

# ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 1 August 2021

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Welcome and Notices  
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Hymn 229/Psalm 100  
All people

Prayer of Invocation

Young @ Heart  
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Acts 11:19-30  
Reade: Tibor Kosa

Offering

Hymn 109  
We sing the praise of Him who died

Sermon: Acts #9  
God has broken through

Prayer of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 207  
Christ is made the sure foundation

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## NOTICES

1 August 2021

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

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Wednesday 4 August 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.  
Sunday 8 August 11 am Divine Service. Acts #9.  
All Welcome. Covid safe practices.

### For your prayers this week



Congregational member: **Ogilvie Russell**

and

**I and R and family** have been serving in West Asia with *Pioneers* and are currently on home assignment. Pray for wisdom as home stay period comes to an end. No image permitted.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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## WELCOME

### GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

1 August 2021



Χριστιανούς  
Christians

For Your Prayers



Sermon Outline

## God has broken through to the other nations!

"All people that on earth do dwell, sing!" This is the summons that began our service today. (Psalm 100)

From the first book in the Bible the Jews believed that God would one day bring blessing to "all the families of the earth" through a descendant of Abraham. But, how likely was that?

The Jews kept themselves separate from the nations. They were as socially unconnected as possible. The conversion of Cornelius changed all that. Back in Jerusalem Peter had critics...

### 1. Jerusalem: Peter addresses his critics

The criticism was that Peter had gone into the home of non-Jewish person.

The critics believed since Jesus was Jewish, genuine followers had to first become Jewish. This meant be circumcised and abide by the food laws, at the very least.

For a second time Peter related his vision (11:5-17) and the dramatic consequences which mirrored Pentecost.

Thankfully this was enough to persuade the critics that God makes no distinction and grants his Spirit, irrespective of culture, to those who receive the word of God and believe (11:1, 15:7). The critics were transformed and praised God that the Gentiles also had the opportunity to repent and live (11:18).

### 2. Antioch: Believers talk to Greeks

Thanks to the scattered believers, the message of Jesus was spreading throughout the Jewish communities of the Mediterranean. Some who went to Phoenicia (Lebanon today) only spoke to Jews (11:19). But others, from Cyprus and Cyrene (in Libya) came to Antioch. Trading perhaps? They shared 'the message about the Lord Jesus' with Greek speaking people and 'a great number believed'.

Jerusalem HQ sent Barnabas to investigate. He was glad and encouraged them to be faithful. He went to Tarsus and found Saul and brought him to Antioch. For a year they taught the church there.

### 3. Christian: the nickname that stuck!

So far in Acts Luke has used a range of words to speak of the 'disciples' (6:1), 'saints' (9:13), 'brothers' (1:16, 9:30), those 'being saved' (2:47) and people 'of the way' (9:2). These are personally and socially relational terms which communicate a sense of dynamism.

And now 'Christians' (*christianous*)

The unbelieving public seems to have supposed that Christ was a proper name rather than a title and coined the epithet *Christian*. It was slow to catch on, but occurs again in Acts 26:26 and in 1 Peter 4:16. Says John Stott "It gives emphasis to the Christ-centred nature of the discipleship".

Think of our church. Do the underlined terms describe us?

### 4. Authentication: a challenge to Churches

However appropriate we feel the terms used for early Christians are of us, Luke provides a test of authenticity. It's in verses 27-30. Generosity.

A famine was experienced in the reign of Claudius, 41-54 AD. The disciples decided to give what money they could to help.

Their practice in Antioch was to give from each according to *ability* (11:29). Earlier in Jerusalem it was to each according to *need* (2:45).

What do you think should be the measurable indicators of 'Christian' discipleship?

Road to Antioch in Syria



Confusingly, the biblical 'Syrian Antioch' lies near the mouth of the Orontes River, today this is in Turkey, 19 km northwest of the Syrian border.

It was founded in 300BC by Seleucus I Nicator, a former general of Alexander the Great. The new city soon became the western terminus of the caravan routes over which goods were brought from Persia and elsewhere in Asia to the Mediterranean. Antioch's strategic command of north-south and east-west roads across northwestern Syria greatly contributed to its growth and prosperity. In Roman times it was among the leading cities of the empire after Rome, Alexandria and Ephesus.



Princeton University mounted a massive archaeological dig in the 1930s. See slides <https://paw.princeton.edu/article/slide-show-images-antioch>

Scores of mosaic floors and other artefacts were unearthed which today feature in world museums.

In 2020, the authorities made limited progress towards justice and accountability for police abuses, instances of harassment and attacks against protesters by security forces in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Lagos and other states. However concerns over their stated commitment to security sector reform persisted. Especially in the northeast region of the country as Boko Haram and its splinter faction, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), continued to attack civilian, humanitarian, and military targets.

Human Rights Watch 2021

Although Nigeria is roughly 50% Christian and 50% Muslim, more Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than in any other country. Violent attacks by the Islamic extremist group, Boko Haram, and other groups are increasing across the country. Persecution, and especially violent attacks, are most prevalent in the North and Middle Belt of Nigeria.

However, the government's attempts to increase the influence of Islam across the country affect even Christian-majority communities in the South.

Men and boys are particularly vulnerable to being killed and widowed women and their children have little protection. Many Christian girls are being abducted or forced to marry into these groups. Around the country, believers are driven from their homes and Christian families rarely receive justice.

Barnabas Fund 2021