

ONLINE SERVICE

during COVID-19

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26 July 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
viola

Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Matthew 27:57 - 28:10
Elise Rutherford

A guarded tomb?

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Amanda Fairs
viola

Benediction



NOTICES

26 July 2020

Wednesday 29 July

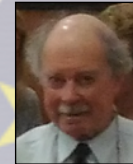
1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time

Sunday 2 August

11 am A Great Commission.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: John LEACH.



and



Chris and Julie DEAN who ministered in the Warragul Church and plan to begin work in Timor Leste later this year.

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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Session Clerk: Mr Keith Ferres 98305466
Treasurer: Mr Vic Ansell 5447 7118

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

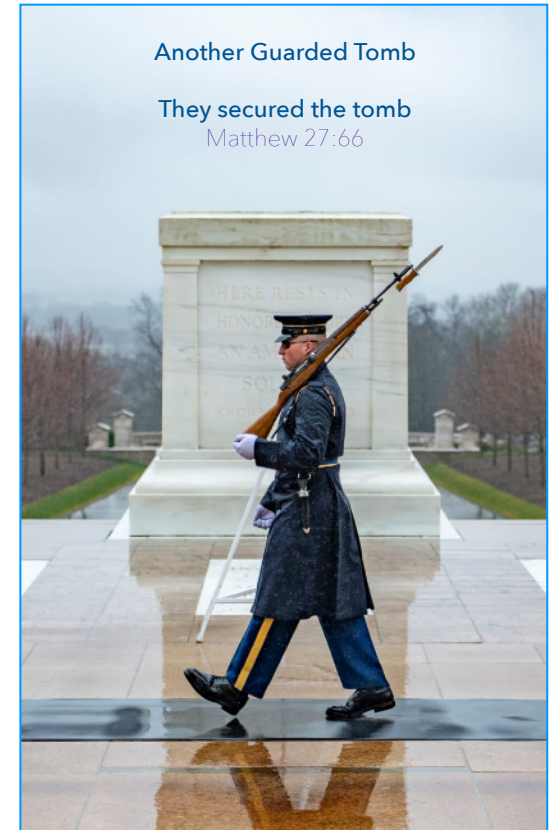
GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

26 July 2020

Another Guarded Tomb

They secured the tomb

Matthew 27:66



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Arlington National Cemetery
Washington DC, USA

WELCOME



Kyrgyzstan's democratically elected government is unique in the Central Asia region. Kyrgyzstan is predominantly (86%) Muslim – mainly folk Islam in the countryside – but there is increasing radicalisation, with more than 330 Kyrgyz citizens known to have travelled to join the Islamic State group. About 4 per cent of the population is Russian Orthodox, and there are a growing number of Christian converts from a Muslim background, who face pressure from family, friends and community. The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but proposed new laws impose stringent registration rules, while all religious literature must be approved.

Kyrgyzstan dropped off the Open Doors World Watch List of the 50 countries in which it is most difficult to live as a Christian for the first time in five years in 2015. This was said to be due to an increase in problems in other countries, rather than improvements in religious freedom in Kyrgyzstan.

Open Doors 2019

Pray for protection for Christian converts in Kyrgyzstan. Ask that Christian leaders will stand firm in the face of persecution. Lift up the many Christians who cannot get work to support their families unless they deny Christ. Ask that they remain faithful and that our heavenly Father will provide for them. Open Doors Australia.

Barnabas Fund 2020

A guarded tomb?

Sermon Notes

Matthew tells us the story of the suffering and death Jesus in chapters 26 and 27. Last week we overviewed some of the key characters in this story. Most of the names are very familiar because we live in a society that has enshrined this story, the Passion of the Christ, not only in the services of the Christian Church's calendar, but also in the literature, poetry, music, song and film of its culture.

J ESUS DIED: eerily dramatic, but REAL.

Jesus died by crucifixion. From this word we get the English word "excruciating". It was a slow and extremely painful way to die.

The details of Jesus' death, that first "Good Friday" are recorded with variants by the four Gospel writers. Despite the variant details the church did not defer to those who wanted the accounts combined and harmonised. That in itself is a worthy and worthwhile task, but it is important that each evangelist is preserved true to his own sources, and we can detect the emphasis of each writer.

Matthew presents us with a day of drama. The eerie darkness from noon till 3 pm, the piercing cry (preserved in the Aramaic language), the tearing of the temple curtain and the earthquake with tombs broken open and souls raised, and finally the declaration from a Roman, that "this was truly the Son of God".

Some people read this text only at Easter. Perhaps it's been a while since you read the text. Re-read the story for yourself. Maybe try a different translation, or listen to it being read. As you do this God will bring to your attention new insights.

J ESUS BURIED: unexpectedly privileged but REAL.

Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin, appears on the scene quite suddenly. All four Gospels mention him, each giving a slightly different emphasis. We discover it was Joseph's own tomb which he relinquished. Additionally, John tells us Joseph worked with Nicodemus who had become a secret disciple of Jesus.

In this way we get a more nuanced insight into the Jewish leadership.

We discover that not all the members of the Jewish Council consented to Jesus' death, and among the Pharisees there were those who had a devotion to Jesus and wanted to serve him while they could.

Nevertheless the Sanhedrin leadership went to Pilate with the bizarre request to place a guard on Jesus' tomb! One wonders how Pilate felt at this? Surely he had never before been asked to guard a dead man!

Jesus had been teaching his disciples that he would rise from the dead. Now, dead and buried, what more might happen?

J ESUS RISEN: stunning, joyful and REAL.

Of the many thousands of people crucified by the Romans why is it Jesus whom we remember and celebrate?

It is the claim of resurrection by the earliest witnesses that changed everything. Matthew's compact narrative points us to four things:

1. the stunned guards
2. an angelic messenger
3. the empty tomb
4. Jesus really encountered

Sir Norman Anderson of the University of London wrote:

It may indeed be objected by some critic that a resurrection from the dead is so incredible that no amount of evidence would suffice. Such an attitude seems prejudiced and unscientific, but let that pass. Let us assume that the resurrection of an ordinary man is indeed incredible. But such a line of reasoning cannot apply to the One whom we are considering. He was unique in all He did; in all He said; in all He was. Whichever way one looks at Him, He is in a class by Himself. Even apart from the resurrection, there are excellent and convincing reasons for believing that He was 'God manifest in the flesh'. Is it, then, so incredible that such a One should rise from the dead? It would have been far more incredible if He had not. It is, indeed, the profoundest of mysteries that He should ever have died 'for us and for our salvation': but, having died, it is no mystery that He should have risen.

Professor Sir JND Anderson
Professor of Oriental Laws

Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies,
University of London 1954-76