

ONLINE SERVICE

during COVID-19

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2 August 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Matthew 28:11-20
Will Findlay

The Great Commission

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Amanda Fairs
viola

Benediction



NOTICES

2 August 2020

Wednesday 5 August

1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time

Sunday 9 August

11 am Great tests the Bible #1.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: **Bennie LOCKE.**

and



Daniel and Courtney are from the Donvale church and minister with Pioneers in South Asia.

MEMBERS who wish to continue their freewill offerings may use the banking details at the bottom of this page or post to our Treasurer. Vic Ansell, 59 Queen St Kangaroo Flat Vic 3555.

GARDENIA ST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
53 Gardenia Street,
Blackburn 3130

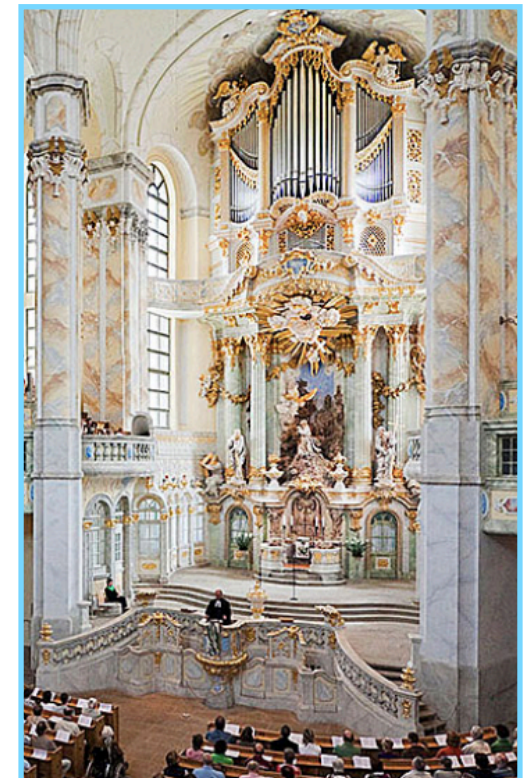


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Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

2 August 2020



Altarpiece and Pulpit
Dresden Frauenkirche
Germany

WELCOME



The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly remained severely restricted, and the state exercised strict control over media and civil society. There was no progress on investigations into a number of enforced disappearances.

Amnesty International

In Laos, Christianity is branded as a harmful Western influence which challenges the nation's Communist values. Government officials use society's hostile attitude towards Christians to justify monitoring believers.

Believers in rural areas deviate from Buddhist and tribal customs and are therefore viewed as a potential danger to the community. Converts are rejected from their families and are often arrested, punished or marginalised by local authorities. Hostility has even extended to visiting Christians who risk being detained and deported for sharing their faith.

Christians struggle to gather. Many do not have permanent church structures and instead conduct worship services in homes. Communities often hinder churches from setting up and building places of worship.

Laws require churches to have both a registered minister and a registered place of worship that is owned by the church to be considered legal. Construction of new churches is extremely difficult as personal approval from the prime minister is required.

Open Doors 2019

The Great Commission

Sermon Notes

The great themes of Matthew's Gospel rise to the surface in arguably the most memorable, powerful and influential conclusion to any document in all literature; renowned as *The Great Commission*. These climactic words of Jesus inaugurate the global mission of the Christian Church. Four aspects naturally stand out:

1 All Authority - the King.

After the exile in Babylon the Jews were longing for the reign of God in the nation. In the popular imagination this would mean Israel's enemies would be defeated and Israel would be preeminent among the nations.

We have noticed that Jesus' favourite theme was the kingdom of God. From the outset Matthew drew attention to the Magi seeking the "king of the Jews". His sermon on the mount included the prayer that the kingdom would come and God's will "be done on earth as in heaven". His healings and miracles displayed the restorative effects of the presence of the king. His parables were parables of the kingdom. His death was as the "king of the Jews".

In his early struggle with the Tempter he had been offered all the kingdoms of the world (4:8), but chose instead the path of service, humiliation and death. At the close of his Gospel, Matthew makes clear that the risen Christ has now been given all authority. He reigns!

2 All Nations - first global mission.

The gates of the kingdom are now open to all. An earlier mission of the disciples had been to Israel (10:6) but now they are commissioned to go to the whole world. This is surely the first global mission given to any group of people.

With the benefit of two thousand years of history we are not surprised that the message of Jesus should be shared with all people. But how unbelievable it must have sounded to the ears of that little group of nondescript Jews on a Galilean hilltop! The other Gospels and Acts fill out the story for us. NT Wright comments:

First, In AD 25 nobody outside a small town in Galilee had heard of Jesus. By AD 50 there were riots in Rome because of him, and by AD 65 his followers were being persecuted by the emperor himself...

Jesus' claim to an authority higher than kings and emperors was made good over and over again in the lives, and often enough in the deaths, of his followers. We see, second, the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Jesus had warned of what would happen to the city and Temple if it refused his message. The warnings came horribly true... But out beyond these events we see a greater future.

3 All I have commanded.

As we have noted Matthew has made known to his readers the teaching of Jesus as a new "five books", the new Torah for the people of God. The old law is not dismissed or annulled, it was repeatedly Jesus' defence against temptation (4:4,7,10). Jesus is explicit that it is not "done away with" but that he is its fulfilment (5:17).

The disciples are commissioned to teach his message, and by teaching to create other learners; learning to know, to love and to serve the Lord himself.

How would you rate yourself as a learner in the school of Jesus? Where are you in your relationship to him today?

4 Always with you.

"I will be with you always, to the end of the age." Physically absent there is to be a new kind of presence. Matthew doesn't flesh this out. The coming of the Spirit is documented elsewhere.

The way Matthew has framed this event is to tell us from the start that the baby born in Bethlehem is "Emmanuel" which means God with us. A new age, the age of Emmanuel had begun.

The new learners, Jesus' disciples, are to be "baptised into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". Jesus has not just left a "to do" list. We are to be ingrafted into a new family relationship. We are to be God's children.

Baptism is a sign that we are in the family of God.

He is with us and we are "in Him".