

Parish Newsletter: October 17th, 2021



ST PAUL'S LITHGOW | ST THOMAS' WALLERAWANG | ST STEPHEN'S PORTLAND

Dear Friends,

Last week's newsletter raised some practical implications of our 'devotion to prayer & studying the Bible' (one of our core values). I shared Ian Paul's spirited argument for printed Bibles not so much because it's a flawless argument – but to encouraged us to talk about how we grow in our values. To think not just about what we read in the Bible, but about how we read it. Kris Young (10am congregation) very helpfully engaged with that opportunity. She writes of a different method of reading: using screens. Kris writes:

- 1. For some, screens make it easier to read.** *This can be true across the age spectrum. Generation Z (now heading into young adulthood) is often described as the 'digital generation'. The vast majority of our younger generation have grown up with a screen in their hands almost as soon as they can walk. They're sometimes more familiar with a search bar than a contents page, too. At the other end of the age spectrum (which is where I'm heading fast), vision can become an issue. There's a limit to the font size that a paper Bible can produce before it requires a forklift! One of the features I love in my electronic Bible is that I can increase the font size to a level I can read.*
- 2. Screens provide benefits to the ordinary Christian.** *Some of us have cavernous memories, capable of holding large slabs of the Bible text in our heads as memory verses. But for others, we quote the Bible the way Jesus did: "It is written..." (although unlike Jesus, we struggle to remember the book, verse or location). This is where electronic Bibles can help. Cross-references in the text exist as hyperlinks – touch a link and you go from Jesus' quote of the Old Testament instantly back to the very place it came from. If you vaguely know the words of a verse you once heard, the search function in an electronic Bible can help you find it.*
- 3. Screens give us portability.** *When I'm in church, I use an iPad as a journal, writing my sermon notes on one side of the screen, and keeping my Bible app open on*

the other. With the same app, I can journal my quiet times and prayer requests. I can even look up commentaries on the passages, having it all in the one place instead of spreading five or six different items across my lap. Travelling for work and family over the past few years, I haven't needed to pack a library into my suitcase, since the "library" fits in my handbag. I still love my paper Bible when I'm at home, but I'm also grateful for the technology that helps me to have the Bible at hand wherever I am.

- 4. Screen apps can help us remember to spend time with God** *Every morning, a little reminder pops up on my phone that tells me it's time to pray. It comes from an app called "PrayerMate". Using this app, I can write my own prayer lists and keep track of various people I need to pray for each day. I can also subscribe to prayer diaries from Christian organisations like Anglican Aid and the Bible Society, or link up with set prayers from Scripture. The app is no good if I don't pray, of course! But it is one good way of organising my thoughts and prayer needs. Again, this is something I can take with me anywhere.*

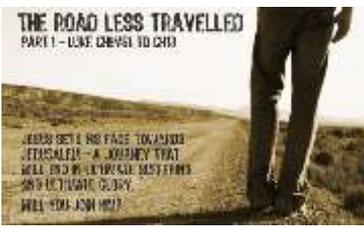
Mark's challenge to think about "how" we read God's word is a fantastic one, and I have been thinking it through since I read it. But there's one big challenge that follows me no matter whether the Bible I'm looking at is paper or electronic, or even if I'm listening to an audio version. My challenge is to think about where my heart is at when I read. God's word is alive and active. So instead of getting distracted by the type of Bible I'm using, I need to focus on bringing my heart to the process of reading it. It's not a chore or a religious ritual. It's an encounter where I hear from God himself. Will I listen? That's the big challenge!

As we grow in our devotion to God's Word, keep sharing 'how' you hear Him as well as what He's saying. There is an argument for the value of literal listening (using audio-Bibles rather than screen or printed) to be made!

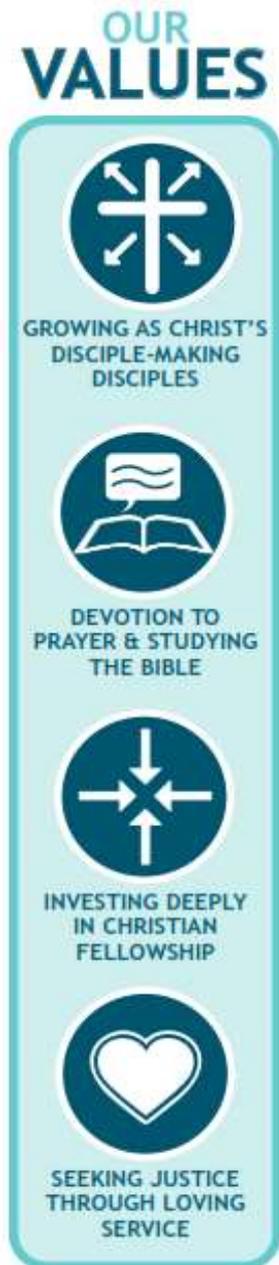
In Him, Mark Smith

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Wiradjuri people.

On this land they taught their children their beliefs, knowledge and culture and we pay our respect to them as we seek to do the same for our children. As we gather on these ancestral lands, we also acknowledge our God and heavenly Father who made the heavens and the earth, and to whom we are responsible for the current stewardship of this land that has been entrusted to us.



Sermon notes: 1 Kings 10v1-9 & Luke 12v13-59



Responding to God's Word in Practice:

1. HEAD: What did you learn?
2. HEART: What did God say to you?
3. HANDS: What will you do?

Word of encouragement: Reflections on the Single-minded Conference (Kathy Thomas, 10am congregation)

Conferences in past years on Single Mindedness, where we were enlightened with thought provoking ways to best serve one another with the idea that we are all made in the image of God, all in different circumstances, married, single, divorced, widowed, younger, older.... we are called to love & support one another, remembering that we are brother & sisters now & in eternity, which I found encouraging & helpful. Hence my enthusiasm to partake in the two webinars of Single Minded- online talks recently.

The first was on "Finding God In Our Loneliness", a talk from Lydia Brownback & a discussion & question time with Danni Treweek, focusing on loneliness, not only in singleness, but for everyone, especially in these times of isolation. Everyone can feel lonely at one point in time. You can be around a lot of people, very busy, live in a household of many, live alone, live with others, be married or single, you don't even have to be alone to be lonely. God has not hard wired us to be alone & has not made us self-sufficient. We need one another.... to love, pray, support and encourage one another. God also has a redemptive purpose in lonely seasons of our lives, to have spiritual discipline to humble ourselves to him. Our union with Jesus is the beginning of the end of our loneliness. Jesus experienced loneliness.... SO we are not alone...

The second was on "My Loneliness and Myself", It was said straight up.. that loneliness is such a big topic, for all... & affects many in many different ways. It touched on ways to acknowledge our loneliness and own it, Loneliness only really exists because we live in a broken world with broken relationships. We were given great strategies to put into place & helpful ways to help us recognise anxiety or panic points, to then respond in a more mature way, both emotionally & spiritually. Ultimately turning to the predictability of God is the only way. God is our constant, he is our rock & fortress, he never fails us.

I have to say, personally, for me... that the follow up questions with Lydia Brownback;- was SO SO helpful....Her answer to the question.." How can we share the gospel to our non-Christian friends who feel lonely"???? My goodness.. what a short, punchy, amazing, relational, thankful sum up" for sharing" not only with my non-Christian friends BUT to take on board & impart in my heart with gratitude & consolation, with my feelings of loneliness, especially through these lockdown times... What an awesome Lord, to have suffered loneliness, to unite us to God, so we are NEVER alone & then Danni said " He calls us friends"... What a privilege & a joy... THANK YOU GOD.

I have found these seminars both helpful & encouraging. I encourage you to consider joining in for the next two . Loneliness and the Christian Community. with Simon Flinders at 7:30 - 9:00 & on Thursday 28th October & Speaking Louder than Loneliness from 7:30 - 9:00 on Wednesday 1st December (God willing both of these will be in person).

Thank you Kindly, Kathy Thomas.

The next Single-minded conference is: **Loneliness & Christian Community: THURSDAY OCTOBER 28, 2021. ONLINE 7.30-9.00PM (AEDT) WITH SIMON FLINDERS.** *One of the great blessings of Christian life is the fellowship we have with one another. But even though we are surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ, sometimes we still feel lonely. This can be particularly true for single Christians. How can they faithfully navigate and respond to feelings of loneliness and disconnection in their Christian communities? How can married friends and church leaders better understand that sense of loneliness, and love them in and through it?*

Keeping in Contact

Ministry contacts:

Senior Minister

Mark Smith 0430 393 414
mark.smith@lpachurch.org.au
Not Available Thursdays

Children's & Youth Minister

John Young 0418 610 655
john.young@lpachurch.org.au
Not Available Saturdays

Community Pastor (Part-time)

James Barnes 0424 825 369
james.barnes@lpachurch.org.au
Not Available Saturdays

Wardens

Robert Hookham 0403 506 693
John Stevens 0438 473 862
Eric Young 0429 664 436

Parish Council

Sue Engeler 0431 101 476
Nick McKinney 0450 098 973
David Moffitt 0409 047 111
Bronwyn Webb 0416 189 960

Pastoral contacts

(Growth Group leaders)

Peter Avery 6352 3059
Julie Barnett 6352 2553
James Barnes 0424 825 369
Erica Debeuzeville 0466 994 741
Andrew Doran 0466 734 110
Ralph Fairbairn 0400 302 901
Jill Hookham 0403 502 181
Philippe Reyter 0402 515 165
Garry Roberts 0400 075 761
Julie Roberts 0429 911 643
Anna Smith 0424 340 687
Declan Smith 0474 231 223
John Stevens 0438 473 862

Ministry Teams & Leaders

Blessing Relationships (Julie Roberts): *Seeking to strengthen relationships in our community (in church & beyond)*

Mercy Ministry (George Auld): *seeking to serve spiritual needs by meeting physical & emotional difficulties.*

Reaching Out (James Barnes): *Seeking to make disciples of Jesus from this town & the world.*

Youth & Children's (John Young): *seeking to make youth & children in our town & church disciples of Jesus*

Prayer Points

Sunday – Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday – Praise God for satisfying all our physical needs & the abundance of this world. Pray especially for those who work on land & sea (Farming & fishing).

Tuesday – Praise God for His creativity in making this world. Pray for all those whose work reflects that creativity – all in the media & the arts.

Wednesday – Give thanks that one day, the glory of the nations will be brought to honour Christ (Revelation 21v26). Pray for all those who build society – for those involved in commerce & industry.

Thursday – Pray for the release of this world from the curse that will lift the frustration & vanity of work (glance over Ecclesiastes). As we wait, pray for those whose work is unfulfilling, stressful or fraught with danger.

Friday – Praise God for His compassion. Remember all who are sick in body, mind or spirit (especially those in our community).

Saturday – Give thanks that God lets his mercy flow so freely to our rebellious world. Pray for the work of Anglican Aid – who bring relief in both word & deed to many in need around the world. Remember especially our partner project: the Karagwe Disability Programme (Tanzania), helping people living with a disability suffer from discrimination, social isolation and lack opportunities to break out of the poverty cycle.

Sunday – Father in heaven, keep your household the church steadfast in faith and love, that through your protection it may be free from all adversities, and may devoutly serve you in good works to the glory of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Notices

Returning to 'in-person' church: Reaffirming we are all one in Christ & so that we don't force a line between the vaccinated & unvaccinated in church life, we return to 'in-person church' on **Sunday October 31st & Monday 1st November**. *Bishop Gary Koo* will join us at all 3 Sunday services. A chance to meet him, as he encourages us in Christ's mission. Until December, numbers will remain tight (60 at Lithgow, 27 at Portland & 20 at Wallerawang), we'll be masked & not sing. Our 10am service continues to be livestreamed, & it remains on our Youtube channel (LPA Church) to watch later & share. That live-stream will remain, even after we return to in-person.



Invitational Services 'Finding light in dark times': Jesus said: *'I am the light of the world... whoever follows me will have the light of life'*. His offer out of darkness needs to be heard by all. Our in-person services & online on November 7 & 8 focus on making that offer to all – especially to those who've not yet received it.

Postcards to make inviting easier are available. We're inviting everyone to take a bundle of 20 postcards. Use some to invite specific friends & family. Use the remainder in your street. Write your contact on the back (eg. 'The Smiths at number 8') & pray as you place them in the letterbox (or knock on the door). Contact James Barnes for your bundle.

Single-minded conference 'Loneliness & Christian

Community': Thursday 28th October. Online 7.30-9.00PM – if you are vaccinated, you might want to invite other vaccinated to join you to watch in your home. Contact Julie Roberts to participate.

Releasing funds for Portland toilets: For some time, Parish Council has been looking to provide indoor toilet with suitable access for those with disabilities. We have now approved a quote from a local builder and work will begin soon.

Several years our Parish sold 2 residences, one in Portland and the other Lithgow. The funds raised in property sales of Sydney Anglican properties are held in trust by the Sydney Diocese. We used some of these funds to purchase a property in Wallerawang suitable for a clergy/staff residence. Further funds were used to save the St Stephens Hall. The remainder of the funds (around \$1,300.00) has grown to \$19,556.64. Parish Council has decided to request these funds to partially pay for construction of toilet facilities at Portland. The dioceses require Parish Council to post a notice at the church buildings and to announce this request and verbally during notices during the services to ensure all parishioners are aware of what is happening. We will do this as well as send it out in our weekly email, Covid 19 restrictions have changed the way we communicate, please take time to read the notice. It is part of the information Mark emailed on the 15th October. Our good God has provided for us in the growth of the funds while held in trust. We look forward to providing adequate facilities and blessing those with needs different to others. If you have any questions please contact a Warden or Parish Councillor. On behalf of your Wardens, Eric Young.

Direct Giving details

Account Name: ANGLICAN PARISH of LITHGOW DIRECT GIVING
BSB - 062591 Account No. – 10085204
At the bank - Use the above details to deposit at the bank (CBA)
Cheque - Send to PO Box 192 Lithgow, NSW, 2790
In person – when we return to meeting on 31st October

Groups that we are able to pass your giving on to:

Some choose to give through us to others (by marked giving). We can do this for the following groups: AFES; Anglican Aid; Anglicare; Arise; BCA; CAP; CMS (Newbys); Fresh Food; LCEA (local SRE); Open Doors; MAF (Hadfields); Pioneers (Blair); Winter Appeal; Nungalinga College