

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday 7 November 2021

Welcome and Notices
Keith Ferres

Hymn 229
All people

Prayer of Invocation

Young @ Heart
"My name is Cleo"
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Acts 19:21-41
Amanda Fairs

Hymn 106
When I survey

Sermon
Jesus Christ: Trouble at Ephesus
Acts 19:23

Prayer of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 423
O Jesus king most wonderful

Benediction



NOTICES

7 November 2021

www.blackburnpc.org.au

- Wednesday 10 November 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting.
- Sunday 14 November 11 am Divine Service. **Gathered Again**
Also streamed on [Facebook Live](#).
Later with on YouTube with captions.
- Tuesday 16 November 1 pm Board of Management.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Congregational members: **Marjorie HALL..**



and

Warwick and Natalie SHORT and family are concluding 13 years of ministry in Niger. Please also remember the Fulani among whom they have worked.



GARDENIA ST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
53 Gardenia Street,
Blackburn 3130

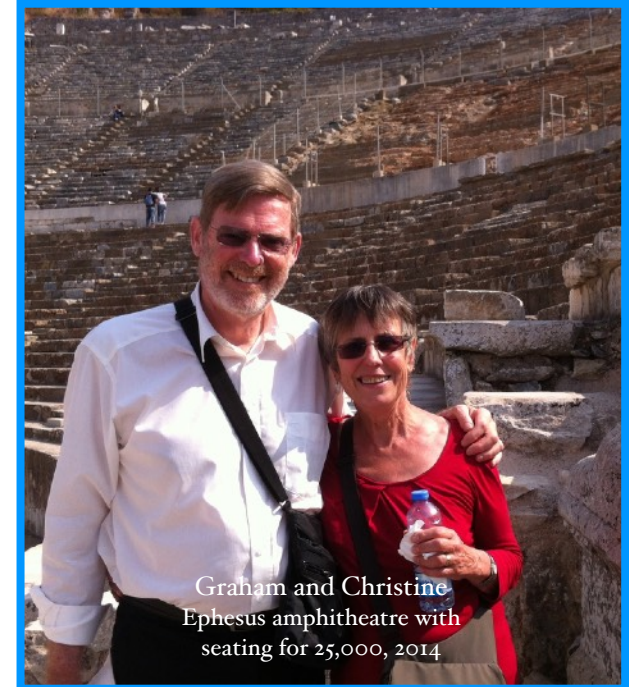


Minister: Rev Graham Bradbeer
tel. 9041 7911 mobile. 0409 978 690
Session Clerk: Mr Keith Ferres 98305466

Electronic Banking Details: ANZ Forest Hill,
Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

7 November 2021



Graham and Christine
Ephesus amphitheatre with
seating for 25,000, 2014

WELCOME BACK!



At the Human Rights Council in Geneva on June 21, 2021, Human Rights Watch, together with 81 domestic and international civil society groups, called on states to address the worsening human rights situation in Algeria, which has involved cracking down on peaceful Algerian protesters, journalists, civil society groups, human rights defenders, trade unionists, lawyers, and even political parties. Countries participating in the 47th Human Rights Council session should condemn the effective criminalisation of freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression in Algeria

Human Rights Watch 2021

The majority of Christians in Algeria are converts from Islam. These believers are at risk of persecution from their family and from the wider community, which includes local ethnic leaders and elders.

Harassment, beatings, threats, and imprisonment, as well as pressure to adhere to Islamic customs, are common for believers in Algeria. Churches are pressured by state officials, who listen to radical Islamic teachers. Authorities limit the freedoms of converts and prevent Christians views from being presented in public. Government officials have forcibly closed 13 Protestant churches in a coordinated attempt to minimise the Christian influence.

Most Christians live in the Kabyle region in the north of Algeria. Many of these people are from the Berber ethnic group and speak their own language. Christianity flourished as the Kabyles were discriminated against by their government. However, pressure on these Christians remains intense. In the Arab part of the country, especially the south, the number of churches is very low.

Open Doors 2021



Jesus Christ; serious trouble at Ephesus

What is an idol? "An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give." (TK).

1. idols: ancient and modern

When the apostle Paul came to town it was not an opportunity for a quiet church luncheon. There was imprisonment in Philippi, uproar in Thessalonica, opposition in Corinth and now a riot in Ephesus. What was going on!? The Message was 'turning the world upside down' Acts 17:7. How so?

According to Encyclopedia Britannica the Greek idols of the ancient world represented the full range of human emotions. Rome gave them Latin names but had the same pantheon. To which, after the Battle of Actium in 44 BC, it added the Caesar, Augustus. Artemis was dominant at Ephesus, but Augustus was becoming prolific. Now think about Jesus' threat to the silversmiths with their images of Artemis...

2. which Australian dream?

Within the western world idolatry is more subtle. The use of images has diminished in favour of icons which engage our time and attention. Iconic brands may represent wealth, freedom, communication, skill, power, etc. Indeed, some are named after ancient gods - Nike, Amazon, Pandora, Ajax, etc.

The Australian dream of a home on a quarter acre block slowly developed through last century into suburbia, and is currently morphing in several different ways. Think ecological apartment living or sea and tree change. To dream is not idolatry, but we must guard against even good things becoming an idol. This calls for discernment. Consider this parable.

3. the peso and the bank

I heard this week from two friends who visited Argentina. Before travelling they arranged to collect some pesos at their Melbourne bank. They took in cash 5x100 peso notes. To their great surprise in Argentina they were informed that one of their notes was counterfeit. They ended up returning 3x100 peso notes to their Melbourne bank which, profoundly embarrassed, deeply apologised.

Who should guide us to detect the counterfeit gods? The church too has its idols.



Think how the following might become idols: i) theological purists - scoffers (as in proverbs), ii) church 'status' and 'gifts', and iii) moral rectitude (What I do/don't do)

1. the true god gives

The god we worship shapes the people we become. Think the 'image of God' in Genesis 1, Hebrews 1 and John 1- The Word became flesh. Consider John's perception of the double entendre in Pilate's words in John 19:5 - "Here is the man" He alone is the truly Human One. Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27).

We want to put on the image of Christ.

Keep close to Jesus. Let him shape your hopes and prayers and dreams. The lure of idolatry is powerful and ever present. "You don't realise Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have." writes Keller. In concluding his letter John urges his readers *Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.* (1John 5:21) Amen.

Counterfeit Gods by Tim Keller



"No person, not even the best one can give your soul all it needs...this cosmic disappointment and disillusionment is there in all of life, but we especially feel it in the things in which we set our hopes.

When you finally realise this, there are four things you can do:

1. You can blame the things that are disappointing you and try to move on to better ones (that's the way of continued idolatry and spiritual addiction),
2. you can blame yourself and beat yourself up (that's the way of self loathing and shame),
3. you can blame the world (that's how you get hard, cynical, and empty), or
4. you can reorient the entire focus of your life on God.