

BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE

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

JUNE
2021

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DENISE'S DATELINE

Prayer and Refreshment

Thank you to everyone who asked about my holiday – it was wonderful combination of rest, refreshment and time with loved ones. I listened to audio books, read books, swam in the crystal clear Byron Bay, saw a ballet, an independent film accompanied by live music, and grooved along to a 10-piece band playing Motown hits – and that was only in the first 2 weeks!

I feel so thankful that I was back in time to take part in the Prayer Retreat which helped me to rest and be refreshed in God in prayer. Rev Beck Miller from Merri Creek Anglican Church had prepared a fantastic time for those who gathered from both Banyule and Merri Creek Anglican Churches. Some of us had participated in such mornings before – for others of us, it was new. We had times of reflection on the heart of God, some time alone, some prayer activity options and then prayer together.

Beck had provided a couple of prayer activities I hadn't used before, and I chose one that seemed so simple: it involved untying knots in a cord as I prayed. So, as I prayed about a burden for someone that had occupied my waking and dreaming thoughts for months, I prayed to God, committed the situation to our loving heavenly Father, and untied a knot as I visualised being released, like the knot. It was so simple, yet the effect upon me in the following days was profound. I really did feel that, like that knot, I had been released of my burden.

Isn't it great when God shows us new ways to pray and trust Him? For us as individual Christians, and as members of our Parish, prayer is something which needs to saturate all our plans, our desires and our hopes.

As a Parish, we have great hopes for our partnership with Merri Creek Anglican Church for the new Church in the Fairfeild/Alphington area; we have great needs for people to serve as Church Wardens from November this year; we have great desires that we grow in number as she share the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ with friends and family. All these need to be underpinned by prayer; all our plans, our hopes and our desires will come to naught without prayer and the empowering of God.

Prayer is a privilege we have as the children of God – by the Spirit of God we can call out to God as our Father and pour out our hearts and our needs to him. I urge us all to be creative as well as fervent in prayer, asking God to bless us and grow his kingdom in us and through us.

May God refresh us as we come to him in prayer.



Denise

Churchwardening

I am grateful for the kind comments and offers of help I have received. I believe we can solve the problem of looking after our properties if enough people join forces. There is more than enough goodwill for that to happen.
— Peter McKay

St Andrew's working bee

Thanks to all those who took part in the St Andrew's working bee. Tree trunks were expertly felled by Glenn, who could so accurately predict where they would go, that, like an expert knife thrower, he was able to just miss people. Extra drama was added by one trunk that wanted to fall backwards onto Glenn, but, foreseeing that if Glenn were squashed to a bloody pulp we might miss out on lunch, we helped give it a push in the right direction.

St John's working bee

There will be a working bee at St John's on 17th July, 8.30 am – 12.30 pm (note the change in date from that initially announced). People from Merri Creek will be joining us, so it will be a good opportunity to meet them, and also we don't want to look bad in numbers in front of another parish, do we?

Also, there will be a nice lunch after.

Catriona on Luke and art

Catriona will be leading Patrick's Bible Study on Tuesday June 8th at St Andrew's at 7.30 pm, presenting 'How has Luke been used in Christian art?' You don't have to have attended this study before to go to this one, which is a special one-off on a topic in which Catriona is an expert.



Much red was worn at Pentecost, with varying levels of taste

This Month – June

Wednesday 2nd: 11 am Iris Grange; 3.30 pm Strathalan

Saturday 5th: 8 am Blokes Helping Blokes breakfast at Macleod Community Hall

Sunday 6th Pentecost 2 / Trinity 1: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit
1 Kings 19:1–18

Tuesday 8th: 7.30 pm Bible study at St Andrew's, led by Catriona: Luke in Christian art

Sunday 13th Pentecost 3 / Trinity 2: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit
1 Kings 21:1–29

Sunday 20th Pentecost 4 / Trinity 3: 10.15 am Combined at St John's
2 Kings 12:1–21

Wednesday 23rd: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers' Union; 11 am Streeton Park and general mid-week service at St John's; 3.30 pm Regis Macleod

Sunday 27th Pentecost 5 / Trinity 4: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit
2 Kings 16:1–20

Wanted

- Lots of churchwardens

Money: April

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-------------------|
| Income: | Giving: | \$14,438.20 |
| | Other: | \$16,124.39 |
| | Total: | \$30,562.59 |
| Expenses: | | \$22,444.54 |
| Surplus: | | \$8,118.05 |

Giving was increased by a generous donation from an anonymous parishioner—thank you very much. So far we have spent relatively little on building maintenance, but that is about to change.

Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

Wednesday 28th of April 2021: After our COVID-19 clean and sign-in sheet, we enjoyed a cuppa and a quick chat.

We thanked Val for sending flowers to Elizabeth Ryder from us in her time of treatment.

Barbara led us in the MU Service, Val reading the Bible, and we all took part in reading the service.

Business arising: Elsie gave a report on the Lady Day Service, which was combined with the Choral Service at St Paul's Cathedral on 25th March at 5 pm. (Lady Day is a celebration of when the angel visited Mary.)

Correspondence—In: Invitation to St Eanswythe's Altona MU to attend their 43rd Birthday on 3rd May, 11 am to 2.30 pm. Speaker: Barry Gomm, who will speak on Dorothy Baker, born in Footscray, a singer in the 50/60s.

Treasurer's report: All funding sent, our bank balance is now \$30.92.

General business: 59th Birthday coming up. One idea was that after our service we visit St John's teapot with its cover on.

Today instead of a speaker, Elsie asked our group if they would help her sort/check out the religious books (I don't get time on a Saturday morning, working at the op shop). In no time the tables were covered with Bibles, religious books, icons, etc, all getting a close inspection. It was a great help.

We stopped for Midday Prayers, then packed away and cleaned.

Elsie Storr

mainly music: June 2021

Watsonia *mainly music* continues with varying numbers attending. Sometimes it seems there are more team members than families. We hope that, as time progresses, they may become more regular in attendance and persuade other families to come along.

One Mum, who attended Heidelberg for a couple of years and transferred to Watsonia at the beginning of the year, (because it is nearer home), has even got her own church congregation interested in starting a *mainly music* group. We must have done something right!

A fantastic morning tea was presented for the Mums to celebrate Mother's Day. Each Mum and Grandmother was presented with a small present – just for them, and the children each helped to make a card for their Mum.

Rosemary Bellair (9459 5394)

Francis George Ebbitt

6 May 1929 – 13 May 2021

Frank Ebbitt and his wife Gladys have been long-time members of the parish, attending mainly at Holy Spirit; Gladys specially asked Helen McAlley to take Frank's funeral service, which took place in Thomastown on 20th May.

The service started with recordings of *The Green, Green Grass of Home* and *The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended*. Eulogies were given by both of Frank's sons-in-law.

Frank was born on 6th May 1929 in rural Ireland, in a farming family. He was the youngest of eight siblings, all now deceased.

It is telling of his character that when, while still young, he visited his father who was then in an old people's home, and his dad said, "Take me home", he did, and looked after him at home. He met Gladys and wanted to get married, but felt that his father was too cranky to impose on his wife, and waited until his father died.

Frank inherited the family farm, but it was not financially viable, so he sold it and migrated to Australia by sea in the early 1960s. There he eventually got a job as a salesman at Sussex Timber, a hardware retailer in Coburg. He stayed in that job until he retired at 65.

Gladys was said to be 'very discerning' for choosing Frank, who was described as tall and elegant, with the 'walk and talk of a gentleman', the perfect match for Glad.

Frank was described as a practical, reassuring, understanding man, who was reliable, loyal, trustworthy and honest. He was proud of his family: he had two daughters and four grandchildren, who found him a loving father/grandfather.

He was easy-going, but always ready to share his views and opinions. He was one of the first adopters of dishwashers, because it was his job in the house to wash the dishes. His family especially remember the summer holidays spent at various places in the country, and eventually in a beach house on Phillip Island.

He loved music: country & western, Irish, and hymns. He also liked whisky and Irish parties. He savoured every feeling of happiness that came his way.

Slides were shown during a recording of *Danny Boy*, then Helen preached on Heaven and John 14:1–6. There followed *The Lord's my shepherd* and finally Vera Lynn's *We'll Meet Again*.

Peter McKay



Frank has to tell which bottle is which

Blokes Helping Blokes



The Blokes met again on 1st May. Glenn gave the Editor extra bacon and eggs, evidently feeling he looked insufficiently nourished.

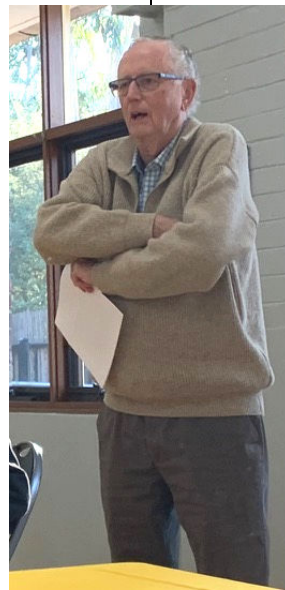
The Editor was certainly not at the top of his form. Paul Smith, next to him, was making comments about occasionally playing away, which the Editor didn't understand.

David Woods presented his living eulogy. He said he would steal his title from a friend, and refer to his life as a 'Guided Journey', because it seemed to him, now that he looked back, that at key points God had guided his feet in ways he was not aware of at the time, but which had made his life the better.

David divided his life, like a football match, into four quarters of 25 years each. (Though the quarters in a football match do not actually go for quite as long as that, they just seem to.) In doing this he appeared to be predicting the year of his death, but making sure it was at a good age.

The first quarter set most of the foundations of David's life. He was born in Sydney, and when he was 14 he went with his church group to a Billy Graham crusade. He said he couldn't remember much of it, except Billy Graham's exhortation that he needed to make up his mind, and his stumbling to the front.

At 17 a friend who had pity on his lonely condition set him up on a blind date, which he said had continued until the present day. (*A voice*: Do you still not know her name?)



David left school in Year 9, got a job in the Electricity Commission, and studied part-time in the evenings for an accountancy qualification, something you could do then, when few people completed high school. However, he eventually realised that to use his qualification he would have to leave the public service, where promotion was purely on time served, and abilities weren't a factor.

David's second quarter had him moving to Melbourne, and working in the private sector, first as accountant for a furniture manufacturer, and later for an oil and gas exploration firm, where his job was more organisational, and where he learnt what it was like to take risks.

As well as work, there was family, with four children before he was thirty. (He now has 11 grandchildren.)

And there was volunteering. He was challenged by the example of those he met and learnt the importance of giving back, and with his accountancy skills eventually became treasurer of a number of organisations, mainly, but not exclusively, Christian.

During the second quarter the first oil and gas company was taken over by one or more Perth entrepreneurs. He distrusted the breed, but told us it turned out his estimation had been badly wrong. They were very much worse than he had thought.

He was offered a very senior position in the new merged business at a high salary with a company Porsche, but he declined. Later it turned out that the person who took his job had an 'accident' while driving his Porsche. David felt he had, by the grace of God, dodged a bullet.

David's third quarter saw him unable to find suitable full-time work, so he worked part-time as a consultant and spent the rest of his time on his volunteer work, which expanded. Eventually he retired from paid work, but kept up the volunteering.

David was unable to say much about the fourth quarter because it has only just started, but he looked towards it positively.

The next *Blokes Helping Blokes* breakfast will be at 8 am on 5th June, again at Macleod Community Hall. *Mr June* will be David Fitzgerald. Please let Glenn know if you are coming, to help with catering: 0487 852 808. All blokes are welcome!

— Peter McKay

Free to a good home!



Our [sc. the Bellairs'] new home will not have room for these items. All you will need to arrange is transport. Please contact *Rosemary Bellair* 9459 5394.

Left and centre: Roll-top bureau – 90 cm wide, 48 cm deep, 97 cm high

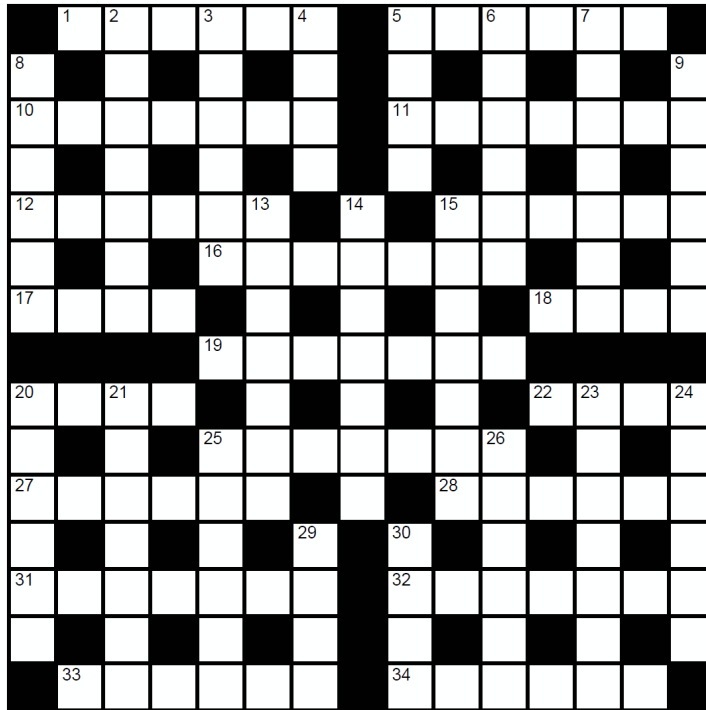
Right: Display cabinet (mirror backed) – 62 cm wide, 41 cm deep, 184 cm high

Captiousness

No-one so far has entered last month's Caption Competition, so it looks like the Editor will get to drink the prize himself.

Across

- 1 Body of water the Israelites walked through (3,3)
- 5 As Gideon, Othniel and others did (6)
- 10 Very salty water! (4,3)
- 11 Brave fighter (7)
- 12 Queen of Persia (6)
- 15 Combat (6)
- 16 Ceremonies (7)
- 17 City of Persian kings (4)
- 18 Posted (4)
- 19 Descendant of Esau (7)
- 20 Fair (4)
- 22 A son of Benjamin (4)
- 25 Corrupted (7)
- 27 One of the churches (6)
- 28 Having the nature of God (6)
- 31 River of Damascus (7)
- 32 Marriage (7)
- 33 Ancient unit of distance (6)
- 34 Wanderers (6)



by Philologus

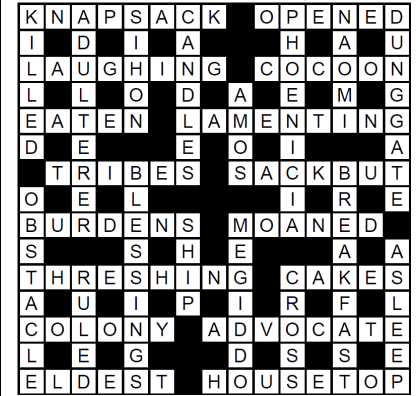
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- 4 Seventh king of Israel (4)
- 5 God's people (4)
- 6 Also known as Tabitha (6)
- 7 Letter (7)
- 8 Serpents (6)
- 9 Sacred minister (6)
- 13 Puzzles (7)
- 14 Upheaval (7)
- 15 Erased, when with 'out' (7)
- 20 Husband of Mary (6)
- 21 Obedient helper (7)
- 23 Enlightened (7)
- 24 Seek retribution (6)
- 25 As Jesus did with a sop (6)
- 26 Crown (6)
- 29 Region (4)
- 30 Jacob was one (4)

Down

- 2 Treasurer of Corinth (7)
- 3 Mary's relation to Martha (6)

Answers to last month's puzzles:



Bible Word Search mystery answer: **AWESOME GOD**

Last month's anagram:

- deiopr _____ provide
- ailpr _____ pillar
- aeginnorst _____ generations
- abcjo _____ Jacob
- ehntt _____ tenth
- beehl _____ Bethel
- enost _____ stone
- aairstwy _____ stairway
- aeehvn _____ Heaven
- eimoprs _____ promise

Bible Word Search – Feelings Between God and His Children

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

https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_Feelings_0.htm

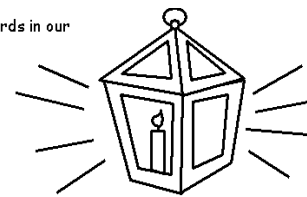
S H I E L D T R E A S U R E V
 H R O T C E T O R P Y O J N E
 E D I V O R P S U P P O R T C
 L U S E E N C O U R A G E C A
 T T N E L O V E N E B G O C R
 E I O F C B E T C C N M C O B
 R F U W A U A A N I P E C N M
 N U R O Y I R D V A P E A F E
 I L I N T G L E N T T T R E D
 A R S D I N I I A E Y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

- Acceptance,
- Appreciate, Believing,
- Benevolent, Caring,
- Certain, Cherish,
- Companion,
- Confessor, Constant,
- Dedicated,
- Dependable, Devoted,
- Dutiful, Embrace,
- Encourage, Enjoy,
- Esteem, Favor,
- Fidelity, Grace, Guide,
- Happy, Honor, Hope,
- Nourish, Protector,
- Provide, Secure,
- Shelter, Shield,
- Support, Sustaining,
- Treasure, Unfailing,
- Wonder

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

Child of God Anagram

www.dltk-bible.com



- adeilt _____
- adelnnp _____
- aalswy _____
- acehrs _____
- adeknrss _____
- almps _____
- beggiinn _____
- deegklnow _____
- agiinprs _____
- eflopruw _____

PRAYER

Easter 4, 2nd May 2021

Matthew 6:5–15

by Helen McAlley

Praying together

Every fortnight, I have a time of prayer with my son-in-law Craig's mother Deirdre. We pray over the phone together for the family, remembering their need of salvation as well as other needs like healing. We have two grandchildren in common but we pray for them all as well as all of our children and children-in-law.

We began to pray together because our 11 year old grandson Fraser was diagnosed to be on the autism spectrum. Very high functioning, but displaying symptoms that we began to pray about.

God supplies our every need

One day, Deirdre told me about a Christian preacher she had heard on YouTube. This man was called Andrew Womack. Deirdre had heard the testimony of a couple whose two boys had been totally healed of autism. They had very severe symptoms and it was quite a spectacular healing. I listened to the testimony and to a sermon by Andrew Womack. What he said was that God has already provided so that all our needs can be met. He cited the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God had provided all the food they needed, for example. They did not have to plead with God to provide food for them. It was all there for them and all they needed to do was to receive it with gratitude. And this is how it is for us. The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians, 'And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.' We do not need to plead with God as if he is reluctant to care for us. If there is a need, He will supply it.

We have prayed in this way for Fraser and, although he is not yet totally healed, we have had encouragements. He now has more self-control when he goes into a meltdown and the meltdowns have become shorter.

Provision of a house

At about the same time, I was speaking to my daughter Lucy on the phone. She and her partner Red live in Torquay. They were renting a house there, but hoping to buy one. Because it is a resort area, the houses were very expensive and it seemed becoming more so each week as many thought they would move out of Melbourne as a result of the lockdown.

On this occasion, Lucy was telling me how discouraged they had become in their house-hunting. She said, 'I don't think we'll ever have a house of our own.' Having just listened to the sermon about God providing our every need, I said I was going to pray for God to supply the house for them. They needed to stay in Torquay because Lucy's daughter Frankie needed to spend time with her father who lived there. I think it was the same morning that I spent time in committing this request to God as I drove up to the hills to spend some time with friends. I prayed along the lines that the Lord had already supplied our every need and wanted us to receive what He had provided in faith.

A couple of weeks later, I spoke again to Lucy and she said to me, 'We've got a house.' I believe this was a gift from God to them and explained how I had been praying for a house

for them. It was a lovely new house with a garage with lots of storage space for Red's tools. He is a tradesman. They loved the design of it. Their offer for it had been accepted, although another buyer had also made an offer. It was within their budget and was just five houses from Frankie's school. This is an example of what the Bible calls God's favour.

God is a loving Father

Do we really believe that God loves us and wants to bless us by providing for our needs? Our needs, not our wants. Can we come to the Lord with our requests like the small child who comes confidently to their father knowing that they are loved and will be looked after in every way that they need it?

When we pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread' in the Lord's Prayer, are we pleading with God to notice us and give us a small piece of dry bread? Or are we thinking how He is a loving Father who delights to minister to our needs. 'Daily bread' surely covers all our needs.

Don't be ostentatious in prayer

In our gospel reading today, we have Jesus instructing His disciples on prayer. Firstly, He says they are not to be like the hypocrites who love to pray in the synagogue or on the street corners in order to be seen by others.

Prayer was an important religious duty for the Jews. In the morning and evening, devout Jews would recite what they called the *Shema*: three short passages of Scripture from Deuteronomy 6 and 11 and Numbers 15. And three times a day, at nine in the morning, noon and three in the afternoon, they would pray prayers called The Eighteen Benedictions. If you were in the streets at this time it was the thing to stop, to turn towards the temple, and pray (the Moslem practice even today). Apparently, the hypocrites would plan their day so as to be in some conspicuous place when it was time to pray. They could then display their so-called 'devotion' to those who were passing by.

Instead, Jesus said, 'When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.' Jesus probably meant to go into the storeroom because that was the only room in the house in those days that had a door that could be locked or even shut. Jesus was not forbidding public or communal prayer here, but rather the ostentation to which it was so easily prone. The essence of prayer is the communion of the disciple with the Father.

Come with reverence not repetition

Jesus goes on to say, 'And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like the pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.' Implied in that is that that Father knows us intimately, cares for us deeply and wants to give us what we need.

We are not to pray like the pagans. The pagans would use long list of the names of the gods in their prayers, hoping that by constantly repeating them, they would inadvertently call on the name of the god that could help them. Jesus stressed the quality of the prayer. It is not to say that we should never repeat things when we pray. Jesus repeated Himself, for example, in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed three times that the cup of

the crucifixion would be taken from Him. Nor is it forbidding set forms of prayer. Jesus went on to give one – the Lord's Prayer. Rather Jesus is speaking about thoughtless, mechanical prayer. It is not 'many words' that God responds to, but an attitude of prayerful dependence.

Our Father in heaven

The Lord's Prayer begins, 'Our Father in heaven'. The commentator Matthew Henry says of this phrase, 'He is not only a Father willing to help us, but, as a Heavenly Father, able to help us, able to do great things for us, more than we can ask or think; he has wherewith to supply our needs, for every good gift is from above. He is a Father, and therefore we may come to Him with boldness, but a Father in heaven, and therefore we must come with reverence....'. We remember God is holy.

Your kingdom come

When we pray, 'Your kingdom come,' we are asking that God's kingdom will come more and more until its full and final consummation. When we pray, 'Your will be done,' we are asking that we and others will be brought into obedience to God. We ask that earth may be more like heaven by obedience to God's will.

Forgive us

The prayer continues with the request that God will supply our daily bread or our needs, and then there is another very important prayer. We ask for God's forgiveness and remember that we too need to forgive others. We need to daily ask for God's forgiveness knowing that it is always available to us through the precious blood of Jesus. We need also to forgive others. This is not a feeling. If we wait until we feel we have forgiven someone, we may wrongly think that forgiveness is impossible. Rather, we can acknowledge that harm has been done to us and choose to forgive regardless of our feelings. When a picture of the person comes into my mind, I say simply, aloud if possible, 'Lord I choose with your help to forgive that person. Bless them in every way' and then I keep going with my day without worrying about how I am feeling.

Lead us not into temptation

We then pray, 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' We remember how easily we can fall into temptation, but also that God's word promises that we will not be tempted beyond our strength. We keep close to God so that we will have His strength when tempted. We remember too that Jesus by His death and resurrection has won the victory over all the power of the enemy and because we are 'in Christ' that victory is available to us in every situation that we face in life.

Shall we pray: *Lord, we thank you for the precious gift of prayer, that we can come through prayer into the very presence of our holy God, make our petitions and ask for your strength in every situation that we face. Keep us ever close to you like a small child with a loving father. May we have confidence in your love and in your desire to hear and answer our prayers in just the right way. (What is a need in your life? Come with confidence now to the Lord and ask that He would supply that need for you). We pray in the wonderful and powerful name of Jesus. Amen.*

Praying the Kingdom

Easter 5, 9th May 2021

Luke 11:1–13

by *Catriona Johnson*

If you've ever done any counselling, or pastoral care training, one of the things that you learn is to try and understand the question behind the question.

As an example, I'll use myself. Before I became a Christian, I was asking questions like 'How can you be a Christian?', when what I was really asking was what things I had to 'give up'. That was what I really wanted to know, that was my question behind my question.

Today, I'm going to modify that a bit to look at the prayer behind the prayer. That is, when we pray the Lord's Prayer, what are we actually praying for?

It's a prayer that really seems so very simple, doesn't it? Especially in this shorter version in Luke that we have heard today.

And it is, but in its beauty and simplicity, there is a *much* bigger truth that it points to, and as Christians, that we all should long for.

To get to this bigger picture view, I plan to start on the ground with the 12 disciples, and then, as those who hope in the Lord, we'll soar on wings like eagles up to get a bigger picture view and understanding of the enormity of what I think the Lord's Prayer can really show us.

First, we'll start with our feet firmly planted on the ground with Jesus and the twelve disciples.

There are two places in the Bible where Jesus teaches his prayer, the Lord's Prayer.

The version of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew is taught by Jesus to the crowds on a mountainside in Galilee, as part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Here Jesus gives them an example of how to pray. And, he emphasises that they shouldn't pray flamboyantly like the pagans, who like to make a show of what they are doing—that's just a performance with lots of words.

But instead, prayer should be a private conversation, quiet, just between God and them.

It is likely that Jesus would have taught this prayer on a number of occasions, and the divinely inspired gospel writers have recorded two versions, one in Matthew and the one in our reading today from Luke.

The Lord's Prayer in Luke has similar content to that in Matthew, although it is a bit shorter.

But its context is a bit different. In Luke, Jesus responds to a specific request from a disciple (v.1):

Lord, teach us to pray, *just* as John taught his disciples.

We are not told what prompted this question, nor which disciple it was who asked.

But what we do know is that at this time in the Ancient Near East, it was common for disciples to follow their leaders around and be distinguished from other groups by some kind of characteristic. With religious leaders and their groups, that was often some kind of distinctive prayer.

Like John had done with his followers.

We read that in Luke 5:33, and as anticipation was high for a Jewish Messiah in

the first century, many sects within Judaism were springing up at this time.

And I think that it is fair to say that, given Jesus' talk of his impending death, the disciples might also have wanted a prayer to sustain and keep them together after he left them. But it is all conjecture, and in fact this passage is one of the most studied in the New Testament.

But what we do know is that the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them to pray as he did.

So, Jesus taught them this seemingly simple prayer, the Lord's Prayer.

This prayer starts with the simple address, Father. A relationship.

The first mention in the Bible of the idea of God the Father was at the time of the exodus.

Israel was in slavery and needed rescuing. God says to Moses:

Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me."' (Exodus 4:22–23)

From then on, to call on God as 'Father' was to call on the God of the Exodus, the liberating God, the God whose kingdom was coming, the God who would restore creation and put all things right.

So here in Luke, Jesus invites these disciples, who have already begun to look to God in trust and obedience, to regard God as Father and themselves as God's children.

Adopted into His family as His chosen people, with the promise of blessing and salvation, as they would have heard time and time again in Isaiah, 63:16 for example:

You, Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.

Continuing on, the Lord's prayer then asks that the Father's name be hallowed.

God's name *is* who he is, it is his character, his reputation, his honour. For his name to be hallowed means that, ultimately, God will once and for all receive the honour and praise due him when his kingdom is fully realised.

I refer to God's kingdom a lot and a good definition is God's people, living in God's place, under God's Rule.

In the next line with the words, 'Your kingdom come', the prayer is praying that this kingdom will come and be fully realised on earth. This is Jesus' mission. To overturn the evil powers at work in the world and establish his eternal kingdom.

In the second half of the prayer, Jesus teaches his disciples how to live individually as followers but also in God's community.

v.3 'Give us each day our daily bread' – a request to live in dependence and trust that God will provide their every need.

v.4 – 'Forgive us' because we recognise that we are sinners in need of forgiveness, and we recognise that we are to follow you and forgive those that do wrong to us.

v.4 continuing on – Father, you do not make us do evil, but you do control the circumstances of our lives, so we pray keep us away from temptation, and protect and sustain us if we are tempted.

This prayer seems simple, but with the coming of Jesus, God's kingdom has broken into the world, and so Jesus is inviting the disciples to live lives that are oriented toward God's divine plan.

The disciples don't really seem to have grasped this yet, but readers of Luke's gospel see much later on, they do understand eventually that Jesus is establishing a new world order in which he will be its eternal ruler.

Now having taught the disciples *what* to pray, Jesus uses parables to tell them *how* to pray.

Have you ever been referred to as persistently annoying?

As a child, I was repeatedly given that label. Bothering my brothers and sister, getting under foot, generally being shooed away, asking so many 'why' questions.

'Why can't I have a horse? My sister has one.'

'Why can't I have a 20 foot yacht?'

'Why can't I go out swimming in the surf at night?'

'Why can't I have a puppy?'

Why, Why, Why, Why.

Here, Jesus wants the disciples to be like that.... but with prayer.

The persistent person in verse 5 just keeps knocking to rouse their friend from sleep so that they can feed their other friend.

It was custom at that time not to let visitors go hungry, so, the owner of the excess food doesn't put a pillow over their head. We know that they would like to though, but they gladly give their visitor some food.

The point though is that they give the food because their visitor keeps knocking on that door.

Their persistence pays off.

What Jesus is saying here is to be persistent, be bold, be insistent, don't give up, keep on knocking, keep praying.

Persistent widow

It's the same parable as the persistent widow and the judge in Luke 18 where a widow nags an unjust judge for justice against her adversary, and eventually gets what she wants.

Jesus wants his disciples to be persistent in their prayer. Pray with boldness and insistence and your prayers will be answered.

Jesus reiterates or summarises this parable in vv 9–10:

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Again, just keep on knocking, keep on praying.

The next two verses, vv 12–13, seem a bit out of place at first. That is, verses referring to fathers. But here Jesus is contrasting human fathers with the goodness of God, our heavenly Father.

And in the previous twelve verses there is no mention at all of the Holy Spirit, but here in verse 13, here it is:

how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

The Holy Spirit is another big theme for Luke in both his gospel and Acts, his second volume.

Here Jesus is foretelling something that the disciples have no knowledge of. That is, that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit will be poured out on believers.

But Luke's readers, living after Pentecost, would have understood the implications of this parable. And, if they were Christians,

they would have already received the Holy Spirit.

But the disciples still had Jesus, and it wouldn't be until after his ascension that, as he promised, he would send the Holy Spirit to be His presence with his followers in his absence.

Jesus is thinking forward.

At this stage, all the disciples know is that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to his children at some stage. How this will happen, they don't know.

We will have to wait for the second volume in the series, Acts.

So, this is the view from the ground, the live action *in situ*. Jesus teaching the twelve disciples how to pray, as both a pattern of prayer for the community of his followers, and as a mark of their belonging, that sets them apart.

But the Bible was also written for us, 21st century readers, so what does the Lord's Prayer mean for us?

This is where we leave the ground on our eagle wings and start to climb into the sky so that we can get a better view of what Jesus is alluding to.

Jesus has given us a prayer to both worship him, to ask him in humility for his providence, and for his forgiveness and protection, just like the disciples.

Jesus longs for us to be persistent in our prayer, as he taught in these parables. In prayer that doesn't give up. Jesus is not asking purely for routine, doing the motions, kind of prayer. But heartfelt, persistent prayer, that is bold, that aims for the sky.

Our prayer should remember that we, along with Jesus, are battling the cosmic forces of evil. We have been called from the darkness into the light, and our prayers must reflect that hope, the hope that we long for the world to be put right.

For peace, for reconciliation, for healing, for wisdom, for those in authority, for the church, for the lost.

We must aim big, and keep aiming big.

Formal prayers, liturgies, litanies, all these things are good and vital, but you have to be persistent, and *believe* that God can make these things happen:

With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible (Matt 19:26)

But, there is an elephant in the room, and I don't know the answer, only God does.

Prayer is often answered, praise the Lord. We are so thankful when it is

What about when it isn't? Or at least when we don't think that it is?

We're not talking about me praying 'Please Lord, help me pass my Hebrew exam', or 'Please Lord, help me get to the post office before it closes', although I am very grateful that both were answered.

It's things like: *Why is there still COVID in the world? Why are there so many homeless people, so many people hurting, climate change, why do churches burn down*, so many things that just don't make sense?

Are we not persistent enough? Does God think that we are not trying hard enough?

It is easy to say that isn't it.

In some cases, it is easy to see where we are at fault, with climate change for example, and even with COVID. Or that we are asking for things that are not in line with God's will.

But, we are battling evil forces, and I think that it is a view that we just cannot see or understand. We don't know how God works in the world.

The thing that Jesus tells us to do is to trust God and keep praying faithfully and persistently.

But, if we let our eagle wings take us right up above the clouds into the stratosphere, we *can* see part of God's plan. We can see the world from right up high and we have a cosmic view of what lies below and around us.

We're not like the disciples. We live on this side of the cross, and we know that it is only through Jesus that our sins are forgiven and that his kingdom is coming.

And I think that this is where we must aim our understanding of the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus asks us to pray for our immediate ground level needs – for daily provision, for strength, for protection. He understood the need for this, he walked this earth as one of us after all.

But his view is cosmic, and he is asking us to join with him in his cosmic mission of kingdom restoration.

He asks for nothing less, total commitment to him and his kingdom.

This is prayer that isn't just a disinterested recital of the Lord's Prayer, or prayer in general. It is probably no accident that this passage follows the narrative of Jesus in the house of Mary and Martha. That passage shows Martha's total devotion to Jesus.

That is what Jesus wants from us. Total devotion in his mission to restore his kingdom.

What are we really praying for then, when we pray the Lord's Prayer? What is the prayer behind the prayer?

The Lord's Prayer is not just a loosely cobbled together set of prayer requests.

We've stayed on the ground and looked at how we use it to pray to our Father with our daily cares and concerns and we've soared high in the sky to get a bigger picture view of Jesus' mission.

We've seen that the Lord's Prayer is about Jesus' victory on the cross, about him coming to reign in his glory, our hope for his kingdom, and how we can live as his followers now while we wait.

It's a prayer that every time we pray it, we should be left longing for the return of our king, and aching to see that his kingdom has finally come.

It's a prayer, that every time we pray it, we too should be thankful for persistence – for Jesus' persistence in being gracious, in being faithful to his promises to redeem us and restore us to His Father, in his persistence to go to the cross, in Jesus' persistence in loving us no matter what.

Feast of the Ascension

16th May 2021

Mark 16:15–20

by Bishop Kate Prowd

I read a wonderful quotation in prep for today's celebration of the feast of the Ascension—it was from the UK writer **Julian Barnes**, who said when interviewed: "I don't believe in God, but I do miss him." That quotation somehow makes sense, doesn't it? We only have to think of our world in this past year and a bit. This past month, or week even. Globally, nationally, locally... Ours is a world, it can be argued, where people are starving; where racial conflict causes bloodshed; where disease kills; where wars destroy once beautiful countries; where religion divides; where denial destroys our climate; where women are not safe to go out late at night... No wonder Julian Barnes can say he misses God even if he has no belief.

The feast of the Ascension is a bit like a celebration about missing God—perhaps an odd feast to celebrate, since what we're celebrating is Jesus' disappearance from earth... Actually elsewhere in Scriptures faith seems

to be constructed around absence. We have both Martha and Mary pointing out to Jesus that had he been around, had he been present with them, their brother Lazarus would not have died. Jesus himself cries out from the cross in Matthew and Mark's Gospels: "My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?" Mary Magdalene asks the gardener early on that first Easter Morning where her Lord is, because they've taken him away and she doesn't know where he is. And now in today's readings, the disciples are being spoken to by Jesus and he is suddenly taken up into heaven before their very eyes.

With the ascension, Jesus as he was known in the flesh, is now gone. The Easter season is finished. The paschal candle stops being lit. So just what is it we're celebrating? The disappearance of Jesus? The absence of God? What's to celebrate? Yet we read in the Acts of the Apostles that after this they know themselves to be blessed, and enabled, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to create new mission fields, far beyond the kingdom of Israel.

After the cloud takes Jesus from their sight, two men in white robes talk to the disciples. It's as if they have no excuse—stop

hanging around looking into the sky, they tell the disciples. It's no good the disciples saying, we'll wait until we're ready; until we have more faith, or feel more prepared... No, Jesus is saying: get out there now. You are my witnesses: "Go and see the world through my eyes, love the world through my compassion, stand up for the forgotten with my courage, challenge evil with my anger... I'm with you, all the way..." *That's* what you're saying you're up for today, Jeslyn and Emmi. —"Go and see the world through my eyes..." That's the call you're making in Confirmation... And then see what happens when you say 'yes' to this.

When Jesus is taken up into God, he's no longer there with them as he was. No longer the person living in their midst in Jerusalem or in Galilee. He's gone—disappeared—but in order to be with them—in a *new* way. With them now in *every* human being. Now just that statement itself suggests that there can never be one picture/image of God. No one distinct understanding of God. If God/Jesus is present in every human being, then there will be many different ways to 'see' God and understand God's presence. Look around you, for starters.

Parish Council Notes

Zoom meeting of Monday 17th May

Correspondence

- Terry Hahn (Freemasons) requesting use of St John's car park as evacuation assembly point for Streeton Park. PC gave permission.

OH&S issues: COVID-19

- From May 18 need to sign in with surnames.
- From May 28 churches must be using Service Victoria app.
- From May 28 density limits lifted for small to medium-sized venues.

Vicar's report

- Relaxing, refreshing holiday visiting friends and family, back 14 May.
- Two people confirmed by Bishop Kate, went well. Numbers still lower than pre COVID-19, but thankful for those who attend. Clergy Conference to look at how we can emerge from the trauma of COVID-19, and learnings.
- Patrick on 2 weeks' leave from May 17, moving house.
- Bp Kate enjoyed time with us, and valued meeting with PC members.
- Abp Philip Freier visiting Sunday 17 October, 170th anniversary of St John's.
- Prayer retreat with Merri Creek Anglican was terrific – 16 attended, half from each parish.
- Thankful to Peter for work on the MOU/contract with BSL. Disappointed with BSL.

- DN and PS attending Oodthenong Clergy conference June 8–9. All clergy expected to attend.

Warden's report

- *Fire extinguisher signs* updated, only because FES man had to be let in due to key change.
- *New printer/copier/scanner* installed. Can fold and staple. Contract altered to ensure we don't pay for toner.
- *Warden for next year*: Appreciate expressions of sympathy I have received. An offer to take on some jobs, no offers to be warden so far. All PC members be wardens?—investigate.
- *18/12–16 Jika St*
– Denise has arranged repairs to screen doors.
- *57 Gloucester Drive*
– Pet request acceded to.
- *St John's*
– Small group to develop Stage 1 Scope of Work.
- *30 Invermay Grove*
– 28 Invermay wishes to replace fence on our side. Posts need not be replaced, will cost us only \$1180. OK'd. A lot of vegetation on our side: deal with this when gutters cleared.
- *St Andrew's*
– Two of the six Parish Hall external doors now closed semi-permanently. No unauthorised entries since.
– About half a dozen attended working bee 1st May, useful work done. Dead tree removed; other vegetation over footpaths removed; and other tidying of the garden.

• 80 Watsonia Rd

- Gas wall oven, grill failed: irreparable. Urgent repair, but can't now get gas wall grillers here. House has only 40 A electrical supply, already overloaded by tenant's unauthorised air-conditioner. Plan for free-standing gas stove prevented by state of woodwork, so put in gas oven and electric grill. Probable costly need to upgrade supply line and switch board. PC to write to Miles about electric supply arrangements.

• Holy Spirit

- Bulbs in the church large overhead lights all replaced with 19 W warm white LEDs.
- Advertising flag for op shop erected next to the flagpole. Still some work to do on holder.
- Disabled toilet continually clogged (incorrectly installed). Get quote to rectify.
- Draft op shop contract circulated for comment.

Op shop report tabled

DioMelb Business Services Bulletin tabled

Finance report

- Tabled by Treas, accepted with appreciation.

Banyule-Merri Creek partnership

- Successful prayer retreat at St John's 15 May.
- DN preaching at Merri Creek on May 30.
- Working Bee at St John's on 17 July.

General Business

- Op shop: all card money held by BSL. Dispute whether rent should be paid, currently \$500 a month. Contract/MOU not yet signed. DN and PM to meet Mark Lane, resolve issues.

Minutes by Judy Thomson, précis by Editor

My first job in New Zealand as a provisional psychologist (one under supervision) was a huge personal challenge. Picture my very first appointment with a client—she looked at me and said, full of anxiety: "I just want you to know that I've never done this therapy before." I could have said the exact same thing back to her! To be honest, I don't know who was more anxious!! It was one thing for me to be on placement; to be hand-held by supervisors and mentors whilst seeing clients in the student clinic. But this was it. My first job on my own. I had to learn to stand on my own two feet professionally. But in a way, I was never alone. I stood on the shoulders of those giants who had held me up all throughout my training. It was the same for those disciples... As St Teresa of Avila (16th C) prays: *Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has said: "Jesus' departure from this earth is not so much the conclusion of a sequence of resurrection appearances, as the first movement in the creation of a worldwide mission and witness by the Church in the power of the promised Spirit." You and I are on that mission, as were those first disciples. You're on that mission too, Emmi and Jeslyn.

Jesus knew those disciples well. On the one hand he's upbraiding them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, the next minute he's telling them to go into all the world and proclaim the good news: telling them that they

need to see with *his* eyes, love with *his* heart, serve with *his* hands, journey with *his* feet. Do you recall in Luke 7:36–50, when the Pharisee Simon invites Jesus to dinner and a woman—identified as a sinner—comes into the room and begins to weep and wash his feet with her hair, Simon is appalled. And Jesus asks him: "Simon, do you see this woman?" This is the Ascension question for us all: Can or do we see others with the eyes and ears and feet and hands and heart of Jesus?

Jesus leaves his disciples—ascends to heaven, rises into the clouds, goes to sit at the right hand of God—all a way to describe an event beyond human expression.

We don't see Jesus' face in the way that his disciples saw that face. We don't hear his voice like they did, or walk alongside him. And yet we see his face everywhere, in everyone we meet—we sense his presence with us, even in our fractured, broken world—that truth is a big challenge, whether confirmed for one day, or a life-time; especially in those spaces Jesus calls us to be the blessing of light and love and compassion and kindness: to be the face and eyes and ears and heart of Jesus.

Let me conclude with more of Rowan Williams' reflections on the Ascension: He writes that Jesus' presence in the world is not that of a thing among other things; his presence is a pervasive *life*; his presence is an ever-present agency: a word, an embrace, a challenge, an invitation—and as soon as you try and lay hold of it, it evaporates between your hands, and yet is more real and solid than anything we can conceive. The Lord is *not* here, in that simple sense; but the sense in which he *is* here, is as power, as agency, as word and invitation: that is what the Church and its ministers struggle hour by hour, day by day, and millennium by millennium, to make

sense of. So...Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? Look here. He is in your very midst. As leading NT scholar Bishop Tom Wright reminds us: "the story continues... and we are a part of it". Today Jeslyn and Emmi you are indeed a part of it and we're here cheering you on. AMEN.



Four Seasons of the Oak

by Frank Meredith of Streeton Views

For Rosemary, who spends Autumn days raking the leaves fallen from the churchyard oak trees

An English oak, tall and wide and grand,
With roots sunk deep in soil and time,
Stands by the river in this evergreen land,
Yet, faithful still to its deciduous homeland,
In cadence with a four seasons rhyme.

In Autumn, golden leaves shroud the oak,
Set bold against the trees of evergreen hue,
Until chill winds that Autumn does convoke,
Dry the leaves and wilt its golden cloak,
Which falls, carpeting the ground from view.

There is splendour in the oak's Winter form,
Barren branches spreading like giant coral,
A sturdy trunk to butt the raging storm,
All painted in the quiescent shades of dawn,
With a pallet of colours, muted and dapple.

The oak heralds Spring with life nascent,
A profusion of buds, cream and pale brown,
Bursting as pubescent leaves, pale and lucent,
In the seasonal cycle of life resurgent,
With flowers and leaves restoring the crown.

In Summer the oak stands in all its majesty,
Bold against the eucalypts and their native land.
Then, in late summer, offspring acorns fall free,
To the ground, perchance to become the tree,
An English oak, tall and wide and grand.