

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 11 April 2021

Welcome and Notices
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Hymn 126
Hallelujah, hallelujah

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Luke 24:13-35
Alistair Ross

Hymn 196
Come, Holy Ghost

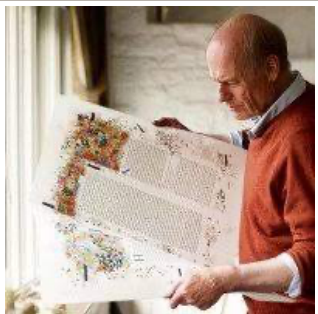
Sermon
Walking with Jesus

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 131
The head that once was crowned with thorns

Benediction

The illumination on the cover of the leaflet is from the Saint John's Bible, the first handwritten and illuminated Bible in 500 years. The illuminations were under the direction of master calligrapher Donald Jackson.



NOTICES

11 April 2021

Website: www.blackburnpc.org.au

Wednesday 14 April 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.
Sunday 18 April 11 am Divine Service. All Welcome
Covid safe practices.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: **Bennie Locke**.
and

P and A and family are with Pioneers based in Australia. Pray for the contacts they make in their part-time work among the M community.



We are saddened to announce that **Jim Evans** one of our senior members died on Wednesday.

His son **Jon**, and daughter **Bev** (in USA) have chosen to have a Memorial Service at a future date.

Please remember **Jim's** family in your prayers.

“Absent from the body present with the Lord”

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GARDENIA ST.
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BLACKBURN
11 April 2021



For Your Prayers



Kazakhstan is undergoing a process of "soft Islamisation". Radical Muslims have taken control of most of the small businesses, and Islamic money – mainly from Turkey – is funding most of the educational institutions.

Christians comprise about 25% of the population of this vast Central Asian republic. Many are from a Russian background, but some are ethnic Kazakhs who have converted from Islam. Protestant Christians, especially those from a Muslim background, are viewed with great distrust.

Kazakhstan's secular Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. From independence in 1991 until 2010 the situation for Christians, other than former Muslims was relatively easy. However, a draconian Religion Law passed in 2011 designed to prevent extremism, has greatly increased restrictions on religious freedom.

The Religion Law requires that religious groups must have at least 50 members locally, 500 regionally and 5000 nationally in order to register – an impossibility for smaller churches. Unregistered churches are raided by the police who seize property and fine or arrest and imprison Christians for worshipping "illegally".

The law also prohibits evangelising and bans religious organisations from receiving foreign donations. In 2018 the government approved a raft of amendments imposing even harsher religious restrictions, including a ban on religious teaching unless within a registered organisation-effectively making religious discussions in private homes illegal.

Property issues are used as a way of restricting freedom of religion. In 2020 the pastors in the capital Nur-Sultan formally appealed directly to the president to stop local authorities seize the land on which the churches stand.

Barnabas Fund 2021

Walking with Jesus

Sermon Notes

Walking with Jesus

It is the day of the resurrection. Two people are travelling to Emmaus, located about 11 km to the west of Jerusalem.

One of them is named is called Cleopas. His companion is unidentified. If Cleopas is the Clopas of John 19 verse 25 he might be travelling with his wife Mary, who had been present on Friday at the cross. But we cannot know.

The unidentified person who comes alongside asks about their dejection. Taking a risk that he is not spying on their loyalties, Cleopas explains their downcast demeanour.

They had held great hopes for Jesus of Nazareth; that he was a prophet who would set Israel free! But he was handed over by the Jewish leadership and crucified.

Now it's the third day since he died. That very morning rumours had begun to spread from the women who went to the tomb but couldn't find his body. They told that a vision of angels said he was alive.

Some went to check this out. They couldn't find his body either. It was as the women had said, but Jesus was not found.

The unidentified stranger is sensitive to their demeanour and feelings. His questions evoke all their disappointment.

They have misjudged the situation. "how foolish.. how slow to believe..."

They imagined the Messiah would save them from suffering under Roman oppression. He should have defeated the pagans, and not been defeated by them! But as Messiah he had come to save them through suffering. As the prophets had said.

"And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures" (v.27).

His written revelation

We are not told the specific content of what Jesus shared during that walk. We do know that he began "with Moses" and "the writings of the prophets" (v.27). After the meal they shared with each other how they had felt as he "explained the Scriptures to us" (v.33).

Later still (v. 44) Jesus appeared to the whole group in Jerusalem and said "everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms has to come true".

In this way Jesus makes clear that the three great divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures find their fulfilment in him. The whole Old Testament points to Jesus.

The challenge for us is firstly to know the story line of the Jewish Bible, (the TaNaKh). This is a substantial volume which from earliest times has become part of our Christian Bible. The first Christians were all Jews. It was their Bible as it was Jesus' Bible.

In addition we need to understand how this Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah.

In our regular worship we seek to fall (as it were) at the feet of Jesus who has rescued us from sin and futility. He has done this by his death and resurrection. Forgiveness and the Kingdom of God are open to us.

As we learn of him with our minds our hearts are warmed. As we bring our minds into conformity to his mind and purpose he reigns in us and over us.

Our shared experience

If you are challenged by any part of the Bible please let me know so we can explore it together. Usually if one person finds something difficult others do too!

The revelation of Jesus in the Bible warmed their hearts. They saw things previously hidden. It was exciting and energising. They asked the stranger to say with them. His company brought life to them! As Jesus shared their meal he did what he always did. The verbs matter. He took, blessed, broke and gave the bread. In this familiar action they recognised the Master!

That familiar action will also help us grow in faith, hope and love.

They had to learn that his presence is real, and perceived by faith. They had now to live their part in his great story. The story of a new world emerging from the tomb of the old.

If anyone be in Christ they are a new creation. Old things have passed away. All becomes new. That newness is what we are called to live. May the Spirit of Jesus help us to live like this day by day.