

# ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 9 May 2021

Welcome and Notices  
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Hymn 169  
Blessing and honour  
(verses 1,3,5 only)

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart  
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Acts 5:1-16  
Will Findlay

Hymn 581  
The sands of time are sinking

Sermon: Acts #4  
An Enemy  
'within and without'

Prayer of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 296 (Rejoice)  
Church of God, elect and glorious

Benediction



## NOTICES

9 May 2021

Website: [www.blackburnpc.org.au](http://www.blackburnpc.org.au)

Wednesday 12 May 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.  
Sunday 16 May 11 am Divine Service. Acts #5  
All Welcome Covid safe practices.  
NB 17-21 May 7.30 pm One Heart: Whitehorse  
Churches Care: Week of Prayer  
Registration is essential

### For your prayers this week

Congregational member: Belinda McCarthy  
(now lives in Yarra Junction)

and

Matt and Kate  
Vinicombe & family.

Pray for them as they  
learn the Anindilyakwa language and  
minister to the Warnindhilyagwa people  
of Groote Island.



## GARDENIA ST

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

53 Gardenia Street,  
Blackburn 3130



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Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church  
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

## GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

9 May 2021



*Colosseum, Rome.*

For Your Prayers



Armed groups and security forces committed crimes under international law with impunity. Police used excessive force against protesters and others. Activists and officials affiliated to the former government were arbitrarily arrested and detained. The authorities failed to act to protect women and girls from female genital mutilation (FGM). People were discriminated against based on their perceived social status. The ongoing conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic seriously undermined the rights to health and education. Amnesty International

Islamic extremism has been steadily on the rise since the beginning of the civil war in 2012, particularly in the north of the country. Threats of attacks and kidnapping from extremist groups such as al-Qaeda are common.

Living openly as a Christian is nearly impossible, and sharing the gospel is extremely risky. Churches have been destroyed and believers have been displaced because of their faith. Young Christian men are often subjected to abduction, forced conversion and conscription in the militia.

Muslims who convert to Christianity are especially vulnerable. To reveal Christian faith or to refuse to take part in Islamic rites may lead to social rejection, harassment and even death. Many Christians follow Jesus in secrecy and fellowship is rare.

Open Doors Australia

A journalist who disappeared last month in Mali's northern city of Gao appeared in a video on Wednesday appealing to authorities to do everything they can to free him from Islamist militants holding him. "I'm Olivier Dubois. I'm French. I'm a journalist. I was kidnapped in Gao on April 8 by the JNIM (al Qaeda North Africa). Reuters 6 May 2021

## AN ENEMY: 'within and without'

Sermon Notes

The story of the church is not all power and glory. From early on Luke's narrative makes this clear. The enemy - *Satan* means the adversary - one who is against you. After the joyful surge at Pentecost, the Enemy counter attacks. He is seeking to destroy the church from within and from without (from inside and from outside!)

### 1. Within the church (Acts 5:1-11)

Ananias and Sapphira's story presents one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament. It follows the powerful and joyful intimacy and sharing within the church (4:32-37). This highlights Barnabas, son of encouragement. The contrast is as difficult and sobering as it is awesome.

Being God's temple is serious business. The story is reminiscent of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1), and of Achan (Joshua 7:1).

Ananias and his wife made two deadly mistakes. They wanted the esteem of the church without sacrifice. Their donation was optional. They each in turn said it was the whole price when they knew it was not. They thought they could lie to Peter. But God was not mocked. Their hypocrisy was nipped in the bud. Great fear fell upon the whole church.

Still the church grew (5:12-14).

### 2. Outside the church (5:17)

The rapid and continued growth was a problem for the High priest and the Sadducees (5:17). They controlled the temple and its services.

They had the apostles arrested and imprisoned. But, released by an angel they returned to preach in the temple. Detained again they were told not to preach about Jesus (5:28)

Peter's renowned response (5:29-32) is classic: "We must obey God, not men" (compare 4:19). These verses are a key to *Liberty of Conscience* as understood in the Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 20). It incited the Sanhedrin, but the wisdom of Gamaliel held and the apostles were released.

Worldly powers clash with the kingdom of God- the upside down Way of Jesus- in the Roman world as today.

Tertullian (d.220 AD) said 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church'.

The clash is clearest the persecuted church. Where is it seen in Western democracies, and in Australia?

Four Vital Signs

Your Questions from last week:

- I. **learning** How effective do you rate the Sunday service as a learning experience? In particular, would any of the following improve learning for you:
  - more time,
  - a different setting,
  - less formality
  - question time
  - a different day/time
  - other suggestions
2. **loving** What appeals to you about this congregation? Which of the following would improve the situation:
  - how valued do you feel? On a 0-10 scale?
  - do you look forward to church? Why/why not?
  - are visitors welcomed in our church?
  - how important is your presence?
  - how does this church express love?
  - other ideas
3. **worshipping** We referred to informal and formal worship. How do you feel about our shared worship:
  - too formal/informal?
  - do you enjoy worship? why/why not?
  - when does informal worship happen in our life
  - are joy and reverence experienced?
  - other comments
4. **witnessing** What can we witness to about Jesus?
  - can we share the things we value with our families, our friends?
  - what cultural issues might be problematic for us? Can they be turned to advantage?
  - how would you rate our external witness?
  - what are our strengths/weaknesses?
  - in addition...