

# ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 8 August 2021

Welcome and Notices  
Mr Keith Ferres, Session Clerk

Prayer of Invocation

Young @ Heart  
Christine Bradbeer  
The Power of Song

Bible Reading: Acts 13:26-52

The Bible Project  
Paul's Missionary Journeys  
Acts 13-20

Sermon: Acts #10  
The Ups and Downs  
Travelling with St Paul

Prayer of Intercession  
and  
The Lord's Prayer

Benediction



## NOTICES

8 August 2021

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

Wednesday 11 August 1.30 pm Covenanted Prayer Time.  
Sunday 15 August 11 am Divine Service. Acts #11  
All Welcome. Covid safe practices.

### For your prayers this week

Congregational members:

**Sonya and Ian RUTHERFURD**



and

**Alan and Faye Canavan** recently completed 35 years with Wycliffe Bible Translators. They live in Townsville serving as translation consultants. Pray for those now reading God's Word in the islands of PNG.



GARDENIA ST

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

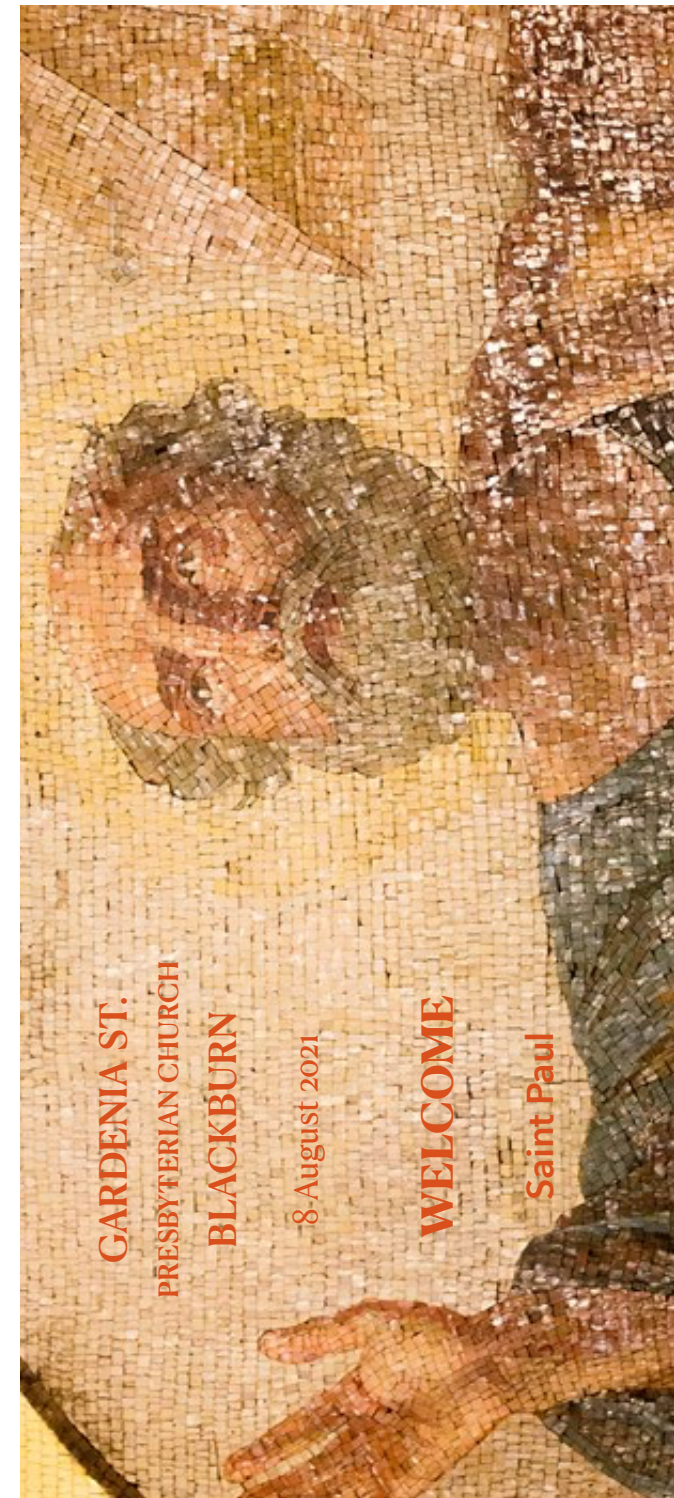
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GARDENIA ST.  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
BLACKBURN

8 August 2021

WELCOME

Saint Paul



Russia  
for your  
Prayers



Russia, or the Russian Federation, is the largest country in the world by area. It became an independent country after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. In principle, freedom of religion is a guaranteed right under Article 28 of the Russian Constitution. But, in practice, many Russian Christians do not experience this level of religious liberty.

Since 2016, more than 1,300 cases have been brought against Christians. In the first half of 2020, at least 19 Christians were prosecuted for "illegal missionary activity", with an average conviction rate of 92%. Most of the charges were for distributing religious literature on the street without authorisation.

The 2016 "Yarovaya Law" gives harsh penalties for vague offences and allows the authorities sweeping surveillance powers. A church in Moscow with a congregation of about 50 has had its services interrupted almost every Sunday by police, who film and take photos inside the church to identify ways in which they claim the church is violating the law.

In November 2019, Olga Glamozdinova won a landmark court case. She was fined for "use of land for unintended purposes" when she allowed church members to meet for four hours every week at her house, where the church was registered. The Russian Constitutional Court ruled in her favour, saying that residential buildings can be used for religious worship services and religious organisations can be registered at residential premises.

A new amendment to the law on freedom of conscience and religious association was drafted in 2020. If enacted, it will be illegal for pastors trained outside Russia to preach in a church or even conduct home Bible study groups. It calls for those trained abroad to re-train in Russia, but the government has made it difficult for Christian theological institutions to operate, with licences being revoked. Barnabas Fund 2021

Sermon  
Outline

## Travelling with St Paul The ups & downs

"a new way of being a human being". [See adjacent column from the Australian]. What did Tom Wright mean by this extraordinary phrase? As we follow saint Paul over the next few weeks let's see what we discover. Today notice:

### 1. Motive and itinerary

Travel itinerary: Who chooses the itinerary? How long are we travelling for (two years? maybe more?) Holy Spirit moved them.

Greek language, Jewish diaspora, Roman roads, Mediterranean sea lanes, familiar territory for some.

After Cyprus John Mark left the travelling group. No explanation given.

### 2. Strategy and engagement

No surprises, it's all about Jesus, enjoying forgiveness of sins through his life, death and resurrection. (13:15) Deep engagement everywhere.

- (1) to Jews, the 'anointed' (Christ) who brings to fulfilment the Hebrew scriptures. The four Gospels bring the OT to a conclusion.
- (2) to the devout "god-fearers" among the Greeks - Jesus is Lord, (Caesar is not), Jesus reigns (Acts 17:7).
- (3) to the pagans - invited to turn from worthless idols and serve the living God, the Creator, Lord of all. A versatile approach!

### 3. Opposition and welcome

The message was confronting, and there was division! The whole itinerary called for and generated a massive change.

In Cyprus, and south central Turkey, from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium (today Konya in Turkey), Lystra and Derbe, Paul and Barnabas experienced both welcome and rejection.

The welcome came with a sense of forgiveness and joy in the Holy Spirit. The rejection came with hostility and active persecution.

### 4. Our challenge today

A 'door of faith' was opened to Gentiles. Churches with elders (14:23) "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. (14:22) Where is the hardship today? Eg., Think Nigeria, China, or the village of Sikapai, India.

A 'long time' - using lockdown time. Long time (writing Galatians 1:16, 2:2)?



Extracted from *Keeper of the Faith* by Greg Sheridan

in **THE AUSTRALIAN**

Paul was an astonishing figure for his times. He was uniquely the master of three separate worlds – the Jewish world into which he was born in Tarsus, in southern Turkey, and to which he was intensely devoted; the Greek world, whose language he mastered and whose classics he read, and which was culturally all around the Mediterranean 2000 years ago; and the Roman world, of which Paul, unusually for an early Christian, was a full citizen...

Paul did not present any military challenge to Rome, or locally to any of the pagan societies where he preached and organised the earliest Christian communities. Had he done so, he would have been crushed instantly. He didn't offer any movement of civic disobedience. He played the long game and knew exactly what he was doing.

Instead of mounting a military or political challenge, he revolutionised the inner identity of pagan society. He tore its mind out. In his lucid, penetrating, unprecedented writings, he left a blueprint of how it was done. N.T. Wright, one of the great Paul scholars, argues that Paul was inventing a new way of being a human being.

Submitted by John Leach  
3 August 2021

