

LIFT YOUR EYES

GUILT AND HOPE IN GOD'S WORLD



Wk 7

Sunday 11 July 2021

TODAY'S SERVICE:

- Welcome
- Song
- Confession
- Bible Reading: Isaiah 66:10-16
- Sermon
- Song
- Prayers
- Interview
- Conclusion

If you are a visitor please don't feel obliged to contribute financially.

Most St Stephen's collection is received electronically.
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It is looking more and more likely that our current lockdown will extend beyond the few weeks we initially hoped. This is daunting and depressing for most of us. Yet we should keep in mind the hope and good news we have.

Firstly, we are a church which believes our God is sovereign and has not lost control of the situation. He can be trusted in spite of the circumstances. Secondly, we are a church which wants to pray big prayers - the best thing we can do for our nation and ourselves is recommit to prayer. That is why we are running an online prayer time from 9:00-9:30am on Mondays throughout lockdown. Third, God has given us his church to support and care for each other and the world. How can you care for someone this week? Many ways - you can give them a call, commit to attending your Connect Group online, send a care package, pray for the more isolated members of our church or give the staff a call and offer a helping hand. By the gracious work of Christ, we are built for moments like this.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.



St Stephen's
WILLOUGHBY

Prayers for the Service

These prayers are used during the service. Prayer is a privilege we are given because Christ died for us. His death & resurrection means we can confidently approach God seeking forgiveness (Hebrews 10:22). If you believe that Christ died to deal with your failings then you should be confident to pray with us. If you are still exploring who Christ is then feel free to listen in.

Confession Prayer

“¹³Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

(Pslam 28: 13)

Our Father in heaven,
You are big, and we are small, thank you that you are Lord of all.
We are sorry for not loving and listening to you.
We are sorry that we choose our way instead of yours.
Please help us be friends with you again through Jesus.
Help us to listen and love you by your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

This is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-14).

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sin against us
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever
Amen

Sermon Notes

Prepare for Joy | Passage: Isaiah 66:10-16

1. What kind of joy does the Christian message promise?
2. Where does it come from?
3. What is different about the joy God offers?
4. How do you experience that joy - even now?

Connect Group Study

1. Within the safety and care of your group, some members might share and reflect on a hope/dream/ambition in your life that has been lost.

Read Isaiah 66:10-16

2. In your own words, describe what is promised to Jerusalem and her children in verses 11-16.

3. Isaiah tells God's people to "Rejoice", why might this be hard in the present for them? Why might it be hard for us?

Review Isaiah 66:12-13

4. Where does the comfort come from? Why is it important to recognise that God is the source of his people's comfort?
5. In verses 15-16, we see God's future has no room for his enemies. How might this actually be a source of encouragement?

6. **Read verse 14.** All throughout the Gospels and the New Testament, Jesus claims and is claimed to be the one through whom we can “see/experience” God’s restoration to ‘Jerusalem’ (Luke 4:16-20, cf. Isaiah 61:1-4).

How does the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ fulfil, initiate, and ensure God’s promise of comfort to us?

7. In 1 Peter 1:8, the Apostle Peter writes, "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." How do you experience Christ’s joy, despite the many adversities and broken hopes and dreams of this life?

Prayer Points

Read Isaiah with us!

Join us as we read through this Old Testament book together. Use these questions to help navigate the book and then share with someone else in the congregation or your Connect Group:

- (a) Is there a message of judgement in this passage?
What is it?
- (b) Is hope found in the passage?
What is it?
- (c) Consider what Jesus did. Is he alluded to? How does he bring hope to the situation of those hearing Isaiah’s judgment?

Monday - Isaiah 61:1-4
Tuesday - Isaiah 62:1-5
Wednesday - Isaiah 63:7-14
Thursday - Isaiah 64:4-9
Friday - Isaiah 65:17-25

Notices

Mission Gift Day - 25 July

Currently our parish supports 6 Mission Partners. All of our partners are involved in ministries which take the Gospel to less reached communities around the world. We partner with them because we want our generosity to extend beyond our immediate community and we will believe the good news of Jesus is God's way of saving all who believe (Rom 1:16-17)

On Sunday 25 July we will hold our annual Mission Gift Day across all services. Mission Gift Day is an opportunity to hear from our Mission Partners, celebrate them, pray for them and support them financially. The day promises to be a great celebration with a number of elements to mark the occasion.

Our general budget sets aside 5.5% of our congregations' giving to support the partners. In addition to that we run our Mission Gift Day where parishioners are invited to pledge a one-off gift. These gifts plus the parish's budgeted giving are then passed on to our partners. You may want to start considering how you can support them.

New Staff Member

Good news! We have a new member of our staff team. We welcome Kushak Sharma on to our team as our Communications and Admin Director. Kushak is a member of St James Anglican Croydon and came to follow Jesus in 2018 after one his neighbours invited him to church. He will work Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Once lockdown is over do make sure you introduce yourself to Kushak.

Upcoming Life Course

We are hoping to run a course called Life (created by EV church on the central coast). The focus remains to build relationships and we are looking at making our courses more accessible. The course is meant to begin in a month i.e. 3rd August but we have little idea what the COVID situation is going to look like then. We are working on worst and best case scenarios and would love to run the course no matter what happens. Pray for the upcoming course!

Kids and Youth News

Hope you will have a great time with the lockdown packs. They are full of fun challenges to help your kids and you make the most of lockdown by deepening your relationship with God!

The plan for the next two services is for kids to attend church online with their family. We are looking to start Playtime back up on the 20th (COVID permitting). Kids and Youth program would restart from the 25th. Half Past Six (online or in-person) aims to start back on Friday 30th July.

Serving as part of our Church

One of the ways we grow as Christians is by serving alongside others. Jesus said he came “not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many”.

There are many ways to serve. Currently we are keen to encourage musicians in our church to join our music team. Our 9:45am and 5:30pm Services are short of musicians. Sunday music is a great way to help us **celebrate together for the glory of Christ** (one of our mission priorities). If you have a musical skill then please speak to David Krebs or Matt Straw who can give you more details or use the QR code on the front page.



Praying for our church

How can we support God’s work in our area? Our 1st Mission Priority as a parish is to **pray big prayers shaped by the gospel**. Can you commit to pray regularly for our church this coming week? Here are suggestions of prayer points:

1. Parish-wide conviction of our sin and need for the good news of Jesus;
2. Staff and Production team as they adjust to the new requirements of COVID lockdown.
3. Wisdom and interest in running the Life Course in term 3 despite COVID; and
4. That God might bring 3 new families to join us at our 9:45am service in the coming 6months.



What's Coming Up

Monday 12th	9:00am Online Prayer Meeting (Meeting ID: 885 1851 2491 Passcode: 216923)
Sunday 18th	Connect Group Leaders' meeting
Sunday 25th	Mission Gift Day at all Services — August —
Tuesday 3rd	Life Course Scheduled to begin

Our Staff Contact us!



Prashanth Colombage
Senior Minister
M: 0432 314 466
E: prash@st-stephens.com.au

Matt Straw
Assistant Minister
E: matt@st-stephens.com.au



Pippie van den Heuvel
Kids & Youth Minister
E: children@st-stephens.com.au

Jill Chilton
Membership Minister
E: jillianchilton@gmail.com



Kushak Sharma
Admin & Communications Director
E: kushak@st-stephens.com.au