

BANYULE BABBLE

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

WITH SEXTUPLE
SERMON POWER!!

JUNE
2026

Office: 1 Burgundy Street Heidelberg 3084 ph. 9457 1144

Ministers: The Ven. **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

DENISE'S DATELINE

Humour and Laughing

I WAS excited this week to be able to 'school' our dear Editor in the use of a word that he had not heard – AND it has only taken me 8 years! I was speaking about how my Dad Wally jokingly 'roused' on me; only to have to explain my meaning to colleagues the Lous, and then to Peter. But seriously, isn't it great to have some repartee with some friends about words, or joke with each other in ways that reveal our connection to each other?

One of my long-standing friends will sometimes answer a call from me with the response 'Oh, what now!?' One time he even snaffled an assignment of mine and wrote a long and scathing comment – in red pen – purporting to be from the lecturer. When I finally 'twigged', I noticed he was at the back of the class in fits of laughter.

One time here at Church, a person asked in a concerned manner if I was OK after a 'cheeky' comment made to me by another parishioner – I replied that, as I gave as good as I 'got' there was no issue – it is part of the way that person and I relate – mild teasing of each other (you know who you are!).

This very Australian type of affectionate interaction is one that involves humour, love, and importantly KNOWING each other well, and considering the context of each interaction.

So, when the Scriptures speak of regarding ourselves with 'sober judgement' (Romans 12:3), and that our '...conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...' (Colossians 4:6), does that mean we are to be devoid of humour or mirth or laughter? Do we imagine Jesus to be humourless and joyless? Sometimes we may miss the humour in Jesus' words and in the Scriptures generally.

Consider Jesus' description of the hypocrite – the speck of sawdust and the plank in a person's eye (Matthew 7:3 & Luke 6:41); or Aaron's reasoning of how the golden calf simply 'came out of the fire' (Exodus 32:24) – this always makes me laugh! Or the competition Elijah set up between God, and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18. The description of a lustful woman in Ezekiel 23:20 is rude and humorous and shocking.

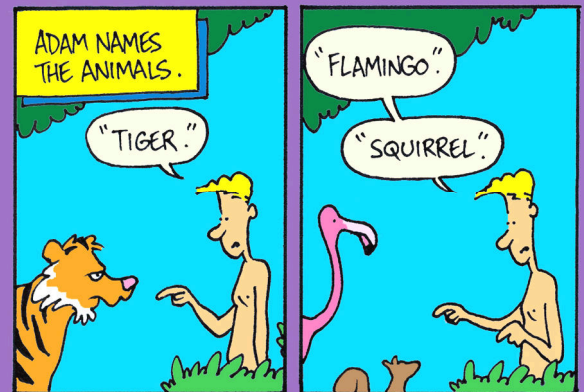
We don't need to speak in a different/more serious voice about our faith in Jesus, and we needn't take offense when someone makes a funny joke about Church. Sarah, after laughing at God's promise, was then able to say 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.' (Genesis 21:6). Psalm 126:2 says 'Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.'

As the Teacher of Ecclesiastes says, '...there is a time to weep and a time to laugh...' (Ecclesiastes 3:4). If we are known as people of joy and laughter, perhaps that will show others that following Jesus really is good, for them and for us.

Denise



N.B. The *Babble* promised an article by Catriona Johnson in this month's edition, about her work in her new job of leading the parish of Wynyard, Tasmania. However Catriona has found there is a lot to do, and she has not yet found any time to write about it. We hope for (but do not promise) an article in July's *Babble*.



This Month – June

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

Sunday 7th Pentecost 2: 9.30 am St John’s; 5 pm Holy Spirit
2 Chronicles 20:6–12; Matthew 9:9–13, 18–26

Sunday 14th Pentecost 3: 9.30 am St John’s; 5 pm Holy Spirit
Ephesians 1:15–23, 3:14–21; Matthew 9:35–38

Sunday 21st Pentecost 4: 9.30 am Combined, St John’s.
Rowan visiting and preaching

Wednesday 24th: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers’ Union; 3 pm Roshana Macleod

Sunday 28th Pentecost 5: 9.30 am St John’s; 5 pm Holy Spirit
Colossians 1:9–12; Matthew 10:40–42

Wanted

- More op shop volunteers

Money: April

Income:	Giving:	\$30,780.89
	Other:	\$26,495.85
	Total:	\$57,276.74
Expenses:		\$61,984.70
Deficit:		\$4,707.96

Giving was up, thank you, mainly because of some unusual one-off adjustments. Unfortunately expenses were also high, due to some work on the St John’s restoration and the Gloucester Drive vicarage.

Denise was collated (ordered about) as Archdeacon in five minutes of glory on Tuesday 5th May at St Paul’s.

Right, above: Rhonda Taylor, Bishop Genieve, the Venerable Denise, Elizabeth Lavoirpierre and Archbishop Ric.

Bishop Genieve is thinking, ‘She has no idea what she is letting herself in for!’

Right, below: Lyn Pearson, Elizabeth Lavoirpierre, Rhonda Taylor, Wally Nicholls and the Venerable Denise share a convivial post-collative moment putting down some beverages in Chloé’s Bar at Young & Jackson’s.

Lyn and Elizabeth were drinking bitters, lime and sodas. Rhonda had a lemon squash (not shown). Wally and the Venerable Denise had Guinness (only two shown).

Holy Spirit Mothers’ Union

Our meeting will be held on Wednesday on 27th May 2026 at 10 am. After our welcome cuppa (thanks to Coral), we then read our M.U. Service.

Then our meeting, with notice of our Disaster Relief donation update, and acceptance of digital participation cost in the 150th Worldwide Gathering to M.U. Melbourne.

Instead of a speaker we put fresh flowers in and one of our special communion cloths on the Communion Table. This cloth came from St Philip’s West Heidelberg.

We closed with Midday Prayers.

Our next Meeting will be **10 am Wednesday 24th June 2026**. This will be a planning day for Wednesday 22nd July, our 63rd year.

Elsie Storr

The Collation of Denise:—



Mission News

Rowan in Indonesia

Since returning from Indonesia earlier this month, I've been adjusting to the cold of Melbourne, attending a few medical appointments, adjusting to the cold of Melbourne, getting some blood tests, adjusting to the cold of Melbourne, having some scans, adjusting to the cold of Melbourne, getting my eyes tested, adjusting to the cold of Melbourne, and participating in some formal debriefs.

Rowan thanks all those who filled his fridge and freezer and pantry with food and drinks, and says, 'Your generosity is greatly appreciated'.

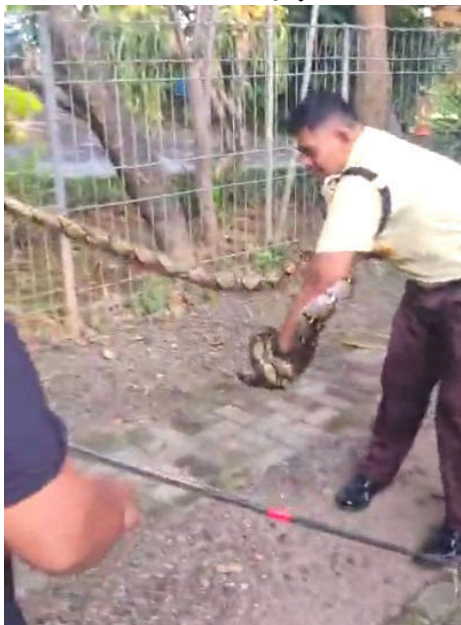
Before he left, Rowan says he was able to spend a week with Rev'd Dale and his wife Joy, who will be looking after All Saints' Jakarta for some of the time while he is in Australia. He asks us to pray for them, that their time with the congregation will be a season of mutual encouragement and blessing.

Rowan will be visiting eight or so link-churches to thank them for their care and prayer for him, and for their financial support. We are one of the eight, and he will be visiting us on **21st June**.

He will also be spending some time on training and professional development, and catching up with family.

A few days after Rowan arrived in Australia, the security staff at All Saints' Jakarta spotted a python in the trees near one of the church meeting rooms, and captured it. This is the second python captured near the church so far this year.

Rowan asks us to thank God for his safe arrival and settling into Melbourne, the generous supporters and churches who stocked his pantry and provided him with a loan car, and the care and wisdom of the local staff and volunteers. He asks us to pray for good preparations and wisdom as he shares with churches and groups, safety on the roads as he travels, and God's blessing and protection on Rev'd Dale and Joy.



Lyn Pearson with Interserve

Hi everyone, yes I am at the airport . . . seems a recurring theme.

However, I have been home for a few weeks, with a few days in Melbourne!—enough time to enjoy our lovely autumn colours on the vine in the backyard, participate in mediation training, and have some Mother's Day greetings before leaving—but to be celebrated when I get back on Saturday. This is just a quick trip to Malaysia as we begin with our new International Council. They are the board to whom Chris and I report. This is important as for 6/10 it is a day orientation, then into a few days of meeting. For some of them they are new to Interserve. This is a good practice as they are leaders in their fields and from the majority world and can look at things with fresh eyes. Please ask that good trusting relationships are built in our intercultural leadership community.

It is nice that I can actually travel just with carry-on. I keep a bag in Kuala Lumpur so no need to bring stuff.

When I get back I will take dad for a day treatment on a skin cancer. I was concerned that he had some invading lesion as he had some pain around the spot. Grateful it is *not* invasive, but it is uncomfortable, and it seems changing the tips on his hearing aids has helped discomfort. Please ask that it goes well. It will be a big day out, as there are two stages to treatment with four hours in between.

Thanks for your prayers for the trip to Ethiopia. Such a privilege to be amongst leaders from a number of groups. Our main partnership was renewed and we pray for next steps going forward. You would be encouraged as I was to hear of the dedication of workers and the way God is building his church. This denomination is 98 years old and has nearly 13 million people!

I am still hoping to get my prayer card out. Ask for wisdom about doing a medical locum. This keeps my hand in, helps me be in a missional context—and I get paid, but need to be in the right place and right timing. Given that a lot of my ISV meeting work is evening, this should not make much difference there. However, there is work in-between that needs to be done.

Thanks for journeying with the boys and me.

Blessings, Lyn

A young school responding to real need

From Anglicare Victoria's magazine, *Our People, Our Stories*, Autumn 2026, p 4:

Founded with a vision to make high-quality independent education accessible to families from diverse backgrounds. Hume Grammar is one of Australia's newest and fastest-growing schools. As the school community has expanded across Melbourne's north, its partnership with Anglicare Victoria has deepened too, powered by students who consistently meet learning with generosity.

What began with one campus participating in FoodBoost, Anglicare Victoria's annual school-led food drive, has now grown to every campus supporting both FoodBoost and the Toy Appeal. During Science Week, the Donnybrook campus collected cereal boxes and transformed them into a domino experiment, before Donnybrook and Kalkallo campuses combined to donate 520 boxes to Anglicare Victoria's emergency relief and homeless support services. The following year, led by Head of STEM Richard Giarrusso, students collected nearly 1,000 cans of food, spelling out 'STEM' on the sports oval and capturing the achievement by drone. In 2025, the school stepped up again.

More than 300 toys were donated, and students ran a fundraiser for children living in residential care. When schools were invited to raise \$1,500 for these young people, Hume Grammar doubled the goal, raising more than \$3,000. We were profoundly thankful.

At the heart of this partnership is School Chaplain Rev. **Jonathan Lopez**, whose awareness of local food insecurity sustains the school's momentum. 'I often say my 'superpower' would be getting food to people who are hungry,' he says. 'Jesus teaches that we should give to those in need and therefore we support our students as they respond with compassion'.

Submitted by Helen McAlley



Blockes Helping Blockes



The Blockes met on Saturday 2nd May at their usual lair, to hear Cam Wright talk about *Just One Cambodia*. Unfortunately Cam had been taken ill, and though he still wanted to talk, Glen said he sounded like death warmed up and forbade it, saying that if he passed on his illness to his audience it would cause all the local nursing homes to go into lockdown.

Two other members of the *Just One Cambodia* board were present, Brett and Jude. Brett said how much Cam wanted to pass on his love for Cambodia and its people, but it would have to be postponed. Glen said it might be instead in the June meeting, or it might be the July one, or August, or September. . . At this point Rob broke in to say that he was impressed at how well Glen had learnt the names of the months, but that there were some more he had not yet mentioned.

Rob had reappeared after seven months away, because it was footy season and he had to support his beloved Ivies. (He later told us they were doing very well, having won their last three matches, two by 100 points.) The Editor noticed a car parked outside with the numberplate 'IVIES 1', but he was unable to see whether it was Rob's by looking for a sheaf of speeding tickets.

Also reappearing was Jim Lynch, whom Glen described as the 'prodigal son'. Jim had been at *Blockes Helping Blockes* right from the beginning, when it met in a pub. Glen suggested that the breakfast bacon and eggs were an equivalent of the Biblical fatted calf slaughtered for Jim's benefit, but it transpired that Jim had not attended because of famine elsewhere, nor because he had run through his inheritance, but to hear Cam Wright—in which he was destined to be disappointed.

Glen said that since it was not long after Anzac Day, he would introduce an Anzac theme. He produced a large cardboard box labelled 'eggs', and asked the Blockes what they thought was inside. The suggestion of 'eggs' got a metaphorical klaxon, but there was an egg carton present. A helmet? —It could be used as one. A shell? —Sort of.

'Let me tell you a story', said Glen. Blockes inwardly groaned. 'Many, many years ago . . .', he went on, and told the Blockes about his grandmother Daisy. During the First World War, single girls might give their names and addresses to soldiers they liked the look of who were heading overseas, so those men had someone to write to. Daisy did this to a soldier called Horace Farrington, and their correspondence blossomed so well that immediately he came home they were married.

Horace got a soldier settlement farm, and when the Second World War came they were living in Cobden, a small town in the Western District, south-west of Camperdown. Horace put his age down and a son (Glen's uncle) put his age up, and both enlisted.

Now soldiers were able to send mail home without having to buy stamps, and Horace took advantage of that. Inside the box, wrapped in a tea-towel, was what Horace sent home—a coconut, still in its outer husk. The address (starting 'Mrs H.W. Farrington') was written on paper attached by tacks. The coconut had never been opened.

Glen said in fact he did it twice, perhaps unsure whether the first had arrived, there being no return mail bearing grateful thanks.



Above: The house in Cobden at the address on the coconut

Jim L said someone in his family had sent a coconut in the mail from Fiji. Allan said that his brother's father-in-law was a rat of Tobruk, and he had used the postal system to send home four parcels, each of which contained different parts of a 9 mm Beretta Italian officers' pistol that he had liberated.

Glen asked for other unusual stories within Blockes' families. Brett said that he had an English grandmother who was very prim and proper, always with hat and handbag, and a Scottish grandfather. He was told when he was 8 or 9 that the king once decreed a rowing race to a nearby royal island, and whoever got a hand to the island first could claim it for their clan. His ancestor had too many whiskies the night before and slept in and started late. He closed the gap but it appeared he would not be able to win, so he cut off his hand and threw it on the island, thereby getting his hand on the island first.

Brett said he believed this story for quite a long time.

David Fitzgerald said his family was with William the Conqueror and descended from Kings of Ireland and of Wales. He went to the village of Glin (in County Limerick, on the Shannon estuary) and saw the family castle*. At the entrance to

* The original mediaeval Glin castle is now a ruin. The new, present, one, really a manor house, was built outside the village in the 1780s/90s. It was the residence of the ancient hereditary Knights of Glin; the last Knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald, died without male issue in 2011, and it is now owned by his daughter.

the 700 m driveway there is a wall with an archway, with two churches across the street, one Roman Catholic and one Protestant, both with graveyards. The Roman Catholics said if he was a Fitzgerald he should look at their graveyard; the Protestants said if he was a FitzGerald he should look at theirs.

David said he once met a man at Etihad Stadium who said that his Irish family were farmers, and ‘we used to look after your pigs’.

There was discussion of the relations between the classes in former days, and it was pointed out that Jim C’s ancestor had lost everything by defying his Laird and voting according to his conscience in 1834 (see *Banyule Babble* July & August 2025).

Glen told a story about UFOs, from when he was at Banyule High. He decided to have some fun, and told his friend Simon to follow his lead. They both looked at the sky, and wondered aloud if they saw a (non-existent) cigar-shaped object there. More and more people joined them. There were 30 people all looking up into the sky. Then 60, including teachers. An announcement was made, ‘Would all students please return to their classrooms’. Then again, because it didn’t work. And again, for half an hour. Glen and Simon went to their class. That was their mistake: the principal knew they had started it, because they were the only students in class.

Glen said that Channel 9 News rocked up, interviewing people. He was amused that recently *Australian Story* on the ABC did a program on a UFO sighting at another school 60 years ago, and people were adamant that it happened and was suppressed.*

Another Bloke was at Ivanhoe East Primary School and said there was a similar incident when someone claimed they saw a cross on a nearby building† move.

The next *Blokes Helping Blokes* will be on 7th June. Cam Wright may or may not be talking about *Just One Cambodia*. If you would like an invitation, talk to Glen on 0487 852 808.



* This was at Westall High School on April 6, 1966. See:

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

<https://www.thenewdaily.com.au/life/entertainment/tv/2026/04/02/westall-ufo-mystery-australia>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-06/westall-ufo-mystery-witnesses-want-answers/106126614>

The Banyule High School ‘sighting’ is apparently remembered:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/4959438726/posts/10158378913053727/>

It is said there (a Banyule High Facebook group) that the *Heidelberger* interviewed students. However the Channel 7 documentary spoken of there is about the Westall sighting and does not mention Banyule, and much of the discussion may be conflating the two incidents.

† Presumably St George’s East Ivanhoe, perhaps before the present Robin Boyd building existed (foundation stone laid December 1963).

Sad news about Eddie Ireland

The Blokes are sorry to hear of the death of Eddie Ireland, one of the Blokes. (Funeral report p. 6.)



On January 13 2018 Eddie spoke to us movingly of his life. He was brought up by his mother, his father having fought at Ambon and died at the Hainan Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. We learnt of racing his billy-cart down Hoddle St; of seeing the stars in the black-out; and Eddie teared up as he spoke of representing Australia at badminton and showed us his Team Australia blazer. He also spoke of meeting another player at a badminton club, and deciding to marry her.



On 6th April 2019 Eddie spoke to us about living with Parkinson’s, which he had then had for about 18 months.

Parkinson’s has more unpleasant symptoms than just the shaking that is apparent to others, as it affects other less visible muscles. Eddie mentioned, among other things, the difficulty of being unable to swallow, especially in bed, but contrariwise sometimes waking up with a dry mouth like the bottom of a cocky’s cage.

The picture on the right (7 Dec 2019), was captioned by Glen: *St Eddie, patron saint of Blokes—doubles up as My Favourite Martian—shown getting ‘Happy Birthday’ sung at him.*



Edmund (Eddie) Victor John Ireland

19/11/1931 – 09/05/2026



Herald Sun, 14/5/2026:

IRELAND, Edmund (Eddie) Victor John
1931–2026

Loving husband of Beth. Much loved father and father-in-law of Jenny & Glen, Sue & Alan, Cathy & Wayne. Cherished grandfather of Erin, Mark & Joel, Hannah & Steve, Andrew & Millie, Tom & Georgia, and Will. Great-grandfather of Harri, Indi and Oscar.

A Life well lived.

Forever in our Hearts

Eddie's funeral was on Tuesday 19th May, at Le Pine Eltham. A substantial contingent from Banyule was there, including Denise and Helen and a number of old St Andrew's folk. There was a display of items close to Eddie's heart, including his father's medals and his own sports memorabilia, which included the badminton *Team Australia* blazer that he had proudly shown at *Blokes Helping Blokes*.



All three of Eddie's daughters presented eulogies, concentrating on different parts of Eddie's life. Cathy said:

Thank you everyone for coming to celebrate the life of our wonderful father Eddie. It's lovely to see so many of you here.

Edmund Victor John Ireland was born on November 19th 1931 to Evelyn Annie and John Hector Ireland. He was an only child.

His parents rented in those days, and he grew up in Prahran, Richmond and Burnley. Granny described dad as a sickly child who cried a lot. She had to move on one occasion because of his crying!

When Dad was 8 years old his father went away to the Second World War. Granny worked and his Grandma would look after him after school. Dad had to cook the dinner, and one night set the curtains on fire.

Though times must have been hard, Dad was given piano lessons, tap dancing lessons and he was in a singing talent group. He was a boy soprano and sang on Radio 3UZ.

In 1942–43, when Dad was about 11, he and Granny lived in a small flat on the corner of Hoddle and Victoria Streets. He went to school at Yarra Park PS, on Hoddle Street. One of Dad's uncles made him an amazing billy-cart, and he and his friends would race

their billy-carts down Hoddle Street. Due to petrol rationing there weren't many cars on the road during the week and the road was free for billy-carts. According to Dad, you could get a lot of speed up on the hill. We actually lived at the top of a steep hill when we lived in Hobart. It obviously reminded dad of his years growing up on Hoddle Street, because he built us a billy-cart that I remember riding down our street on as a nervous 6–7 year old. Anyway one day a boy on a bike came along and grabbed dad's billy-cart and disappeared up towards Smith Street. Dad ran after him but couldn't catch him. He was devastated.

Each night Dad had to be home by 5.30 pm to put dinner on for his mum, while she worked in the city. What he didn't tell her was that after school he would sell newspapers on the corner of Victoria and Hoddle Streets. He wasn't allowed to. Granny had said that 'no son of hers was selling newspapers'. But Dad had worked it out that he could sell them all and be home before she got home from work. Of course Granny came home early on the tram one day and caught him. He was in a lot of trouble and that was the end of his little business.

Dad was a bit of a devil and loved to play practical jokes. One night after he had been to the pictures he caught the crowded tram home. He had bought some sneezing powder at the joke shop earlier and stood in the middle of the tram with the powder in his hand. He discreetly blew the sneezing powder around, killing himself laughing as one by one the passengers began sneezing.

He also often told us the story of how he liked to hide in a hedge and fire peppercorns with a peg and match at passers-by and think it hilarious when they'd say 'gee the mozzies are bad tonight!'

Dad loved his food and was a pleasure to cook for because he ate everything. He owes this to his mother who made him sit at the table until he ate his dinner and if he didn't it was dished up for breakfast the next day until it was eaten. This was always drummed into us as little girls at the dinner table.

Granny was very particular in calling dad by his proper name Edmund. We were all surprised and amused when dad had to get a birth certificate for his passport and found that he had been registered at birth as Edward by mistake.

Dad's father John died in a prisoner of war camp in Ambon in 1943 when Dad was just 12 years old. At 14, Dad left school and Granny took him to the Legacy office to help him find a job. The man suggested a position at Bennett and Woolcock meat and smallgoods factory. Dad ended up working there for almost 30 years. He knew every different cut of meat and for many years he would enjoy visiting different butcher shops in search of the best and tastiest sausage.



Dad and his mum and step-father Vic (our Poppy) moved to Newport when he was about 17. It was around this time that he started playing badminton. He went on to play for Victoria five times and for Australia in 1963. His Australian blazer is over there.

Dad and Mum met while playing badminton in a team in Newport, and they began courting after his 21st birthday. They married in 1956, dad's lifelong friend Robbie Bird was the best man and Marilyn his niece was the flower girl. They would have been celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary this year.

Mum and Dad lived in Hastings Road Newport until Jenny was born, when they then moved to Macleod.

Initially they lived in a house on Greensborough Road, but were told they had to move as they were going to widen the road (this finally did happen in the late 80s). They built a new home in Newtown Road and moved in in 1963. Those were very happy times. Mum and Dad played tennis and badminton, there were family holidays to Rosebud, and lots of socialising with the neighbours (and I came along in 1968).

In 1974 we moved to Tasmania, where Dad started a new job in sales. We lived in Hobart, and although initially it was a big adjustment for us all, we settled in to life there and made life-long friends with our neighbours the Martins.

We returned to Melbourne in 1976 and lived in St James Road in Rosanna. Dad put a pool in the backyard for us – I remember helping him dig the hole and him with the spirit level trying to get the ground perfectly level. I loved that pool, but the only problem was it was permanently in the shade and as a result it did earn the title of the coldest pool in Melbourne. It was absolutely freezing!

Dad began working in sales at Aarque and spent many happy years there. Having worked in the office with him for a year after I finished uni, I saw first hand what a hard worker he was and how he was so very well liked and respected by his work colleagues and clients. He was a wonderful leader and he led by example. He was always the first to arrive and last to leave. He had a great work ethic that I think was instilled into all of us.

In the mid 80s we made the move to Regina Street in Rosanna. This was our last family home and a home Dad loved and took great pride in. I was the last of the children to leave the nest, living at home right up until I was married in 1993. I remember any time I came home late from a night out I would creep in the front door and stop and listen to see if I could hear Dad snoring. Dad was an excellent snorer as Mum can attest to, and my hope was that if he was snoring loud enough, Mum wouldn't be able to hear me coming in the door and creeping down the hallway at some ungodly hour.

I'm so very lucky that I got to have my Dad in my life for as long as I did. And even though I know it's a blessing, it's sad knowing he's gone. I'll be forever grateful that I got to tell him I loved him in the final moments of his life. I'll miss him every day.

Sue said:

When Jenny, Cathy and I came together to work out what we would say today, we found that because of our age differences our memories of growing up with Dad were quite different. We all agreed, though, that we had a happy childhood, never missing out on anything.

Dad was a happy, hard-working and positive person. He was fussy and liked certain things to be done his way. When Jenny was in primary school, he gave her a lesson on how to wash the dishes correctly: put boiling water in the sink, wash glasses first, and so on. Fortunately I missed that lesson as well as drying the dishes.

Dad had a funny sense of humour. He had an LP record of a famous posh Englishman who imitated the sounds and noises of trains, including the chugging, whistle and screech of brakes, using only his voice. Every time Dad listened to this record he would be in fits of laughter. He often would use words like 'blimey', 'Hector Crawford' and 'strewth'. He would proudly say his name was Edmund Victor John, then add 'Sherbet' before Ireland. He would tell a joke and quite often laugh before he got to the punch line; and if you complimented him on his looks or clothes, he would simply reply, 'It's the body'.

Mum and Dad were both perfectionists and this was reflected in the five homes they lived in. Dad would be the first to admit that he was not a handyman, but where he lacked skills in that department, he made up for it in other areas. They both loved the garden and spent many hours tending to it. Dad would often refer to the garden as 'the Botanic Garden'.

Dad enjoyed a beer and didn't mind having a small wager on the horses and dogs. At one stage he was part-owner of a greyhound named 'Eddie's Comet'. Dad looked after Jenny and me on Saturday afternoons while Mum played tennis. Sometimes Dad would go to the Old England pub to have a beer and watch the races. Dad would leave us in the back seat of the car, bring out two packets of chips, tell us to lock the doors, and there we would remain until he was finished—different times.

Dad loved listening to music and dancing. He especially enjoyed jazz, big brass bands, Tom Jones and Elvis Presley. When doing the garden he would position a dual tape deck on the front lawn and have the music blaring, entertaining the neighbours whether they liked it or not. Dad also loved to dance. He would be first on and last off the dance floor, and would always dance with each of us. Dad had a unique dance style which he was not shy to display, and the more encouragement he received the more enthusiastically he danced, always leaving the dance floor dripping wet with perspiration. I can still picture Dad dancing at Cathy and Wayne's wedding—on top of the tables. This love of music has particularly been passed down to Cathy, who loves the radio, live concerts and dancing. Fortunately she did not inherit Dad's dance moves.

Dad also had a real love for TVs and electronics. He owned many cassette and tape decks, recorders, videos, DVD players, records, cassettes and DVDs. Dad was always searching for the latest and best system.

His set-up at home was so complicated only he knew how to operate and navigate it. He had cords plugged in everywhere. Mum was too scared to turn on the TV, let alone change the channel. Dad would study the TV guide, marking movies he wanted to record. Mum would say some were good, many were terrible, and a few they never

saw the ending because Dad would forget to press the extended recording button. Such was Dad's obsession with TVs, when Mum and Dad were in London for the first time with Jenny and Erin, Jenny was excited to show them the sights. However Dad had other ideas. He said he passed a shop with lots of TVs and he would like a couple of hours free time to study them.

Dad loved watching the old black & white movies, James Bond, Elvis Presley, horror and action movies. I remember watching *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and 'Deadly Earnest' with him. The scarier the movie, the better in Dad's eyes.

Sport played a big part in our lives: it was Mum and Dad's common interest. Dad played competition tennis in Newport as a young boy, and social tennis with neighbours and friends later on. Badminton was his real love, playing at an elite level. In later years he played golf.

Dad was a typical golf player, coming home from a day's play frustrated and saying he was giving up; but of course he continued to play the next week. He enjoyed tournaments with Aarque, and the annual golfing and tennis trips to Yarrawonga with friends.

Dad would help Jenny and me train for netball when we were 11 and 13 years old. He taught us to skip properly, encouraging us to skip 1000 times and saying that if you count in hundreds it goes by quicker. He illegally attached a netball ring to a lamppost on the nature strip so Jenny could practise throwing goals. Dad would come and watch our netball matches; however his competitiveness got the better of him, and he was banned by Mum for being too vocal.

In 2014 Mum and Dad watched my son Andrew play tennis at the Australian Open. I know they were both proud and thrilled to be there, and Dad was able to yell and cheer to his heart's content with the crowd. Dad would speak to Andrew before each match, imparting his wisdom. It was the same message each time: 'Take no prisoners'.

Dad barracked for St Kilda and did attend some games as a young boy. How he got away with supporting St Kilda I'll never know, as Granny and Poppy lived and breathed Collingwood.

Dad also enjoyed trying his luck at the Casino, and was convinced the roulette wheel was rigged. Dad spent many, many hours studying the sequence of numbers, trying to find a pattern, or just some sign that gave him that winning edge. He finally developed his own winning system, a system that Cathy adopted and can vouch for. Mum and Dad would give cash to the grandchildren for birthdays and Christmas. Dad would say to Mark, 'Give me back your cash and I'll take it to the Casino and double it'.

We have come to the conclusion that we girls and our children have each inherited a piece of Dad, whether it be his strengths, ailments or vices. I'll leave you to decide who got what.

Jenny said:

Dad hadn't been retired very long when he began to have some health problems. This didn't hold him back because he always seemed to recover well from treatments and operations.

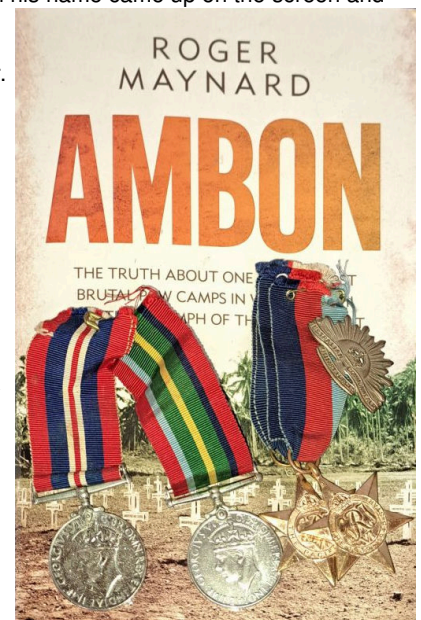
He was mentally strong.

In 1996 during the Atlanta Olympics Dad won a trip in a competition on *Wide World of Sports* to the United States. He guessed the closest to the winning time that a certain cycling race was won.

How excited we were when his name came up on the screen and he was announced the winner. This was Mum and Dad's first of several overseas trips together.

In 2004 Dad had a special trip to Japan with his nephew John. Dad had done a lot of research into his father's war service over the years. His unit was sent to Ambon Island where he was captured and sent to Hainan Island off the coast of China. He died in 1942 in a prisoner of war camp. Dad was able to visit his father's grave and we were very grateful to John for helping Dad fulfil a life-long dream.

Mum and Dad went on to have two fabulous cruises on the *Queen Victoria*—one around the Mediterranean in 2008 and the other to Asia in 2010.



They also did a trip to New Zealand and then Fiji with their old friends June and Alan Anderson. Dad was very interested in different cultures, history and people.

Dad was a devoted son and during these years he cared for his mother and stepfather, often driving to Newport each day to do their shopping, banking, gardening, and to take them to lunch or appointments.

He also looked after his cousin and other family members in their final years.

In his eighties Dad spent many hours helping Mum at the church op shop in Macleod, sorting and doing the heavier work, and worked on the book stall and barbecue at the church fête.

He was also a member of the *Blokes Helping Blokes* group at St Andrew's Anglican Church who met monthly for breakfast and fellowship. The members took turns in sharing their life stories with a Living Eulogy. On different occasions Dad spoke about his father's war history, growing up near Hoddle St, and about living with Parkinson's disease. He had been diagnosed in 2017 at 86.



Geoff Murphy, David Lovatt Sr and David Lovatt Jr have continued to be special friends from this men's group.

Not being able to drive was a big blow to Dad's independence. Dad looked after his car meticulously, but the time had come to give up his licence and the car was passed on to his grandson Tom.

Looking after Dad was becoming harder for Mum as his mobility was poor and he was having some falls. He was a big man and she was just unable to manage him any longer—she had done a wonderful job.

He entered Strathalan Aged Care in Macleod in 2021, which was close to home and easy for Mum to drive to. It was hard for them to be separated but Dad accepted the move with amazing resignation. They talked on the phone and Mum visited regularly, taking in food and everything he needed. She did his washing and fussed over him.

Separation during Covid lockdowns was difficult but Dad was well looked after and we supported Mum at home. Settling into the new routine, Dad joined in with the daily activities: exercises, bingo, footy tipping (which he won one year). He went to Men's Group, church services, luncheons, concerts and special celebrations.

As his Parkinson's progressed he became restless, trying to move around, believing he needed to be somewhere for work, or that he was meeting someone. He fell from his wheelchair so many times but surprisingly never broke a bone!

His days were brightened by visits from family and friends. Eventually he struggled with his speech, but he would light up when he saw us, and enjoyed the treats we brought him.

There have been many ups and downs over the last five years and our family would like to sincerely thank the doctors, Sandy the Nurse Practitioner, Audrey, Leo and the nursing and lifestyle staff, volunteers and the whole team at Strathalan, who looked after Dad 24 hours a day. What special people you are!

Thank you to all the family and friends who rang and visited Dad. We know it can be confronting visiting an aged care home. It's heart-breaking to watch a friend or loved one slowly slip away and become mentally and physically frail. Those visits brought him a lot of joy.

Dad had a lot of pain in the last few weeks. We'd like to thank Sandy for managing this and for making him comfortable in the final days. Thank you to the staff for looking after us as we sat with Dad during that last week, reminiscing and saying our goodbyes.

He slipped away peacefully and pain-free with Cathy and Erin by his side.

So as we've heard today Dad had a long, full life and was full of life. He was a devoted son, loving husband, father and grandpa and uncle. He was very generous. We had a happy childhood and never missed out on anything—school camps, excursions, sporting trips and interstate netball carnivals. We enjoyed family visits, and holidays to Rosebud and Queensland.

He was a loving father, and father-in-law to Glen, Alan and Wayne, and supported us in our married lives as we raised our children.

He was a proud Grandpa to Erin, Mark, Hannah, Andrew, Tom and Will, and celebrated many of their sporting and academic achievements. He loved his visits with his little great-grandchildren Harri, Indi and Oscar.

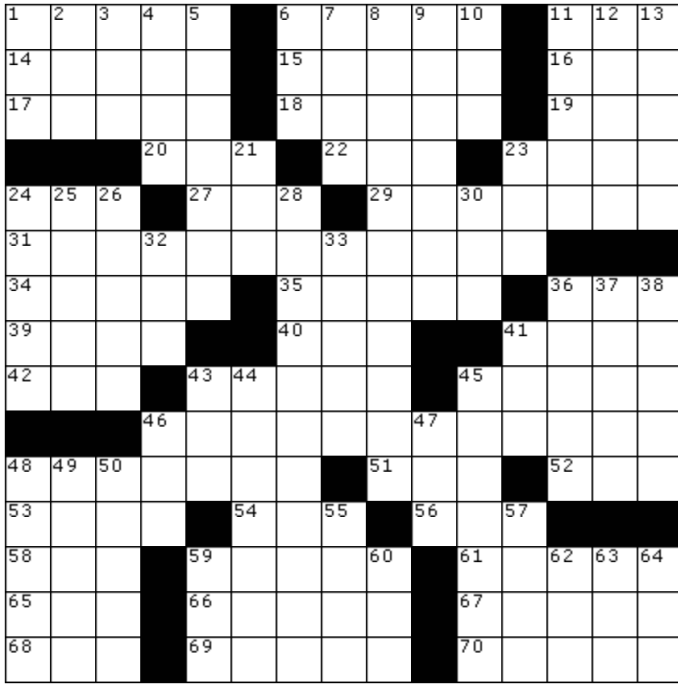
He was a hard worker, respected by workmates and clients. Some workmates were life-long friends. He was a great sportsman, and loved music, movies, gardening and travel. He had a fun sense of humour and was a 'good' dancer. He was kind, and often described as a gentleman.

He cared for others, and was loved and admired by many in return.

We will miss you, Dad. Thank you for everything you did for us, and for all the happy times spent together.

Those memories will live on in our hearts forever.





ACROSS

- 1 Smell
- 6 A land flowing with milk and _____
- 11 Rested
- 14 Lil' ___ (cartoon character)
- 15 Remain
- 16 West southwest
- 17 Long poem division
- 18 Toe
- 19 Expression of surprise
- 20 Grow older
- 22 Extremely high frequency (abbr.)
- 23 Last word of a prayer
- 24 Computer brain
- 27 Goddess
- 29 Tilting
- 31 Timely greeting
- 34 Result
- 35 Estates
- 36 Car speed
- 39 Eve's garden
- 40 Day of the week (abbr.)
- 41 Tropical edible root
- 42 Dab
- 43 David's weapon
- 45 Stomach sore
- 46 Shaded with lines
- 48 Head hiding bird
- 51 Day of the wk.
- 52 Single
- 53 Red gem
- 54 Picnic visitor
- 56 Gross national product (abbr.)
- 58 Gone by
- 59 Ankle biting insects
- 61 Popular condiment
- 65 Convert into leather
- 66 Writing tables
- 67 Son of Abraham
- 68 Bard's before
- 69 Property
- 70 Beaver's house

DOWN

- 1 Pouch
- 2 BB association
- 3 Where Mary and Joseph didn't stay
- 4 Greek cheese
- 5 On top of a frog's head
- 6 Owned
- 7 Off-Broadway award
- 8 Good night (2 words.)
- 9 Enlightened
- 10 Still
- 11 Hindu teacher
- 12 Wan
- 13 Pluck
- 21 Long, long time
- 23 Spr. month (in N)
- 24 Baby bird's comment
- 25 Chinese bear
- 26 Fuming
- 28 Greediness
- 30 Old-fashioned Dads
- 32 Play on words
- 33 Alerts
- 36 Masculine
- 37 Clean feathers
- 38 Swarm
- 41 Tender loving care
- 43 ___ Lanka
- 44 Settings
- 45 Knife
- 46 Weep
- 47 Fall mo. (in N)
- 48 Speak
- 49 ___ and spice
- 50 Cut of beef
- 55 Grab
- 57 El ___ (Texas city)
- 59 Food and drug administration (abbr.)
- 60 Fast plane
- 62 Child
- 63 Droop
- 64 Expert

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

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

Bible Word Search: Intercessors and great prayers

https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_IntercessorsAndGreatPrayers_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**.

Abraham, Altar, Answer by fire, Consecration, Covenant, Cry of righteous, Disobedience, Divine presence, Early morning, Elisha prayed, Eyes of the Lord, Ezekiel, Forty days, Holy of Holies, Intercessors, Intervention, Israel, I will hear, Lord delivered, Moses, Rest, Samuel, Shew mercy, Supernatural



Answers to last month's puzzles:

Bible Word Search mystery answer:
COMMANDMENTS

Last month's cryptogram:
 ALL OF YOU, BE LIKE-MINDED,
 BE SYMPATHETIC,
 LOVE ONE ANOTHER,
 BE COMPASSIONATE AND HUMBLE.

1 Peter 3:8

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
1				7				15						26						10					

___ E ___ O ___ O ___ ___ O ___ ___ A ___ ___ O ___ O ,
 2 7 17 26 12 26 16 4 12 26 2 2 3 1 16 16 26 17 26

___ U ___ O U ___ E ___ E ___ A ___ E O ___ ___ O U .
 6 10 16 26 10 11 7 9 7 19 1 11 7 26 12 9 26 10

New Names across Space and Time

26th April 2026

1 Peter 2:1–10

Sermon by Xiaoxi Lou

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him –⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.⁶ For in Scripture it says:

‘See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.’

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,’

⁸ and,

‘A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.’

They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Sticks and stones...

There’s this phrase that gets used when someone else is mean to us; when we’re bullied; when we’re called a liar; or maybe when someone tells you that you’re ugly. You know it, right: you say the second half:

‘Sticks and stones might break your bones,
but words will never hurt you’.

In the face of critical or harsh words or teasing we’ll often use the phrase: *sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me*. So it’s ok if they mess with your name a bit, it’s just words. At least no one tried to hit you. Right?

Where does this phrase even come from? One thing the internet is good for is sharing obscure bits of information, and it is first mentioned in Liverpool in 1857, then in 1862[†]. Of course, since we can all repeat it back, it’s part of common language now.

The thing? The phrase only comes up when someone HAS said something mean to us. When someone HAS used words as a weapon. When the family member, or friend, or parent is trying to tell you that physical violence and pain hurt a lot more.

We’ve heard a bit about Peter’s audience that he was writing to when we started this series. We know that this letter was written by Peter the apostle, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. We know too, that Peter himself went through a lot. Let me read to you from verse 4–10. See if you notice anything:

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him –⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.⁶ For in Scripture it says:

‘See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.’

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,’

⁸ and,

‘A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.’

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In these few verses, we have a lot of references to stones. You might have noticed that it seems like a common theme. We have quite a few Peters in our church. Can you tell us what your name means?

The Peter who wrote this letter’s original name was Simon. He was Andrew’s brother. And at the end of Matthew chapter 1, Simon meets Jesus for the first time:

Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas’ (which, when translated, is Peter).

Cephas in Aramiac, and Peter in Greek means ‘rock’.

This NEW NAME that Jesus had given Simon was PETER: ROCK. And the thing was, Jesus told Peter that he would be the foundation, the rock of the church.

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18)

And here in 1 Peter, we know that some of those who were reading Peter’s letter were being persecuted and unfairly treated because of their faith. Peter himself experienced physical persecution, including being stoned, which we read about in the book of Acts too, and some historians tell us that he was killed, stretched out upside-down on a cross.

All these references to rocks, then, are not accidental. Peter was pointing to Jesus as the cornerstone, the first and crucial stone in any building, which all the others rely on. And just as Jesus had given Peter the new name of Rock, God and Jesus are good at giving these readers of today’s letter new names. And these names would have been familiar to the Jews: names so familiar they could say them automatically like ‘sticks and stones will break my bones...’: for these new Christians, they were newly bestowed on them even if they were less familiar with the names.

Words and names matter

So in the phrase ‘sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me’, Peter probably only agreed with the first half. He KNEW sticks and stones could hurt him, and he was willing to BE hurt if it meant that more people knew the truth about the saving power of Jesus. Peter’s suffering, and his new name from Jesus, were all things that Jesus had already been through. Jesus had

experienced suffering too. Jesus had been given the name Messiah and Saviour down through time.

We’ve had ‘Correspondents across space and time’; ‘New stories across space and time’, and today we have ‘New names across space and time’. Peter was connecting and giving his readers new identities, new names, and he’s continued to do that in today’s passage because he knows that words matter. These new identities were ones that God had given to him, that Jesus had made possible.

So, when he describes Jesus a certain way, then goes on to describe his readers that way, it’s no accident. While Peter’s name might have meant ‘stone’, and while Jesus gave him this new name, Peter always points others to Jesus. In the face of the ostracism and persecution that the Christian community was facing, Peter knew that the best way for them to understand themselves and the way that they were different from those around them, was by understanding themselves through Jesus; the way that Jesus was different:

Compare the columns of names and identities:

Jesus	Peter’s Audience
a living stone	living stones
rejected by humans	(implicit: rejected by humans)
in God’s perspective, elect	in God’s perspective, elect
in God’s perspective, honoured	in God’s perspective, honoured†

Chinese proverb: A child’s name tells you more about their parents than the child... (a saying from Xiaoxi’s Dad: the internet was less helpful on this one).

Peter was employing the same idea. All the descriptors that Peter gives to Jesus, he applies to his readers. Peter is effectively making sure that these readers will not experience the embarrassment of judgment but the glory of approval.

...but my true name is the one God gave me

Peter is agreeing that indeed ‘sticks and stones will break his and the other followers of Jesus’ bones’. But instead of saying ‘but words will never hurt me’, Peter gives his readers a new name: in fact a few new names and a way to understand themselves as a reflection of Jesus:

Living Stones; Spiritual House; God’s treasured possession; royal priesthood.

Just as Jesus had given this new identity for Peter, Peter connects and creates this new identity for his readers. Just as last week, we saw how Peter urged his readers to ‘be Holy as God is Holy’, now Peter gives them the same names as those that Jesus has.

The same man who was God’s son—in fact, God in human form—the same man who, too, was willing to endure ridicule, and sticks and stones, and even death on a cross, so that God’s chosen people—Peter’s readers—even WE might be saved. This is the same person that links us here today with the audience that Peter was writing to, and to Peter himself. And so again, I read to you the names that Peter has given his readers, which even includes Jesus’ followers in 2026 Heidelberg!

[†] Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 60.

^{*} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sticks_and_Stones

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

And so friends, as we go into the week, we too, have new names. Names that God gives to his people. 'Sticks and stones will break my bones, but my true name is the one that God gave me!'

New Names



LIVING STONES



SPIRITUAL HOUSE



GOD'S TREASURED POSSESSION



ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

So, next time someone calls you something mean: tell them this! Or if you really want, instead of explaining 'My name is Peter' you could say: 'Hi, my name is 'Living Stones'. 😊

Everyday Humans across Space and Time

3rd May 2026

1 Peter 2:11–25

Sermon by Xiaoxi Lou

¹¹ Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.
¹² Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbours. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honourable behaviour, and they will give honour to God when he judges the world.

¹³ For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state,
¹⁴ or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honour those who do right.

¹⁵ It is God's will that your honourable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you.
¹⁶ For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.
¹⁷ Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.

¹⁸ You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel.
¹⁹ For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment.
²⁰ Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.

²¹ For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

²² He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone.

²³ He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

²⁴ He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.

²⁵ Once you were like sheep who wandered away.

But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls. (NLT)

What do you think about today's passage? It's got all this stuff with suffering, with being a slave, of being unfairly treated and even things like: *Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel.* Clearly this letter is from FAAAR away in space and time. How are we supposed to make sense of it?

Recap: We've spent a lot of time with Peter, talking about what we *can* be, what vision and ideas we should hold ourselves to: after all, we are *elect* and *exiles*. We are given Jesus, throughout, as our example, and told to be holy because God is holy. We've been given 'new names' too. Did anyone actually introduce themselves as 'God's high priest'?

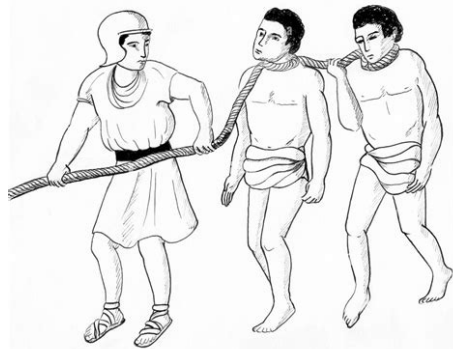
But how are supposed to understand things, when he starts talking to us about slaves submitting to authority?

TRULY HUMAN: What is Peter talking about?

The problem is: 'slaves' and 'slavery' isn't quite as 'normal' and 'everyday' for us as it would have been in Peter's time. Our passage says that we should suffer even when those above us are cruel. A helpful way I've been told to think about masters and slaves, is similar to the relationship between an employee and their boss.

So is that what Peter is talking about? We sign contracts after all. No matter what kind of boss we have, should we...just submit and obey? I think some context and understanding of Peter's world might help us here.

So what was it like to be a slave in the early first century in Greece and Rome? Thanks to lots of media and movies, our minds will easily turn to black American slavery. Peter's time though, is even further back. I found this picture of slavery in first century Israel and it paints a pretty terrible picture. How can Peter then, tell slaves to submit?



alamy

Joel Green tells us that *in some circles in antiquity slaves were regarded as persons devoid of critical facilities:* essentially, they are just animals: subhuman. No need to worry too much about what their needs, how they think or feel, right?

And so, the fact that Peter addresses slaves at all is significant; that he calls upon them to exercise discernment and moral agency in relation to the will of God is especially suggestive.

* Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 80.

Truly HUMAN: The strangest thing about this letter then, isn't that there were slaves, but that Peter was writing to them. He is treating them as real people, as true humans: not as subhuman, just property for the master to use. He was giving them the respect of choice and inherent ability: the respect and honour and culpability of a true human. The way that Peter is talking to his audience treats them as people that have ability to think and decide. Peter *isn't* saying that employees and slaves are the same. Instead he lifts these slaves up, and treats them as humans. Instead of sub-human, Peter talks to his readers as true humans: those with an understanding of the world, and a knowledge of Jesus.

Peter reminds them of their new and true status as God's creation when he wrote earlier in the letter: ¹⁶ *For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.* ¹⁷ *Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.*

Peter is definitely saying that slaves and workers are not the same. Instead, he lifts slaves up, from the status of animals to the status of employees.

OK, so maybe trying to understand today's passage with an 'employer and employee' concept only helps so far. An employee is given the freedom and respect of being able to quit. Any employee does still have pathways of redress. They are treated not as animals, but can leave work and take sick leave. An employee is *hired* because the employer knows that the employee has a brain, and can think and do things and is actually especially hired because they have a particular skill set. Let's try again.

Example #2 Well, what about when Peter writes: ²¹ *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.* OK, well, are we still talking about slaves here? What does Peter even mean about 'even if it means suffering'?

Those living in North Korea: What's life like for Christians?

Well, we don't have to look far to find Christians that are suffering for their faith. It's impossible for Christians to live freely in North Korea. Each citizen of North Korea must attend 'study sessions' where they are told to denounce each other. If discovered, believers are deported to labour camps as political criminals, where they face a life of hard labour which few survive, or they are killed on the spot. The same fate awaits their family members. There are believed to be tens of thousands of Christians held in labour camps across the country.

Meeting for worship must be done in utmost secrecy—and at grave risk. The churches shown to visitors in Pyongyang serve mere propaganda purposes.

So how do we understand their situation? This sounds a bit like slavery, right? It's definitely suffering. While they might have jobs and can go to school, they must never give a hint of their faith and are not free in that way. So, is that how we should understand 'bearing up and enduring beatings' under their master? Maybe Peter is trying to say that suffering makes us good? What does that mean for you and me?

When Peter writes about suffering and being a slave, is Peter saying the more you suffer, you become more good? Maybe we should go looking for opportunities to suffer?

Neither of these: Peter tells us something different: any Christian that undergoes suffering is to look to Jesus' example to understand how to respond to it.

When justice cannot be effected, we are to trust that God is judging and will bring ultimate justice. In the case of our brothers and sisters in North Korea, this means that they will endure and be wise in how they navigate their hostile world. At the same time, Peter is not telling us to go looking for suffering: rather, to understand the suffering we undergo. If we are in a bad situation, God will still use this to our good. ²¹ *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.*

While we live here, and in some places surrounded by enemies, we need to be wise about when and who we speak up to. For example: living in North Korea: trying to escape. We speak up for justice when we can: but not unwisely. Peter advises us to:

¹³ *Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.* (1 Peter 1:13–14)

We're not to be like the world around us. We're to wait for Jesus to effect justice. Rather than be like the world around us, behaving in revenge and anger, we're to look to Jesus as our example.

Peter, just like last week, continues to put Jesus before us as our example. He refers to the Old Testament book of Isaiah and uses it to point to Jesus, then in turn refers to his readers the same way.

Peter's claims	1 Peter	Isaiah
Christ committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth.	2:22	53:9
Christ, when he was insulted, did not insult in return; while suffering did not threaten.	2:23	53:7
Christ bore our sins (on the tree).	2:23–24	53:4,12
By Christ's wounds you were healed.	2:24	53:5
You were straying like sheep.	2:25	53:6

Now we've at least worked out that what Peter writes probably isn't so applicable to our own work or home situations. Hopefully, none of us are trapped out of need, the way slaves of the time were. And I'm quite sure Peter *wouldn't* be saying to the slaves: ah, yes, go against your masters so you can be punished some more: punishment equals a good life according to God! No.

So, how are we to better understand and work out our response to this passage, then? We might be waiting for God's justice, and be waiting to return to our real home with Jesus, but how do we respond now?

Example #3

Our Bible study in Clayton came up with a much more helpful equivalent for us in 2026. An equally horrible equivalent to being a slave in Peter's time, would be the garment

and factory workers that make so much of our stuff we buy on a regular basis. In many ways, they are trapped by their circumstances into a type of slavery. Unlike those being punished for their faith, though, Peter is encouraging them to obey.

The International Law and Policy Brief website tells us that the fast fashion industry employs approximately **75 million factory workers** worldwide. Of those workers it is estimated that **less than 2%** of them make a living wage. This leads to workers living below the poverty line and the European Parliament has even described the conditions of factory workers in Asia as **'slave labour'**. Many garment workers are working up to 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. The textile industry also uses child labour particularly because it is often low skilled, so children can be **exploited at a younger age**.



Unlike those in NK they are being exploited rather than hunted down. It is more like this situation where Peter is telling his readers to submit regardless of whether their masters are good or bad: because they have so few options. Trapped in a place where they *need* to stay in order for them to get what they need: it's easier to see where Peter is going, isn't it? He basically encourages his readers to be wise in situations that are hard. Each of the reminders Peter gives to his readers helps them to look at eternity as their reality, and so Peter changes the goal of his readers. They aren't here to live 'a good life' as measured by human standards. Rather, for his readers, and for us, we live lives that are 'good' according to God's measure. When Peter looks back at the 'suffering servant' passages of Isaiah, he looks at the ultimate example in Jesus: of what it means to live a 'good life' by God's perspective, one that knows there is eternity waiting beyond this life, and a perspective that realises that Jesus' saving death on our behalf is the true treasure we have.

Christ's suffering is singular and decisive, 'once for all.'[†] Peter reorients his readers back to the real goal: eternal life. And because that is the real goal, it means that we can endure injustices if the situation requires it: even if we are slaves trapped in bad jobs. So: here's the everyday life for us: while you might not (hopefully) be living as a slave like the garment workers in India, are you living as a 'slave to God' as Peter calls his readers to?

While we are definitely not living in a country where the law allows and encourages Christians to be punished and killed, like North Korea, do we ¹² *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

Even in our schools and workplaces: do we look different? Do people see how we are slaves to a good God? One who loves us and died for us?

And when we do feel the rejection of others because of our faith, do we look to Jesus' example for how to respond? Do we run back to our True Shepherd: the one who oversees our souls?

Unlike the groups of people we've talked about today, who are much more like slaves than we are, we still have responsibilities in our roles as 'slaves of God'. Let me encourage you in practical ways to do so then: take part in ministry here at the Parish of Banyule on a Sunday, or you can volunteer at a number of different Christian-based organisations! I'm sure Anglicare would love more donations!

Even in response to conditions of the garment workers, there is now actually an 'ethical garment' guide: and we can then, as consumers, spend our money more carefully and wisely. We ourselves may not be in positions of slavery, but neither do we/should we stand by and watch. Instead, we can demand and buy from those brands that work towards more safe and fair working conditions. Even buying from op shops, like ours at Holy Spirit, ensures that we're not encouraging the making of these fast fashion companies. And for our brothers and sisters in North Korea, we continue to pray and support those on the ground working against that injustice. Please talk to me if you'd like pray letters from those working on the ground. We do have the chance to 'live good lives' to bring honour and glory to the one who died on our behalf and working for justice in those industries.

¹² *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

Jesus is the Way

3rd May 2026, Holy Spirit Watsonia

John 14:1–14

Sermon by Helen McAlley

¹⁴ *'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.'*

⁵ *Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'*

⁶ *Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'*

⁸ *Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'*

⁹ *Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?' ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very*

^{*} Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 85.

[†] Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 88.

truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

LOST

What a wonderful gospel reading we have tonight.

Recently, I drove down to Frankston to visit a friend. I am not the most confident of drivers, but I relied on my GPS which got me there safely. But on the way home, I got confused and thought the GPS was in error which it sometimes is. I stayed too long on the highway and then had the feeling of being totally lost. It was not a pleasant feeling to be trying to navigate in an unfamiliar area with quite heavy traffic. Nor was it easy to find a place where I could stop safely. Eventually, I saw a sign which said 'Blackburn.' I knew I could get back to my home in Doncaster East if I followed the signs to Blackburn. And sure enough, I eventually arrived home safely. A second time, I doubted the GPS which seemed to be wanting me to go too far to the east. I realised later that it was aiming for the East Link. So maybe I was just too suspicious of it on that day.

ANXIOUS

When we are in a situation like this, we can be tempted to feel quite anxious about the traffic and about being lost itself. As always when we are anxious, we need to make that determined decision to trust the Lord and to believe that He is helping us regardless of the circumstances. We make that decision regardless of how we are feeling and to say something like, 'Lord I am trusting you to show me the way and I affirm that regardless of the way I feel at the moment. Thank you that you are a very present help in trouble.' Like many other things in our Christian life such as love and forgiveness, trust is a decision not a feeling.

THE REASSURANCE OF JESUS

In our gospel reading tonight we have Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper, immediately before the crucifixion. Jesus knows His time has come, but, being Jesus, He wants to reassure His disciples that all will eventually be well if they trust in Him. He knows that they are feeling afraid and anxious, maybe a bit like I was feeling when I was lost in that traffic. Jesus speaks with them about heaven to which He knows He will shortly be going, and wants to reassure the disciples that the time will come when He will take them there to be with Him. He says:

'You must not let yourselves be distressed – you must hold on to your faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's House. If there were not, should I have told you that I am going away to prepare a place for you? It is true that I am going away to prepare a place for you, but it is just as true that I am coming again to welcome you into my own home, so that you may be where I am. You know where I am going and you know the road I am going to take (John 14:1-4 JB Phillips' Paraphrase).

'WE DO NOT KNOW THE WAY'

This was all getting a bit too much for Jesus' disciple Thomas who remonstrated with Jesus, saying, 'Lord, we do not know where you're going and how can we know what road you're going to take?'

Jesus could have been annoyed with Thomas for interrupting Him and contradicting Him, but He knew Thomas's heart and knew that this was a genuine question. Thomas wanted to be sure of what would happen. Maybe he thought he needed a map to show him the way to heaven, or nowadays he might have thought of a GPS.

However, we do not get to heaven with a map or a GPS. We will get there by simply trusting in Jesus. Jesus replied to Thomas, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.'

It is only through trusting Jesus that we can get to the Father in heaven. Jesus led a sinless life but He chose to go to the cross to be punished for *our* sins and wrongdoing, not His own. He died to pay the price for our sins so that those of us who receive Him as their Lord and Saviour can be set free from them and we will be able to spend eternity with Him. Of course we have free will to accept or reject God's wonderful gift to us through Jesus.

We may not have an address for our home in heaven or a map to get there, but it is enough to know Jesus. In a similar way, a small child starting school might think: I don't know what it's going to be like, or how to get there. That child's parents might say, 'We know the way to that school and we will make sure that you get there safely. We'll show you where your room is and where the toilets are and we will introduce you to your new teacher.' Can we too choose to trust that our Lord Jesus will help us in every difficult situation in our lives and also to, one day, take us to heaven to be with Him?

Jesus went on to reinforce what He had said to Thomas, saying that no-one can see God the Father except through Him (that is Jesus) and that those who have seen Him have seen the Father.

'SHOW US THE FATHER'

This prompted Philip to say, 'Lord show us the Father and we shall be satisfied.'

This question of Philip may have given grief to Jesus. He had been teaching them so often about the heavenly Father, and here was Philip speaking as if he knew nothing about the Father.

Maybe we can think back to the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus had made many references to the heavenly Father (Matt 5-7). For example if the disciples of Jesus love, pray for and bless their enemies we are true children of the heavenly Father who gives good gifts to all regardless of their behaviour. The Father will also hear and reward those who pray to Him sincerely. If people forgive others, they are like their Father in heaven who forgives all our failures when we come to Him in genuine repentance. The Father knows our every need and will meet that need as we trust in Him. Just as He feeds the birds and makes the flowers beautiful, so He will care and provide for His children. Jesus also taught His disciples to pray, 'Our Father in heaven.' Until that time no-one had ever addressed God as Father. How many times had Jesus prayed to the Father for help as He performed a miracle like the feeding of the five thousand or the raising of Lazarus. And how many times had He spent the night in prayer to the Father? And yet here is Philip saying that they need to be shown the Father.

JESUS AND THE FATHER ARE ONE

In Colossians the apostle Paul writes that Jesus is 'the visible expression of the invisible God.' The *Living Bible* says that Jesus is 'the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all and, in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't.' Jesus and the Father are the same in their personal qualities, as indeed is the third member of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. When we read that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, we know that this is what God the Father is like. This is what our Lord Jesus Christ is like and this is what the Holy Spirit is like.

GOD IS HOLY

Sometimes we think of God as punishing and condemning. I have been reading through the Old Testament and I marvel at the patience of God in giving second chances and in warning people that their sins will be punished if they persist in them, as He did by sending Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh. Nevertheless, the time will come when He will bring justice and will not allow people to continue in their sins forever, just as a good parent will correct and discipline their children. When I think of some of the terrible sins in the world like child abuse and trafficking, cruel murders like the man who murdered an innocent young girl just for the experience of doing it; when I think of Christians around the world who are tortured and murdered for their faith, I am glad that one day the Lord will put a stop to it all, and sadly those who refuse to repent and turn to Him will be punished. Anyone can come to God even at the last hour like the thief on the cross and will be welcomed into God's kingdom. But our Holy God will one day put a stop to all these evil things and will lovingly take us to be with Him in heaven where there will be no pain, sickness, suffering, death or crying.

PRAYER

Shall we pray? *Lord we thank you that you are a God of perfect love and holiness. Thank you for sending our Lord Jesus who is the way to you and to heaven. Thank you that He shows us what you are like. Help us to trust you in everything in this life and to know that a home is prepared in heaven for those who love Jesus and have accepted Him as our Lord and Saviour. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Teach us to pray: How to Pray

The Lord's Prayer

10th May 2026

Matthew 6:9-13

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

⁹ *This, then, is how you should pray:*

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,*

¹⁰ *your kingdom come,
your will be done,*

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ *Give us today our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts,*

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."*

Over the last couple of years, we have been praying a prayer of mission, and asking God to grow us in spiritual maturity. One of the things that I felt that we could do this year to move us forward in that prayer is to do a series on prayer. And so today we begin with the Lord's Prayer.

So for all this term except when we have Pentecost and Trinity, we will be focusing on one of the prayers of Scripture. Some from the Old Testament, most from the New. But it's right, as people who belong to the Lord Jesus, that we begin with his prayer.

Can you remember when you first prayed? What has been your experience of prayer? Each week we come together as God's people for a service of prayer and praise and worship and Holy Communion, and the whole thing is an offering of prayer. Yes, we have prayer elements within the service, but the whole service is a prayer. What I say at the Lord's Table for Communion is a very long prayer to God. So we're thinking about prayer today.

I love to collect old books of prayers. I have one that I think I paid £1.50 for in Cambridge many, many years ago, probably over 30 years ago. And for each day of the year, it has one or two prayers. I love scouring bookshops to find old prayers collected in various books.

It's wonderful reading through these prayers of Christians throughout the years, because it shows the breadth and scope of their prayers. I don't know about you, but sometimes my prayers to God can be like a bit of a shopping list: 'Lord, I'd like this, and this, and this, and please hurry up'. But the scope of prayers when we read through our Prayer Book—the Occasional Prayers that you find in there as well. There's a little section within the Prayer Book—we use those prayers when we have our monthly prayer meeting, when we make pancakes (which will be next Saturday: just an ad for that) and we pray together for an hour, particularly for our missionary friends, but also for our own mission as a church—and they're called Occasional Prayers. If you get bored during the sermon, just—actually, let's all do it now. Pick up your green Prayer Book that you have in your pews and turn to page 181. There'll be a green Prayer Book in every pew. Turn to page 181 and there's a little title that says 'Occasional Prayers'. They are set prayers for lots of different things: for education, for people who work in the arts, for various mission societies. And you can see there are some fantastic prayers there, and it shows us the breadth of prayers that we can pray.

Well, now that you've found that, you can close it up. Now, if you don't have a Prayer Book at home and you'd like to take one, we have lots. So, it's fine if you want to take one home: that's okay. I'm sure we've got lots and lots and lots, that we can stand for you to take a Prayer Book home, as long as you use it.

As a child, I used to have hanging in my room [*shows a plate*—this isn't the actual one because when I was a teenager, I think I threw it out. But this was one I found in an op shop for \$2. There was a little plate in my room growing up (in my purple room, because I always said to Dad I wanted it painted purple, which was my favourite colour), and it had the Lord's Prayer on a plate. Whenever I walked past it, I would read it. As a child, I also suffered from terrible nightmares, and a couple of things helped. One was Dad's comforting presence,

as he would sit on the bed and pat my hand till I went back to sleep (and Dad was almost falling asleep as well). But the other one was, if I was scared that I was going to have a nightmare, I would pray the Lord's Prayer. I don't know where I learned it. Perhaps at Sunday School; certainly from that plate that I had on the wall.

We know that over the last couple of years we've been praying our collective prayer of mission; and people in response to that prayer have come, and stayed, and have become part of our church. God has answered that prayer. This series is for us to be empowered in each of our individual prayer lives.

And so we begin with the Lord's Prayer. I have two very short points and one slightly longer. First point, *prayer is simple, and difficult*. Point two, *when we pray*; and point three, *Jesus' template for prayer*.

For point one, **prayer is simple and difficult**. Prayer is as simple as speaking, either out loud, or in our minds. Most human beings manage to speak by the time that we're about three years old. Prayer is speaking to God, whom we cannot see. It's speaking, but it's also a spiritual practice.

And sometimes we find it hard to hear God's response to us. Some people have the blessing of, on very rare occasions, hearing an audible voice. Most of us don't have that. But if we have faith in God, the God who speaks and communicates, the God who loves his people and reveals himself to humanity, then prayer, speaking to God, should be simple, right?

But prayer is also difficult, because God is not right in front of us; and because it is a spiritual, not a human-to-human, practice. Prayer takes intention: to move from this physical plane of what is happening in and around us, to the spiritual—to turn our hearts and minds to God.

There are many demands upon us these days because of the busyness of the lives that we live; and these busyness things can get in the way of our inner spiritual lives. We have so many distractions in life. When was the last time you had a time of quietness, or stillness? Some people have that when they're reading. Reading is still seen as important to most Australians. Most Australians either read or listen to a book, maybe one a year. About 75% of people do. But a quarter of Australians don't access a book of any sort at all during the year—I wonder if that's busyness, or a struggle with reading, or not being able to access audio books or Braille books.

Prayer is also not modelled in many families.

So how do we learn to pray? It can be difficult. So prayer is as simple as speaking to God and as difficult as knowing how to pray.

Point two, when we pray. We see in nearly all religions of the world, people will be praying, trying to connect with the divine—whether it's in set prayers, or what we call extempore prayers, where we just speak from our hearts. Even people with no faith will pray in some situations.

Jesus expects his followers to pray, to engage with God, to speak with God. So, in this passage that Allan read for us that comes from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is speaking to his friends about a lot of different things. Jesus says 'when you pray': not *if* you

pray, but *when* you pray—because to God, who speaks and engages with us and who has done so from the very beginning of time and space, prayer is something that humans have always done, and prayer is expected by Jesus, that we will talk with him when we pray.

Jesus gives us here a wonderful template of a prayer. He's not speaking here about those very short 'arrow prayers' like 'Lord save me!', though that's a perfectly fine prayer as well. Rather, Jesus is making the point that we should be engaged in prayer with God in a specific, and an intentional, way.

Point three, Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer to pray. We pray it together each week. We can pray it at any time for ourselves. It's a wonderful prayer. It's a prayer that's prayed by Christians throughout the world in lots of languages. One of the things I love about being at the cathedral for any service, is that when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we're encouraged to speak in our own language. For me, that's English. For the Dean, that's German. For other people there, it's Chinese or Farsi or Hungarian or Italian or whatever; so everyone attending prays the Lord's Prayer together in their own language.

Yet the Lord's Prayer is also a template of *how* we should pray. Jesus says, 'This, then, is how you should pray'. The prayer is divided into two sections. The first section is all about God, his glory, and his honour. It begins, *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*.

We speak to God who is our Father. We are part of the family of God when we become Christians. God is not distant. It's not like in the Acts reading that we had 'to an unknown god'. The picture that we have so clearly in the Scriptures when Jesus speaks about God, is that of the running father who runs out to meet the prodigal on his return. Also notice it's not just 'my Father' but 'our Father'—all of God's people.

We pray that God's name would be honoured by all: all people on earth. We pray that God's kingdom and rule would come. When we pray that, we are declaring that God is to be worshipped by all people. That's part of our mission as Christians when we pray.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Not just 'out there', for everyone else—'Lord, do your will out there'—but also 'Lord, do your will in me, in here, as well as out there'.

So, as we come to pray, let's always begin with God, praising him for who he is, for what he has done. In the middle of our Bibles is the book of Psalms. Prayers to God, 150 of them, and they all start with praising God. Nearly all of them finish with praising God—some don't, but nearly all of them start with God and who he is and what he has done for he is good. Then the Psalmists bring the reality of life, the struggles and the joys, the elations and the despair, to God. So too, we start with God who calls us to be his.

And then we turn to ourselves in our prayer. *Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*. We begin with God, but we speak about ourselves, and our own situation. Isn't that amazing, that God is interested to hear our prayers?

We pray for the daily necessities: food and clothing and shelter. When we pray, *give us this day our daily bread*, we are reimagining and reliving that time in the Exodus, that image of God providing manna and quail for the refugees from Egypt to eat. We're praying for all those things that God knows that we need, those life things, the ordinary things of life.

Additionally, we also pray for forgiveness. We know that we need forgiveness, obviously, because that's why Jesus came; but the prayer for forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer says, *Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*. That's a challenge, isn't it? I wonder if we harbour any hatred in our hearts toward people, or if we withhold forgiveness. Having been forgiven, Jesus encourages his people to be people who extend God's kingdom. And one of our ways of doing that is to show forgiveness—but it's a challenge. We might think of people who don't deserve forgiveness, people who've done outrageous things, and told lies, and sinned against us. Or perhaps we might be like King Lear, declaring to God, 'I'm a person more sinned against than sinning.'

Now, please don't hear me be glib about forgiveness. Some people in our world, and perhaps some of us sitting here, have been the object of outrageous, hurtful, despicable words and acts and actions and lies by others. When we turn to the matter of forgiveness, forgiveness is not saying, 'What that person has done doesn't matter'. Not at all. Forgiveness is also not saying there are no consequences for bad behaviour, or illegal behaviour. Forgiveness is also not done for another person. It's done for ourselves, to release us from hatred.

Sometimes we can't forgive. We just struggle. Yet forgiveness can be a process. So when we can't forgive, we can say to God, 'I can't forgive', and we can ask God to move us, slightly, in that direction—to move us somehow forward in that attitude of forgiveness.

Jesus' last part of the prayer is *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*. We need God's protection. We ask for God to keep us from denying him in our words and actions, and to deliver us from terrible evil that happens in the world and can happen to us. *Lead us not into temptation* or as our modern version says, *Save us from the time of trial*. Peter stood at the time of trial, didn't he, and failed, but was restored by the Lord Jesus. Deliver us, Lord, from a time of trial—when testing might come, when we might be tempted to deny Jesus in words or in deeds, keep us from that evil.

So, the Lord's Prayer begins with God, and then moves to ourselves. It's Jesus' template for all prayer.

So I want to challenge us today: perhaps you are someone who prays the Lord's Prayer daily. Some of us do. Some of us don't. Will you commit to praying the Lord's Prayer daily this week? If you are doing so, keep going. It's a really good prayer. If you haven't done it daily, or if you only do it when we're here at church, try praying it every day, and see how God answers our prayers, and how we become more aligned with God's desires for us. Give it a go. It's a great prayer. Amen.

Teach us to pray: Prayer for God's help

17th May 2026

Psalm 25

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

- ¹ *In you, LORD my God,
I put my trust.*
- ² *I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.*
- ³ *No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.*
- ⁴ *Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.*
- ⁵ *Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.*
- ⁶ *Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.*
- ⁷ *Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, LORD, are good.*
- ⁸ *Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.*
- ⁹ *He guides the humble in what is right
and teaches them his way.*
- ¹⁰ *All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful
toward those who keep the demands of his
covenant.*
- ¹¹ *For the sake of your name, LORD,
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.*
- ¹² *Who, then, are those who fear the LORD?
He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.*
- ¹³ *They will spend their days in prosperity,
and their descendants will inherit the land.*
- ¹⁴ *The LORD confides in those who fear him;
he makes his covenant known to them.*
- ¹⁵ *My eyes are ever on the LORD,
for only he will release my feet from the snare.*
- ¹⁶ *Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.*
- ¹⁷ *Relieve the troubles of my heart
and free me from my anguish.*
- ¹⁸ *Look on my affliction and my distress
and take away all my sins.*
- ¹⁹ *See how numerous are my enemies
and how fiercely they hate me!*
- ²⁰ *Guard my life and rescue me;
do not let me be put to shame,
for I take refuge in you.*
- ²¹ *May integrity and uprightness protect me,
because my hope, LORD, is in you.*
- ²² *Deliver Israel, O God,
from all their troubles!*

Good morning everyone. Lovely to see you here on this slightly chilly day.

Have you ever had need to call for help? Perhaps—I don't know if anyone's been lifted up by a helicopter. Anyone had the Westpac Rescue come and rescue them? Oh wow, Neville, you'll have to tell us that story later. Anyone ever been in an ambulance? [*Raises hand*] Anyone ever needed help from the Surf Life Saving Society? Or the SES who come out and help when we've had storms and stuff?

Today our sermon is looking at crying to God for help; and we're focusing on our psalm reading for today. I wonder how difficult or easy is it for you to ask for help? Sometimes it's very difficult to ask for help. When we really know that we need help, like we need an ambulance, or the fire brigade, or we need

to call the police, or, you know, we've fallen down somewhere—oh, that's me quite a few times—and needing help, that's easy; but at other times it can be difficult.

Especially for women—women find it very difficult to ask for help, often because they are the helpers within the family. Australians are very, very good helpers. When there's a situation where we need to raise money: if there's been a bushfire or a flood or something, musos get together and they put on a concert, and people go and collect money—we're very good at helping; but asking for help for ourselves? Sometimes that can be difficult.

Psalm 25, which we read together this morning, is one of the many prayers in the Psalms that is a prayer for God's help. The issue is: can we ask God for help? Do we matter to God?

I wonder what you think when children need help. Think about that little cutie there [*picture of very young child*]. He looks like he's just had a full tummy and bath time. So, he's probably needing some tummy time, and then a cuddle, and then off to bed. But how do children let us know that they need our assistance—for food, or for sleep, or if they're cold, or they're uncomfortable? Even when they don't have words, they're able to communicate from very, very early on the need that they have for help and for assistance. And whom do they cry out to? Their loving parents. That's whom they cry out to, isn't it? Sometimes the parents get to see the cues, when they're a bit 'hangry', so they're a bit grumpy because they're hungry, or they're very sleepy or whatever, or they're annoyed with their siblings—you can tell when they need help.

How willing are we to give assistance to those little ones who need help? One of my holidays many years ago, I was up at Byron Bay, and it was at a time when quite a lot of the beach had been washed away, so the Council had put up big sandbags for us to step down onto the beach. Well, it was quite okay to do that, no problem at all. One day I was climbing up those sandbags, and a little girl about two years old was coming down. Now, she was having a bit of trouble. There was a bit of grass caught between her toes, and she looked up and saw me, and she just stuck her hand up, for me to give her assistance. Now, the mum said, 'Oh, I'm sorry about that.' I said, 'Please don't. That was a delight for me to help her down to the beach.' It was delightful. She saw me. She needed help and she just immediately asked for it.

When we pray to God, we are relying upon God's character. I found this quote from Walter Wangerin Jr, an American scholar about prayer:

*Let this be understood above all:
the power of prayer is not in us, that we speak.
It is in God that he listens!
It is his hearing that causes a true connection
between us.*

So we speak because God listens.

So I thought we should look today at Psalm 25 and prayerfully consider it together. What I've done is to highlight the parts of the psalm. The psalmist is speaking throughout the psalm. However, the parts in [*italics*] are when he is speaking about himself or asking God for something. The parts in [**bold**] are where he is speaking about the character of the God in whom he trusts.

¹ In you, *LORD my God*,
I put my trust.

² I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

³ **No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.**

⁴ *Show me your ways, LORD,*
teach me your paths.

⁵ *Guide me in your truth and teach me,*
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.

⁶ **Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.**

⁷ *Do not remember the sins of my youth*
and my rebellious ways;
**according to your love remember me,
for you, LORD, are good.**

⁸ **Good and upright is the LORD;**
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

⁹ **He guides the humble in what is right
and teaches them his way.**

¹⁰ **All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful
toward those who keep the demands of his
covenant.**

¹¹ **For the sake of your name, LORD,**
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

¹² Who, then, are those who fear the LORD?
**He will instruct them in the ways they
should choose.**

¹³ They will spend their days in prosperity,
and their descendants will inherit the land.

¹⁴ **The LORD confides in those who fear him;
he makes his covenant known to them.**

¹⁵ *My eyes are ever on the LORD,*
for only he will release my feet from the snare.

¹⁶ *Turn to me and be gracious to me,*
for I am lonely and afflicted.

¹⁷ *Relieve the troubles of my heart*
and free me from my anguish.

¹⁸ *Look on my affliction and my distress*
and take away all my sins.

¹⁹ *See how numerous are my enemies*
and how fiercely they hate me!

²⁰ *Guard my life and rescue me;*
do not let me be put to shame,
for I take refuge in you.

²¹ *May integrity and uprightness protect me,*
because my hope, LORD, is in you.

²² Deliver Israel, O God,
from all their troubles!

So for the psalmist, it's clear that the Lord is his God. He trusts him, and he asks that he not be put to shame. Very early on in the prayer, we'll start to see how the psalmist moves back and forward, between focusing upon God and who God is, and focusing upon his own need. Like we saw in the Lord's Prayer last week—remember how we saw that the first part of the Lord's Prayer, where the Lord Jesus taught us to pray, the first section is about God and God's character, and then the second section is about our human need. So too, we have that style modelled in the Psalms—not surprisingly.

The psalmists speak to God because they know that God listens to them. Of God's character, he says: 'No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame.' As he prays, the Psalmist alternately focuses upon what he needs from God, and why he needs it from God.

He asks for guidance from God and reminds God (as if God needed reminding; but recalls) that God is his Saviour. In verse six, which I think is the centre of the psalm for me,

⁶ **Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.**

It is God's character that the psalmist is calling upon.

Throughout this psalm as well—and we'll see at the end the difficulty that he is in—he's always aware of his need for forgiveness. So he asks for forgiveness of sins, when he says,

⁷ *Do not remember the sins of my youth*
and my rebellious ways;

And he's contrasted that with
**according to your love remember me,
for you, LORD, are good.**

Consider God's characteristics that he speaks of: that God is good and upright; he instructs sinners in his ways and guides the humble; God teaches and is loving and faithful. Then he says,

¹¹ **For the sake of your name, LORD,**
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

You see, again, he's relying on the character of God. And I love this verse in verse 14:

¹⁴ **The LORD confides in those who fear him.**

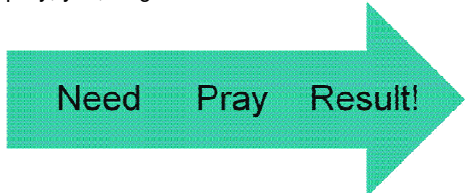
Isn't that amazing? In whom do we confide? Someone who is trusted. Someone who is special. Isn't it amazing that the Lord confides about his covenant, about who he is, to those who fear him: that is, his followers?

So why does the psalmist cry out to God? It's pretty clear that the psalmist knows who God is: God's character and history. He knows that God can be called upon; and at this moment he needs God's help.

So let's focus for a moment on what is going on for the psalmist—and then perhaps this might encourage you in your prayers as well. Let's look at when he comes to the nub of the issue, why he needs God's help: He is lonely and afflicted. His heart is troubled. He is in anguish. He is in distress. There are enemies about him. He asks God to guard his life and rescue him. *May integrity and rightness and uprightness protect me*—not his own, but God's.

We see from this small section of the psalm that the psalmist is pouring out his genuine need, his heart to God. He is calling upon God for help.

When we think about prayer, we need to be careful that we don't think about prayer as a formula. It's **not**: well, here's my need. If I pray, yes, I'll get the result that I want.



It's not linear. It's not a formula. It's not magic. For example, can you solve this mathematical equation?

$$6 \div 2(1+2) =$$

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/655452355193183/posts/1208566619881751/>

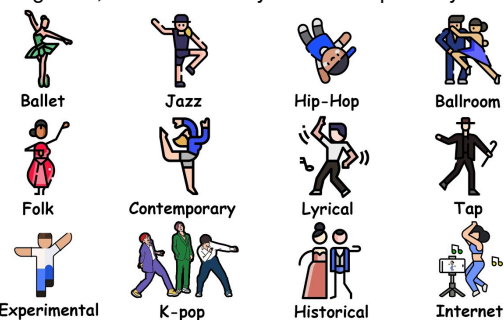
Have a think in your head and see if you can get it. If we simply go left to right, $6 \div 2$ is 3 and we multiply that by what's in brackets, $1 + 2$ is 3. So 3×3 is 9. However, that's not the correct answer. Why? Because of the order of operations. We do the brackets first. What's in the brackets? $1 + 2$ is 3, $\times 2$ is 6. So then we go back. $6 \div 6$ is 1. So the answer is 1 not 9. Any mathematicians here

who need to correct me, please feel free. So if I have got it wrong, please let me know.

So sometimes people can think about prayer in that way: there's a need, you pray, you get the result that you want. But it's not linear. It involves God and us, our hearts and our needs. It's much more like a circle:



There is God, us, our needs and desires when we come to God. So much less like a linear equation than like a dance. In dancing, whatever style you prefer, whether your style is traditional, lyrical, K-pop, hip hop, ballroom, jazz, tap, sometimes they're done together, sometimes they're done separately.



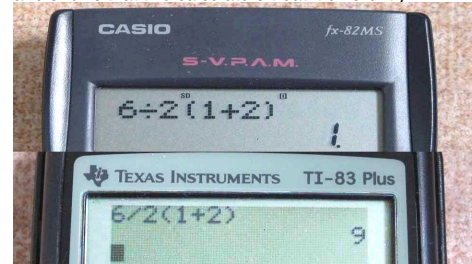
Think Haven, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CT4XjZUEK0I>

Dance is something that is used in many, many cultures as worship, as ways of exalting God, of expressing joy. I was at a wedding on Thursday and when we were having dinner, Dad said to me, 'Oh, look, they're probably finished all the celebrating now.' I said, 'No, Dad. I think now they'll all be dancing.' It's what we do at weddings, isn't it? We dance. We dance for joy.

Praying is much more like a dance than a linear equation. There's a back-and-forward as we speak to God about who God is, as we

* At the Editor's school it was considered to depend on whether one used the BOMDAS or BODMAS convention. Google AI says the modern use is to treat multiplications and divisions as of equal rank, and do them left to right, giving an answer of 9. Several sources agree. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URCvFUIhQ> adds that usage up to 1917 gave the alternate answer of 1.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_operations considers it ambiguous, calls it a contrived internet meme, and shows that two calculators treat it differently:



Ceinturion, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Precedence62xplus.jpg>

In reality people writing equations make sure to use brackets to make the meaning unambiguous.

speak about our need. It sort of all gets jumbled up together in a back-and-forward motion as we pray to God, as we listen to what God says in his word—and at times in silence—how God moves us to pray. Our prayers often go around and around and around, thinking about our need, and who God is.

If you find it difficult to ask God for help, one of the things that we need to remember, especially as we look at this example from Psalm 25, is that we can pray to God about anything in our lives.

Of course, there are many, many other psalms in Scripture, and I've suggested a few that you might like to look up: Psalm 16, Psalm 23, Psalm 79, Psalm 86, Psalm 119:132–137. Perhaps take note of one of those this week and read through it. Or just open up your Bible to any psalm and see whether it is a psalm of praise or a psalm of crying for God's help. At Bible study this week, Rosemary said, 'Well, in the Psalms, it's either one or the other. It's either praising God or asking for help.' And that's true. But even within there, there's also that dance back and forwards, speaking about God, and who he is, and our need for him, and our need as humans.

So Psalm 25: how does this encourage you in your own prayers? I think if we remember verse 6:

6 Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

We have a God who speaks, and a **God who listens**, and wants us to listen. In our two other Bible readings that we had today [Acts 1:6–14 and John 17:1–11], we heard Jesus himself praying for his disciples, and we heard the disciples modelling prayer and naturally pouring out their hearts to God when Jesus had ascended.

Second thing, whatever is happening in your life, **bring it to God in prayer.**

And **finally**, asking for help from God is not weakness, but relying on the strength of the one from whom we seek help. Is it weakness for us to put our hand up in the sea if we're struggling? No. It's wise. We're relying not on ourselves, but on those who can assist.

God's great mercy and love are from of old. Whatever is happening in our lives, bring it to God in prayer; it is not weakness. This is something that Jesus prayed, and he was not weak. He brought everything in his heart, in his ministry, to God. So too we, as Jesus' brothers and sisters, children of the same heavenly Father, can ask God for anything.

Living in the Power and Love of the Holy Spirit

Pentecost, 24th May 2026

John 20:19–23; Acts 2:1–21

Sermon by Lyn Pearson

Big idea: No matter what our age (in years or in Christ) **we can live in the power and love of the Holy Spirit.**

Lyn has just returned from Ethiopia (thanks for your prayers). She visited one of the two large denominations, and they told her:

- Church growth: Mission is our purpose: we have nearly 13 million willing to die, willing to go to prison
- Personal stories of experienced Christian leaders of God's provision

She was challenged by their testimonies.

Lived Experience = Know the Holy Spirit (head and heart and hands—in action)

Globally, there seem to be two types of churches, two types of Christians, when it comes to belief in the Holy Spirit:

Experience is everything, and

Experience is nothing: don't trust it

Yes there are some sort of in-between...and as good Anglicans this is maybe where we land...but usually there is an imbalance.

John 20:19–23: Imagine the scene

¹⁹ *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!'* ²⁰ *After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

What is happening here?

Just after Jesus shows himself to Mary near the empty tomb (she went to prepare his corpse properly as he was quickly laid there because of the Sabbath)—she met him in the garden and doesn't recognise him until he calls her name—he tells her:

¹⁷ *Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."*

¹⁸ *Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her.*

(NB: She is the first one, the first witness to share this good news.)

Then that evening, the doors are locked—they are in fear of the Jewish leaders—then:

1. He comes amongst them—we don't know how, but we know he can
2. He speaks with them: 'Peace be with you'
3. He shows his wounds: his hands, and his side—why? They are overjoyed. Back in chapter 16 he said they would grieve, but then there would be joy!

John 16:7: *Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ...and he warns them that their grief will turn to joy.*

¹³ *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.* ¹⁴ *He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.* ¹⁵ *All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.*

Then we return to the reading from John 20:

²¹ *Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'* ²² *And with that, he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'* ²³ *If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'*

But then he repeats to them: *Peace be with you!*

Not just the greeting...the phrase, derived from the Hebrew greeting *shalom aleichem*, was a common way to say hello or goodbye, not just g'day; but Jesus' use carried divine authority and reassurance. It was not merely a casual greeting; it was a declaration of God's peace entering their hearts, replacing fear, guilt, and doubt with calm and confidence.

He breathed on/into them

Receive, is to take, it is a command.

Interesting link: *The Spirit gives authority* = forgiveness of sins / the retention of sins

- Is that only to the disciples? Or for us?

Just like the first human back in Gen 2:7: *Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his*

nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

- Remember the command to the first humans: be fruitful, multiply, subdue: have dominion.
- Isn't it only God who forgives sin? And yet he invests his disciples with this authority.

He breathed into them: this is the new life of the Spirit—they became a living being. This is what it is to be human, to be in the image and likeness of God, to have a body, mind and spirit...

Now these followers of Christ have Jesus with them even when he physically leaves. He gives his Spirit just like he said.

We know from John 3 this is the only way to have new life, to be *born again of the Spirit*: this is the comforter, advocate, the paraclete promised by Jesus in chapter 16.

- What about you? What is your lived experience of living in the power and love of the Holy Spirit? Do you call Jesus Lord: that is the sign that his Spirit is in you.

You know for every story of the wonder and miracle of the power and love of the Holy Spirit we also know a counter-story: prayers in faith offered and unanswered the way we hope. People who have misused power and spiritually manipulated others...we need to be aware that there are those who have suffered, been hurt or manipulated or disappointed because they went out on a limb to believe and pray in the name of Jesus and nothing happened; but there are also many who have seen and keep seeing, who even in the midst of heartache, trust and keep praying for breakthrough.

Stories of breakthrough, breaking of curses, of doctors confounded because no surgery needed...there are many.

Three categories with regards to our acceptance of the Holy Spirit:

1. **Thirsty**
2. **Suspicious**
3. **Uninformed**

Where are you in knowing and living in the power and love of the person of the Holy Spirit?

Is it beyond intellectual? Not just head knowledge and being informed, but relational.

Lived Experience = To Know Him

I said before—Globally, there seem to be two types of churches, two types of Christians when it comes to belief in the Holy Spirit:

Experience is everything, and

Experience is nothing: the Word is living and active and it is all we need.

I have been to both ends...

- The church up the road
- The good teaching, good thinking, no feeling church

What is abundant life, life to the full, streams of living water?

My story:

I came to God in a dramatic way, and in a charismatic Anglican church. There were people in my school, in my friend group too, who sometimes came.

The main part of the youth group after games, socialising and eating was *prayer*.

There were ecstatic gifts of the Spirit—but things did not go well, we got carried away with gifts more than the giver. I am not sure what went wrong, but it seemed that there was misuse, or the evil one came and influenced things...there was no correction, no guidance...

I went away from these ecstatic gifts, *fearful* that the evil one might get a foothold; and a new minister came who I think believed in the cessation of many power spiritual gifts.

I definitely grew under his teaching: the normal way God speaks is through the Bible.

Then I came to hear about, and even experience in my time overseas, power dynamics in the spiritual world.

It was so refreshing to be with brothers and sisters in fervent prayer, who prayed through the night.

What about you? Where have you seen God at work in and through you?

After the Resurrection

Acts 1: ⁴ *On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'*

The fifty days after Passover was the Feast of Weeks, the feast of Pentecost: it is a celebration of the harvest.

Acts 2:1-5

¹ *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

⁵ *Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.*

What is the symbolism of fire in the Old Testament?

Sinai: the burning bush, the Ten Commandments, the tabernacle, the temple... and us as His church.

Stop and think about that. God is there: what is the symbolism now for us?

Believers in Jesus Christ have His Holy Spirit—that is why we are told we are the temple of the Holy Spirit: we together are God's chosen instrument of transformation to the heavenly realm of God at work—small working models of the new creation!

Each of us has been given gifts by the Spirit for building up His body. (1 Cor 12)

But where does this leave us? Are you thirsty/suspicious/uninformed?

So now we have more information.

Have you been burnt before and are suspicious—that was me: but I have come back to the middle road.

Are you thirsty for living water, for the lightness of living in the power of the Spirit?

No matter what our background, our age, our chronological or age in Christ: He is the same Jesus, He is the same Holy Spirit, we have the same heavenly Father who was and is and will be...

So what is it like to live this life to the full in the power, presence and love of the Holy Spirit?

A man was taking a service at two sites. In the first one he said that God had told him that someone needed help with regard to his teeth, and if so would he come to the front. No-one came. At the second site, not very confident, he nevertheless repeated the invitation, and then someone ran down the stairs. He said, 'I was going to give up on God. I was at the first service and I knew the call was for me, but I didn't have the courage to come down. So I made up my mind to come to the second service, and said to myself, if he says it again, I will come out'.

I want to be so moved to be following the voice of my shepherd. It is a risk sometimes to say something, do something which may seem out of place...but that is how we attune

to the Spirit's leading—the gift of prophecy: a gift we are encouraged to desire.

Christ is building His church... there are thousands upon thousands coming ...many come because they see someone come to them who explains dreams. Most in what we call the global South...

Back to Ethiopia—unity of expression and cooperation...but Pentecostal

In 2020, 86 percent of all Pentecostals and Charismatics were in the Global South. The Spirit-filled movement represents the fastest-growing Christianity worldwide in the 21st century.

The Characteristics of Major Revivals Chet and Phyllis Swearingen, missionaries and revivalists, recorded '512 Accounts of Revival' from Biblical times until the present.

One thing is sure about true revivals—the move of the Holy Spirit always brings God's presence, immense love, holiness with convictions and humility, leading people to salvation in Jesus Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit transforms lives and ignites love, zeal, and passion for God and people.

<https://lausanne.org/global-analysis/revivalism-and-the-future-of-mission>

Has God come here? Has God come to you?

If you call out the name of Jesus as Lord, then you have his Spirit: you are never too old, never too young to hear him, to learn to live in the power and love of the Holy Spirit.

We have the Spirit of Christ within us, we are His living temple, individually and together. In this place, in this city, in this country in God's world, God's Spirit is working to build His Church.

So let us attune ourselves to be in step with Him, radiating the presence of God in us, living in the power and love of His Holy Spirit.

Parish Council Notes

Meeting of Monday 18th May

Ministry matters

- All Saints' Greensborough has reimbursed us money overpaid in 2025 & transferred \$20,000, our share of Birch Trust money.
- BSL still owes us for outstanding months. For April we only received \$65. A new MOU needs to be agreed. Meeting on 11 June.
- St John's 175 years committee to meet again.
- Katrine Bromley & Peter McKay have agreed to be Synod reps.
- Decision re BCA mission donation deferred. We wish to support the Killingworths on King Island, but it needs to be ratified by BCA.

Finance matters

- Diocesan compliance inspection invoice queried re errors in current properties of parish. Write to Diocese.
- Katrina emailed Diocese re outstanding payment of interest from sale of St Andrew's. Got apology: they were busy. Payment of \$10,000 has been offered since and accepted.

Property matters

- Heritage Victoria's permit for St John's restoration work received. Diocese has approved the project. Meeting Diocese and architect 21 May to discuss next steps.
- Following Banyule Council's verbal declining (via Nick McKay) of our request for a sealed pathway between Holy Spirit and Ibbotson Street, Denise contacted him re Council's offer of 'works in kind' when the Watsonia Town Square was originally being developed. A further email was sent referencing dates and discussions.

Child Safety Officer, Family Safety Champion

- No incidents reported.
- On Domestic Violence Day, 3 May, Judy was interviewed in church by Denise. They later had a discussion with the youth.

Diocesan professional standards

- Angela needs Crimcheck and Kooyoora approvals, then training. All others up to date.

Vicar's report

See *Ministry matters* above; also:—

- Church attendance has fluctuated in past few weeks—depends on weather, people's health.
- A large donation of food items from Carey Grammar School via Scott Bramley that we can gift to Anglicare and our Link Missionaries.
- Sermon series on Prayer has got positive feedback. The accompanying Bible study series is being used at Tuesday Bible study and a Bible study hosted by Neville and Jan Collins.
- We will have a new Bishop from Sept, when Megan Curliss-Gibson becomes the Assistant Bishop for our new Episcopal region.
- My Dad has been here since 1 May – I will drive him home on Tuesday 26 May. Annual leave 26 May – 8 June.
- Evensong with my collation as Archdeacon was lovely: Rhonda and Elizabeth and Dad attended.
- My first 'Archdeacon' role, commissioning of the new Vicar of St John's Diamond Creek. Also Parish Support Team training day 4 May.
- Home visit & HC to a woman with cancer who is unable to come to church.
- Hosted the Jika Street Building Committee meeting on 11 May.
- Preparation and officiating at wedding of Mary Harper's grandson 14 May at Immerse Winery.

• Visits:

- 23 May Pentecost: Lyn Pearson
- 21 June: Rowan
- 19 July: Bishop Stephen Hale preaching
- 15 November: Bishop Genieve's visit deleted
- 13 December: Adrian (BCA) Combined service?

Wardens' report

See *Property matters* above; also:—

- Inspection of churches, halls, rented vicarages, tennis courts by insurance consultant.
- Annual electrical safety & compliance checks.
- *St John's*
 - Disability Access report from Equal Access.
 - Structural Engineer report for the Bell Tower.
 - Tower Access report.
 - North-East Link grant application submitted for further planting along Salt Creek.
 - Renewal of fan/light at Gloucester Drive.
 - Leaking tap/washers replaced out of hours by Don from Community Garden: very grateful.
- *Holy Spirit*
 - Quarterly fire extinguisher, exit clearance checks.
 - Clearance of blocked toilet.

General business

- Costs for Jika St fence replacement to be shared 50/50. Obtain quotes, then works ASAP.
- Approach by Matt Smith re repairs and improvements to BCA's rented office space. Determined it needs a new external door; a split system in the first office; painting of whole area; replacing blinds and carpet. Agreed to get quotes and start works.
- After plumber's work to unblock the toilet at Watsonia, suggested we get a quote to replace the bad sewer pipe underneath. Equipment grant from Banyule Council?

Minutes by Rhonda Taylor, précis by Editor