

# Paul's Epistle

Dear Jesus,

Please bless the person  
reading this right now.

Watch over them and  
protect them today.

And, show them  
peace and love.

May you walk  
beside them  
and guide  
their steps.

~Amen

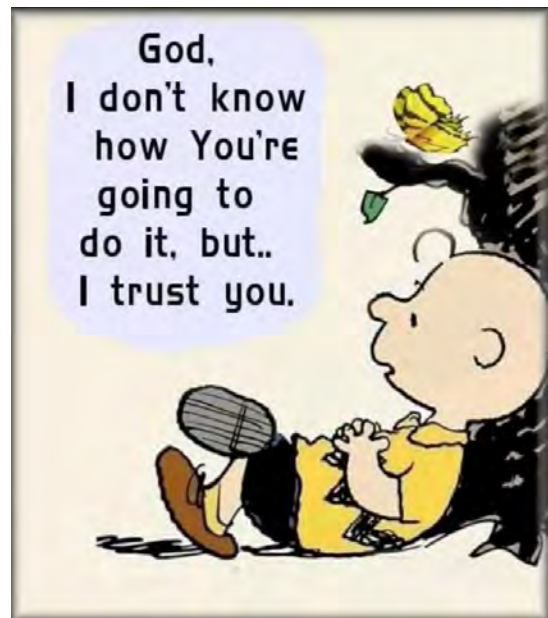


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## Inside this Issue

Dear Jesus	Cover
God I don't know ...	2
4 reminders for your day / Jesus invites you	2
Report from Special General Meeting of the Parish	3 4
When we run out of words to say ...	4
Our hope in Jesus / 3 ways we can gift the love of Jesus	5
Faith story—Ann	6
Bible Trivia Questions	7
Healing is a process not a destination	8
While we wait for an answer to our prayers	8
Faith Story - Russell	9
The Cross at Australia's Heart needs you	10-11
Personal Story	12-13
Let's Sing!	13
Bible Trivia Answers	14
What could be one the other side of your "Yes" to God	14
Meridth - my faith story ...	15
We were made for more ...	16
Jesus does not just observe our grief ...	16
When we focus on God's purpose over our plans	17
We can trust that our God	17
The McDonald Messenger	18-20
When we remember that God has numbered our days	20
You can look at all your past mistakes	21
You don't have to let unruly negative talk infect your day	21
Ian & Jenny Wood's Prayer updaye	22-23
About us ...	24



*4 reminders FOR  
YOUR day:*

YOU ARE *never* ALONE.

YOU *are* SIGNIFICANT.

YOU ARE ACCEPTED *unconditionally.*

YOU ARE *loved* BY GOD.

DENISE PASS

JESUS INVITES YOU TO COME  
AND ASK AUDACIOUSLY,  
BELIEVING THAT HE WILL  
LISTEN AND GIVE YOU  
WHAT'S BEST.

**BECKY HARLING**

# Report from Special General Meeting of the Parish

Each year, the Parish holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to review the activities of the Parish over the previous 12 months. It is also able to hold Special General Meetings when specific issues need to be dealt with.

At the 2023 AGM, the attendees agreed to hold a Special General Meeting on Saturday, 15 July 2023 to review the financial situation of St Paul's and to consider whether to create a subcommittee of the Parish Council to investigate options for responding to the financial situation.

The Special General Meeting was attended by 25 church members and 7 people gave their apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

Ken opened the meeting in prayer asking God's guidance in order that we can fulfill God's intention for St Paul's. The meeting then prayed together:

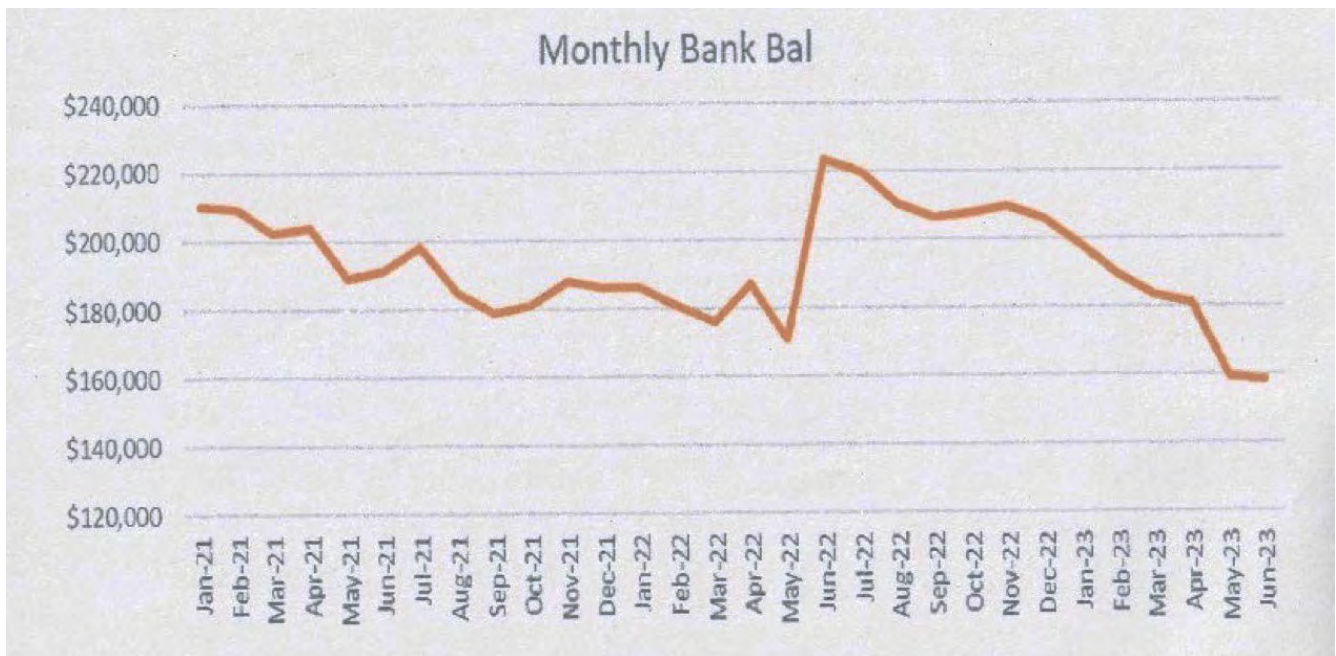
**O creator God,**

**Fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we may listen to one another, speak the truth in love, and bear much fruit in the service of your kingdom;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen**

The new Parish treasurer, Mario, covered the financial report of St Paul's for the previous six months. Over the previous six months, expenditure exceeded income by \$39,489 which means an overall reduction of our bank balances.



The graph shows the trending decline in our financial reserves since January 2021 at a rate where we need to be alert rather than alarmed but we must carefully and prayerfully plan and manage our responses (the jump in reserves in June 2022 was due to the \$40,000 anonymous donation and the \$10,000 bequest from the estate of Len Matthews).

Mario emphasised that income has remained at similar levels to previously which is very impressive considering a declining weekly attendance at the worship services and many people are on fixed incomes, however expenses are steadily increasing, the two major expenses being the rent for the Parish Centre and wages.

Ken covered some broad approaches to responding to the declining bank balances and to the fewer people available to maintain the range of St Paul's ministries and activities. The options involve increasing the income, reducing expenditure, growing the church's membership or other approaches such as more groups contributing to the use of the Parish Centre facilities.

In response, there was a general discussion where points were raised such as what are the most important aspects for people to maintain to support their faith journey within St Paul's, how we might need to think outside the orthodox Anglican box in terms of timing and approach to worship to make it attractive to a wider demographic, how we need to be very pragmatic when prioritising the response options.

/continued ...

## Report from Special General Meeting of the Parish ... continued

The meeting then agreed to establish a subcommittee of the Parish Council which will:

- (a) identify, develop and prioritise possible responses to the financial situation.
- (b) keep the Parish Council informed with a final report by 30 October 2023.
- (c) assist in the subsequent broader consultation with interested parties.

The meeting elected as members of the subcommittee, Ken Rampling, David Graham, Wayne Scott, Mario Amato, Ralph Wall, Chris Lemon, Carmen Nelson and one person to confirm their availability.

The subcommittee will present a final report to the Parish Council by the end of October 2023 and another Special General Meeting will be held later in November to consider the recommended options and, where appropriate, how they will be implemented. This process does not prevent normal adjustments and changes being implemented by the Parish Council in the meantime.

The 2024 Annual General Meeting will be an opportunity to review the progress.

People were thanked for their very constructive contributions to the meeting and Ken closed the meeting with prayer.

People are invited to discuss any of their thoughts with members of the subcommittee at any time.

David Graham

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## When we run out of words to say, we can say the name of Jesus

When we run out of words to say, we can say the name of Jesus

When life gets hard and everything feels confusing, it's easy to turn to the things that bring us comfort or to the people that can give us answers instead of turning to Jesus.

We stop praying because we feel like our words are not being heard. We let disappointment shape the way we view God. And when things don't go as planned, we think He surely can't be trusted so we try to forge our own path.

Sweet friend, the enemy would love nothing more than to make you feel like you have no need for Jesus because if he does you will forget just how much power and authority His Name truly holds.

Philippians 2:9-11 reminds us that, "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

We have access to the most powerful Name in the universe and we can call on His name anytime we are in need!

When we run out of words to say, we can say the name of Jesus.

When we don't understand the outcome, we can bring our questions to Jesus.

When we aren't sure which step to take next, we can follow the lead of Jesus.

Let's choose today to not let the questions and uncertainties of life keep us from speaking out the most powerful Name we have in our word bank!

P31 Ministries

When we run out of words to say, we can say the name of Jesus.

When we don't understand the outcome, we can bring our questions to Jesus.

When we aren't sure which step to take next, we can follow the lead of Jesus.

## Our hope in Jesus

In a world full of constant division and devastation, it can be easy to get discouraged, letting our hope be dependent on what is happening all around us.

But friend, let this truth encourage you to remain hopeful: God's word says that those whose hope is in Him will not be put to shame! (Romans 5:5) (Psalm 25:3)

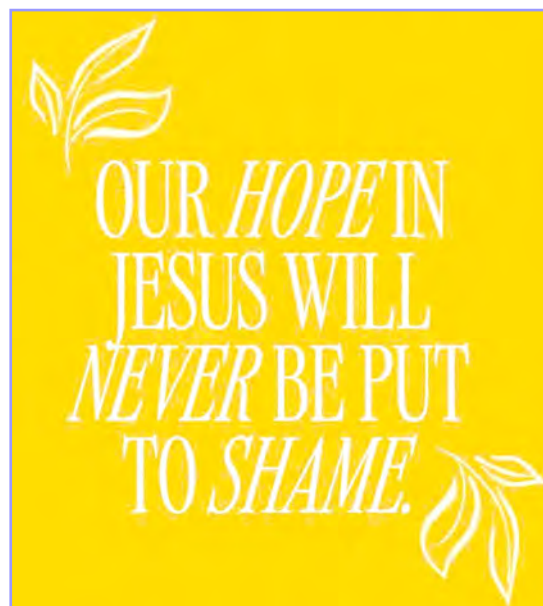
That is good news! We know the end of the story. Our Lord and Savior will be faithful to keep His promise. We will see Him again and live with Him in eternity. That is the promise of our continued hope.

Although our present suffering can be painful and threaten to steal our hope, when we continue to trust in the Lord, keeping our hearts and minds fixed on our eternal hope, we can be reassured that our faith will never be in vain.

May your hope be the light in this dark world and may it encourage those around you to carry hope, too.

Are encouraged to remain hopeful today?

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## 3 ways we can gift the love of Jesus to those who are hurting

Jesus commands us in John 15:12, "Love each other as I have loved you" (NIV). Through the prompting and power of the Holy Spirit, faithful friends love like Jesus and go out of their way to show it. They are willing to lay down their lives for others and be inconvenienced; they run toward us in our suffering when others run away.

How can we be that kind of friend? Here are three ways we can gift the love of Jesus to those who are hurting:

### 1. Be the one who shows up.

When we vigorously pursue those we love in all circumstances — the good, bad and ugly — isn't that a wonderful picture of Jesus? He is the Savior who says, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20b, NIV). We can pray to Him for wisdom about when and how to show up for our friends in the ways that best honor them.

### 2. Be present in others' pain even when you don't have answers.

A godly friend soothes a broken heart, not through perfect words, solutions or theology but by being fully present amid someone else's suffering. Frankly, the best kind of friend isn't the one with all the right words. She's the one who will climb into your mess and sit in it with you for a while.

### 3. Be vulnerable.

What people often need most is an empathetic witness who will listen and pray over them with words they can't muster up for themselves.

Sweet friend, only Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of this, but we can certainly pray for the grace to resemble Him in our friendships. Let's not avoid life-giving interactions out of fear of doing or saying the wrong thing. Instead, let's courageously move in love toward our friends, especially in times of adversity.

How can you faithfully show up for someone who is hurting?

Beth Knight



Reminder: God can do big things with faith the size of a mustard seed!

## Faith story - Ann



"My parents weren't Christians. They sent us to Sunday school because they thought we'd get good morals. So all four children went. At age 8, my teacher was Rita. She used to draw amazing pictures with crayons.

One day, she shared the story of the Good Shepherd. He went after the one lost sheep. He had 99 other sheep, but he went after the one that was lost.

I was really moved by this story and by the Shepherd's love for the sheep. We are each special to God! I had a conversion experience in that moment, and I was assured of my salvation. I went home, and I told my dad straight away. He was in the bathroom, cleaning out the sink. I said, "I have found Jesus!"

My father struggled with alcoholism and with the disappointment of shattered dreams following the Second World War. My mother also suffered with mental health challenges. So, when I excitedly told them about my coming to trust in Jesus, my father's response was to swear at me, which was crushing to my 8-year-old self.

I went straight to my room and knelt before my heavenly Father. I knew I had a heavenly Father, and he loved and accepted me!

All three of my siblings became Christians through that same Sunday school. We used to go to church together every Sunday, the girls wearing our hats, leaving our parents at home, perplexed by these Christian children.

In my twenties I met and married Les. You should hear his story! We had our first child, a daughter. She was born early, and nearly died of a streptococcal infection. But before that Les and I had been involved with the Navigators, so we had a lot of people praying for her around the world. After much prayer and time in hospital, our daughter survived.

My father told us later that he was overwhelmed by the prayer support for our daughter. He'd never seen or heard of it before. It made him question.

Then a few years later, on a Sunday, my dad was dealing with a tree root that was blocking our sewer. He was digging a trench and working hard. A friend who attended our church walked past, and saw my dad working. The friend turned around, went home, changed into his overalls, came back and spent the day digging with Dad, giving up his precious church meeting.

This act of kindness and support really moved my father. Over time, these two events caused him to consider Christ! God brought him to faith in Jesus. Then my mother also put her trust in Jesus!

It happened over a 20-year period – God dealing with both of them. I think it taught me that God is a God who works in everything, drawing people to himself. I remember we sang 'The King of Love, my shepherd is,' at my dad's funeral. God used the picture of the Shepherd and the lost sheep in both my life and my father's life!

I also learnt that God works even in hardship. At age 36 I was diagnosed with cancer. I felt my life was over.

Initially, I found it difficult to acknowledge God. How could he allow this when I had 3 young children? There were many moments of lament, sorrow, pain and suffering. But God was faithful in his love for me, and I learnt so much about his love in the hard places that I had to walk.

Then at age 43 I had a heart attack. It's been a long journey of sickness and ongoing issues.

But again, I can see God's hand in all of it. When I was in the middle of chemotherapy, I remember reading Psalm 16 and thinking about hope within suffering. None of us are exempt from suffering, and even when we suffer, we can rest secure in the love of our Good Shepherd. God will never abandon us to the grave! And within everything that happens to us we have unshakeable hope!"

To read more of Eternity's Faith Stories, compiled by Naomi Reed, go to <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/section/faith-stories/>

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When you feel unseen, unheard, and unknown, God sees it all!  
He knows every part of you deeply and He's heard every cry.

# Bible Trivia Questions

- Where did Elijah meet with the prophets of Baal to prove that God is the one true god? Bible reference?
  - Mount Moriah
  - Mount of Olives
  - Mount Ararat
  - Mount Carmel?
- Where did Jesus grow up after returning from Egypt? Bible reference?
  - Bethlehem
  - Nazareth
  - Jerusalem
  - Temple mount
- James 4 asks, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your \_\_\_\_\_ that battle within you? You want something but don't get it." Bible reference?
  - blank sins
  - evil motivations
  - desires
  - selfish tendencies
- In which book of the Bible is this verse found: "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it." Bible reference?
  - Leviticus
  - Titus
  - Proverbs
  - Habakkuk
- What was Aaron doing while Moses was up getting the 10 Commandments?
  - having a potluck with the Israelites
  - praying to God
  - telling the Israelites to wait & be patient
  - making a golden idol
- What does this name of God mean: Jehovah Rapha? Bible reference?
  - The Lord who leads
  - The Lord who sends
  - The Lord who provides
  - The Lord who heals
- name commonly given to the first five books of the Old Testament?
  - the Doxology
  - the Apocrypha
  - the Pentateuch
  - the Septuagint
  - Bonus ? : What does the word mean?
- In Revelation, Jesus says: "Do not be afraid. I am the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_." Bible reference?
  - the First and the Last
  - the Way and the Truth
  - the Life and the Truth
  - the Lion and the Lamb?
- Where in the New Testament does it talk about the perseverance of Job? Bible reference?
  - Hebrews
  - Revelation
  - 2 Timothy
  - James
- What does Jesus say about judging others? Bible reference?
  - judge fairly
  - judge justly
  - judge not
  - judge Deborah
- "The \_\_\_\_\_ of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools." Are the blanks. Bible reference?
  - true sayings
  - quiet words
  - harsh rebukes or
  - silent prayers
- What were the two plagues that afflicted the Egyptians physically? Bible reference?
  - gnats and blisters
  - boils and hives
  - dandruff and hives
  - gnats and boils
- Fill in the blank: "In the same way, \_\_\_\_\_ are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain." Bible reference?
  - husbands
  - high priest
  - wives
  - deacons
- What did the mysterious hand write on the wall at King Belshazzar's banquet?
  - Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani;
  - Jehovah-Jireh;
  - Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin;
  - Shadrach Meshach and Abednego
- Which of the following did Paul NOT mention that individual members of the church should bring when coming together in worship? Bible reference?
  - a hymn
  - a gift of leadership
  - a word of instruction
  - a revelation
  - a tongue
  - an interpretation
- How many of each animal did Moses bring into the Ark? What is the Bible reference?

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Dear Jesus, I know what feels impossible for me, is easy for you. Help me to rest in knowing you are able, you have answers, you will give me strength and help me every step of the way.

## Healing is a process not a destination

Triggers from emotional wounds are real. They leave us feeling vulnerable, unsafe, unable to trust others, and at times unable to move forward with a healthy state of mind, peace or joy. Fear seeps into our souls, and it can be hard to shake.

Although the Bible doesn't specifically address the phrase "emotional triggers," we can still glean so much wisdom and comfort from many passages in Scripture as we cope and heal. Second Timothy 1:7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."

God's Word tells us countless times not to fear because He's got us covered (Isaiah 41:10). We have the power, through Him, to control our feelings, though that's not always easy (Proverbs 16:32).

God's Word also helps us find freedom from our thoughts by capturing them and turning them around (2 Corinthians 10:5). His comfort can soothe our emotions as we breathe in His love (2 Corinthians 1:4).

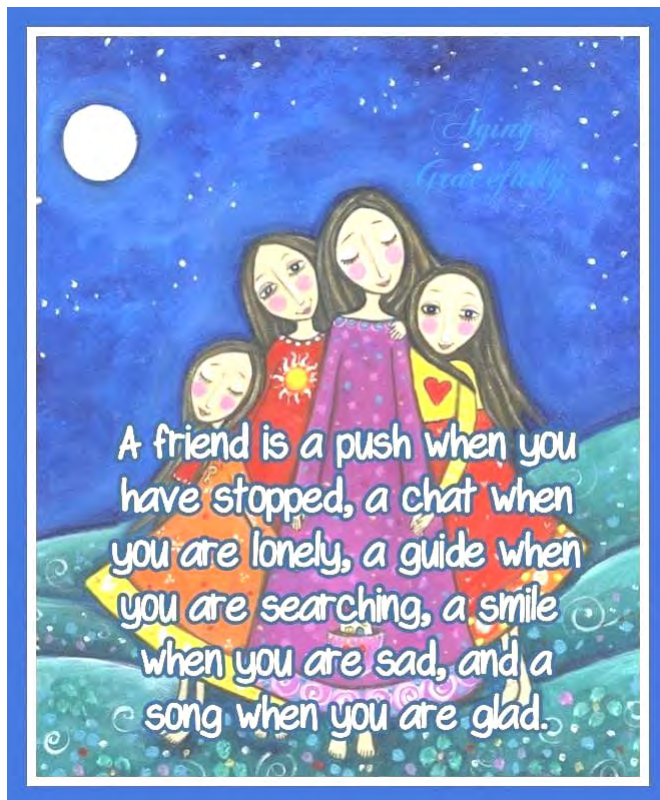
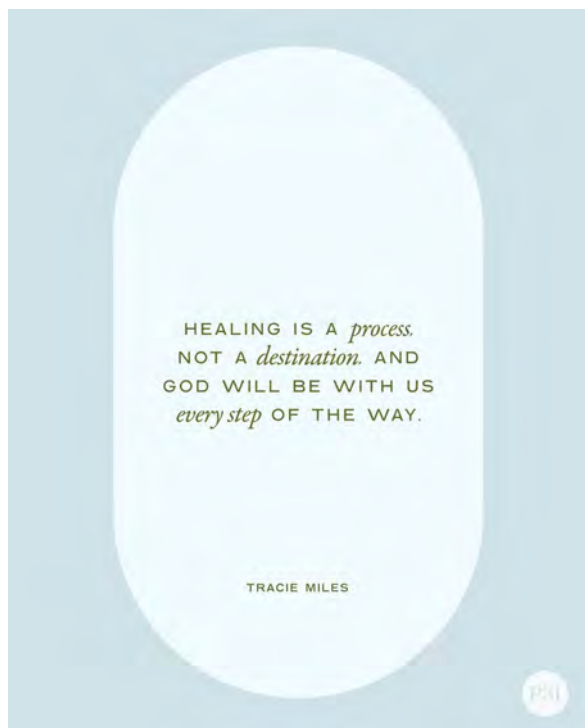
As we lay our burdens at His feet, God ushers peace into our hearts (Matthew 11:28). We can learn to practice forgiveness of the ones who hurt us and to release the bondage of traumatic memories and anger (Ephesians 4:31).

We can lean into trusting God, believing He has our past and our future in His hands because of the love He has for us (Jeremiah 29:11). We can have faith that we will overcome adversity in His strength and power, just like David, Peter, Paul and even Jesus did in Scripture (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

All of these biblical truths and practices can slowly heal us from the inside out, alongside the God-given blessings of counseling, therapy and medication if needed.

What's one step in your healing journey you need to take today with God?

Tracie Miles



## While we wait for an answer to our prayers

How has God been good to you? Just looking around where we currently sit we can start making lists of all the amazing blessings that are in our lives, and those are only the things we can see.

But, it is so easy to become consumed with all the prayers He has yet to answer, all the things we don't yet have...

...the job we need desperately.

...the provision for an unexpected expense.

... the restoration of a relationship that hurts so deeply.

These things overcome us with worry of how it will all work out. But in Psalm 106:1-2 it says, " Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Who can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord, or declare all his praise?"

While we wait for Him to answer, let's praise Him for our blessings. This helps shift our focus off of our lack and onto the one who has always been faithful!

What is one thing you are praising Him for today?

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## Faith Story – Russell



"I'm in hospital at the moment, awaiting an operation for pancreatic cancer. But it's an opportunity. I dwell on the Scriptures, and I talk to the nurses. Most of them know nothing about Jesus. They're young, and they're thinking about their career paths. They're not thinking about the life hereafter at all, even though they see people going there all the time. They haven't given that life even a thought.

I was born in 1938, and at age 9 I went to a Christian boarding school in Armidale. I started to have a belief in Jesus from that point. We had a wonderful chaplain who'd been in the trenches in the first world war and seen a lot of life. I admired him. We had prayers every morning and a lot of Christians around us. I think the truth of the Gospel just attached itself to me. When I left school, I made a point of attending church every week. That's what kept me going – being perpetually surrounded by the Gospel. And I married a lovely Christian girl, Margot. We've been together more than 60 years!

But my moment of change came when I joined the Gideons in 1984. I became part of a world where we saw the Lord at work. I joined others committed to prayer, giving out Bibles and being a Christian witness. We would meet weekly to be fortified in our faith, and we saw the Lord use us.

We received thousands of letters, all of them reminding us that when people read the Scriptures it changes lives. Every time, of course, we gave out a Bible, we didn't know what the Lord would do. We always scattered them in faith, trusting that his Word wouldn't return void, as it says in Isaiah 55:11.

Over the years, I must have given out hundreds of Bibles. I generally give them out in appreciation of people. I say thank you to the person for a favour they've done for me, and then I tell them the Bible is a small token of my appreciation. In 40 years, I've only ever had one knock back.

One year, in 1992, I gave a Bible to a friend of mine at work: Ian. We were in our fifties, working in stockbroking. At first, he said he didn't need it, but then he took it.

A few years later, he wrote to me to say he'd had strange promptings to go to church. Then he read the Bible, and came to Christ. He asked if he could have another one. He went on to Bible College, and became a lay preacher. It was very encouraging!

In stockbroking, it's all about the dollars. How do you make more dollars? But Christians are needed in every sphere of life, including finance. I stayed in broking from age 23 to 81. I enjoyed it. It was a career and an opportunity to share the Gospel. Of course, the Lord breaks down barriers without any trouble at all!

Right now, as I said, I'm in hospital. While I've been here, I've given out 13 Bibles to different nurses.

I find it's also an opportunity to tell them I'm not afraid. I'm going into major surgery, but I'm not afraid. Margot and I are both content with whatever the outcome is. If I survive this cancer, that will be okay. If I don't survive it, that will also be okay. I know where I'm going! The nurses tend to be surprised. It's not what they normally hear!

I think that wherever we are, there are avenues for ministry. And it's never about me. The Lord is the one who works! This week, I've been reading Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

It's always wonderful to dwell in the Scriptures, and the truth is that God saves us. He rejoices over us with singing!"

Eternity News

To read more of Eternity's Faith Stories, compiled by Naomi Reed, go to

<https://www.eternitynews.com.au/section/faith-stories/>

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God wants to be invited into your mess.

# The Cross at Australia's Heart needs you

*The place where heaven meets earth*

Six hours north of Uluru, lies another landmark of great spiritual significance to local First Nations people: Memory Mountain.

Rising from the red earth, this monolith is nestled among the awesome West MacDonnell Ranges.

"When you sit on top of that mountain, it's one of the most spectacular views in the whole of Australia," enthuses Australian landscape photographer Ken Duncan. "From it, you can see three of the highest mountains in the Northern Territory: Mount Zeil, Mount Sonder and Haasts Bluff, which are also some of the highest mountains west of the Great Divide. And you can see them all from Memory Mountain. You've got views for 360 degrees."

For the Ikuntji community at Haasts Bluff – situated 230 kilometres west of Alice Springs – the mountain holds far more importance than its physical appearance. Unlike Uluru, this mountain is sacred to many local Aboriginal peoples because of its *Christian* heritage.

At the base of the mountain is a memorial, erected in 1923, to four Indigenous evangelists who first spread the gospel in this region.

Memory Mountain is the place where local Aboriginal people believe God instructed them to build a massive Cross.

It is also a place where Aboriginal Christians from around the region have met together for the past 40 years at Easter celebrations known as sing-alongs, where they come together to "sing songs to Jesus" for many days at a time.

"Hundreds of Aboriginals have been baptised in the creek there since the sing-alongs began in 1982," Duncan tells *Eternity*.

And Memory Mountain is the place where local Aboriginal people believe God instructed them to build a massive Cross – like a beacon that draws people from all over Australia, from different beliefs and walks of life, and unites them in this sacred place.

For these Christians, this Cross – which their ancestors had dreams and visions about decades ago – is a key to true, God-ordained reconciliation in our nation.

## **The Cross becomes a reality**

It's taken over a decade, several million dollars, and lots of prayer and patience, but construction of a 20-metre-high Cross on top of Memory Mountain was completed late last year.

"God's timing is perfect!" says Duncan, who was asked by local Aboriginal community members to help spearhead the Cross's construction. After years of grappling with council approvals and engineering logistics, Duncan notes that the timing of its completion, like many aspects of this project, is uncannily supernatural.

When the Cross is officially launched this Easter, it will be 100 years since the monument to the evangelists was built at Memory Mountain. At this dedication, the solar-powered LED lights lining the massive steel Cross will be switched on for the first time, illuminating it for all to see, even at night.

But, as Duncan notes, the vision is not about the Cross itself; rather, it's about "lifting up the name of Jesus over the nation. It's about getting people united around Jesus."

This idea of the Cross as a meeting place – a place of prayer, contemplation and worship, where everyone is welcome – is expressed by local Aboriginal elder Douglas Multa.

"The Cross is important to everyone – not just me. It's for everybody, [to] bring everyone to united – to one," he says.

Multa is one of many in the community whose ancestors had a vision of a giant Cross on top of Memory Mountain. The vision first came to his uncle, Nebo Jugadai, one night at an Easter celebration at the base of the mountain.

"We believe it's a place where people would be really touched by God."

It was at one of these sing-alongs 14 years ago when local elders approached Duncan to ask if he might help them turn the vision of the Cross into a reality. Duncan was known in the Ikuntji community, having created a creative arts training centre there to equip Indigenous youth through his Walk a While Foundation, established in 2010.

Duncan recalls the conversations at that sing-along: "The kids were coming up to me and saying, 'Ken, we've been seeing a Cross on top of that hill there.' And then some of the senior women said to me, 'You know, children are having dreams of a Cross up on top of that mountain. There's a ladder going from the top, right up into the clouds and there's angels going up and down ...'"

"Then quite a few of the male elders, individually, came up to me and said, 'Ken, can you help us build a Cross? I think we need to build a Cross up there.'"

## The Cross at Australia's Heart needs you, cont ...

Duncan admits that, at first, he was reluctant to get drawn into helping. "So I said, 'Well, why do you want to build a Cross?'"

"And they said, 'Well, we want to build a Cross to let people know that our hope is in Jesus and that the mountain is a place of prayer where all can come, no matter what their faith or belief. We believe it's a place where people would be really touched by God.'"

That's certainly been the case for those involved in the Cross's construction. Duncan tells the story of his construction manager friend who is not a Christian but who said after spending time at the Cross on the mountaintop, "You know, I really believe this is a connection between heaven and earth."

Another man who conducts tours of sacred places around the world described it as "one of the most holy places I've ever been to anywhere in the world."

"We're getting contacted by prophets all around the world who believe that this is part of a Holy Spirit revival strategy," says Duncan. "Time will tell, but you know, there's definitely something happening out there."



The Cross on Memory Mountain. Image supplied. Ken Duncan/ Walk a While Foundation

### **The next phase of the Cross project**

Now, Duncan is calling on the Church to help with the next phase of this monumental project.

"A lot of people are going to want to come to this mountain, but we need to start putting in camping facilities and toilets, glamping facilities. That's going to make it a lot easier for people to come out here."

Crucially, this will also create jobs for local Aboriginal people to work on their land and to share their culture.

"We have been struggling for many years to get job opportunities for the young people, so that Cross is going to bring lots of jobs," Multa told ABC News.

"It will bring tourists in, they will put the money into this community, and whatever money we make will go back into the community."

A locally Indigenous-led company, Memory Mountain Limited, has been established to own and lead this development, in conjunction with Ken Duncan and his wife, Pam. The organisation will run tours of the Mountain and the surrounding area, as well as cultural activities, such as boomerang carving, kangaroo tail cooking and storytelling by community elders. Uniquely, it will also offer a one-day faith-based experience at the Mountain, to teach about the Christian heritage of the area.

But funds are needed to complete this vision, and Duncan is calling on Christians to help provide. He notes that "God provided miraculously" the millions needed to build the Cross itself through the generosity of private donors.

"A lot of people say, 'I really want to come out there.' Well, if you ever want to go out there, help us now to build the facilities so that we can get ready for people coming. Because this is going to grow much bigger," says Duncan.

He reiterates, "This is all about getting people united around Jesus ... Here's a chance for Christians to show unity – that's what the world needs to see."

If you would like to donate to the next stage of the Cross project, please visit:

<https://memorymountain.com.au/donate/>

Rebecca Abbott|Eternity

# PERSONAL PROFILE



Edward Nathan

'Son, learn to forgive'. Those were the last words from my Dad when I visited him in Malaysia after migrating to Australia in 1988. It was an intervention by the Holy Spirit at that precise moment in time as I was about to do something terrible after I had been cheated of a vast amount of money. I did listen and life has been good. Born in Johor Bahru, Malaysia in 1958. This is the town next to Singapore as you cross over on the causeway. I was one of 5 children (middle) to my father's youngest wife. He had three wives – one from official marriage and the other two (sisters) as de facto wives. The older sister has four children and as such I have 4 half/three quarters siblings because if we did not have the same father we would have been cousins anyway.

Life was pretty tough in my younger years as my mum had to work as a maid to feed us. Malaysia is not a welfare state and as such if you did not work you were at the mercy of the wealthy/unscrupulous or you starved. Mum made sure we had food and above all made sure we attended school and completed our studies. Also, she made sure we went to church every Sunday. We went to a Roman Catholic church. While Dad was a Hindu, Mum stuck to her religion as her parents came from Kerala and they were Catholic. It is normal for most Asians to take on the religion of their father but Mum would not have a bar of it. Also the fact that Vincent de Paul's was helping her feed us would have been a major determinant in staying with the faith. Dad's parent were Sri Lankan or Ceylonese as they were known in them years! Both Mum and Dad were born in Malaysia. Dad was an accountant. My Dad converted to Christianity during the last 10 years of his life and was a Christian when he asked me learn to forgive.

My childhood was pretty eventful with Dad coming in and out of our lives and us struggling in a 'survival of the fittest' type scenario but in general it was a pretty good childhood. We did not know any better and were not feeling 'entitled' so it was all good. Having been exposed to the good life from time to time when I lived in a plantation complex with my Dad and seeing him as a figure of achievement and a role model, it was always in my heart to leave Malaysia and make a better life for myself. As soon as I finished my studies I worked as a laborer in Singapore to save up for my first year's fee to study Hospitality Management in the UK. It may have been the first term/semester fees. It was hard yakka working under the scorching sun building roads and working in shipyards. Managed to get a place in Leeds, UK and left Malaysia in 1978.

Withing two months of landing, I was employed and learnt to smoke (cigarettes) and drink. Met my English wife, Trish who was my boss at the weekend job that I had as a sorter/picker at Burtons. I was the best student at my college and was given the opportunity to go to New York as an exchange student and I did. Left the UK in 1982 and returned to Malaysia as all good children do. I could have stayed as I did have an English de facto wife but that would have broken my mother's heart. I was fortunate to find employment with an oil company, Exxon and did five wonderful years setting up all the infra structure for the 'oil men' and their expatriate families. While working for Exxon I also set up an International Hotel Management school which has now been granted the status of University offering French national qualification. It was a great life with my accommodation right on the beach. My porch/balcony was about 50 meters from the South China Sea. After my first year of employment I went back to the UK to marry Trish and brought her back to Malaysia. Trish went back to the UK to have out first born son Jonathan and we spent the rest of our four years in Malaysia.

We migrated to Australia based on my wife not being happy and the rest of my siblings having already moved to Sydney with my Mum. After just over a year in Sydney my wife and I separated and she took our children back to Leeds. We had our second child Jessica in Sydney at the Royal Paddington Hospital. I move to the Blue Mountains with another lady and set up a restaurant and did some teaching for the TAFE. I gained employment with PepsiCo as an area manager for about 10 Pizza Huts in Western Sydney. I was restless and wanted my children back so I returned to the UK and worked as a pizza maker while visiting my children every day. I was planning to live in the UK if my wife did not want to return to Australia. The wonderful woman finally decided she would move back to Australia just so I could have the children near me. She was indeed a good person with other people's (especially her children) interest at heart. We returned back to Australia in 1992/3 and Trish remarried and had two other children.

I remarried in 2001 and had one child, Jamieson with Cheryl. We started JCE Positive Outcomes together with another friend of mine. When Cheryl fell pregnant at the age of 40 with two adult children from another marriage when we found that she had a very aggressive form of breast cancer in the first trimester and were asked to abort the child.

# PERSONAL PROFILE, CONT ...

As I also already had two children of my own as well it should have been an easy decision given our age and circumstances. We kept the child and Cheryl underwent Chemotherapy, two operation and radiation while pregnant. Jamieson arrive in August 2000 with a full head of hair while his mum was bald. No side effects from the poison of the Chemotherapy. God is good. We lost Cheryl in 2012 when the cancer came back. For the last 4 years of her life we lived in Yamba, NSW as Cheryl wanted to be near the beach. Cheryl was a Queensland beach girl! It was hard trying to run a business with no resources and running back and forth from Canberra to Yamba – 13 hour drive back in the day. I did that every two weeks for 4 years.

Jamieson (now 12 years old) and I moved back to the ACT in December 2012 and I remained a single parent caring for him until he was 18, supporting my other two children and trying to keep the business going. I must say God was

with me all the way and I flourished and have a wonderful family. As I knew Jamieson would eventually go off to the US on a tennis scholarship and realized it is now time for me to action my dream and what God had put into my heart i.e. start a food ministry and feed his people. I went onto a Christian website looking for a good praying woman and God gave me Lynn. I was not planning on an American wife but that's what appeared on my screen even though my search parameters were not China or the US! God had my best interest at heart and gave me the best wife! We are now coming up to our fifth year of marriage and embarking on a new chapter with at Paul's Anglican and our food truck ministry, 'The Ministry of Food'. We plan to stay with Ken, Lynette and his wonderful team and work together in advancing the kingdom of God. JCE Positive Outcomes has been in operation since 1990 and we will use this organization in conjunction with the food ministry to bring people to God. Amen.

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## Let's Sing!

### A Bible study from the Bible Society

#### Ephesians 5:18-20

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

#### Reflection: Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs

If an alien were to visit our church and we were to ask him, 'Why do we sing in church?', he might observe, 'You sing at the beginning so latecomers can find a seat. You sing before the sermon to stretch your legs. You sing at the end so people can go out and prepare morning tea.' Of course, singing is far more important than that.

In Ephesians 5, Paul echoes about why Christians sing. Interestingly, in Colossians, Paul wrote, 'let the message (or word) of Christ dwell among you richly' (3:16). Here he writes, 'be filled with the Spirit'. Where the word is proclaimed, the Spirit

is working. This filling expresses itself in singing. When we sing, we teach one another. It has a horizontal dimension. But we also 'give thanks to God' (5:20). Singing also has a vertical dimension.

Christians sing not just because we're commanded to, but because God deserves all the praise for who he is and all he's done for us. John Piper says, 'Singing is the Christian's way of saying: God is so great that thinking will not suffice, there must be deep feeling; and talking will not suffice, there must be singing.'

#### Prayer:

Heavenly Father, today we lift up our hearts and our voices to you in praise and thanks for all you've done for us in the Lord Jesus. You are our God, our Saviour, and our Shepherd and you deserve all the honour, and glory, now and always. Amen.

*Mike Raiter*

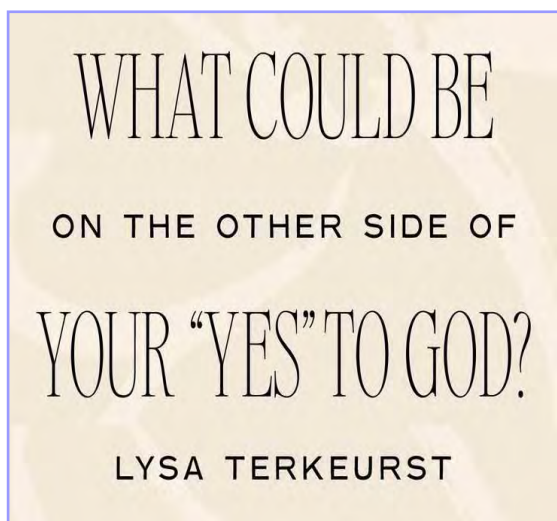
*Director of the Centre for Biblical Preaching*

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Our circumstances should never dictate the way we view God; Our view of God should dictate the way we view our circumstances.

## Bible Trivia Answers

1. Mount Carmel; 1 Kings 18:19
2. Nazareth; Luke 2:39-40
3. desires; James 4:1-2
4. Proverbs; Proverbs 22:6
5. making a golden idol
6. The Lord who heals; Exodus 15:26
7. The Pentateuch (pronounced pen-ta-tuke)
7. (e) Bonus "Five books" or "five scrolls"
8. the First and the Last; Revelation 1:17
9. James; James 5:10-11
10. judge not; Luke 6:37 (This could lead to a great discussion on the difference of being discerning vs. condemning others)
11. quiet words; Ecclesiastes 9:17
12. gnats and boils; Exodus 8-9
13. deacons; 1 Timothy 3:8
14. Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin
15. a gift of leadership; 1 Corinthians 14:26 (This could spark a conversation about "being the church" and trusting the Holy Spirit in each brother/sister, rather than expecting church leaders to facilitate everything.)
16. None, Moses led people out of Egypt. Noah was on the ark! (You finish on a trick question!)



## What could be on the other side of your "Yes" to God

It all started the day God told me to give away my Bible.

I was exhausted from traveling and speaking at an event. All I wanted was to get to my assigned seat on the plane and settle in for a nap. I was just about to close my eyes when two last-minute passengers made their way to my row and took their seats.

Reluctantly deciding to forgo my nap, I opted instead to pull a manuscript out of my bag and read. When the guy sitting beside me asked what I was working on, I told him I was a writer and was working on a book about leading women to the heart of God. He smiled and said he thought God was a very interesting topic. I agreed and asked him a few questions about his beliefs.

Before long, I found myself reaching into my bag and pulling out my Bible, walking him through some key verses that dealt with the issues he was facing. He kept asking questions, and I kept praying God would give me answers.

All of a sudden, I felt God tugging at my heart to give this man my Bible. Now, this was not just any Bible. This was my everyday, highlighted, underlined, written-in, tear-stained Bible. I started to argue with God in my head, but His message was clear: I was to give away my Bible.

I took a deep breath and placed the precious book in the man's hands. "I'd like for you to have my Bible," I said.

Astonished, he started to hand it back to me, saying he couldn't possibly accept such a gift.

"God told me to give it to you," I insisted. "Sometimes, the God of the universe pauses in the midst of all His creation to touch the heart of one person. Today, He paused for you."

About a month later, the man I had given my Bible to called. We had exchanged business cards, and he wanted to tell me how his life had totally changed. God was definitely pursuing him in a serious way. And I was blessed and amazed by the way this man was responding.

We just never know what could be on the other side of our "yes" to God. After this experience, I resolved I'd always try to be a person who'd do whatever the Lord asked of me. A person who'd want to continue seeing God work miracles through small acts of obedience.

What is one small way you could say "yes" to Him today?

Lysa TerKeurst

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No matter where you are today...God will be faithful to meet you there.

## Meridyth – my faith story



"I grew up with my mother and one half-brother. My mother never told me who my father was. She said, "You don't need to know."

I thought to myself, If I don't have an earthly father, how am I going to do this? We lived with my grandparents, who were both paralysed from strokes, so we took turns in caring for them. It was quite challenging at age 13.

I vividly recall walking into their room one day and finding my grandfather dead. A few years later my grandmother died in hospital.

That year I had so many questions about life. I went on a Christian camp where the speaker talked about 'the Father heart of God'. He said, "If you want a Father who will always be there for you, always listen to you, always confront you (and rebuke you) and always love you with a love that will never end, then you do have that – a perfect, heavenly Father."

I made a commitment to God that day. I was 15.

From then on I had a yearning to know my heavenly Father more and more. How could a holy God love me when nobody else could? It started with me reading the Gospels, wanting to know about Jesus. What was Jesus like? How did Jesus react when things went badly? What did Jesus say to people when he was challenged and accused, and then when he was dying? I read all of Jesus' words in red. The more I read them, the more I wanted to be like Jesus, and the more I wanted to reflect Jesus. I wanted to have the mind of Christ.

It's been a long journey. When I was 43, I went into hospital for a minor procedure, and I ended up in a wheelchair for 25 years.

I was a single mum with two kids at the time. How was I going to manage? I ended up going to university and getting five degrees, but all the information and qualifications meant nothing without the Father heart of God. Every day I needed to know how to love him more.

Some years before that, I started visiting the local café near our supermarket. Every day I'd pray, "Lord, take me to someone who needs to hear of you today." Then I'd look for someone sitting alone, looking like they wanted to talk. I never disturbed anyone who was reading or busy.

You would be amazed at the conversations I've had! It's been going on for 50 years now. I ask people if they want to share a cuppa. They look at me, with my mask on and my CPAP machine, hardly breathing. But they invite me to sit down, and we start talking. After a while, I ask them if they ever had a faith. Then I ask them if they want to explore faith. They often do!

Afterwards I give people my number, and they can ring me if they want to. They just want to be listened to. Sometimes they say, "The God you serve is not someone I've ever heard of before."

It's been glorious. I'm 73 now. Currently, my larynx closes to 99% without warning, so I have a permanent CPAP machine, and I'm having a tracheotomy this month. I won't be able to speak, so I'll have to find new ways of sharing God's love at the cafes. It will be a new creative challenge! We don't always need a mouth to show the love of God!

I find that the harder life is, the more I'm thrown back to know the mind of Christ. There is always more to learn! I am imperfect, but I'm perfectly loved! For me, it's about fostering that love relationship with God every day. It's just so amazing the way God ministers to us! And if we have the answers in Jesus, how can we not share them?"

Eternity News

To read more of Eternity's Faith Stories, compiled by Naomi Reed, go to

<https://www.eternitynews.com.au/section/faith-stories/>

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Reminder:

God can do big things with faith the size of a mustard seed!

## We were made for more, we were made for God

Satisfied. What a beautiful word. God fulfilled every debt I owed. Paid in full. All my need for saving was fully satisfied the moment I believed that the gospel was true. However, if I'm honest, I don't always remember to live satisfied. In recent years, I've found myself running to other things to fill my hungry heart. Bypassing my Bible, I've feasted on empty fillers that only reinforced the emptiness.

I know I'm not alone.

We are a generation of Jesus-hungry people who tend to misplace our spiritual hunger. We take our appetites to the wrong stuff — all fluff — false fillers that never fulfil.

In the mornings we reach over our Bibles and pick up our phones. We scroll through social media, then make ourselves a cup of coffee. When emotions well up mid-afternoon, we take our angst to the wrong wells — broken wells that don't satisfy.

Then, when we find ourselves utterly weary and heavy laden, we online shop, or we hop in our car and drive to nearest store.

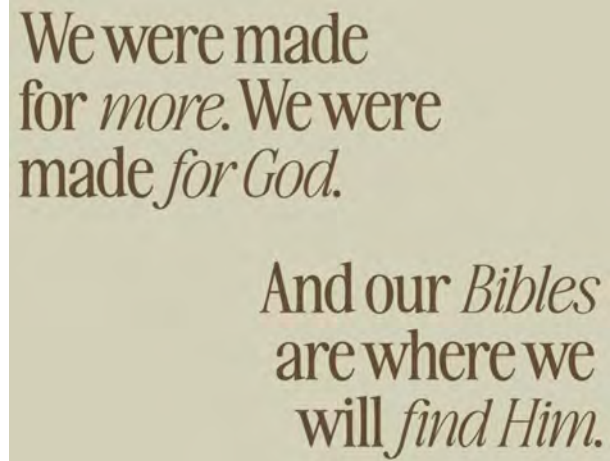
None of those things has ever satisfied. We were made for more. We were made for God. And our Bibles are where we will find Him. It is time for us to open up God's Word and feast! The One who satisfied our outstanding debt all those years ago does an outstanding job of satisfying us still.

There is a feast that satisfies. Christ, who satisfied our eternal debt, is more than able to satisfy every hunger we have today.

The feast is already on the table. Don't rush past it today. Pull up a chair, open your Bible, and dig in.

How can you practice making more time for Christ in your daily routine?

Wendy Speake



## Jesus does not just observe our grief he enters into it with us

What will happen next? I wondered as we ended week three of our loved one's hospital stay.

I knew Jesus loved me, and I was certain of His love for my family member too. But we were weary after so many days of uncertainty; sadness wrapped us in the chill of the hospital.

When will the heartache end?

In John 11, Jesus was on the move. Not to visit a cold hospital room but to visit some dear friends who were also experiencing brokenness due to illness.

The sickness of Mary and Martha's beloved brother Lazarus had delivered death while the sisters waited for the Saviour to come. But making His way to bring comfort to His loved ones, Jesus intended to bring more than His support. He was coming to show the sisters and "the Jews who had been with Mary in the house" (John 11:31, NIV) His love and His power as the Son of God.

As I read the entire story of Lazarus' death, there is a particular piece that soothes my own hurting

heart. Even though Jesus knew how this day would end, knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead, He deeply felt the pain of His friends.

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled" (John 11:33).

"Then Jesus wept" (John 11:35, NLT).

Jesus didn't just observe their grieving; He entered into it with them.

In my own season of heartache, just reading the words "Jesus wept" comforts me. He was with the sisters in Bethany, and He is with me — understanding the pain I am in right here, right now.

This story of Jesus and His friendship gives you and me a true picture of His heart. He was with His friends in their pain, and as surely as we are His beloved, He is with us as well.

In what ways have you felt the comfort of Jesus in difficult seasons?

Lynn Cowell



## When we focus on God's purpose over our plans

There is no guarantee we'll see our plans come to pass perfectly. This often leaves us to face the sting of what feels like failure when our many plans remain lists in our planners, scribbles in our journals.

But what if we choose to look at our unaccomplished or interrupted plans not as failures but as opportunities? What if God is using what we call "failed plans" for His greater purpose?

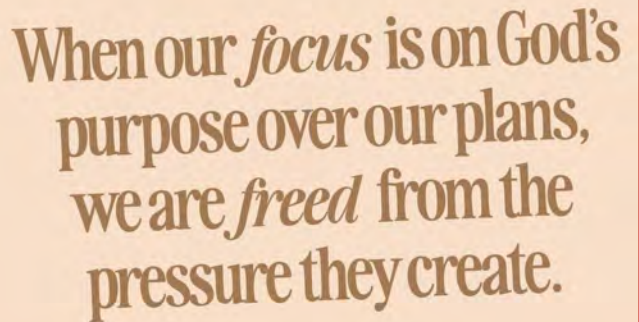
Think of some of Jesus' disciples. Matthew planned to be a tax collector. (Matthew 9:9) Andrew, Peter, James and John planned to be fishermen, but an encounter with Jesus interrupted those plans for a purpose that would spread the gospel to all nations. (Matthew 4:18-22)

Unfulfilled plans are often pathways to God's greater purpose. When our focus is on God's purpose over our plans, we are freed from the pressure they create. We release the urge to do everything at once and the frustration when we realize we can't.

Plans are what we intend to do, but the effects of our purpose in Christ grow far beyond our intentions. No matter what plans come to pass — or not — this year, we can always have peace when we know that even if plans fail, God's purpose always prevails.

What plans can you trust God with today, knowing that no matter what happens, His purpose will prevail?

Christina Patterson



When our *focus* is on God's purpose over our plans, we are *freed* from the pressure they create.

CHRISTINA PATTERSON

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## We can trust that our God

My name is Miriam, and I live with my family in Burkina Faso. My story begins when my husband fell sick.

Our pastor bought us a house close to his, where he could pray for my husband. Despite the sickness, we were like any other Christian family who went to church together. After one Sunday service, I told my husband and son to return to our old home to prepare the fields, saying my daughters and I would soon join them.

At about 5 p.m., some of us were sitting on the steps of the compound where we lived, and the terrorists came. A few pointed guns at us and brought us inside. The others surrounded the yard with guns in their hands, threatening to shoot if anyone fled. They kidnapped eight of us, including the pastor and my two daughters.

During this, I prayed a prayer based on the story of Daniel in the lion's den: "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight" (Daniel 6:22a-b).

I focused on that story, saying, Oh Lord, today I'm also in a lion's den, as Daniel was, but You saved him. I know if You want to save me, You can save me.

One day, I finally had an opportunity to escape with my daughters. We left in the dark at about 9 p.m. and walked all night. We were afraid of being caught and killed like others who tried to escape. So we relied on the Lord for all that could happen. For five days, we walked day and night. At last, we arrived in a village where we found someone to transport us home.

That first day home, my husband and I celebrated, as we had thought we would never see each other again. By the grace of God, we were reunited with great joy.

Please pray for me, my children and my husband. I trust that God, our Protector, Provider and Savior, will continue to work in my life and in yours.

How has God delivered you in the past? How does that give you hope for your future?

Miriam from Burkina Faso (Global Christian Relief)

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Declare this today:

Though things feel out of control, God is still in control.

# The McDonald Messenger

with Glen & Beth McDonald

July 2023

## Church Life

God continues to be faithful to His mission in Roxby Downs. Through the challenges of distance and shift work, we are continuing to meet and encourage each other in faith.

The prayers for the family who brought their children for baptism have been answered. This family has been resolute in making Jesus the centre of their lives with Jemma & Louwtjie being confirmed. We see this faith spilling out through their discipling of others resulting in another baptism - Taylor and her son Clifton. The hope this has brought Taylor is great, lifting her eyes to Jesus and inviting others into this same hope. Please pray as I continue to lead Taylor through Christianity Explored with another mum who has recently connected to the church through Tots & Tunes.

Through the last few months, we have been having great conversations with connections we have made through Tots and Tunes. It is amazing how having young children leads people to ask questions about life and purpose. For those who have been introduced to God as children, it can be an opportunity for them to reconnect to God and the church. Please pray for these families who are reconnecting.

The nature of Roxby Downs means that people have connections in different areas of life. We have seen the fruits of God's wisdom in these relationships as people at church start praying for others. One couple invited another couple, who moved to town but found it hard to connect to church due to the pressures of work, to meet together to read the Bible. This has resulted in the new couple now committing to the church. They are looking at ways of including another couple new to town in their Bible study. What a blessing this is to see the community grow around God's word.

For three years now, I (Glen) have been meeting with Darryn to read the Bible and pray. Through family life and his work, it is difficult for him to make it to church each week, yet God continues to grow him through our time together, even though it has been limited by sickness. He is now praying for one of his Islander friends who is keen to join us. I am also praying for another Islander friend who has shown interest in joining us.

Please pray for the opportunity for these men to meet and encourage each other in God's word.

We continue to have a church service in Andamooka. Over the last three years, this has primarily been to encourage the few Saints down there. Over the last three months, we have connected with another couple who have shown an interest and have come to several services.

Our partnership with the RAAF Chaplain has also borne fruit in the lives of several people. Towards the end of 2022, following the carols service, all our Christian connections in Woomera moved away. Yet God by His grace has brought many people new to their faith to Woomera. We have been able to connect with and encourage them. We were able to support them through tough times through prayer and practical support. They have begun to join our Bible study group via Zoom as we look at discipling them in their faith.

Over the next few months, we are looking at how we can develop our children's ministry at our Sunday (or Saturday) church services. We are looking forward to having Rachel Dirks from BCA join us for some training in children's ministry and help us set a direction. It is exciting to see a couple of people from Roxby lifting their eyes to the possibilities and wanting to be involved. Please keep praying for more people to be involved with this ministry so that we can continue to grow these opportunities.



## Good Friday in the Park

Once again we were able to reflect on the hope of Jesus' death on Good Friday in the park. There were over 50 people at the service, with over half not being regular members of our church. This was followed by morning tea in the park and a lot of conversations and encouragement. It is a great reminder that people are still wanting to be connected to God through Jesus.

Many of these connections have come through our annual mission with the Trinity Church Network from Adelaide and the children's programs we have been able to run following these missions.



Good Friday service in the park

## Tots and Tunes

The main connection we have with our community comes through Tots and Tunes. The numbers are continuing to grow and relationships are being formed. Families are encouraged by the program to engage with their children followed by good coffee or hot chocolate and an opportunity to chat. It is exciting when these opportunities and relationships are seen by those of our church as an opportunity to live out their Christian faith and look for ways to invite people to church or to have conversations about their faith. As one mum put it, the relationships we build at Tots and Tunes enable us to continue to connect with people in the cafe or at school. When this is seen as an opportunity to point people to Jesus, we see the kingdom grow.



Tots and Tunes enjoying the bubble song

## Trinity Network Mission to Roxby Downs

We are so thankful for the partnership with the Trinity Network in Adelaide. We have started planning for the September/October mission during the school holidays. This is the third year we have run the mission and we are seeing a great connection with the community.

One child who we have built a connection with keeps asking when the "Big Kids" will be coming. He gets so excited when I tell him not long. He has been to every children's event we've run, and his family will sometimes come to our Saturday night church. With each connection we have with him, we see a small shift in his understanding of the gospel and his confidence in Jesus Christ. He is just one of a few children who have been introduced to Jesus.

Please pray for the ongoing relationship and discipleship of these children and their families.

## Family Life

This year we said goodbye to Zac as he moved to Adelaide for school. While we miss him dearly, we have been encouraged as he has flourished at school. He has settled into church at Trinity Tansley.

Many of our fears about his faith were alleviated as he has committed to serving the church and the people there. We are thankful to the church family supporting him - picking him up for church, encouraging him and keeping an eye out for him.



A long weekend, allowed us a trip to Adelaide to visit Zac and spend family time at the Zoo

Beth has continued to serve our community as the Family Co-ordinator at the 'Community Hub'. It has been a blessing to our community, providing parenting training and support to families and parents. The relationships formed through the Community Hub are easy links to invite people to attend *Tots and Tunes* and other events at the church.

We have now started a family tradition to holiday at Port Broughton each January. It was exciting to be able to share this time with Beth's parents, brother & sister-in-law and nephews. This was also the first opportunity to meet one of our nephews after COVID-19 lockdowns and border restrictions.

We are looking forward to August when we will celebrate Beth's parent's 50th Wedding anniversary. We're going on a cruise to New Caledonia with Beth's family, along with an Aunty & Uncle from the UK.

### Prayer & Praise Points

- Thank God for the growth of the new Christians who have joined us in the last few years.
- Thank God that Zac has settled into Adelaide and serving in his church.
- Pray for the development of children's & youth leaders, and more people with a vision for this ministry
- Pray for the establishment of a ministry to the mining camps to provide a Christian community to encourage those who are fly in/fly out.
- Pray for the organisation of the Trinity Network mission to Roxby Downs.
- Pray for us as a family that we can rest and not feel rushed.

Love from

*Glen, Beth, Zac, Lili, Jaxon, Jesse & Asher*



Our ministry in Roxby Downs is supported by [Bush Church Aid](#)

*Reaching Australia for Christ since 1919*

## When we remember that God has numbered our days

Maybe it's my age (let's just say I'm in my mid-late 40s, shall we?), or maybe it's the season I'm in - (preparing to graduate my oldest child from year 12 and see him head off to university in another state), but Psalm 90 and its implications have resonated in my heart and mind over the last several months. The psalmist, often presumed to be Moses, asks God to "teach us to number our days" in Psalm 90:12.

Perhaps what's most encouraging to me in this passage is the use of the word "teach" — because that means it's normal not to automatically have wisdom for how to live our days purposefully, wisely and rightly motivated. This is something to be learned over time.

The eternal hope of Christ gives purpose to our days. There is a destination we're headed to — a hope not yet fully realized — and this world is not it.

So numbering our days isn't about mustering up fervour to "live life to the fullest" or to "carpe diem" our way through life. No, life's meaning has already been secured by the image of God we carry in us (Genesis 1:27) and the finished work of redemption purchased for us by Jesus (Ephesians 1:7).

What does it mean to number our days, then? It means rejoicing in our eternal hope and allowing it to shape the choices we make — how we spend our time, where we look for encouragement, how we spend money, what entertainment we seek out, and the people we choose to invest in and listen to.

If we consider every day as part of God's plan to teach us to take our eyes off of our immediate circumstances, we can set our minds on the God who has purposefully placed us in the midst of our current season so that we might live for Him. When we remember that God has numbered our days, we treasure everything that reminds us we already have everything we need in Him.

How does this eternal perspective help you number your days and gain a heart of wisdom?

Ruth Chou Simons

WHEN WE REMEMBER THAT  
GOD HAS NUMBERED OUR  
DAYS, WE TREASURE WHAT  
REMINDS US WE ALREADY HAVE  
EVERYTHING WE NEED IN HIM.

RUTH CHOU SIMONS

## You can look at all your past mistakes

There's a hard but beautiful story in the Bible that shows a picture of Jesus' desire to choose those of us who struggle to see our value. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who was caught in adultery to the temple courts where Jesus was. Could you imagine being caught in the very act of some of your biggest mistakes, arrested on the spot, and dragged to a public setting to be killed?

"When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

'No one, sir,' she said.

'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin'" (John 8:7-11, NIV).

You see what just happened? He flipped the script.

Not only did Jesus create accountability for the public shaming, but He also chose to show love to a woman who, to her community, was blemished and worthy of death. Her brokenness didn't discount her access to, and love from, the Saviour of the universe.

When you decide to bring your hurts into the light, hope and healing can be yours. Through this act of choosing the woman in John 8, Jesus is showing us today that He chooses you and me as well. Jesus is choosing you right now. The question is: Will you be brave enough to fight for your greatest hope by fighting through your greatest hurt?

What's an area of your life you've discounted God from using because of past mistakes or pain?

Toni J Collier

You can *look* at all your past mistakes, your *past pain*, the parts of your story that you just want to *forget*, and *declare* that they don't get to have the final say in *your life*.

Toni Collier

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LET *unruly* NEGATIVE TALK INFECT YOUR DAY EITHER. *Fight* BACK WITH THE WORDS GOD HAS SPOKEN ABOUT WHO HE IS AND WHO YOU ARE *through* HIM.

KAREN WINGATE

## You don't have to let unruly negative talk infect your day

I catch myself thinking irrelevant, negative phrases more often than I care to admit:

"You always do that."

"They'll never change."

"I'm not good enough."

"I can never do anything right."

I know they're not true. And I could wave my thoughts aside, justifying them in the emotion of the moment, but the problem is, if you and I say or think those negative ideas often enough, they become like tiny seeds that germinate and take root in the well-watered corners of our memories. Soon, the same thought comes more frequently with greater intensity, and we accept as truth what is actually a lie our enemy would have us believe.

I like the how-to advice Paul gave the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 10:5: "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

We can't prevent those thoughts from sounding in our brains, but we can refuse to mull over them. Think about the imagery Paul used: "take captive every thought." Like putting up a blockade to divert unwanted traffic, we have the choice to confine our negative thoughts and false words. We refuse to let the thoughts continue; in fact, we walk away from their influence.

What verses help you to remember what God says about you?

Karen Wingate

## June 2023 Prayer Update



**Ian and Jenny Wood**

*Serving the Lord in Darwin*

**We're back in Darwin!**



Thank you so much for your prayers for our epic drive back to Darwin. We arrived in Darwin yesterday on 28 June, after six days on the road. Right now we're both tired but really excited to be back home



*We went through a few different places this time. The first picture is at Tambo. The second is a replica of the Black Stump at Blackall. Everywhere we went after this was officially beyond the Black Stump.*



*There were some unexpectedly beautiful places like this wetland at a rest stop on the Barkly Highway, but also lots of kilometres of Mitchell grass.*



*We stayed with some friends yesterday night in Nightcliff. Darwin City is just visible from their balcony over the water. They'll help us move into our old unit in Darwin City today. We both plan to start back at Nungalingya after we're settled in the unit.*

## **Prayer Points**

### **We're grateful**

- for the time we spent with family
- for the encouragement we got from our supporting churches
- that we arrived back safely

### **Please pray**

- for us as we settle back into our unit and at Nungalingya

*After this, I saw a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb.*

Revelation 7:9

*From Ian and Jenny*

## About St Paul's

St. Paul's Ginninderra was re-established in 1973 to serve the suburbs of Spence, Melba, Florey, Evatt and McKellar. Four decades later people are more mobile and parish boundaries mean very little and yet a large proportion of those who attend St. Paul's today come from within that area and we also welcome people from all over Canberra. The church leases a section of Mt Rogers Community Centre (old Spence Primary School).

At St. Paul's we endeavour to:

- make Jesus Christ central to our life-related preaching
- nurture adults, youth and children in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ
- encourage people to discover and exercise their Spiritual gifts
- offer opportunities for people to find wholeness in their lives
- create an atmosphere of love and friendship
- live out the Great Commission of Jesus
- see "His Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven"

## Worship Services - normal time

### SUNDAYS

8:00am - Holy Communion - a Traditional Service

10:00am - Holy Communion - a Contemporary Service with Kidz Alive (1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays) - [this service is available on Zoom, see the Parish's website \(https://stpaulsginninderra.org.au\)](https://stpaulsginninderra.org.au) for the link

10:00am - Prayer, Praise & Proclamation with Kidz Alive (2nd & 4th Sundays) - [this service is available on Zoom](#)  
Kidz Alive may not run in school holidays

### MONDAYS

9:00am - Lectio 365 Prayer Time

### WEDNESDAYS

9:00am - Lectio 365 Prayer Time with Holy Communion and fellowship morning tea

### FRIDAYS

9:00am - Lectio 365 Prayer Time

## Contact Us

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