

BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE

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

NOVEMBER
2021

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CATRIONA'S CATECHISM

ARE you glad to be there?

I've never been asked this before, or at least not before this year. But in the last few months, I've been asked this same question a number of times. 'Glad' is a term you don't hear very often (it means feeling pleasure or happiness). My grandmother used it quite a lot when she talked about her flowers, her 'Gladdies', but it's not a term that I've heard much when it comes to how I feel. So, is there anything about this year that I can be glad about? It has been a year disrupted by the sadness of Covid after all.

Well, was I glad about the wonderful welcome that I received from everyone when I arrived for my first service with Banyule on 31 January 2021?

Or am I'm glad about all the ministry experience that I've had? That so far this year, I've led 11 services, read the Bible in 8, led intercessory prayers 13 times, and preached 9 times. I've helped with half a year's worth of *mainly music* sessions (I still sing the songs), I've organised and run a confirmation class with Patrick, helped with baptisms, funerals, and weddings, presented a testimony slideshow, and done a weeklong intensive with Denise and Patrick.

Or am I glad that I was privileged to help record Sunday services so that we could still gather as God's faithful people even when we couldn't meet together physically?

Or am I glad about the Banyule Parish hospitality, mentoring and encouragement. The lunches and afternoon teas, the trip on Puffing Billy, the phone calls, emails, and texts, the seeds and seedlings?

You bet I'm glad!

It's quite a list of things that I've been able to do, in any year, let alone a year so significantly impacted by Covid. I am immensely glad for the support you have all shown me, and I look forward to my next couple of months with you as we lead up to celebrating our Saviour's birth.

I came to Melbourne and Banyule to have an experience that would be very different to 2020 and that has certainly been the case. I am blessed because I saw, and continue to see, Melbourne through new Tasmanian eyes, and was not battle weary from a previous year of Covid, so I had an advantage. But I think that I am glad because of the difficulties of this year, not despite of them. God has me here, at this time for his purpose and I'm very humbled and grateful for that. He is transforming me as his child, and as a faithful minister to his people and I am learning and growing so much, in a way that I could never have done without being here. And it is great to do so in community, no matter how difficult that is.

I'm so glad that God is at work in our world, calling people like you and me to himself, into his kingdom. And I'm really glad that he has called me to vocational ministry, and that this year has really affirmed that for me, that this is who I am.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone again once services in person resume, and then next year, I'll be a student minister at Merri Creek Anglican which will be quite a different ministry experience again for me.

And in there somewhere there will be a trip back to Tassie, to tell my church family down there, just how glad I am to have spent 2021 in Melbourne.

Catriona



Meet our new Associate Minister!

Patrick will be leaving us early next year, but we shall not be left bereft. Go to page 3 and meet Jonathan Lopez!

Face-to-face services restart! Yay!

In November, we'll get out of our dressing-gowns and back into our old habits again. To attend the usual services, however, you will have to prove you have been fully vaccinated. You can do this with a smartphone by linking your vaccination status with the check-in app, or you can do it with a paper certificate, or the certificate on your phone.

If you can't do this, don't worry, there will be a special service for you each week, at **1 pm at St John's**. Numbers are limited, so please ring Denise (0438 856 376) and book in.

The first Sunday in November, the 7th, will be a lead-in: the normal service will be online, but there will be a Litany service at St John's at 10.15 am, and the 1 pm service.

And on the 21st we'll have the Archbishop with us, celebrating St John's septuagintcentennial (vaccinated only).

Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be on **Sunday 28th November** at 11.30 am. Like last year, it will be possible to attend the meeting either in person at St John's (but you must be fully vaccinated), or on Zoom (vaccination status doesn't matter). Whichever way you do it, please do attend, as we'll be planning for 2022.

If you are not sure if you are on the Parish Roll, or you think your status needs to be changed, please contact Denise (0438 856 376).

If you run a group, please start writing up your Annual Report now and get it to the office as soon as possible. We expect many reports to be quite short!

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

This Month – November

This month face-to-face services restart. To attend the usual services you will need to be able to show you are fully vaccinated. If you can't do this, there will be a special service for you each week at 1 pm at St John's.

Also a new Bible study group with Catriona will start on Sundays at 3.30 pm, from 31st October.

Saturday 6th: 8 am Last Blokes Helping Blokes, on Zoom

Sunday 7th Pentecost 24 / Trinity 23: Online service; 10.15 am Litany at St John's; 1 pm St John's (no vax)
1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

Sunday 14th Pentecost 25 / Trinity 19: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 1 pm St John's (no vax); 5 pm Holy Spirit
1 Thessalonians 5:12–28

Sunday 21st Pentecost Last, Sunday before Advent, Christ the King: 10.15 am Combined at St John's, with Archbishop; 1 pm St John's (no vax)
Archbishop's choice

Wednesday 24th: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers' Union; 11 am Streeton Park and general mid-week service at St John's (vax only)

Sunday 28th Advent 1: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 11.30 am Annual Parish Meeting St John's or Zoom; 1 pm St John's (no vax); 5 pm Holy Spirit
Jeremiah 33:14–16; Psalm 25:1–10; Luke 21:25–38d

Wanted

- Lots of churchwardens

Money: September

Income:	Giving:	\$5,530.00
	Other:	\$19,522.46
	Total:	\$25,052.46
Expenses:		\$24,944.71
Surplus:		\$107.75

Giving was down further. Expenses happened to be low in September, as the warden did little maintenance.

Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

Our meeting on September 22nd was cancelled due to the COVID virus. Our 2022 diaries and Christmas cards order has arrived (many thanks to Sylvia); also the Seafarers' *Ship to Shore* mag.

Recently I was asked how it is that MU knits beanies for the Seafarers. They helped the MU out one year by allowing us to use their Mission Church for our Lady Day Service, as St Paul's Cathedral was unavailable. (We have also had our Lady Day Services at St James' Old Cathedral and St Peter's Eastern Hill. When our World-Wide President came for a visit St Paul's was booked again and Wangaratta offered their Cathedral, so Melbourne MU went to Wangaratta.)

Our next meeting will be our A.G.M. on October 27th at 10 am (if out of lockdown).

Elsie Storr

mainly music: November 2021

There really is nothing to 'report'. There have been no sessions for the whole of October and, at the time of writing, we have no idea whether we may be able to open up this term. If we do manage to open up how many of the families will return?

The bigger question remains as to how many of the team members still have the enthusiasm to continue next year? And then, how many families will return and do we have the energy to resort to advertising, something we have not done for 13 years!

Rosemary Bellair (9459 5394)

June Lockhart

June died on Monday 11 October 2021. She is survived by George, her husband of 70 years, and her daughter Pamela.

Due to COVID times, Pamela has decided to wait until we can gather more easily to hold a service for June.

Please pray for George and Pamela, and for all of June and George's close friends.

We entrust June to the care of the Lord Jesus, whom June knew as her Lord and Saviour.

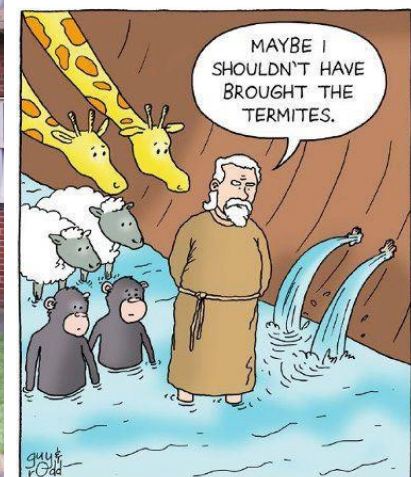
Denise

The *Babble* will give a report when the memorial service occurs.



Left: A distressing sight at St Andrew's after the wind storm overnight, 28/29 October. The Parish Hall stood the shock, but branches penetrated the roof and ceiling. The tree will be craned off some time after Melbourne Cup Day.

We believe the tree was part of the original landscaping of St Andrew's by Olive Mellor. If anyone knows the species, please let the Editor know.



Meet Jonathan Lopez, our new Associate Minister!

Denise says:

We welcome Jonathan, Rachel and Zion to our parish. Jonathan will officially become our Associate Minister on 1st November, and he will be with us for at least one year.

It will be good to have an overlap with Patrick, who is now half-time with Banyule and half-time with Merri Creek, and will become full-time with Merri Creek early next year. It is also good that Jonathan starts with us just as we move back into face-to-face services.

Please make yourselves known to Jonathan and Rachel and Zion!



Zion (our son), myself and my wife Rachael returning to Lambeth Palace in 2018 where we lived in monastic community from 2015–16 in the Community of St Anselm

Jonathan says:

Hello or Mabuhay! Which in Tagalog (the Philippine national language) means 'thus, live!'. It is a greeting I only became familiar with when I travelled on Philippine airlines as a child. I was never taught this word throughout my childhood. It is actually a compounded word 'ma' meaning that you wish and 'buhay' meaning life. So it's actually more like 'best wishes'. My name is Jonathan Lopez and both my parents came to Australia in the 70's knowing the Ferdinand Marcos (former President of the Philippines) rule wasn't going too well. They were wishing and perusing a life of safety and a future for our family. Mum and Dad both worked factory jobs. My sister studied to be a nurse. I studied Business and Hospitality and eventually finished Theology at Ridley Melbourne where I met my wife – Rachael.

I must confess, I only just started attending an Anglican church in 2011. I was in my second year at Ridley when my classmate, now prison chaplain, asked me to come along to her church. I felt God's call to love the Anglican church as I was discerning which church God really wanted me to serve in. I was raised Roman Catholic, spent 17 years in a Pentecostal church—where I discovered Jesus—and then worked and attended a Salvation Army fellowship. I shared these church experiences at a vocations day for the diocese of Leicester in the UK, and a woman who was discerning a call into ministry said to me, 'Well with all those experiences it makes sense you're an Anglican!' She shared she had a range of church backgrounds also. I am grateful for the variety of churches I

have experienced and to see first hand God's life-giving spirit at work in them and indeed still pray for 'Mabuhay' upon them all. Jesus said in John 10:10b:

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

I am grateful for the opportunity to come and share in the life-giving ministry here in Banyule through worship, love and service to the community. The life we are given in Jesus is something outside of human efforts to live. The life we have as believers is a life that is overflowing with God's love and blessings which makes it so much different to the way the world perceives life.

Mabuhay!



Above: I coach competitive amateur boxing at an indigenous youth club and these are some of the fighters I coach



As in the previous month, the October meeting was attended by thirteen members. Glenn was somewhat distracted, as he had been up and working from 4 am, making bread (ordinary and raisin) in his backyard wood oven, and he continued kneading and baking while most of us could look on but couldn't have any (except for Stuart, who could insist that Glenn passed some through the hatch because of Stuart's delicate condition).

When the Blokes discovered that Glenn was in his backyard they were alarmed. They remembered that Glenn had decreed that the topic of conversation would be "My Thing", and their alarm grew. Fortunately we found that Glenn had some sort of clobber on.



Jim Royston spoke about how he had played hockey from the age of 15, and once played in a University club. But the hockey they play now is not the same, and they don't even play on real grass.

Keith went one-up by saying he had played tennis from the age of 14. He used to play on an asphalt court that was so short that your own serve would bounce off the back wall back at you, or something like that. He played at both Rosanna and Macleod, but he was stopped by his wife who complained



that she never saw him and required him to give it up to attend to his marital duties.

David Fitzgerald topped this by waving around his football Best and Fairest medal, but then nonchalantly said this was a mere bagatelle, and what he really did was trout fishing, at places like Licola, Jamieson, or the Timbarra River near the Buchan Caves. He once (he said) caught 72 trout in four days, and that was only the ones he didn't throw back. He said that on a trip to New Zealand he learnt how to catch a trout without any equipment, by tickling it under the chin, which put it to sleep.

The Blokes listened quietly and did not make any comments about the general veracity of fishermen's stories.

Jim Royston mentioned that he also had a medallion for marathon running somewhere, but he didn't keep it handy to wave about. It was for the old Frankston to Melbourne marathon, for which he was coached and encouraged by a Melbourne University maths tutor, who also ran a café in St Kilda and had run over a hundred marathons.

At this point Jon Buttery entered. The Blokes had been very sorry to hear that Jon's wife had succumbed to her cancers, and they asked him how he was coping. Jon said he was running on adrenalin at the moment and doing OK, but the doctor had warned him that it was normal to keep going on the support of others for a few weeks, but then to crash at 4-6 weeks. Jon's daughter is similarly coping, but they were really just taking it day by day.

Jon mentioned that in looking for grave plots, he found Eltham cemetery was very nice, with an old-school manager. David said he had found a nice graveyard near Whittlesea for his father, and Keith had laid his son to rest at Kangaroo Ground. Allan Way mentioned a priest friend who had collected the ashes from a number of homeless people who had died in his parish, for whom there was no-one at the funeral except him as celebrant, and someone from the funeral directors. He

had stored the ashes for some time under the altar in his church, but eventually they were scattered at a nice spot at Wingan Inlet.

Allan had kind words about the treatment of John Baumgardner's funeral in last month's *Babble*, mentioning that he was in the small congregation, but incognito, as he was wearing a suit. Allan had kept in touch with John after he had left St Stephen's, and considered him a good friend.

David said he appreciated the Editor's reports on *Blokes Helping Blokes* in the *Babble*. The Editor said that he was in a very fortunate position, because it didn't matter what he wrote, he knew it would still be accepted. Instead of getting a well-deserved rejection letter asking why anyone would print such childish drivel, his copy would miraculously get published, no matter how bad.

Glenn informed us that not only was he making bread, but also he had run across a bloke who was dumping the entire harvest of his orange tree that he had brought from Cyprus, because the oranges were always too bitter to eat. Glenn discovered that the tree was actually the rare and sought-after Seville variety, and Seville oranges are the archetypal fruit for making the very best marmalade. So he had a batch stirring in a 100-litre pot, ready to be converted into marmalade that afternoon.

Keith waved a credit card in front of the camera in an effort to buy some of Glenn's marmalade. The Editor threatened to print the number in the *Babble*, but Adam was already online making purchases, so it was evident the card would soon be maxxed out.

Adam's thing, he said, was music. He was interested in lots of types of music, but particularly post-modern punk. He said this was not like the old punk that we knew so well, but spoke against toxic masculinity, and allowed men to be emotional (though it did not go as far as emo). He mentioned particularly a British band called Idles. He had managed, by some means we didn't quite understand, to become Facebook friends with the grandmother of one of the band members. But now, regrettably, there was no live music.

Damian said his thing was surfing, which he had been doing for 25 years, mainly based at Ocean Grove. He said you could tell an old hand from the length of their surfboard: most people had six-foot ones, but his was nine feet.

(However, the Editor's brief reading suggests that longer surfboards are required for people of higher weight.) Damian recounted a story from one Christmas Day at Lorne, when his brother and he were terrified by a fin coming at them through the water, which turned out to belong to a seal.

Jon Buttery said he had newly taken to gardening, and that it was so exciting watching the plants grow, an activity that is usually taken as the archetype of something boring. He did however reveal an unexpectedly blood-thirsty side, saying it was so much fun slaughtering snails. We did not notice any of the traditional accompaniments to expressions of joy in slaying, such as drool running out of the side of the mouth, or the head rotating 360°.

There followed gardenery discussion of the effect of fruit flies having made it down to Melbourne.

Frank Webb said that while he had four boys at home his thing had been holidays at home. He also mentioned that he had the backside out of his trousers, but the Editor does not remember what caused this wardrobe malfunction. Now that the boys had left, however, he and Sylvia have been pushing the boat out and doing a lot of travel, and he spoke specifically of a cruise to Northern Canada and Alaska. He found that in Dawson City in the Yukon, just south of the Arctic Circle, churches have collapsed because they were built on permafrost that is now melting. They were gadding about where a bear had very recently killed a bloke.

They also got to Prince Edward Island on the other side of Canada, where *Anne of Green Gables* is set.

Neil has been getting about on his bike, but has discovered that e-bikes need pedal assistance on the Eltham hills.

Stuart has of late been preparing for his imminent arrival, presumably learning breathing exercises. But before that, he said, he did fishing, and not the wussy river sort (not looking pointedly at David because you can't do that on Zoom), but ocean surf fishing, extolling particularly Queenscliff as the place to do it.

The Editor also spoke of travel, particularly of late in India. He has an account with Indian Railways, and after disposing of the common myth that Indian trains run with lots of people on top (that's Bangladesh), he spoke with pride of an email Indian Railways sent him saying he was an example to Indian youth. Of course it was a clerical error, meant to be sent to Indian seniors who voluntarily gave up their right to discounted travel for the good of the railways, and not to non-Indian seniors who didn't have that right in the first place. But it was still the best testimonial he had had.

David Clifton said that music was big for him, too. The Kidney Association had paired him up with a DJ in Bendigo, who had asked him to compile a playlist of 60s to 80s music, which he is very glad to do.

Frank Webb here mentioned that he had experience of DJs, as he had gone on a 'Rock the Boat' cruise and got very little sleep. Apparently the DJs worked in shifts to ensure his sleep deprivation around the clock.

David continued that he had met Renée Geyer in Glenhuntly Road. Her car had run out of petrol and David bought some at a servo for her. She asked in her gratitude what she could do for him, and David was a gentleman and asked only that she signed

his copies of her records, which three weeks later she did.

Glenn said that he has one of only 100 special CDs made of *Whispering Jack*, of which he has found that 60 are still in John Farnham's hands; and he has been able to get his signed, which he thinks makes it unique and worth about ten million dollars (he hopes).

Keith Tupper mentioned that he organised the Arden Crescent concert series. He raised the standard of the music discussion by pointing to Antoinette Halloran, one of the world's top operatic sopranos, who grew up in Rosanna.

Allan Way did not claim any special status in music, but he did flex his athletic muscles over some others by noting that in the 50s and 60s he spent more time underwater scuba diving than he did out of the water, which, assuming he slept and ate above the waterline, suggests he was immersed for nearly all of the available time. He was stopped, he said, by a couple of ear operations, which presumably the surgeons were reluctant to carry out while submerged.

He then took up fishing, so he could excel in that too; and he combined that with kayaking, so it was a bit more of a challenge. He recommends East Gippsland as the place to do it.

And of course we all know of Allan's extraordinary skill in wood turning, for which he can make his own awards.

At this point Glenn turned off the meeting and turned us out, ready to do it again at 8 am on 6th November on Zoom*. Let Glenn know (0487 852 808) if you want an invitation: all blokes are welcome!

Peter McKay

* Glenn has announced that this will be the last *Blokes Helping Blokes*.

Ministry of Railways, Government of India.
Fri 27/04/2018 7:22 PM

Respected Peter Mckay Ji,

I am delighted to know that you have voluntarily given up your railway ticket subsidy. I am grateful to you for your contribution. The money saved will be used to improve safety and connectivity of Indian Railways, which is the primary mode of transport for the people of India.

Indian Railways has been going through various transformational changes in the last few years and several decisions have been taken to enhance passenger experience in Railways.

Your selfless gesture to give up your ticket subsidy is an example for the youth and will further motivate them to contribute to the socio-economic development of India. I express my profound gratitude for your decision and co-operation in building New Railways for a New India.

I am confident with your blessings we will transform railways into a modern, safe, green, affordable and comfortable mode of transport.

Jai Hind!*

Piyush Goyal**

*Loosely, 'Long live India!'

**Then Minister of Railways; now Leader of the Upper House and holder of two ministries. A possible future Prime Minister?

Diana Elizabeth Almonte

28 August 1962 – 30 September 2021



Diana was Jon Buttery's wife. Jon Buttery is not only a member of *Blokes Helping Blokes*, but also of the Community Garden. The Garden's extraordinary success at getting Council grants has been due in large part to Jon's skill at writing grant applications.

The funeral was held in Montsalvat's chapel on Tuesday 12th October. Lockdown restrictions meant that only a few could attend, but others could watch on livestream.

Diana had had a heart transplant which left her immunocompromised, she had other medical conditions, and finally contracted two cancers: melanoma and pseudomyxoma peritonei, which ultimately was fatal, after a long struggle.

Jon and the eulogy spoke of her passion for baking—after she became gluten-intolerant, she became a wonderful low-gluten cook—teaching (English, history, politics), family history—her father was an immigrant from Italy, her mother likewise from Austria—traveling (all around Australia, New York, Italy, Austria, France, the Philippines, Israel, Egypt), photography, gardening (especially camellias).

Jon said that when they bought their home, it was because Diana started bidding, and kept on bidding. Jon was shocked. Years later, he realised why.



Our Parish at Synod: From TMA Online

<https://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/2021/10/we-must-speak-out-synod-condemns-uighur-genocide/>

'We ... must speak out': Synod condemns Uighur genocide

Melbourne Anglican church speak up on genocide of Muslims in China.



Caption: Synod condemned China's treatment of Uighur Muslims.

By Chris Shearer

19 October 2021

A motion to condemn the genocide of Uighur Muslims by the Chinese Communist Party sparked debate during Saturday's session of the 2021 Melbourne Synod.

The motion, brought by the Reverend Patrick Senn, also called on the state and federal governments to ensure no imported goods were the product of forced labour and urged the Prime Minister to accept Uighur asylum seekers.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the [Chinese Communist Party's] policies have been the most large-scale and systematic actions [of genocide] by a government since the Holocaust. And yet the world is largely silent," Mr Senn said.

He said he believed this silence was because so much of the world economy relied on Chinese manufacturing and the goodwill of the Chinese Communist Party.

"Our very own state's new metro tunnel trains are being developed by a Chinese company that accessed Uighur labour," Mr Senn noted.

"We as followers of a just and righteous God must speak out and condemn their treatment for what it is: genocide. It is a very small step we can take, but an important one.

"As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: 'Silence in the face of evil is itself evil'."

But the validity of reports on the treatment of Uighurs, provided in an appendix to the motion, was questioned by some delegates.

Nai Cheong Mak Mak, lay delegate from the Anglican Parish of St Thomas, noted they were mostly from American media sources, and suggested the allegations within

them had not been tested by an impartial body like the United Nations.

"I think as a member of synod it is not fair for us to be a judge over these serious allegations," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by Dr Audrey Statham of St Mary's Anglican Church, who opposed the motion.

"I believe more research into the sources cited in this motion needs to be done before we come to a definitive position as a synod, [and] that we should do more research rather than rely on the argument of apologising later," she said.

But several speakers argued that there was ample independent evidence for saying that what was happening in Xinjiang province was genocide, and that it was the duty of the church to speak out.

The Reverend Professor Mark Lindsay invoked the Holocaust for the second time in the debate, arguing that the churches had been overly cautious then.

"The churches were rightly condemned at the time [of the Holocaust] for being reticent to speak out against the well-known facts of genocide. We must not allow ourselves to be silenced again when we are equally clear on that genocide is happening again," Professor Lindsay said.

"The churches were wrong to be silent in the 1930s and 1940s. We cannot make that mistake again. It will reflect atrociously on us through the rest of history."

Reverend Denise Nicholls, Banyule Anglican Church, agreed, urging synod to condemn the treatment of fellow humans made in the image of God.

"As Christians made in the image of God, we always try to speak out for the voiceless and the oppressed, and all the more so when it is systemic and state-sanctioned," Ms Nicholls said.

"And yet this is what is occurring with the Uighur peoples of China under the regime of the Chinese Communist Party, simply because of their ethnicity and because they are Muslim."

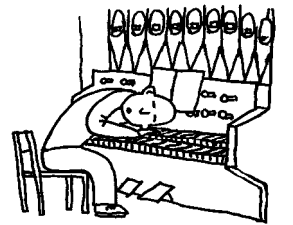
The motion was passed 420 votes to 36, with 21 abstaining, without amendment.

THE LITURGICAL PAUSE

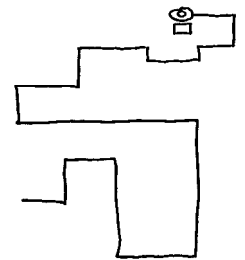
THIS IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF A CHURCH SERVICE. WE OBSERVE A LITURGICAL PAUSE AT THE FOLLOWING POINTS:



AT MOMENTS WHEN PONDERING IS EXPECTED



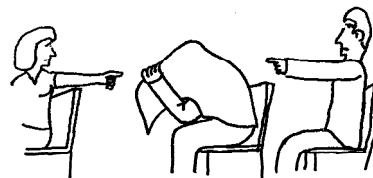
WHEN THE ORGANIST HASN'T COME IN



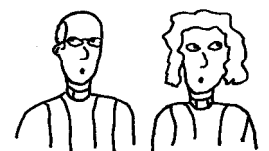
WHEN THE READER HAS A PARTICULARLY GRUELLING JOURNEY TO THE LECTERN



WHEN AN EASTER FIRE OR ADVENT CANDLE REFUSES TO LIGHT



WHEN NO-ONE WILL ADMIT TO BEING THE PERSON DOWN TO LEAD THE INTERCESSIONS



WHEN NOBODY HAS A CLUE WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN NEXT

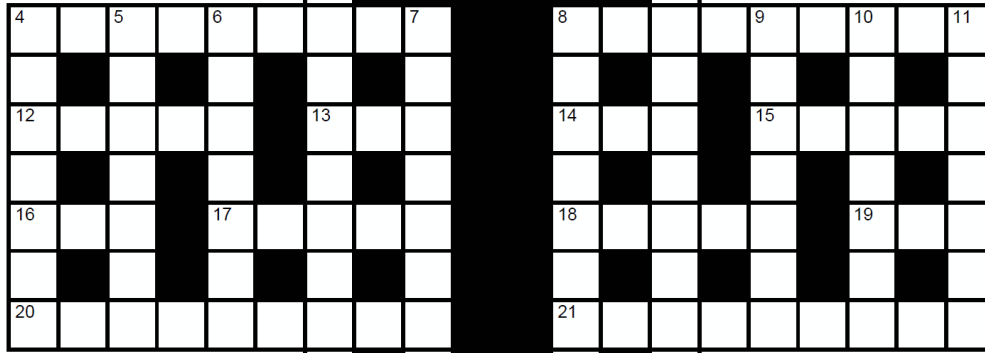
THE WEDDING AT CANA

CAN YOU SPOT THE 20 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO PICTURES?



Across

- 1 Donkey (3)
- 2 Jesus' Father (3)
- 4 One of the twelve (9)



- 8 Didn't believe in resurrection (9)
- 12 One of David's warriors (5)
- 13 First word of the Lord's Prayer (3)
- 14 New Testament name for Noah (3)
- 15 Wish harm upon (5)
- 16 Hole in the ground (3)
- 17 Adversary (5)
- 18 Savour (5)
- 19 First woman (3)
- 20 Mother of John the Baptist (9)
- 21 Family of priests (9)
- 22 Third son of Jacob (4)
- 23 Hates (8)
- 26 Assurances (8)
- 30 Endured pain (8)
- 31 Return from the dead (4)
- 32 Intercessor (8)
- 35 Decorating (8)
- 39 Old Testament book of the Bible (4)
- 40 The prince of Rosh, Mesech and Tubal (3)
- 42 A wise insect (3)
- 44 Dwelling place of kings (6)
- 45 Make bigger (8)

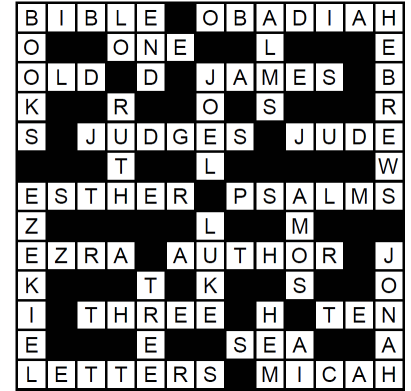
Down

- 1 One of God's messengers (5,2,3,4)
- 3 1940s archaeological find (4,3,7)

- 4 Tread down (7)
- 5 Father of Jonah (7)
- 6 Very salty water bordering Israel (4,3)
- 7 Defensive structures (11)
- 8 Refuges (11)
- 9 Dirty (7)
- 10 Devout (7)
- 11 Pieces of money (7)
- 24 Used to listen (3)
- 25 Used to see (3)
- 26 Positions (5)
- 27 Made available (7)
- 28 Snake (7)
- 29 Destroyed along with Gomorrah (5)
- 33 Finish (3)
- 34 Possess (3)
- 35 King of the Amalekites (4)
- 36 Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 37 Almost sacrificed by Abraham (5)
- 38 Present (4)
- 41 Unfasten (4)
- 43 Fish traps (4)

by Philologus © BiblePuzzles.org.uk

Answers to last month's puzzles:



Bible Word Search mystery answer: **BARNABAS**

Last month's anagram:

- aabelpr _____ parable
- affhiltu _____ faithful
- abeiiilst _____ abilities
- aemrst _____ master
- aenrstv _____ servant
- abceelrt _____ celebrate
- aelnstt _____ talents
- hornstttuwuy _____ trustworthy
- bddelou _____ doubled
- aabelluv _____ valuable

Bible Word Search – Acts Tour Guide



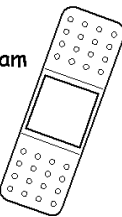
All the words listed below are in the puzzle – left, right, up, down or diagonally. Find each word and circle each letter of the words you find. After you have found all the words, the left-over letters form the **mystery answer**.

https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_ActsTourGuide_0.htm

- Achaia, Adriatic Sea, Antioch,
- Apollonia, Athens, Caesarea, Cauda,
- Cenchrea, Cilicia, Corinth, Cos, Crete,
- Damascus, Derbe, Ephesus, Fair Havens,
- Galatia, Galilee, Gaza, Iconium, Lystra,
- Macedonia, Neapolis, Pamphylia, Philippi,
- Phoenicia, Phrygia, Rhegium, Rhodes, Salamis,
- Samaria, Seleucia, Syracuse, Thessalonica, Thyatira, Troas

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

Jesus Heals the Man with Leprosy Anagram



- adeeiss _____
- aceilmr _____
- eloprsy _____
- cdehotu _____
- acdeeln _____
- behlmu _____
- aeegmss _____
- cdorsw _____
- aadfir _____
- ceinot _____

Acts 17:1–34

Focus on the Known, not the Unknown

3rd October

by Catriona Johnson

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the market-place day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, 'What is this babbling trying to say?' Others remarked, 'He seems to be advocating foreign gods.' They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, 'May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?' ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.' ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: 'People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship – and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ 'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring."

²⁹ 'Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone – an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.'

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, 'We want to hear you again on this subject.' ³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Focus on the Known, not the Unknown

When I came to Melbourne earlier this year, I really didn't know what to expect. Melbourne is a lot bigger than Hobart, the city I am used to, and considerably bigger than Mountain River where I live. Melbourne really was quite unknown to me. But there was one thing that I knew, and that I praise God I still know, and that I was focused on at that time of uncertainty, and change: that Jesus is my Lord and

Saviour. And so, even though our passage from Acts 17, Paul's speech to the Areopagus, has a lot going on in it, it really is about Paul's focus on Jesus that for him everything is about Jesus that he is the only true God, and it was him alone who he was proclaiming throughout the world, even in a city like Athens, soaked in the evil of idols.

Why was Paul in Athens? Paul had arrived in Athens in a roundabout way. God had called him to spread the good news of Jesus across the north of Greece and he, Silas and Timothy had just been preaching in Macedonia. But Jewish agitators had been following him and so fearing for his safety, Paul went down south to Athens, where he would wait for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. It seems like a huge detour but one that God orchestrated so that Paul could deliver his speech to the Athenians.

So, what does Paul find when he gets to the safety of Athens? Well, what do you do when you get to a new city? Enjoy it, take in the culture, how it is different from your own, the different food, dress, entertainment, buildings, environment, smells, sounds, sights. Take in the vibe? But what do you do if the city just feels wrong? Paul, here in our passage was 'greatly distressed' (v16). Why was that? Because it was full of idols. That doesn't just mean that there were idols everywhere, on every street corner, but that the city was submerged in idol worship.

In his letters, Paul makes the strong connection between idol worship and sexual immorality and this is what he was seeing in Athens. The city was debauched. It oozed evil. Every city needs to know Jesus, especially Athens where people did not know him, and so Paul set about doing just that. Paul generally first went to the synagogues to teach amongst the Jews to give them the first opportunity to hear the good news about Jesus (v17). And there were also God-fearing Greeks or those who had become or were in the process of becoming Jewish and who were allowed into the synagogues. And we hear also that Paul spoke in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

Now in Paul's time, the marketplace was quite different from the ones that we have, Victoria Market or shopping malls, or big chain supermarkets. In Greco-Roman times, the marketplace was the hub of urban life: it was a centre for trade, but it was also a place where ideas were shared, discussed and debates were to be had. Market places were where philosophers met. Socrates, for example, met here. And here, Paul was drawn into a debate with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (v18). These two groups had quite different views of the world and of God.

The Epicureans were focused on their pursuit of happiness and contentment and although they believed that there were many gods, they believed they were distant and took no interest in the everyday lives of humans. They did not accept any form of divine retribution or justice. They were critical of popular religion and with gods being present and worshipped in the many temples in Athens.

The Stoics on the other hand believed that the human race had come from a single source. They believed that there was a natural order, which was permeated by a rational divine presence, or 'Logos', that God was in

everything; and they tried to live in harmony with this Logos through logic and discipline.

These two philosophies were the popular Greek options for understanding reality, and they weren't liking what Paul was preaching. Two reactions are given here in v18. Some of them asked, 'What is this babbling trying to say?' Others remarked, 'He seems to be advocating foreign gods.' The term 'babbling' was a derogatory term given to people who just took bits of information from others, and passed them off as their own ideas: in this case, accusing Paul as an ignorant plagiarist and a religious charlatan, or as 'a third-rate journalist'.

The other accusation was that Paul seems to be advocating foreign gods, because he is preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. Here they understood this to mean that Paul was preaching about a god named Jesus and his consort Anastasis, which is the Greek word for resurrection. It also seems that there is a parallel with Socrates. Socrates was tried for teaching about foreign gods in this very same city, in the marketplace: taken to trial and put to death because his ideas were seen to be dangerous for the city. So here, to them, Paul appears to be preaching the same thing and his listeners may have drawn that parallel and the implications of what he is saying on the city.

But whether he is taken with open curiosity, or with thinly veiled hostility, Paul is taken to a meeting of the Areopagus, so that he can present his ideas further (v19). The Areopagus was effectively the government of Roman Athens and it controlled ideas of education, philosophical lectures, public morality, foreign cults for example. The Athenians enjoyed spending their time talking about and listening to the latest ideas (v21) and many people visited Athens to do just this. The Areopagus acted as the gatekeepers of the philosophies that were allowed to be aired in Athens. These members of the Areopagus were the social influencers of the Ancient World: what they said would have gone, and this 'new' religion had to pass the 'pub test', or at least not threaten the world as they knew it.

Now that Paul has the stage, what does he say? How is he going to start talking to a group who believe that he is potentially teaching about a false god, that is potentially dangerous to society? As we read earlier in v16, Paul had noticed that there were lots of idols in Athens, even one to an 'unknown god' (v23). It seemed in their anxiety not to leave any god unworshipped, the Athenians had idols to everything, but were ignorant of the one true God. This is what Paul seizes on as an opportunity: Yes, you are very religious, but you do not know the God that is marked here as unknown.

"There are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know."

This is the famous quote that Donald Rumsfeld, George W. Bush's defence secretary, said in February 2002 in a news briefing when asked for evidence that Saddam Hussein had tried to supply weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups. It is a bit of a tongue twister, but the thing is that Paul is saying to these Athenians, 'You are ignorant

of the very thing you worship—you know that you have known unknowns—but I am going to proclaim to you the 'known known'. I am going to give you knowledge of him.

Essentially, the Big Idea of Paul's sermon to them is: God has given the world enough time to know him through his mighty acts of creation and providence and you have ignored him. Now, he is calling you to ask for forgiveness and turn from your evil ways because the risen Jesus, the one appointed by God the Father, is coming to judge the world with justice. God has set the clock running for the time when he will come to bring the world to justice, and the one who will do this, is the one that he has resurrected. Paul is preaching Jesus, and the resurrection.

So, with that in mind, how does Paul preach to persuade this curious but critical audience? Paul does this by establishing common ground with them. Starting with his extension of the gift of knowledge about the god that they do not know (v23), he constructs his argument around concepts that would have been easily acceptable by these Greco-Roman philosophers. But all the time, he does this in a way that has its foundation on God and is firmly Biblical.

Paul starts by appealing to both the Epicureans and Stoics, that God made the world and all that is in it. But he doesn't live in temples, he does not need anything from us (v25). That's for the Epicureans, and for the Stoics, that he created all people from one man, and he controls history, being present among us (v26). He is not a distant God like the god that the Athenians worship, but a God who is involved with us and wants us to seek him out and find him (v27). Paul, knowing the ideas of the people he was speaking to, highlights (v28) that even one of their poets, Aratus of Cilicia, a third century BC philosopher-poet, said, "we are his offspring", in reference to Zeus, not realising that it is the one true God who has in fact made us in his own image.

All this part of Paul's argument to them is leading up to Jesus and the resurrection (vv30,31). His listeners would have known whom he was referring to in v 31: to Jesus. This was the man who was responsible for the 'way' that was spreading through the world, the one whom people were following, the God-man who had died and come back to life. This man, this judge, is coming. He has been appointed by God, and God has shown that his plan is unfolding by raising this man from the dead. The resurrection is just the start. Paul is contrasting their unknown gods, with the God who has been proven: 'God has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead' (v31), and, this happened within living memory, in this very public event

What was their response? Some of them sneered (v32): The resurrection was foolishness – no one was brought back from the dead, it just didn't happen. Others were open-minded and wanted to know more, inviting him back; and—Praise the Lord!—some of the people became followers of Paul and believed (v34).

That's a great sermon by Paul isn't it? It's interesting looking at a sermon or speech for someone else, in another time, another place, another language, in Greek. We can read this passage and think, we'll that's awfully interesting, I didn't know that. And we

can leave it at that, a curiosity, and move on. But there is much here for us to learn and apply to our own lives. Let's have another look at it, imagining that Paul is preaching to us. Is he convincing? Can we use his technique when we talk to others about Jesus? He knew his audience, knew how he could make connections, he sees where they are and builds a bridge to Jesus. It is a good way for us to think about when we are talking about Jesus, isn't it?

Jesus is our known known, but do we treat him that way? Do we need more proof? Are we convinced? What about providence, all the good things that he has done, and continues to do in our daily lives? Do we see God in those? Do we reach out for him, and find him? He is not very far from us: 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' (John 14:6). Is Jesus known to us? Or are we dazzled by all the known and unknown idols around us? All those good things that we make ultimate things in our lives.

So then, how have we responded? Perhaps with scorn and sneers: this is preposterous!! Or maybe we want more information. This is great, but is it stalling tactics, to delay us making a decision? Or becoming followers? —Yes, that's me!! I've said yes, what about you?

Our world, our city, our homes, even theological colleges, have idols: unknown unknowns, known unknowns. But there is only one known known, the God who revealed himself through his Son, Jesus, the one who longs for us to seek him out and ask for him to make himself known to us.

And so, as we reflect on how Jesus is the great known known, our maker and our judge, the one who will come again to put our world right and reign in glory, let us pray together.

Heavenly Father,

We thank you that you want to be known by us, that you seek us, asking us not to reject you, but to turn back to you, repent and seek forgiveness so that we might live with you for eternity for your glory.

Fill our hearts with such conviction of your love for us, that we may always be prepared to give an answer to everyone the reason for the hope that we have. Fill us with your desire to see cities not full of idols, but cities full of your followers, praising you, worshipping you, glorifying you.

Come Lord Jesus come, come judge us and our world with your justice, so that we may live with you for eternity in love, peace and joy.

We ask for this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 1

"Thank You for Being in my Life"

The 19th Sunday after Trinity, 10th October

by Patrick Senn

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

2 We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 3 We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by

love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Introduction

Good morning friends, it is good to be back with you again. Thank you to everyone who has been thinking of me and praying for me. As you know, I have been on sick leave. I have been unwell, both physically and mentally. For a while, I was going quite ok during the lockdown. I was not great, but I was fine. This changed when the government closed playgrounds and childcare. When that happened, Beth and I really started struggling and I slowly went downhill. For a while, it seemed like Beth and I were just handballing Phoebe to each other before the other one had to rush off and do some work. Without any family here to support us, it was draining and deflating. Every day was just a countdown to get it over. I got bronchitis and felt absolutely rotten, the sickest I have felt in a long time. But, as I was lying in bed, I experienced grace in a new way. As Beth got up the fifth time in a row at 5 am when Phoebe started crying, I first felt so guilty. I felt so useless and like such a burden on her. At the time, it was difficult to accept her help and that I could do nothing. But now as I look back, all I see is amazing grace, and I am so thankful that Beth is in my life.

And this is a feeling that is common. I mean, you can buy cards that say "Thank you for being in my life." When was the last time that you were really grateful for someone? Not just for a gift that they gave you, or a thing that they did, but grateful for their existence? Or maybe you remember someone telling you, "Thank you for being in my life."

Today we begin reading Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. It is the earliest letter St Paul wrote along with Timothy and Silvanus, and it is directed to the church in Thessalonica, a city in Greece that you can still visit today. And in this letter, Paul is essentially thanking the Thessalonians for being in his life. More specifically, he is thanking God for making them alive as Christians; for choosing them to turn away from dead and false pagan gods to follow the one, true, and living God.

Virtue Signalling (1 Thessalonians 1:2–5)

Paul opens his letter: "**We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.**" What is it that makes Paul so thankful? Paul says, "**We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your**

endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." In short, faith, love, and hope. The Thessalonians have a living and active faith: their belief in Jesus is not just an intellectual thing in their heads but it actually influences how they live; they love one another even though it is laborious, and they hold on to Jesus in hope and do not give up. In short, they are not just talking the talk but also walking the walk. They are good at exercising the three most important Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love.

But Paul is not saying that because they have a strong faith, because they are good at loving others, and because they hold onto hope, that they are nice Christians who have figured out how to earn God's favour. That would be terrible news for people like me. People who often have a weak faith. People who again, after the thousandth time, have failed to love. People who more often are cynical than hopeful. And people who on some days cannot even get out of the bed to shower. Faith, hope, and love are not ways we can earn God's favour. Rather, regardless of how big or how little, if a person has these than that is a sign that God already has accepted you and loves you. "We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you."

1 Thessalonians 1:6–10

Paul knows that God chose the Thessalonians because he saw a transformative change within them. He describes this in verse 6. "You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." Despite great harm and suffering, the Thessalonians held onto Jesus and did not renounce him even during persecution. They imitated not only Paul and Timothy who did the same, but also Jesus who endured the shame and torture of the cross without giving up. They proved themselves to be true believers, tested in the furnace of suffering.

Think of a dodgy salesman who is trying to sell you an old car that he promises you is good and safe. The greatest test is whether that salesman will sell that car to his own family or not. If he does not, you know he does not believe in what he is selling.

But the Thessalonians do really believe in Jesus. They did not just accept him when things were easy, they held onto him even when this meant suffering under persecution. And because of this, they became a model example to many. As Paul tells them, "your faith in God has become known everywhere." And he goes on to praise them and thank for their true faith, forsaking false idols and turning towards the one, true God.

Conclusion

The opening of Paul's letter is full of joy, confidence, and excitement. He is essentially telling them, "I thank God that you are in my life." Maybe you gave someone a card that said "Thank you for being in my life", or maybe you received a card like that. The Thessalonians show us how to live lives that are commendable to God. It boils down to holding onto Jesus. Whether we are great at it or whether we often make mistakes along the way does not really matter. What matters is that we have a living faith—a trust that actively turns to Jesus for forgiveness of sins, for help in times of trouble. What matters is

that we love; that we love others despite their flaws in the same way that God loves us despite our flaws. And what matters is that we hold onto Jesus, that we wait for him with expectation and longing.

But, like I said, these things are gifts that God gives to those whom he loves. I think about myself the last few weeks, lying sick and helpless in bed. I think that is an accurate picture of our spiritual state apart from God. Although we are dead and unwell, lying in the bed of our sin unable to get up, Jesus comes along and serves us back to health. He gifts us with faith, hope, and love. And because he does this we are able to turn away from idols to serve the true and living God.

When we do these things, we can imagine Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, together with all saints and the whole company of heaven saying, "We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

AMEN.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–20

17th October 2021

by Denise Nicholls

¹ You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ² We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³ For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴ On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶ We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. ⁷ Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹ Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

¹³ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. ¹⁴ For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone ¹⁶ in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

¹⁷ But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

INTRODUCTION

This week NSW celebrated their release from lockdown, their 'Freedom Day'; it was 'good news' for all people in NSW, and there were scenes of rejoicing. It also gives us in Vic some cause for hope too!

Today as we hear from the second chapter of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, they too rejoiced – but in the GOOD NEWS of God's Gospel, and the life-changing impact of God's Gospel Message.

1. The Gospel Motivation vv.1–6

As Australians have been encouraged to be vaccinated, different ways have been considered to motivate people to 'get the jab', from offers of free beer to the 1 million dollar vaccination raffle.

If you've ever sold AMWAY, or AVON, or TUPPERWARE, or been in sales where your salary included a commission on how much product you sell, the motivation is that extra money that you can earn and the focus is on 'me'.

Yet when Paul writes to his friends, he speaks about his motivation in sharing God's Gospel with them:

with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. v.2

...we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. v.4

In the ancient world, orators and philosophers sought glory, fame, and renown from their speeches, much in the same way that in our world people can seek and obtain fame through such things as Instagram and TikTok.

Yet Paul tells his friends that the motivation of him and his companions was NOT due to error or impure motives, that they did not use trickery or seek to be 'people pleasing'; neither did they use flattery or greed, or even seek praise. Rather, he points to their experience in Philippi where they were dreadfully treated, and yet they were still willing to speak the Gospel, the GOOD NEWS of the Lord Jesus Christ to them as Thessalonians, for it was for all people, Jews and Gentiles.

The application for us is that the Gospel is GOD'S gospel God's good news that he has an open heart for all people to come into God's family. So we can keep praying for those whom we know and love that they would come to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus.

2. The Gospel Family vv.7–12

In this section, Paul uses the beautiful imagery of family to convey his love for the new Christians in Thessalonica. He speaks of him and his companions being like 'young children' among them, and the images of a nursing mother and a wise father dispensing guidance for life.

He shows how the Thessalonians and he became family to each other:

Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. v.2:8

Paul's time among them was not a show, not a pantomime; neither did he act as a guest to be entertained and waited upon.

In the movie 'The King's Speech' there's a great scene where the Queen (Queen Elizabeth's mother) came and shared afternoon tea with Lionel Logue's wife – what a shock it was for Mrs Logue to have the Queen in her home!

Rather than Paul being waited upon as an honoured guest, he threw himself into the everyday life of family. Paul says he and Silas worked their day job, making tents, to pull their weight in the family and to contribute to the life of the Church. That's the privilege of being family, isn't it? Like at Christmas where we all pitch in to share the load and bring different dishes to contribute to a family feast.

Paul also speaks to remind his friends how 'holy, righteous, and blameless' they were when they lived among them – there was no chance of accusations of improper dealings, rather they lived rightly, both religiously AND in line with being members of the civic society. In this way, he says, he was like a good father imparting instructions on how to live well, rightly, piously in the world:

¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

The application for us is that we can encourage each other in our gatherings together – when we are able to meet together! In the meantime, we continue to express our Gospel family connections by keeping in touch, walking beside each other in life, sharing one another's burdens with gentleness, and teaching each other. It is so lovely when we celebrate BAPTISMS here at church, when we as the Church say to the newly baptised, "WE welcome YOU...as a child of the one heavenly father and as an inheritor with us in the Kingdom of God".

3. A Gospel Likeness vv13–16

In these verses Paul thanks God a second time for the Thessalonian church, for they:

received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. v.13

and in receiving the good news of God's Gospel, they became imitators of God's other Churches in Christ Jesus.

Do you have a family trait that members of your family share? A way of walking or standing? Or a certain hairline, or build? Or character trait, ability or passion for something?

Paul says that the Thessalonians share the Gospel family trait of other Churches, that of being **imitators in their suffering!** That is an odd sort of reassurance, isn't it? But it **IS** reassuring, as Paul says that are in line with the long line of the People of God, including the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God's prophets of the Old Testament. Perhaps this gives us a glimpse of Paul's understanding of his prophetic role to the Gentiles?

God's Gospel was intended for the Gentiles, and despite opposition, Paul and Silas

and others spoke the Gospel, and the Thessalonians believed and became children of God.

So the opposition the Thessalonians faced, even persecution, did not mean they were FAILURES – but rather they were in the family of God, and displaying the family likeness.

The application for us is NOT to seek persecution – rather know that as if and when it occurs, it is not mark of failure of faith, or God's desertion; it is a family likeness, a mark of the Christian Church when we share God's gospel of the Lord Jesus. So, we pray for the persecuted Church throughout the world, recognising that the work that is going on is God's work.

4. A Gospel Longing vv.17–20

During COVID we know about dashed hopes and plans, don't we? We know about **longing** to be able to travel more than 5, 10, or 15 km again! I have friends in Ballarat and Geelong and Buxton, and family in NSW that I haven't been able to see. For some of us, that extends to family and loved ones in Perth, Tasmania, and Switzerland. We have that longing to see and hold loved ones again!

Verses 17–20 speak of a Gospel longing, and in this last section he returns to family imagery again:

brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you – certainly I, Paul, did, again and again – but Satan blocked our way. vv.17–18

Paul says he was 'orphaned' by being separated from them: this is a consistent use of this term in the ancient world of a parent losing a child; this shows his intense longing for this his church family, that he made every effort to come back to them, but that he was stopped by the enemy.

We remember from Acts 17 the hasty departure made by Paul and Silas and Timothy amid a riot:

[A] mob...started a riot in the city...[and told] the city officials...: 'These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.'⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil...[Jason on bail]...¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.

Against any possible allegation that for Paul the Thessalonians were 'out of sight, out of mind', Paul says that he longs for them:

¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

The people with whom he had shared life and Christian life, he longed to be reunited to. The preciousness of the relationship with the Thessalonians shows that it was NOT transactional, NOT a notch in his belt. Rather, he speaks of rejoicing in them, glorying in them as beloved of Christ, members of the family of God who await the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The application for us is that the joy of being part of our Church family is rejoicing in the people who have come to faith, sharing with one another, young and old. We rejoice

in the partnership we have in extending God's kingdom in our link with Merri Creek, and through our longevity in the faith and investment in people. As we THINK of all these, these are a joy and crown for us.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the GOOD NEWS of the Gospel, the life-changing impact of God's Gospel Message, is that Christ has taken hold of us, we are members of family of God, and all that means for us as individuals and as a Church.

The life changing impact of God's gospel message for all people provides us a new motivation—a Gospel motivation; a new family—the Gospel family; a new family likeness—a Gospel likeness; and a new longing for each other—a Gospel longing.

May we through the Holy Spirit continue to rejoice in God's Gospel message to us and to all people.

1 Thessalonians 3

'The Tyranny of Distance, and the Supremacy of Love'

The 21st Sunday after Trinity, 24th October
by Patrick Senn

3 *So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them.*

⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labours might have been in vain. ⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. ¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Introduction

I am still somewhat shell-shocked. The announcement that the lockdown is coming to an end, along with the announcement in NSW that immunised international arrivals can enter without having to quarantine—it is hard to believe this is actually true. I spoke with my mum last week and for the first time it actually felt like a real possibility that I will see her soon. Since March last year, I have been very open with you in sharing about the pain and loss I have been suffering, since Phoebe has not been able to meet her grandmother.

When the NSW Premier announced that international arrivals can return, I read on several news outlets and all-over social media that people just burst into tears at the thought of seeing their families. I haven't burst into tears, but that is probably because I am just still digesting this news. It is hard to believe that the borders will actually open.

We have been living in a globalised world, where any city or nation could easily become your new home. Of course, the pandemic has slammed borders shut, grounded airplanes, and left people stranded. And for the first time in a while, the world has felt the *oppressive tyranny of distance*. However, soon baby family members can be held, brothers and sisters reunited, and recently widowed men and women comforted by their own children. No wonder people have burst into tears.

Today, as we come to chapter 3 in Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul recounts his own sufferings under the tyranny of distance. We hear of his own fear and worries for the Thessalonians, from whom he was separated so painfully. And yet, we also hear of the great love he has for them, and the incredible love mutually returned to him, all enabled by the all-surpassing love of Christ.

"Everybody out now!": Paul's hasty departure (3:1–5)

Last week we heard how Paul was taken away from the Thessalonians. In his words, he was orphaned by being separated from them (2:17). He told them about Jesus, and continued instructing them in the faith after their conversion, but he suddenly had to get out of there. Persecutions and threats by civil and religious leaders constantly followed him, and he was forced to abandon the Thessalonians. We have been reading about the suffering and persecutions of the Thessalonians themselves, so we know that the trials did not finish just because Paul left. In fact, it was the message that he brought them—the message about Jesus—that invited persecutions upon them in the first place! This is why we hear Paul's agony in his words. He talks about not "standing it" or "bearing it any longer". Paul had every reason to wonder: "Do you hate me?"

This situation is very powerfully illustrated in the movie *Silence*. Based on a novel by a Japanese Roman Catholic, it tells the story of two Portuguese Jesuit missionaries who sneak into Japan after Christianity has been outlawed by the emperor. Thousands of Christians were martyred; only a few handfuls of villages of faithful Christians remain. The two Jesuit priests stay secretly with one village, hearing confessions and saying Masses. But, word gets out this is happening, and the emperor's inquisitors visit the village. The village elder is asked to renounce his faith, but he refuses. The inquisitor tells them the elder will be executed, but only in three days. The village must volunteer one other person to be also executed. That night, the community gathers in secret to discuss the dilemma. Different villagers desperately volunteer each other, until one of them bursts out and points at the priests: "It's all the Christians' fault! We were

living carefree and good lives until you came and converted us! Now, we live in constant fear and secrecy!"

This is exactly how Paul left the church in Thessalonica. In a sense, he left them in a worse position than when he arrived. They were the same people like everyone around them, worshipping the same gods and enjoying the goodwill of society. And Paul, instead of suffering in person with the Thessalonians, was forced to abandon them. Under the tyranny of distance, he was suffering under the question "Do you hate me?"

"So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy". This was not a small gesture of Paul. Timothy was a "brother", and "co-worker". Elsewhere Paul calls him "my true child in the faith". Saying goodbye was not easy. Often, workplaces are totally disrupted when one person decides to leave. Friendships end, relationships become disharmonious, and the whole morale of the team sinks when a beloved person moves on. Timothy was Paul's closest companion. And yet, Paul willingly sent him, at great cost to himself, to visit the Thessalonians and to strengthen and encourage them in their faith. Paul's love was real. He sacrificed for them.

"Finally Alive": Timothy's Gospel to Paul (3:6–10)

Given the seriousness of the situation, we can easily imagine the joy Paul felt when Timothy returned from the Thessalonians with good news. Not only do they continue in faith and love, they also only have pleasant memories of Paul and long to see him. They do not blame him for their suffering. There is no hint of bitterness. They just miss him and want to see him again. It is no wonder Paul asks, *"How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?"*

The joy and love of the Thessalonians is mind-boggling. How can you love someone who introduces suffering into your life? This goes against everything our society values. Australia is the capital of defamation lawsuits in the world. If you sully someone's name and give them a bad reputation, you are taken to court. For the Thessalonians, Paul destroys their public reputation and brings persecutions upon them, and they continue to cherish and love him. This is not natural. I mean, I remember someone asking me to do something for them, which I agreed to. The computer I was working on had internet problems, which is my greatest weakness. I remember clenching my fists in a rage, angry that the person ruined my life!

What is it about Paul, that he can really love and sacrifice for the Thessalonians by sending his companion Timothy to them? And what is about the Thessalonians, that despite being in a worse situation because of the gospel Paul gave them, they still love, cherish, and miss him? Well, if you know someone who has stuck out their neck for you, you are more likely to stick out your neck for them. If someone goes through

great lengths to help you, it transforms you to go through great lengths to help them in return. This one-way sacrificial love, of course, is ultimately expressed in what Jesus did for us. On the cross, Jesus stuck out his arms, his legs, his back for us. While we deserve every condemnation for our sins, God grants us free forgiveness for all of them. And it is this message, this gospel, that transformed Paul and what transformed the Thessalonians to love each other supremely, even under the tyranny of distance.

"Let us pray": Paul's petitions (3:11–13)

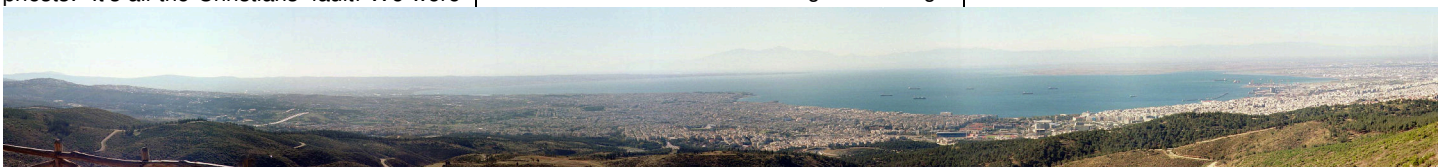
This is why in the last few verses Paul prays and attributes everything to the work of God. The power to love in this way lies not in us but in God. Paul prays: *"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones."* On our own, we can only end up in bitterness when others inconvenience us. We can only point the finger in accusation and condemn, "You have ruined my life!" But, when Jesus comes into our lives and gifts us with faith, hope, and love, we are transformed. When we believe the gospel and see that Jesus is the one who supremely has stuck out his neck for us, not just when we are good but precisely when we are bad, then we learn to love in a new, deeper, and stronger way.

The way that we can love sacrificially like Paul and like the Thessalonians is simply by receiving this same love from Jesus daily. It is not by trying harder, by studying a theory more, or beating ourselves up every time we fail. No, it is by looking to Jesus and receiving afresh what he is always ready to offer. The more we hear the good news that Christ died for sinners and offers them the forgiveness for all their failures, the more we will become like him. This is how we increase and overflow in love for each other.

Conclusion

As I said at the start, I am still quite shell-shocked by the news that this horrible lockdown season is slowly coming to an end. It really is strange to believe this. It seems like we have been living for an eternity this way, and I have somewhat gotten used to living under the tyranny of distance from my family. But, chapter 3 of Paul's letter shows us that despite living under the tyranny of distance, true love is possible. Just because he was separated from them, Paul was not unable to sacrifice for their wellbeing. He sent his beloved companion Timothy to check up on them. And, although by the world's standards the Thessalonians had every right to hate Paul for the sufferings they were experiencing, they only loved him, cherished him, and missed him. Under the tyranny of distance there is the supremacy of love. A love which is not achieved by human strength, but given through the supreme love above all—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

AMEN.



Modern Thessaloniki (Mt Olympus just visible in background)

Parish Council Notes

Irregular meeting Monday 4th October

Brainstorming session on 'Reimagining the Future' for parish and Mission Action Plan. To be continued Thursday 4th November.

Zoom meeting of Monday 18th October

Matters arising

- Suggest in-person Sunday services start November: Denise to consult Patrick.
- All current services for vaccinated people; for others, 1 pm Sundays at St John's.

Correspondence to/from PC

- Re *mainly music* money: will be available for *mm* next year.

Preventing Violence Against Women

- Will order books on preventing online scams.

Diocesan standards: progressing.

OH&S: COVID-19

- Latest Diocesan advice emailed to PC.

Vicar's report

- Great feedback about online services.
- Expect we can begin in-person services again on Sunday 7 November. To comply with State government mandates, and diocesan advice, suggest:
 - All our current services to be for double-vaccinated people.
 - Provide an additional worship service for those who are unvaccinated and/or prefer not to disclose their status Sundays 1 pm at St John's.
 - Hope this will only be short-term arrangement.
- June Lockhart died on Monday 11 October; Helen will take her funeral later.
- Helen McAlley had another heart procedure; doing really well, but will need recovery time.
- Thursday Bible study continues to meet each week by Zoom: usually 8 attending.
- Morning Prayer and Compline services attendance up and down. These opportunities for prayer are important.
- Ongoing pastoral care through clergy, and by folk keeping in touch with each other.

- Waiting on clearances for new cleric: hope for a 1 November start.

- Patrick now half time with Merri Creek (Mon am, Wed am, Sun 7, 14 Nov, 5, 19 Dec, some other times) and half with us. Last day with us 30 Jan 2022. Must use all holidays with us before full-time at Merri Creek.

- Prayer Retreat with Merri Creek was to be 6 Nov, to postpone.

- Watsonia Town Square options public consultation 3 Nov – 3 Dec. Will Council compulsorily acquire our land? Online meeting Thurs 21 Oct 3 pm: folk from parish, diocese, Council.

- Meeting Thurs 21 October 7 pm to seek guidance from Diocese re Rosanna development, see if any chance of a joint venture.

- Met with Mark Lane online re op shop Wednesday 22 Sept. Quite close to agreement: await reviewed document from Mark. Asked for meeting this week.

- Synod on, online, 13–16 Oct. Bad first night, but technology, and our use of it, progressed.

- I'd like to take a few days off in the last week of October.

Curate's report: oral, tabled

Warden's report

- Lockdown limited what could be done.
- Evacuation diagram information sent on.

- Set Annual Parish Meeting date, arrangements.

- Photos of St John's and St Andrew's made accessible to film location agents through Film Vic. Filming will still need warden's signature.

57 Gloucester Drive

- Banyule Council asked for plans (fee \$115).

St John's

- Put in a Council grant application for (some) money to asphalt the St John's car park. Learn if successful by early November.

- Tennis court net post completed.

- New contract with Reza in office filing cabinet.

- The low bluestone retaining wall to the right of the steps has moved and part is leaning. Asking for advice and quotes.

- On weekend a tree from the creek fell down & damaged tennis court fence. Enquiries underway.

30 Invermay Grove

- Tenant dealing with the mould in the bathroom (\$657.50 for thorough job).

St Andrew's

- Asking for advice and quotes on retaining wall near Fellowship Hall also.

80 Watsonia Rd

- Back working on front awnings.
- New shed door rotten after one year: seeking non-wood door.
- Vegetation encroaching into footpath space removed after notice from Council.

Holy Spirit

- Back steps treads and landing replaced by Peter Andrews.
- Sign fixed.

- Op shop: 22 Sept Mark Lane agreed to (a) Settlement of debts; (b) Penalties for late payment; (c) No clawbacks; (d) Parish not to pay for op shop works & maintenance. Now waiting on new draft.

- Internet now available at the op shop, phone number has been ported.

- Suggestion of Christian prayer wheel where tree felled: zero enthusiasm.

Op shop report: tabled

Finance report

- Discussion of budget for 2021/22. Meeting Tuesday 19/10 to confirm details.

EY/Dio/Banyule discussions

- Special PC Meeting on Thursday 21 October.

St John's Building Subcommittee

- Meeting with architect on Thursday 21/10.

Watsonia Town Square Development

- Diocese prefers not to sell the car park while the council prefers to purchase it. Another meeting scheduled Thursday 21 October.

General business

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

Minutes by Patrick, précis by Editor

CHURCH SEATING

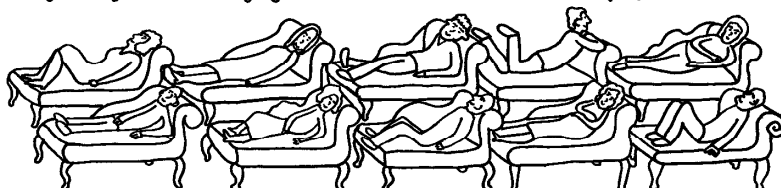
10 PEOPLE
SITTING
ON A PEW



10 PEOPLE
SITTING
ON CHAIRS



10 PEOPLE
RECLINING
ON CHAISE
LONGUES



LESSONS LEARNT:

1. IT IS EASIER TO MAKE A CHURCH LOOK FULL IF THE PEWS ARE REPLACED BY CHAIRS
2. IT IS EVEN EASIER TO MAKE A CHURCH LOOK FULL IF THE PEWS ARE REPLACED BY CHAISE LONGUES

American children

Finding one of her students making faces at others on the playground, Ms. Smith stopped to gently reprove the child. Smiling sweetly, the Sunday School teacher said, 'Bobby, when I was a child, I was told if that I made ugly faces, it would freeze and I would stay like that.' Bobby looked up and replied, 'Well, Ms Smith, you can't say you weren't warned'.

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, 'Would you like to say the blessing?'

'I wouldn't know what to say,' the girl replied.

'Just say what you hear Mommy say,' the wife answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, 'Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?'

<http://southcountychurches.com/humorouschurchstories.html>