 Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies,
who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to
catch Jesus in something he said, so that they
might hand him over to the power and authority
of the governor. 21 So the spies questioned him:
'Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what
is right, and that you do not show partiality but
teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.
22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'

23 He saw through their duplicity and said
to them, 24 'Show me a denarius. Whose image
and inscription are on it?'

'Caesar's,' they replied.

25 He said to them, 'Then give back to Caesar
what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'

26 They were unable to trap him in what he
had said there in public. And astonished by his
answer, they became silent.

27 Some of the Sadducees, who say there
is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.
28 'Teacher,' they said, 'Moses wrote for us that
if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no
children, the man must marry the widow and
raise up offspring for his brother. 29 Now there
were seven brothers. The first one married a
woman and died childless. 30 The second 31 and
then the third married her, and in the same way
the seven died, leaving no children. 32 Finally,
the woman died too. 33 Now then, at the resur-
rection whose wife will she be, since the seven
were married to her?'

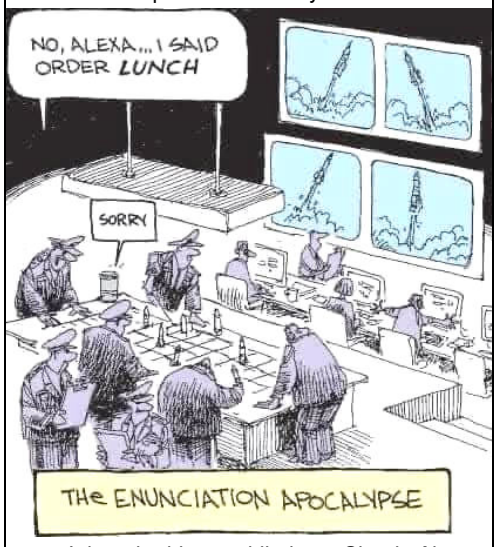
34 Jesus replied, 'The people of this age marry
and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are
considered worthy of taking part in the age to
come and in the resurrection from the dead will
neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and
they can no longer die; for they are like the angels.
They are God's children, since they are children
of the resurrection. 37 But in the account of the
burning bush, even Moses showed that the
dead rise, for he calls the Lord "the God of
Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of
Jacob". 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of
the living, for to him all are alive.'

39 Some of the teachers of the law responded,
'Well said, teacher!' 40 And no one dared to ask
him any more questions.

Well, isn't it exciting! We're heading towards Christmas and I'm heading into the tenth month of being here at the Parish of Banyule! Hooray! To be honest, it really has taken a while to work out how everything works, and I've definitely taken a long time to make sure I've got the right BOX for the right Church… Did you know that I got very confused the second week here? I thought we were at Holy Spirit Watsonia, and went looking for the same room where we prepare communion there? Of course, I couldn't find it, and wasted precious time just sort of aimlessly walking around! And of course, I once thought I was at All Saints' Greensborough, and thoughtlessly greeted you all by welcoming you all to Greensborough…we don't have that service recorded, right? Uh oh.

We all have ways to manage all the different things and roles we play. Whether you want to call it 'wearing different hats' or the different boxes in which we 'store' away all the information: work boxes, home boxes; married boxes, family boxes; friend boxes. We keep the work box here, then the home box here; we have the church box here too. It's really helpful!

Sometime though, they can cause problems, like when Charlie's grade two teacher used her 'teacher voice' on her husband. He wasn't too impressed. Or maybe like this…



I thought this was hilarious. Clearly Alexa, or Alex I think the male version is called, should only be used in some situations. It is good for us to limit and 'box' things sometimes, right?

In today's readings, instead of using boxes to help manage our thinking, we see people trying to impose boxes on others, try to box that person up. We see in Haggai how the Israelites were building their own houses but conveniently ignoring God's house: Haggai reminds them that they can't ignore God's house for their own. He reminds them that they can't box God up and put him in a corner: *2 "This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: The people are saying, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.'"* (Haggai 1:2 NLT)

You and I can hear, right? Just like the prophet Haggai knew as he asked the question: Nope, you lot have just been worrying about your own houses and not God's.

3 Then the Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai: 4 "Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins?

Haggai basically questions whose interests were most important to them—their own or those of their God? Were the Israelites keeping God in a box: limiting Him so that they could focus on themselves?

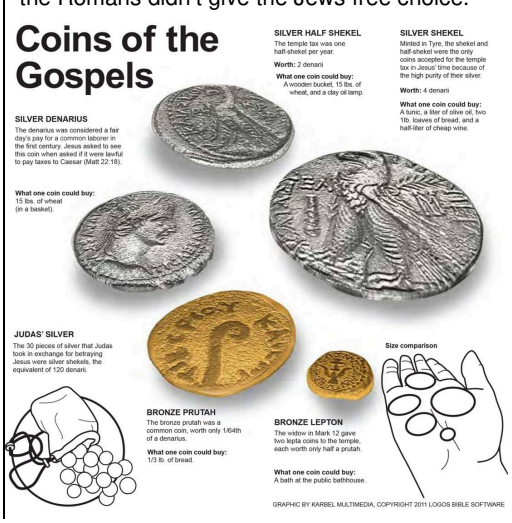
This isn't a new question for Christians. Even hundreds of years later, Paul writes to the Philippian church reminding them: *For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ* (Phil 2:21).

In our reading from Luke we see a similar thing. Jesus has been calling the Pharisees and Saducees out for ignoring God, all this chapter so far…just like Haggai was doing. And after being called out…they have been trying to get back at him: catch Jesus out. They try to trap and box Jesus up too, in order for the Roman authorities to put Jesus into a literal box: prison! And that way, they won't be to blame if people are upset that this popular Rabbi is imprisoned. These two groups of leaders come with questions to Jesus:

20 Watching for their opportunity, the
leaders sent spies pretending to be honest men.
They tried to get Jesus to say something that
could be reported to the Roman governor so
he would arrest Jesus. 21 "Teacher," they said,
"we know that you speak and teach what is
right and are not influenced by what others
think. You teach the way of God truthfully.
22 Now tell us—is it right for us to pay taxes to
Caesar or not?"

This isn't an honest question from the Pharisees. Just like Luke explains: they're trying to trap Jesus.

The Pharisees forget that Jesus knows all things, sees all things, including their intentions, and is WAY smarter than them. At this time, coins weren't always uniform. They sometimes had other stamps on them and the Jews had been given the freedom to choose the stamps on almost all their cons. They of course didn't choose the heads of their leaders. They would choose things like grain, because good Jews didn't put images on coins, because they don't worship anyone but God. The only coin that did have a human head stamped on it was the denarius, the lowest-value coin: that had the head of Caesar, of course. This one, the Romans didn't give the Jews free choice.



Well, you try and trap Jesus in a box? You find out that Jesus is really good with boxes, opening them up, getting out of them, and managing them. So when the Pharisees try and trap Jesus with this question, he very intentionally replies:

23 He saw through their trickery and said, 24 "Show me a Roman coin. Whose picture and title are stamped on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

25 "Well then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."

26 So they failed to trap him by what he said in front of the people. Instead, they were amazed by his answer, and they became silent.

When Jesus uses the most common coin that does have Caesar's image on it, Jesus is actually sticking his tongue out at those trying to trap him. You want to use Roman authority to trap me? Watch me use that same authority that you are actually under, to answer your question intended to trick me! Jesus' answer divides the question of authority up neatly, and yet again, refuses to be boxed by them.

ROMAN DENARIUS
OF THE TIME OF JESUS CHRIST

The box of the Sadducees: Resurrection and marriage

The Sadducee leaders weren't about to be left out either. They were actually a really small group of Jewish leaders; usually rich; not very liked; often really focused on the first five books of the Old Testament. Now, they get a turn to try and box Jesus in!

'Teacher,' they said, 'Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother' (Luke 20:28).

Let's just note, this was a really obscure part of the Law of Moses. Not only that, but it wasn't even one that was being practiced. All these religious leaders really have it in for Jesus, don't they?

34 Jesus replied, "Marriage is for people here on earth. 35 But in the age to come, those worthy of being raised from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage. 36 And they will never die again. In this respect they will be like angels. They are children of God and children of the resurrection."

Jesus isn't saying marriage is bad, more that one of the key outcomes and purposes of marriage (babies, and the continuation of life) won't be the same: there we won't die.

37 "But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—even Moses proved this when he wrote about the burning bush. Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, he referred to the Lord as 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' 38 So he is the God of the living, not the dead, for they are all alive to him."

Want to try and trap Jesus in obscure laws about death and marriage? The Sadducees are trying to catch Jesus out on a law that is based on life here on earth. Jesus reminds them that God's ultimate plan isn't about life here on earth. It's about eternity where will all be alive, not here on earth where Abraham, Jacob and Isaac are all dead too.

See, the problem is: They are all putting God into a box that they can control: to trap Jesus! Whether it be because they've separated him so they don't have to pay attention to him, or maybe it's a box of control so they can control others: just like the Pharisees and Sadducees try to do to Jesus: embarrass us with your teaching? We'll trap you in our laws!

The problem for all of us, including the Pharisees, is that Jesus is Lord over all. And He is good at managing boxes, and has no need to stay in them.

But again Jesus outwitted them by dividing the question up very neatly: 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's', in other words, worship, devotion, obedience—those things belong to God alone.[*]

Oh, whoops! You guys all thought this was about putting Jesus and God into a box? Each time, whether it was Haggai being used by God, or Jesus: they all reconstruct the box so it is rightly all about properly worshipping God. I even found this *Golden Grain Promise Box:* a box full of the Bible verses—the right kind of box for us to have!

Try to trip Jesus up on a law about marriage? Well…the Lord of life knows exactly how to sort it!

The people of Haggai's time try to box God? God uses Haggai to call them to account.

Instead of trying to trap God in a box, we should be putting him first: giving him authority and power over all our boxes.

You might say: that's all nice and well, Xiaoxi. Sure, Jesus doesn't have to stay in boxes. And look, here we are in God's house and it's beautiful. But we will let Jesus reply to the Pharisees, he knows what to say, what to do. We're trying to maintain the building!

But we can't come up with the right words and have awesome comebacks to challenges! What if we too let Alexa accidentally launch a spaceship! What if I say the wrong thing and offend someone, like using the teacher voice instead of the wife voice, and then everyone is upset at me? What do we do then?

I think one of the hardest lessons to learn is to know when to stop trying to control and when I should hand it over to God. There are so many times during the day, when I want to make sense of things: have some control; manage and keep everything in the right boxes! Trying to manage all the things at home; with my family; at church let's not start talking about managing medical appointments! Like how do I make sure I do keep going even in the face of that friend who shares with me about their newly diagnosed cancer; even though I need to make dinner. What about making sure I can manage my health while still making sure I am not too much of a bother or burden to my family and friends.

Well, I have a suggestion: The problem isn't trying to keep things in boxes…it's not bringing those boxes to God. Rather than boxing people in to control them only, what if I opened those boxes and double checked them with God? After all, he sidestepped all those attempts at trying to be boxed up! What if…I can open the box and ask for God to take a look inside, open that box, and show me. Show me what?

Show me what HE is doing.

Show me how HE is moving.

Remind me of my limitations and stop me from trying to manage and control too much. Unlike me, God will make helpful and good boxes when needed.

Remind me, that He is holding me in his hand that does actually control the world.

Rather than try and box Jesus, trap Him into something I can understand or belittle like the Pharisees and Sadducees: I can place myself in His control and His box.

Let's pray. *Father God, thank you that you totally know how to manage everything, that you are a better teacher than anyone else we know, and that you know how to make boxes that work. We pray, Father, that we would continue to hand to you all of these different sections and different boxes in our lives so that you can manage them for us. May we hand over our sorrows and our fears—our lives—so that we can honour you in all that we do. We pray all of this in your name. Amen.*

A bit of Luke 22

16th & 23rd November 2025

Acts 3:1–10; Luke 22:24–38

Sermon by Peter McKay

Acts 3:1–10

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, 'Look at us!' 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

6 Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognised him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

[*] R. C. Sproul, *A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 364.

Luke 22:24–38

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which
of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus
said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it
over them; and those who exercise authority
over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But
you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest
among you should be like the youngest, and the
one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For
who is greater, the one who is at the table or
the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at
the table? But I am among you as one who
serves. 28 You are those who have stood by me
in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom,
just as my Father conferred one on me, 30 so
that you may eat and drink at my table in my
kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve
tribes of Israel.

31 'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift
all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you,
Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when
you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.'

33 But he replied, 'Lord, I am ready to go
with you to prison and to death.'

34 Jesus answered, 'I tell you, Peter, before
the cock crows today, you will deny three times
that you know me.'

35 Then Jesus asked them, 'When I sent
you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack
anything?'

'Nothing,' they answered.

36 He said to them, 'But now if you have a
purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't
have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. 37 It
is written: "And he was numbered with the
transgressors"; and I tell you that this must be
fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is
reaching its fulfilment.'

38 The disciples said, 'See, Lord, here are
two swords.'

'That's enough!' he replied.

First, may I say that I appreciate Denise's invitation to preach, and her confidence in me (misplaced of course). I hope that you will be patient with my ramblings, and I hope that, if you have brought stocks of over-ripe tomatoes and eggs past their use-by date, you will use them sparingly and gently.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer, and may I not stray too far from the truth.

I want primarily to talk about today's Gospel reading. And you'll be thinking I'll talk about service and humility, because that is the subject of the first six verses, and I think it is a very important topic, and especially relevant to our Annual Parish Meeting, when we'll talk about service; but it is also one we are reasonably comfortable with. Or perhaps you are thinking that I'll talk about Jesus' loving warning to Peter, because we are also familiar with that, and we may well need to be warned to be courageous in giving an account of our faith. But no, I am going to concentrate on the last four verses, because I have never heard those verses read in church. The bit about the swords seems particularly strange. But I assume that if Jesus said them, and Luke thought they were worth including in his gospel, they have something to say to us.

These words of Jesus are so strange that traditional commentators thought Jesus couldn't possibly have meant it. Why tell the disciples to buy swords, and then at the end of the same night tell Peter off for using one? The great seventeenth-century commentator Cornelius a Lapide (Cornelis van den Steen, 1567–1637) said that what Jesus *meant* was that the coming persecution would be so great that it may *seem* necessary to have a purse and bag and sword [*]; and he lists others who take the same view. On his view the swords are only there to show that Jesus repudiates their use during his arrest. But why would he tell disciples to sell their cloaks and buy a sword? There wouldn't be time before the arrest.

I don't like this idea of interpreting Jesus' words by assuming he must have meant something quite different. It doesn't seem to me honest, and I suspect that is one reason these words don't appear in the lectionary. With great trepidation, I shall here suggest another interpretation.

Let us start with the context. This reading comes from the Last Supper. Jesus knows that his time with the disciples will soon end. Thursday is drawing to a close, and Friday is coming. Immediately after this reading comes the Garden of Gethsemane, and then the arrest. Jesus wants to prepare his disciples for change.

He teaches them about service. He wants to encourage them, but also to correct them. Leadership in his Kingdom is not about status.

And leadership of the disciples is about to pass to Peter, a man apparently quite unsuitable for the job: foolhardy, impetuous, presumptuous. Jesus knows that Satan will put him to the test, and Peter will be seen to fail, just as Jesus' mission will be seen to fail. But that will not be the end: Jesus will rise again, having conquered death and nailed our sins to the cross; and Peter will turn back and be forgiven, having learnt that he is weaker than he thinks.

But the other disciples also have to learn this lesson. And here we have the relevance of the first reading, from Acts. It is an inspiring reading, and we all wish we were like Peter, able to speak words of healing power in the name of Jesus.

There is an apocryphal story of a Pope (usually said to be Innocent II or Innocent III) and someone else (usually said to be Thomas Aquinas, St Francis, or St Dominic). The Pope is either counting money or showing the Vatican treasures, and he says, 'You see, we can no longer say "Silver and gold have I none"', to which the other person says, 'And neither can we say, "Rise up and walk"'. As a story it is very doubtful, with no consistency about the people involved, and in most tellings of it the chronology makes no sense. But the important thing is that it points to a real problem.

The problem is that we feel we are missing out. If the early Christians could go around healing people, why can't we? Are we not good enough? Are we not real Christians?

Well, I don't think most of us are as good as Peter. I know I have been given his name, but I have not lived up to it. But other explanations have been given. It has been said, for example, that there was a particular time for miracles, and the age of miracles has now passed. But we can see that miraculous healings do occur, and within our little group I know that Helen and Xiaoxi have both experienced them, and perhaps others here have had similar experiences.

But Helen and Xiaoxi have also both reported times when attempts to get healing did not work. We don't have the thing under our control. God doesn't always do our bidding—which probably shouldn't surprise us; but it does disconcert us. He is not a tame God.[†]

But Jesus has something to say to the disciples. He reminds them of the time when he sent the disciples out into the towns and villages. They were instructed not to take money, or a begging-bag (I am told that is what the bag is for), or food, or extra clothes: they were to rely entirely on God. And they were to heal the sick.

And they came back with joy. God had provided everything, and illnesses and demons submitted to the name of Jesus.

But Jesus now tells them that things are changing. Now they will need a purse and a bag, and even a sword. Why?

Because Jesus' life is reaching its fulfilment. He will be crucified, die, rise again, and after a while he will leave them. They will go into a new time.

And in this new time God will give them more responsibility. They had previously had to learn to trust God; now they would be allowed to use God's creation. They will not be carried as babies or little children, with God doing everything for them: now they will walk, at least sometimes.

God expects *us* to use his creation. The whole idea of creation, of a whole universe of things, is that we are to be part of it, to name things and classify them and understand them and make proper and respectful use of them, as we are told to do in the beginning of Genesis.

And God knows this creation is now fallen, and infected with evil through and through. The creation is in bondage to decay, subjected to frustration and futility.[‡]

So it is not wrong to use science to learn about disease and how to heal it; it is part of our commission from God. Those who consider that Christians should pray instead of seeking medical advice are mistaken: we should do both. And we can expect that where humans can do things themselves, God will expect them to do so. So it is not wrong to be prudent. It is not wrong to save money. It is not wrong to have a reasonable stock of food and clothes. It is not wrong to be careful stewards: it is expected of us.

Of course we will often fail. Sometimes, God will have to carry us, and we should, like little children, ask for it when—so frequently—we need it, and be always ready to receive it.

But God is a good King, a good boss: not always looking over our shoulders, micromanaging, requiring us to ask permission for everything; but leaving us to do our jobs, trusting us to get on with it, even though he knows we will often stuff things up. Time and time again, he calls people to do things, to be leaders, who are very far from perfect, who will often fail. Look at the heroes of the Bible: except only for Jesus, they are full of flaws, frequently getting things wrong. They are ordinary people; which shows us not only that heroes are ordinary people, but that ordinary people can be heroes.

---

[*] T.W. Mossman (transl), 'The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide: S. Luke's Gospel', 4th edn (John Grant: Edinburgh 1908), p. 484

[†] C.S. Lewis

[‡] Romans 8:20–21

And there is a problem when ordinary people are given miraculous powers, and Elisha is an example. He has just seen Elijah taken up to heaven, and therefore been given a double portion of Elijah's spirit. He is walking to Bethel and a big group of boys say rude words to him about his bald head. Not having the patience of a proverbial saint, he curses them—and forty-two of them get horribly killed by bears*. His curses were not just relief for his anger, they were appallingly effective—and look at the result. Forty-two grieving parents. It is just as well that we don't have those powers.

But there is something I have so far neglected. What hits us hardest in this passage? The swords! We are used to Jesus saying, 'All who draw the sword will die by the sword'. Indeed, according to Matthew he will say it quite soon. We are not used to hearing him say that we need one, and it is better to be cold without a cloak than not to have a sword.

When we think about it, it also seems odd that the apostles already have two swords. When we think of the twelve apostles, we don't usually imagine them carrying swords. The flannelgraph figures of disciples I remember from Sunday School never used to include swords. In Roman-occupied Judea, did the Romans even permit it?

The Greek word used here for sword is μάχαιρα, *mákhaira*. Now to the Greeks, what we would usually call a sword was the ξίφος, the *xiphos*, which was very similar to the famous Roman *gladius*. The *mákhaira* was originally a very particular design, single-edged for cutting rather than stabbing.

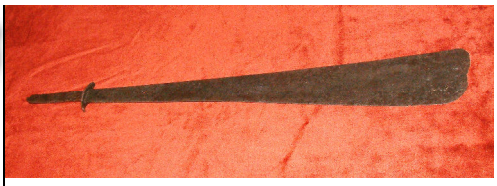
Replica of a Roman *gladius*

Rama, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uncrossed_gladius.jpg

The *mákhaira* was in fact a sort of machete. Similar blades are known all around the world, and are used for a lot of agricultural purposes. They can reap grain or grass or sugar cane, clear unwanted plant growth, chop food for animals or people, even chop down small trees, split firewood, shape wood . . . they are very useful tools, and in many societies around the world people start using them from a very early age (though here they are now illegal).

I have no doubt that the 'swords' the apostles had were some sort of machete. It is the sort of thing they would be likely to have. Perhaps they especially had them there to slaughter and prepare the Passover lamb.

In the museum of the Archdiocese of Poznań in west Poland there is displayed what is said to be St Peter's sword. The likelihood of its being genuine is pretty low, but it is interesting that it is clearly a machete.



Radomil, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Miecz_%C5%9Bw_Piotra_RB1.JPG

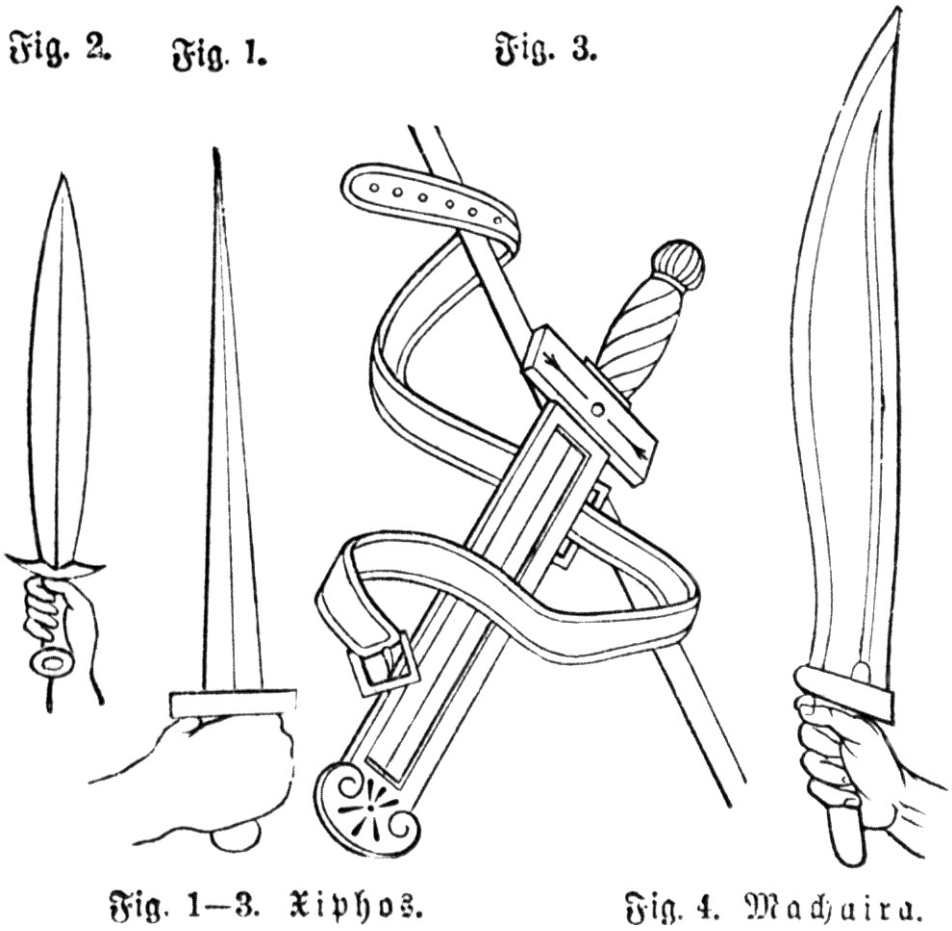
(The broad end, giving a distant centre of mass, gives it strength of swing; compare with the modern example below.)

So immediately we are all thinking, perhaps Jesus was saying that in the time to come, as well as needing practical things like a purse and a bag, you will also need a practical tool, the sort that all farmers would have (and probably fishermen too, to cut rope and shape wood and stun fish). Perhaps the translation 'sword' is just a mistake.

But if it is a mistake, it is one the disciples also made. Machetes can indeed be used as weapons, and the *mákhaira* was certainly used that way. Indeed, though *mákhaira* is not the only Greek word for 'sword' used in the New Testament, it is definitely the usual one, and it seems to be the generic word for any sort of sword. It is even used in Acts 16:27 for the jailer's sword when Paul and Silas are in jail in Philippi and are released by an earthquake, and the jailer draws his sword to kill himself. That sword would almost certainly have been a Roman *gladius.*

We know the disciples took Jesus to be referring to a weapon, because when, after Gethsemane, people come to arrest Jesus, the disciples ask, rather timidly, 'Lord, should we strike with our swords?'† They assume this is why Jesus wanted the swords. Peter, of course, absolutely typically, doesn't wait for an answer but goes straight ahead; and he muffs it, only getting the high priest's slave's ear. And Jesus tells him off for misunderstanding what Jesus is there for.

Perhaps the translators were misunderstanding Jesus, like the disciples. But on this Sunday after Remembrance Day, I am not so sure. Perhaps Jesus is pointing to a real need for self-defence in this fallen world we must live in. One commentator says Jesus is talking about the disciples' need for self-defence, and they misunderstand and think he needs them to defend him. Another ties it to the prophecy from Isaiah 53:12 'he was numbered with the transgressors', and says that required the disciples to also be considered transgressors, for which they needed to be armed. I find that hard to believe,



Meyers Konversations-Lexikon : eine Encyklopädie des allgemeinen Wissen. Bd. 14, Ruböl–Sodawasser, Leipzig: Bibliogr. Institut, 1890.

* 2 Kings 2:23–24

† Luke 22:49

because (a) I can't see any such requirement, and (b) none of the other disciples were in fact arrested or tried. I think most commentators don't really know, and neither do I.

And I don't know what 'It is enough' meant. It could mean 'two swords are enough', or it could mean 'I have said enough' or 'we have talked enough'. I suspect if God told me what that meant, I would understand much more; but he hasn't.

Now in a sermon, you are supposed to point to the practical application: how it affects the way we should live. Often, Scripture leads us to the conclusion that we are not living as we ought, and we should try to do better. But these particular verses I find comforting, even if I can't fully understand them. We are not bad Christians if we can't do miracles. We are not bad Christians if we are prudent. Yes, we should serve with humility. Yes, we should have the courage of our convictions. Yes, we should be prepared to fail, and then to let God take over. But God approves if we try to serve him with all our mind as well as all our heart.

Let us pray: *Lord, we know that we often get things wrong. We often misunderstand you, we act without thinking or praying, or, worse, we know what you want and we go the other way. Thank you that you still give us the honour of standing back and giving us a good go, and of giving us another go when we fail. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

(Right: The Editor delivers his sermon.)

Annual Parish Meeting Notes

Meeting of Sunday 16th November

23 members present, 15 apologies

Prayers

- Thanking God for the parish and those in it. Prayer that the meeting would be fruitful, and for an improvement in Peter's health.

Minute Secretary

- Rhonda Taylor with Belinda Hirschauer.

Minutes of previous annual meeting

- Accepted.

Reception of the Parish Electoral Roll

- Kaye was thanked for its revision.

Vicar's annual report

- Pp 6–10 of *Annual Report 2025: Part A*.
- 1 Feb 2026 eighth anniversary of Denise's commissioning as our Vicar. This year a good year for parish, and for her. With difficulties of 2024 behind, a much happier soul with her four-legged friend Peggy Lee.
- In 2025 commenced partnership with All Saints' Greensborough and welcomed curates Xiaoxi and Weiyi Lou on a part time basis; participated in HOPE 25 between Easter and Pentecost; added Interserve (Rev Dr Lyn Pearson) to CMS and BCA Mission Partners.
- Wardens Kaye Collins & Katrina Philip thanked: worked tirelessly in distinct roles.
- Parish Council thanked; Rhonda Taylor as parish secretary and for work in the church office, especially child safe ministry (special thanks by meeting); Emmi Godau as Treasurer; Mercy Henry and Belinda Hirschauer as Parish Council members in their second year. Mercy to step down because of work and study.
- Helen McAlley thanked for selfless commitment to monthly preaching and pastoral support; Heather Connor and Wilma Walker for organisation of parish rosters; thanks to all who serve; Sylvia Webb for *Banyule Churches Together*.
- Looking forward to 2026, 175th anniversary of St John's. Will form a committee to assist with organisation of special events. Archbishop Ric booked for Sunday 16 August.

Parish Council Annual Report

- Pp 14 & 15 of *Annual Report 2025: Part A*.
- Rhonda Taylor thanked PC members for support, and encouraged congregants to flock to Holy Spirit Watsonia: will now be comfortable and able to hear the service on hot days. Three new split-system units will be installed from 18 November.
- Mercy will not be continuing on PC next year. Were delighted to welcome Emmi Godau back.

Churchwardens' annual report

- Pp 12 & 13 *Annual Report 2025: Part A*.
- The Diocese has introduced a schedule of ongoing OH&S inspections which need to be undertaken by a specific company, AESC: funded by the Diocese this year, but we will be responsible for funding from next year.
- Kaye thanked Denise for all her support and guidance in churchwardens' matters.

Audited accounts

- *Annual Report 2025: Part B* – Financial report.
- Emmi's return to Treasurer required her to learn a new accounting system 'Xero'. She briefly summarised the profit/loss statement & balance sheet. Delighted the auditor had found some miscalculations which benefitted us by $7000. Apparent healthy balances in some accounts are specifically for huge costs associated with the heritage repairs to St John's. Our share of money received from the sale of St Andrew's must only be spent on property.

The budget

- *Annual Report 2025: Part B* – Financials
- The op shop has been a challenge. Some months when we did not receive any payment. A number of meetings, but to no avail. BSL has a high staff turnover: difficult dealing with ever-changing personnel. *Allan Way:* History repeating. After completion of Watsonia Town Square, if situation continues, Parish Council will look at alternatives for the property.
- The MVRF loan is interest-free, and at $760 per month will be paid off this year. Rental income is down as we no longer receive rent from the Invermay Grove property, which was sold with St Andrew's.
- The budget was accepted.
- Much acclamation for Emmi.
- Denise thanked PC for carpet removal in the vicarage. New floorboards much more practical.

Reports by other parish groups

- *Annual Report 2025: Part A* – Reports.
- Reports by *mainly music*, St John's Riverside Community Garden, Holy Spirit Mothers' Union, *Banyule Babble* Editor, Link Missionary Rowan, and Xiaoxi Lou our Curate (in *Part B*). Denise thanked the authors of these reports.
- Kaye thanked Peter McKay for all the work he puts into the production of the *Babble* each month, but suggested fewer printed copies would be advisable. Allan Way told us that the article on 'Blokes…' is read and enjoyed beyond our parish and Peter is most popular. Much acclamation.

Election of wardens and Parish Council

- **Katrina Philip** and **Kaye Collins** have been renominated and seconded and were elected.
- Previous members of Parish Council **Rhonda Taylor**, **Emmi Godau** and **Belinda Hirschauer** have been renominated and seconded and were elected. A new nomination was received from **Christopher-Jack Andrew** and seconded and he was elected.

Election of an auditor

- Motion passed that we retain Bryce Hoffman of BK Managers as auditor.

Election of lay parish nominators

- Previous parish nominator **Judy Thomson** renominated, seconded and accepted. Allan Way has decided to step down as parish nominator. **Jan Collins** has been nominated, seconded and accepted.

Any other matters

- Denise presented a list of people to be approved as Lay Assistants at Holy Communion: Naira Riad, Katrina Philip, Peter McKay, Heather Connor, Maryse Pereara, Mercy Henry, Rhonda Taylor, Wilma Walker, Anna Doyle and Jeslyn Johnson.
- Elizabeth Lavoipierre has melded into the church and regards it as her family.
- Allan thanked Denise for her many years of service as our vicar: right person for the job.

Minutes by Rhonda Taylor, précis by Editor

A young parish minister about to deliver his first sermon asked a retired cleric for advice on how to capture the congregation's attention. 'Start with an opening line that's certain to grab them', the older man said. 'For example: "Some of the best years of my life were spent in the arms of a woman who was not my wife".' He smiled at the younger man's shocked expression before adding, 'She was my mother.'

The next Sunday the young clergyman nervously clutched the pulpit rail in front of the congregation. Finally he said, 'Some of the best years of my life were spent in the arms of a woman.'

He was pleased at the instant reaction—then became panic-stricken. 'But for the life of me, I can't remember who she was!'