

VISION SERIES 2022

Our future together



Wk 2

Sunday 7 August 2022

TODAY'S 9:45^{AM} SERVICE:

- Welcome
- Songs
- Spotlight
- Bible Reading:
[Eph 3:14-21](#)
(Bible p.1175)
- Sermon
- Prayer
- Communion
- Song
- Conclusion

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

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

Our 9:45am service is live streamed to our YouTube and Facebook Channels. If you don't wish to feature on our stream, please occupy the pews towards the back.

Welcome to St Stephen's. We are thankful that you are here. Every week we enjoy welcoming new people and visitors to our church family. We'd love to hear how you found your time here. You can let us know by speaking with the person you came with, chatting with a staff member or using the Connect Card which is accessible via the QR Code.



We are currently working through a 'Vision' series on Sundays. It is our chance to think about what kind of church we should be. At St Stephen's we want our sense of purpose and place to be primarily shaped by the Bible and its great story.

We live in an age of pessimism and hopelessness. Yet amid this age, the story of God's rescues, his love for the world, his control over the ultimate outcome of all things, and his willingness to show mercy, provides us with hope and cause for optimism. His church should be optimistic about his plans and the church's place in them. We are optimistic not because of who we are but who God is. We are optimistic because of the message of hope Jesus brings.

Prayers for those not sharing in Lord's Supper

Participation in the Lord's Supper is for those who have professed faith in Jesus - it's a powerful and important symbol of the Christian message. As such we want to encourage those who are still exploring the Christian faith to feel free to remain in their seats when others move to the front to receive the Lord's Supper. During that time you may want to reflect on the sermon or Bible reading. You may also want to pray one of these prayers below.

Prayer for those searching for truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me who you are. Give me an understanding of you that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those struggling with sin

Lord Jesus, enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the pioneer and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

Prayers adapted from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York.

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 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

Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group Questions

1. What can shake your confidence in God's plan for his church?
How do you respond at such times?

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

Getting your head around the passage:

Use as many questions as you need to ensure you understand the passage's contents.

1. How does Paul describe God?
 2. What does he ask for? List the various aspects of his request.
 3. What role does Christ play in his request?
 4. What is the role of the church in this prayer?
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2. Why should prayer be the 1st characteristic of God's church as they seek to live out their identity in the world?
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3. What impedes our prayer life – either stopping it or lowering the hopes of our prayers?

4. What is the gospel story? What hopes does it present to God's people? How can these fuel our prayer life?

5. What does your group need to do so that you continually shape your prayers around the Gospel story? Identify ways your regular meeting can ensure this happens.



GaP Group Reflection

Watch the video provided to your group leader.

1. What can shake your confidence in God's plan for his church? How do you respond at such times?

Prayer

1. Share some of the gospel shaped hopes you have for our church and pray for them.
2. Pray God might grant your group and its members a deep confidence in God's plans

Read the Bible with us!

Use these passages to shape your prayers this week.

Monday - [Eph 3:20-21](#)

Tuesday - [1 King 19:19](#)

Wednesday - [Acts 4:29](#)

Thursday - [Mark 9:22-24](#)

Friday - [Luke 22:42](#)

Notices

Vision Month Week - 2

It can be easy to disappear into a state of pessimism about the task at hand for the church. However, the Biblical story challenges us to re-orient our mindset. We are called not to despair by hope and optimism. We are called to an optimism shaped by God's purposes, plans and power. That optimism must first pour out in prayer. For this reason, we want to be shaping our hearts around the gospel and see those heartfelt convictions pour out in our prayers. Our midweek Gospel and Prayer groups are places that seek to reinsert gospel optimism into our lives. They seek to speak the counter-cultural gospel story into our weekly rhythms. They are small communities that can equip us to escape the pessimism of a world without God. If you haven't joined one, maybe now is the time. Speak to Prash or Jill.

Celebration Sunday - 28 August

On Sunday, 28 August, we will hold a brunch (after the 9:45am Service) and dinner (after the 5:30pm Service). Both events will be opportunities for us to gather and celebrate the great gift St Stephen's is to each of us. These meals are free for everyone. So, we hope you will commit to attending and celebrating with us. The Christian life together is a celebration characterised by serving and sharing together. As we share a meal together and serve each other in that context, we are reminded of the great banquet where Jesus will serve us! We cannot think of a better way to finish our Vision Month and look forward to all God will do in the coming year.

Prayer Night

On Wednesday about 40 of our church members from across our three services met to pray in the Chapel Hall. We prayed big, gospel-shaped prayers as nothing we plan to do can happen without God. Thank you to those who could come.

Thank you to all who have helped with the letterbox drop for the Dumpling Making Night fliers. Keep praying for this.



Last Chance for Dumpling Making Night

This week is the last chance to grab your tickets to the Dumpling Making Night. Don't miss out on the opportunity to bring friends to hear about Jesus and enjoy making & eating dumplings. It's a night for families, youth, adults, and kids. Taste and see how great dumplings are; we also hope to give everyone a 'taster' of how incredible Jesus is. Check our Facebook pages for a run sheet of the night. Tickets are at st-stephens.com.au/thiswinter.

When? Friday, 12th Aug; time - 6:30-8:30pm @ Chapel Hall.

Simply Christianity

The Simply Christianity course will begin Friday 19 August from 6:30pm, the week after Dumpling Making Night. We'll enjoy Korean Fried Chicken as we look at the historical evidence for Jesus Christ. Come along and bring your friends to explore the person at the heart of the Christian faith. Register at st-stephens.com.au/thiswinter



Kids and youth news

At St Stephen's, we want to (in partnership with parents) flood a pathway that takes children ages 1-18 from unbelief to biblically shaped faith.

At the moment, we are missing a step in this pathway. That is a place for kids to invite their non-Christian friends too. Ideally, we would have an after-school kids club, but we are not in the position to do so. We have decided to have 'Bring Sundays'. It is a chance for kids to bring their friends to church. We hope that providing this opportunity will help our church kids develop a heart for the lost and see new families join our church. How can you help? Encourage the kids at church to invite their friends along. Keep an eye out for new families on the 21st of August. Make sure you say Hi.



What's Coming Up

Monday 8th	Weekly Prayer Meeting - Zoom Link Meeting ID: 837 9111 9200 Passcode: qKga12
Tuesday 9th	Playtime - Week 4 - Register
Friday 12th	Dumpling Making Night. Get Ticket
Saturday 13th	Prayer Morning 8:30-8:55am - Zoom Link Meeting ID: 878 2345 9321 Passcode: 836532
Sunday 14th	Dreaming & Planning Meeting No.1 for Evening Service
Thursday 18th	Encounter - Senior's group - 10am-1pm - Chapel Hall
Sunday 21st	Newish Morning Tea.
Sunday 28th	Celebration Brunch & Dinner + Mission Gift Day

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