

# ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 20 June 2021

Welcome and Notices  
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Hymn 1  
Holy, holy, holy

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart  
Kindness

Bible Reading: Acts 9:1-22  
Tibor Kosa

Hymn 679  
Revive Thy work, O Lord

Sermon: Acts #7  
Damascus Rd to Straight St.

Prayer of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn  
In Christ Alone  
(Townend)

Benediction



## NOTICES

20 June 2021

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

Wednesday 23 June 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.  
Sunday 27 June 11 am Divine Service with the  
Rev Dr Greg Goswell  
All Welcome. Covid safe practices.

### For your prayers this week

Congregational members:  
**Manfred and Nola RICHTER**

and

**Douglas and Jeanette BENNETT**



are with Wycliffe Bible Translators HQ at  
Kangaroo Ground. They ask we pray for  
stamina (!) and give thanks for Douglas'  
improved health.



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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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## WELCOME

GARDENIA ST.  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
BLACKBURN

20 June 2021



The Conversion of Paul  
Caravaggio, 1601  
Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome

What liberty Caravaggio has taken with his  
composition that is unsupported by the text in Acts?



For Your Prayers

Sermon Outline

Legislation limiting the rights to freedom of expression and privacy remained pending. Security forces detained individuals for "spreading misinformation" and criticizing the government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Protesters were detained and security forces continued to use excessive force to disperse protesters and enforce lockdowns. Efforts toward securing justice, truth and reparation for crimes under international law and human rights violations committed during the 1996-2006 conflict remained grossly inadequate. Indigenous families were forcibly evicted and their homes destroyed. Sexual and gender-based violence continued with impunity. Gender-based discrimination continued in both law and practice. Dozens of abuses against Dalits were reported and abuses were often carried out with impunity. The government did not take adequate measures to protect Nepali migrant workers stranded and otherwise affected by the pandemic abroad.

Amnesty International 2021

There was a time when Nepal's communist government was the biggest threat to the country's Christian minority. Today the main source of pressure is the religious nationalism of Nepal's Hindu majority. The country's new Constitution declares Nepal to be a secular state; at the same time, it also forbids anyone to change their religion, and bans proselytism. Nepal's Christian population, currently at 4 per cent, is one of the fastest-growing in the world, and that has prompted a backlash from nationalists, who themselves are taking encouragement from the nationalist urgings of the Hindu government in neighbouring India. In 2017 two parliamentarians warned that religious freedom in the country was "teetering on the edge".

World Watch Monitor 2019

## Saul of Tarsus: Damascus Rd to Straight St

In 2019 English historian Tom Holland, author of multiple top-selling volumes on ancient Greece and Rome added another highly rated volume, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind*. This book grew out of two decades of reflection on the things he valued.

Holland realised he did not espouse the values of ancient Greece or Rome. Whence had his values come? To his surprise he realised that the apostle Paul, who travelled those ancient Roman roads, was the source of his values; and, he argues, the values of the Western world.

Today we find out about the apostle who travelled the Roman roads.

### 1. Saul the fanatic

We first encounter Saul of Tarsus as the person who held the coats of those who stoned Stephen. (Acts 7:58, 8:1) Not content with hunting Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, Saul sought permission to hunt down "followers of the Way of the Lord" in the synagogues of Damascus too. (Acts 9:1-3)

We know from his later writings that while he was by birth a Roman citizen, he was proudly raised in the strictest sect of Judaism; a Hebrew of the Hebrews. His zealous bigotry is proverbial.

### 2. Saul encounters Jesus

The story of Saul's conversion (Acts 9) is repeated twice later (in speeches by the apostle, Acts 22 and 26). The latter has a reference to 'kicking against the goads'. This suggests Saul was struggling with his personal role. Had the death of Stephen, especially Stephen's prayer

unnerved him? Was he increasingly zealous to overcome inner doubts?

The blinding light and inner voice suggest that this epiphany changed Saul of Tarsus so thoroughly that shortly he becomes known by a different name: Paul the Apostle. (Acts 13:9)

### 3. Ananias and brother Saul

Ananias and other disciples in Damascus have heard of Saul's impending visit and are justifiably apprehensive and afraid. Meanwhile, blinded, Saul's entourage escorts him to Straight Street.

Ananias is given a vision of what must happen. He is told to visit Saul and lay hands on him to restore his sight. The Lord has much for Saul to do. Despite apprehension, Ananias obeys. His words are epic. "Brother Saul..."

A new chapter opens up, not only in the personal story of Saul of Tarsus, but in world history.

### 4. Our story and His Story

The conversion of Saul called him to a unique role. Nevertheless there are elements which are true for every Christian. Like Saul, we all need to encounter Jesus. The message invites us to hear Jesus, and to follow him. For very few people it will be as dramatic as for Saul, but for every person it is a lived experience that colours and enlivens everything. It is new life.

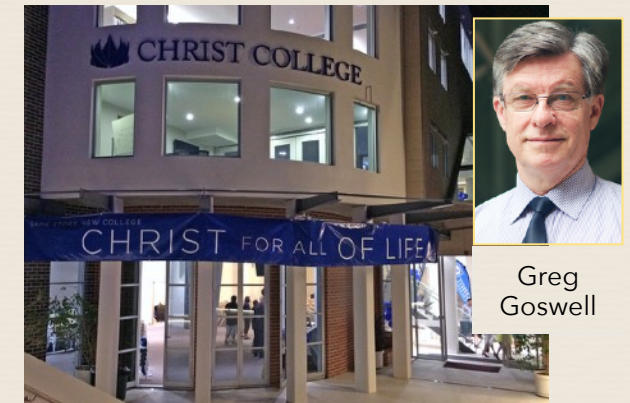
Getting Away!

Christine and Graham

hope to begin a four week break from June 23.

Graham writes:

In the 1970s we ministered in Armidale NSW. From Wednesday June 23 we plan to head north, first to spend time with family in Bondi. After that we hope to visit friends from the 70s some in Armidale, most in various coastal locations.



Greg Goswell

In our absence I have asked the Rev Dr Greg Goswell to look after pulpit supply. Greg is the Academic Dean at Christ College, the Presbyterian Theological College in Sydney. Greg and Mignon have enjoyed fellowship with us recently (when I was on medical leave) and I know you will make them both feel welcome.

For any critical pastoral support please contact the Rev Bob Thomas who has kindly agreed to make himself available. His contact number is 0417 592 646.