

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 24 July 2022

Doxology 709
Praise God

Prayer of Invocation

Hymn 169
Blessing and honour

Young at Heart
Forest Hill Community Space

Welcome and Notices
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Offering and Dedication

Hymn 410
I heard the voice of Jesus

Reading: John 16:1-15
Sonya Rutherford

Sermon
From an Upper Room #7
The friend will come

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 179
Christ is the world's redeemer

Benediction



NOTICES

24 JULY 2022

Wednesday 27 July

1.30 pm Prayer Meeting

Sunday 31 July

11 am Divine Worship. All

Welcome. The Upper Room #8:

Joy like a river!

Thursday 28 July

7-9 pm Making Space with Kendall

<https://www.foreshillcommunityspace.com>

For your prayers this week

Congregational member: John LEACH.



and

Jeanette BENNETT continues to work with APWM at Wycliffe in Kangaroo Ground. Douglas is now 'officially retired'.



GARDENIA ST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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GARDENIA ST.
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BLACKBURN

24 July 2022



Upper Room
#7
The Friend
will come

"All sins are attempts to fill voids," wrote the French philosopher Simone Weil. Because we cannot stand the God-shaped hole inside of us, we try stuffing it full of all sorts of things, but it refuses to be filled. It rejects all substitutes. It insists on remaining bare. It is the holy of holies inside of us, which only God may fill."

Barbara Brown Taylor

Return of the Prodigal, detail, Rembrandt, 1669
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

The Friend will come

The 'Friend' (MSG) is the *Παράκλητος*, the Holy Spirit who has been promised, and mentioned already in Jesus' discourse with the disciples (14:16, 26, 15:26). This is the one who comes alongside to help. Jesus explains that the Spirit comes to minister, first to the world (v.8) , and second, to the disciples (v.12)

the world is wrong [16 verses 8-11] Apart from the Holy Spirit people will not really understand the truth about three words relating to Jesus.

The words are *sin, righteousness, and judgment*.

They are words with complex histories, and strong religious overtones. Today, where they are not obsolete, they are loaded with particular and often personal sensitivities.

What does the Spirit say about these words as they relate to Jesus?

i) SIN describes a broken relationship. Whether personal or social, its impact has largely been replaced by the *medical model* or the *legal model* of treatment. Both of these are present to a degree in the Bible, but they are secondary to the broken relationship.

Barbara Brown Taylor explains

"neither the language of medicine, nor of law is adequate substitute for the language of sin. Contrary to the medical model, we are not entirely at the mercy of our maladies. The choice is to enter into the process of repentance. Contrary to the legal model the essence of sin is not primarily the violation of laws but a wrecked relationship with God, one another, and the whole created order. "All sins are attempts to fill voids" wrote Simone Weil. Because we cannot stand the God-shaped hole inside us we try stuffing it full of all sorts of things but only God may fill it."

Using the Biblical language we have recourse to repentance. This opens up the possibility of change and renewal because of the grace of God toward us. This is where HOPE begins.

ii) RIGHTEOUSNESS. Our self-righteousness is no righteousness at all. We are blind to this reality until the Holy Spirit opens our eyes.

William Barclay comments "When you think of it, it is an amazing thing that people should put their trust for all eternity in a crucified Jewish criminal. What *convinces* them that this crucified Jew is the Son of God? *That is the work of the Holy Spirit*. It is the Holy Spirit who convinces people of the sheer righteousness of Christ." He alone is GOOD.

iii) JUDGEMENT. It is the role of the Spirit to convince the world that in the about to unfold death and resurrection of Jesus, the power of evil has been overthrown. The cross is Christ's kiss; where the Father welcomes his children.

for disciples, a friend [16:12-16] To the disciples the Spirit has an additional dual role. He will lead them into the truth, and in doing this he will speak of Jesus.

As Jesus was speaking there was no such thing as the New Testament. This farewell discourse interrupted as it is by several named disciples was later written, no doubt after apostolic recollection, conversation and editing.

As we noted last week, the consequences of their new found faith in Jesus would bring on trouble for the believers. They would be ejected from their synagogues and be hated in a hostile word. But the Friend, "the Spirit of Truth will guide you", "He will give me glory and he will take what I say and reveal it to you".

The Spirit empties the God shaped void in our lives of the all sorts with which we fill it. The Spirit insists it is the Holy of Holies, where only God may dwell. In revealing Jesus Christ to us God enters that holy place and transforms our lives.

We should ask ourselves, 'How is his presence changing me?'



Independent journalists, publishers and other government critics were arrested and charged under repressive laws. Human rights defenders were subjected to widespread harassment, unlawful digital surveillance, arbitrary arrest and politically motivated prosecution. Torture and other ill-treatment continued to be reported.

Amnesty International 21/22

Registration is required for religious groups and activities including preaching, teaching and publishing. Believers from ethnic minorities – more than half of Vietnamese Christians – experience the worst persecution. The Hmong people (living mainly in the North-west Highlands) are discriminated against in higher education and civil service jobs. Christians are sometimes forced out of villages and farmlands. However, in 2020 plans were announced by a local government in Lam Dong Province to resettle 79 Hmong Christian households who had been evicted from their villages, including providing a road, community centre and clinic. It was also announced that the Christians would be helped to get household registration and national IDs so they could access education and health care. The Montagnard people, from the Central Highlands, have endured decades of persecution for their Christian faith. Authorities raid or close down house churches and try to force Christians to deny Christ. A 2019 report estimated that 10,000 Montagnards were stateless because local authorities refused to issue ID cards, household registration or birth certificates.

Barnabas Fund 2022