

ONLINE SERVICE

Pentecost, 31 May 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
Viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
He ain't heavy
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Matthew 7:21-29
Ian Rutherford

Sermon

Coronavirus advice: words to build a life on.
Matthew 7:15-23

Prayers of Intercession and The Lord's Prayer

Amanda Fairs
Viola

Benediction



NOTICES

Pentecost, 31 May 2020

Wednesday 3 June

1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time

Sunday 7 June

11 am Sermon on the Mount Final.



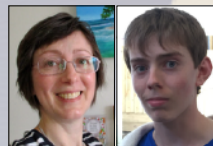
Streaming online during COVID-19

blackburnpc.org.au or

www.facebook.com/blackburnpresbyterian/

For your prayers this week:

Congregational members: Suzanne and
Ayrton HART

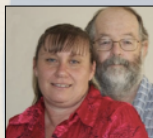


and

Dennis & Glenys

TRANTER are based in

NSW and minister to the Indigenous Community.



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.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
53 Gardenia Street,
Blackburn 3130



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Electronic Banking Details: ANZ Forest Hill,
Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

Pentecost
31 May 2020



Pentecost
El Greco, c.1600
The Prado Museum, Madrid

WELCOME



Eritrea is one of the most closed countries in the world and remains an unsafe place for political dissenters or anyone who attempts to escape its indefinite national service program. Government critics outside the country are often harassed, intimidated or even threatened by members of the government's party (the only party permitted to operate in Eritrea). Those inside the country who publicly criticise, or who are perceived as critical of the government are frequently arrested without being formally charged and are usually detained indefinitely, usually without access to a lawyer.

Amnesty International

Eritrea is a dangerous place for Christians. With no guaranteed religious freedoms, anyone who speaks out against the government risks severe consequences. Christian activity is monitored with the intention of finding Bible teachers and church leaders. These individuals are arrested, tortured and placed in prison or labour camps without a trial.

Authorities can search any private residence without a warrant, and they frequently target underground Christians in prayer. This makes it incredibly difficult for Christians to hold Bible studies or prayer meetings.

The Eritrean Orthodox Church has a long historical presence in the country and puts pressure on Christians with different backgrounds, despite facing persecution themselves... They view inter-denominational conversion as a betrayal of family values and tradition and will sometimes even report them to the government and deny them their inheritance.

Open Doors, Australia

Coronavirus advice: words to build a life on.

Sermon Notes

Since the beginning of February the Coronavirus pandemic has overlapped our study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

We have grown used to the Prime Minister with the Chief Medical Officer advising us of the decisions of the National Cabinet, and the various State Premiers informing how restrictions will be worked out in each Australian State. The restrictions imposed have been a matter of life and health for individuals and for the wider community.

Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus teaching the crowd in such a way that it parallels Moses' giving the Law at Mt Sinai. As with the Law, compliance with Jesus' words is also a matter of life and health for individuals and for the wider community. We see this in the critically important words of the closing segment of Matthew 7.

Just **saying** "Lord, Lord" has the appearance of credibility. John Stott comments, "Here are people who call Jesus 'Lord' with courtesy, orthodoxy and enthusiasm in private devotion and public ministry. What could be wrong with this? In itself nothing. And yet everything is wrong because it is talk without truth, profession with our reality."

Jesus story of two house builders depicts this person as the foolish builder. In the life that he actually built Jesus words were "incidental additions" and "home owner improvement to your standard of living". They should have been the foundation!

Actually doing what Jesus says is the critical thing. We were expected to comply with the Coronavirus regime of hand-washing, social-distancing and personal isolation.

Legislation gave the police powers to ensure a high level of compliance! With Jesus no external compulsion can ensure compliance. But his words have a recognised power and enduring and inherent authority. The wise builder discovers that they are foundational words, "words to build a life on".

House inspection is a common concept in suburban Australia. Building or buying a house calls for careful examination and judgement.

The whole point about Pentecost was that the disciples, up till then hiding away in an upper room, were blown out on to the street by the rushing mighty wind to speak the truth of God in Christ in public, and to do so boldly and unashamed. If Pentecost is simply all about us having new private religious experiences, however exciting and dramatic, we are turning Christianity into a *private* hobby. The gospel of Jesus Christ is nothing if it's not *public* truth, issuing a costly and dangerous challenge to the world's conceptions of truth. The world of the first Christian centuries was full of competing and clashing cultures, religions and tongues, and the followers of Jesus discovered that the tongues of fire which rested on the apostles enabled them to address these different cultures with a fresh judging and healing word of truth.

NT Wright, *Durham Cathedral*, Pentecost 2006

Throughout the Bible we are told that the justice of God will prevail and ensure that all wrongs will be righted. God will repair his broken world and put it right.

Trials may come during this life. The foundations of our lives may be tested. What is certain is that, according to Jesus, the day of judgement will come.

At the last, Jesus will restore all things. This is what the last judgement is about. Matthew is under no illusion that Jesus wants us all to think deeply about this.

Wayside markers in the structure of Matthew's Gospel guide us more deeply into the theme of judgment and forgiveness. See especially in Matthew 25.

Participants who enter the way of Jesus build their lives on his words. We will follow Matthew's markers in next week.

With Jesus, his followers say to the Father, "Thy will be done". Their prayer is "Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven".

They earnestly pursue the fruit of his Spirit.