



Vision Series 2021

WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHURCH?

Beautiful | Diverse | Large
by the gracious work of Christ

Wk 5

Sunday 29 August 2021

TODAY'S SERVICE:

- Welcome
- Song
- Confession
- Spotlight
- Bible Reading:
Mark 4:1-20
- Sermon
- Song
- Interview
- Song
- Prayer
- Conclusion

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

Most St Stephen's collection is received electronically.
BSB: 062 272
Account Number:
00490436

This Bulletin contains a number of hyperlinks throughout. Feel free to use them to link to forms, multimedia and Bible passages.

This is the final week of our Vision Series for 2021. How have you found the series. Take time in your connect groups this week to reflect honestly and let us know via the form in the study.

In this final week we focus on our vision of being a 'large' church. Most church won't say it - we feel a bit silly writing that - but most want it. We sometimes want it for the wrong reasons: our own power, prestige and place in the world appear to be impacted by the size of our group. Others are automatically turned off by the idea of a large church. Some of those people don't want it for the wrong reasons to: fear of losing comfortable places, power and prestige as the group broadens.

We want to be a large church because God wants his kingdom to grow, he wants his message to go out and his heart is always open to new people. Large doesn't necessarily mean healthy but healthy things do grow So we want to be a healthy and large church. A church who grows for the sake of God and those outside - not those inside the church.



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

Gracious God, we have come to see that our lives fall far short of your glory.

Response - **Have mercy and forgive us.**

You have given your Son for us, and poured out your Spirit, yet we fail to return your love with all our heart.

Response - **Have mercy and change us.**

Too often we are selfish and proud, ignoring you and neglecting others.

Response - **Have mercy and cleanse us.**

When we do not truly trust and obey you, we are overwhelmed by self-pity, fear and worry.

Response - **Have mercy and deliver us.**

In Christ we are given a sure hope and secure love, yet we follow the false hopes and desires of this world.

Response - **Have mercy and renew us.**

Father, through the redeeming death of your Son, by your Spirit, and through your word,
enable us to follow you with joy.

Response - **All this we ask, confident of your faithfulness and love.
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

Church (on the phone)

If you would like to listen (via phone) to the Sunday Service at 7:45am on Sunday Mornings:

1. Dial 8015 6011.
2. You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID at that point dial 890 595 1389 #.
3. If the meeting has not already started press # to wait. You will be prompted to enter your unique participant ID but you do not need a participant ID so press # to skip.
4. When asked for the meeting password Dial 088653. You can now listen to the service.

Sermon Notes

Grappling with Growth | Passage: [Mark 4:1-20](#)

1. Reasonable Expectations

2. Effective Methods

3. Responsible parties

Connect Group Study

1. Do you see the church as one of these in relation to the world?



Read [Mark 4:1-20](#), [Acts 2:42-47](#) & [John 15:5-8](#)

2. What encouragements are there for growth in these passages

3. What can hinder us as we think about growing?

4. Who is responsible for growth? How do you see that in the passages?

[Watch this video](#)

5. What do you fear about the church increasing in size?
6. Look back at Acts 2:42-47 and the description of the early church. What is appealing about this growing early church?
7. Complete [this form](#) and let us know how the vision series this year has impacted you and your group

Please pray God would make us a church that is beautiful, diverse and large by the gracious work of Christ.

Prayer Points

Read the Bible with us!

As we work through our vision statement this August enjoy these readings through the week.

How does each passage help encourage our vision of a healthy growing community?

Monday - [John 15:5-8](#)
Tuesday - [Acts 2:42-47](#)
Wednesday - [Mark 4:1-20](#)
Thursday - [Matt 25:14-30](#)
Friday - [Matt 5:13-16](#)

Notices

Pray for Afghanistan - Video from the Archbishop



Click on the image

The world stands in disbelief as they watch the situation unfold in Afghanistan. As we see government and order dismantled, ordinary people running for their lives. Thousands of people have been displaced, including women, children and vulnerable members of the community. As a church lets pray for those who find themselves in the middle of this crisis.

Sam Chan's Visit

Last Tuesday Night Sam Chan joined our book club to share and participate in some Q&A with us! It was a great night. Sam shared about the dramatic changes and shifts in the cultural and spiritual landscape that we face in the 21st Century and how this may effect how we 'bring our friends to faith'. It was so helpful we thought we'd share it with you. You can watch the [Q&A Session](#) too. Please let Matt Straw know how you find it.

Lockdown Update -

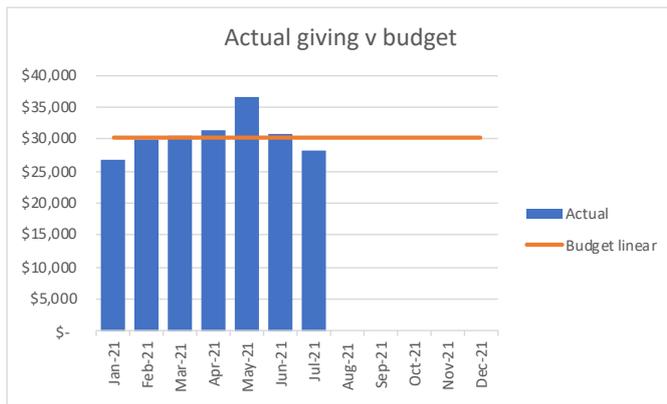
Grellman family

We are spending the lockdown bushwalking and Face timing; there are movie nights, keep fit boot camp sessions, reading sessions, and online shopping. We miss seeing family and friends in person. The girls especially miss being at school and classmates. We are all praying that people will get the vaccine quickly so school and church can go back. We are also praying for Great Nanna, that she won't be too lonely.



Grellman family

Finances update for August



Thank you to our members who financially support St. Stephen's ministries. You will notice a dip in the monthly giving over the past month. In part this is due to our inability to take cash offerings. If you normally give in cash either consider giving online (details on the front cover) or

keep you giving and bring it in when church returns.

The revenue from our weekly site rentals has also dropped off in light of the lockdown. Please pray for wisdom in handling our finances.

Kids & Youth Update

It has been wonderful to see God at work in our young people through lockdown!

Here are some praise points!

- Families are having conversations with their kids at home about heaven and hell.
- Youth inviting their non-believing friends to Senior high bible study! We had two new people join us on Sunday
- The youth at switch memorising Ephesians 2:8-9
- Families that have recently joined our Kidzone zoom and getting plugged into the community!

Let's praise God! There are many challenges that we face; God is still at work even during this troubled season.

Kids & Youth - who can you invite to this week's program?

What's Coming Up

- Sunday 29th Switch Online at 9:45am
For Zoom Details - Email children@st-stephens.com.au
Kidszone Online at 9:15 to 9:30 -
For Zoom Details - Email children@st-stephens.com.au
- Monday 30th Online Prayer Meeting 8:30-8:55am - [Zoom Link](#)
Meeting ID: 878 2345 9321 | Passcode: 836532
- Tuesday 31st Lockdown Book Club - Week 3 - 7:30 to 8:30 pm [Register](#)
- September-
- Friday 1st HPS Online 6:30-7:30 pm - [Zoom Link](#)
Meeting ID: 822 6072 6503 | Passcode: HPS

Our Staff - Contact us!



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