

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 28 February 2021

Welcome & Notices
Session Clerk: Keith Ferres

Hymn 562 (RCH)
O God of Bethel

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Galatians 5:22-6:5
Alistair Ross

Offering

Hymn 484 (RCH)
Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost

Sermon:
"BEAR

One Another's
BURDENS"
- Galatians 6:2 -

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 563 (RCH)
Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us

Benediction
Threefold Amen

NOTICES

28 February 2021

Website: www.blackburnpc.org.au

Wednesday 3 March 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.
Friday 5 March 1 pm Session Meeting
Sunday 7 March 11 am Service of Holy Communion.
All Welcome, Covid safe practices.

Sunday 14 March Five Year Presbytery Visit
follows morning Service

For your prayers this week:

Congregational members:
Bernard and Hilary HAWKINS



and



Yousif & Vivian KUNDA who minister with
Global Recording Networks now in Ethiopia.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Minister: Rev Graham Bradbeer
tel. 9041 7911 mobile. 0409 978 690
Session Clerk: Mr Keith Ferres 98305466
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Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694





Numerous journalists and other critics of the government continued to face arbitrary arrest, illegal prolonged detention and unfair trials. Hundreds of people were killed in a surge of communal violence, and the army unlawfully killed at least nine protesters, including children.

Amnesty International

Ethiopia, is the second most populous nation of the African continent, with many ethnicities and languages. Ethiopia officially accepted Christianity in the fourth century. It remains the dominant religion, but Islam is followed by about a third of the population.

Recent years have seen periodic violent attacks on Christians. In late June 2020 violence erupted again, in which hundreds of Christians of many ethnicities were brutally slaughtered by members of Qeerroo (meaning "bachelors"), a male youth movement of the Oromo ethnic group.

The killings were apparently coordinated and Islamist-inspired; some of the Qeerroo carried lists of named individuals to find and kill individuals who were actively involved with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Police at first stood by as the murders unfolded and some local authorities assisted the militants to find Christians. Christian businesses and homes were burnt down, vandalised or destroyed by the extremists.

In 2018, Abiy Ahmed, a Christian from a Muslim background, became Ethiopia's first Oromo Prime Minister. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his efforts to resolve a conflict between Ethiopia and its neighbour Eritrea, which had seceded from Ethiopia in 1993 after a long war.

Barnabas Fund

ONE
ANOTHER
#6

BEAR *One Another's* BURDENS

Sermon
Notes

What do you look for as you come to church? What effect are you expecting the Bible's message to have on you today?

How can we be sure we haven't ducked under the radar of God's Word instead of actually being encountered by God, that we have actually 'met with Him'?

Is there a real danger that our Bible reading hasn't merely confirmed our own suspicions; that we were right all along, or that it's too complex for a person like me, or that the preacher has learned it well enough...

How can we tell if the Holy Spirit is present in a Christian congregation? How can we gauge that powerful and enriching presence today, even right here?

1. Nurturing Spiritual Fruit.

I think we all know that God's presence is now independent of physical location, or specific architecture, or aesthetic beauty. God looks on the heart. "This is the one to whom I will look... to the one that is of a humble and contrite heart and who trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:2)

Although they are clearly secondary the aforementioned things have a place in that whatever we do for the Lord must be done to the best of our ability. As David said "I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing". (2Samuel 24:24) It is the heart that is primary.

Our first concern is with the Word of the God, but this is not just an intellectual exercise. It must be more than intellectual. It begins in the intellect, with understanding, but it must go way beyond this.

Where must it go? It must be seen in action. "Blessed are you if you do it", said Jesus in closing His sermon on the Mount. (See also James 1:22 and 2:17)

2. The burden and the backpack (Philippians 2:6-11)

Sometimes readers think there is a contradiction in Galatians 6, as if the apostle wrote one thing and a couple of verses later contradicted himself. This confusion happens because some English versions translate two different Greek words by the one English word "burden". It helps our understanding if we recognise the first word means "heavy load" (6:2) and the second (6:5) as "pack", for this second Greek word has the sense of a backpack that every person has to carry.

We cannot avoid the backpack. On the journey of life there are unavoidable things with which we travel. The knowledge of our own

Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace

The movie *Bonhoeffer, Agent of Grace* is available on YouTube. If you are reading this online you can follow the link with the image...



mortality, our apprehension of the unknown, the human grasp of beauty and intelligibility in the created order, etc. But life's burdens are disproportionately distributed to humanity. God does not expect His children to carry them alone. He must resist the temptation to be merely stoic.

We see burdened people everywhere. In the local congregation we can play a part in helping others by sharing their heavy load.

We saw at the start of this short series that love to one another is the command of Christ. So this is 'the law of Christ'. He came to bear the burden of all who feel the crushing weight of a world gone wrong. God works through human friendship. Notice in 2Corinthians 7:5,6 God comforted Paul "by the coming of Titus".

God will use you and me as we come alongside to share the burden of our friends. It is humble and community building work, and it is evidence of the Holy Spirit among us, bearing fruit in our lives (Galatians :22,23)

3. Load-bearing for one another (Galatians 5:22-6:5)

If you read the end of Galatians 5 with the start of chapter 6 you will notice the repeated "one another" in this section. The Spirit of God is seen in relationships within the Christian congregation. The gifts of the Spirit can be faked, the fruit of the Spirit is incontrovertible.

Congregations may grow in number as people of like minds gather, but if there is only an intellectual affinity we should not suppose the presence of the Spirit. The Pharisees held a lot of intellectual teachings, some which Jesus also shared, but they they burdened others with loads they would not carry themselves! Whitened tombs!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer talks about 'cheap grace', a mere assent to ideas without any change of life. The grace of God is costly. We are to take up our cross and follow Jesus. This means we must love and serve one another.