



VISION SUNDAY

One-off
week

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

- Welcome
- Song
- Vision Spot 1
- Bible Reading:
[John 13:1-17](#)
(Bible p.1079)
- Sermon
- Vision Spot 2
- Prayer
- Holy Communion
- Song
- Vision Spot 3
- 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

Sunday 5 February 2023

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're glad you are joining us this morning. If you're one of our regulars, back after the holiday break, its good to see you – you have been missed! If you are new – we're so glad you made the decision to come. We love welcoming new people into our church community. We would love to hear from you. Could you let us know how you found your time? One way of doing that is by using the Connect Card (hardcopy in here or accessible via the QR Code).



This morning we restart a series we began last year which looked at Jesus' life through the eyes of his good friend John. We made it through the first half of John's account last year so we're picking up the story in Chapter 13 – the last half of the book and a detailed account of Jesus' last hours.

As we ponder and reflect on the actions and words of Jesus we see the wonderful yet sobering example of his love in action. We are prompted to reflect on our own lives. Are we people who are inclined to serve others. Even more, we are comforted that this love of Christ is also available to us!

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

Sermon Notes

A Vision for our life together | John 13:1-17

Rev. Prashanth Colombage

1. The Centrality of Love

2. The Practice of Love

The hurdle to love

“... let’s just note that we generally operate with a meritocratic mentality, one that goes by the formula: hard work + perseverance = success you have rightly earned...”
(Justine Toh, Achievement Addiction)

3. The Cure of Love

Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group Study

1. Imagine someone comes up to you on the street as part of a 'vox pop' (one of those street-side video interviews) and asks you, "what's your life all about?" How would you answer?

Read John 13:1-17

Getting your head around the passage:

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

1. Recount the events that take place in this passage as a group.
2. What time does this happen? Why is this significant?
3. How does Peter respond? What does Jesus say to Peter?
4. What is Peter's mistake?
5. What does Jesus command the disciples to do (v.14)? Why?
6. What does Jesus command the disciples to do (v.14)? Why?
7. Why is the behaviour of Jesus confusing to Peter and the other disciples?

Read Mark 10:33-37.

2. How does the behaviour of Jesus contrast with the attitude of his disciples?
3. What example (v.15) is Jesus setting? What might this look like in the context of your life and relationships?

4. Re-read Justine Toh's quote from the sermon notes. How can a meritocratic mentality affect our ability to serve others? How can it misshape our character at times?
5. Jesus laid down his outer garment here, then laid down his life (John 10:11) in a matter of hours. **Read John 19:16b-24** as a group.
6. Jesus' death is an offer to serve our punishment for us. Why is Jesus' service better than the meritocratic model we easily adopt?



GaP Group Reflection

Watch the video provided to your group leader.

1. Where have you experienced loving service and generosity in the community of St Stephen's?
2. How can you put loving service and generosity into action this year?

Prayer

1. Give thanks for the sufficiency of Christ's loving service on the cross.
2. Ask God to free you from the tendency to measure your life based on your efforts and see the ways you might lovingly serve others.

Read the Bible with us!

1. How does this teaching of Jesus contrast with the teaching of this world?
2. How does Jesus live up to this?
3. How can my life be shaped by this as I form part of God's church in Willoughby, Artarmon & Chatswood?

Monday - [John 13:1-17](#)
Tuesday - [Phil 2:1-11](#)
Wednesday - [Matt 23:1-12](#)
Thursday - [Mark 10:35-45](#)
Friday - [Luke 4:14-19](#)

Notices

Vision Sunday

This Sunday is marked as Vision Sunday in our church calendar. It's a chance to refresh our minds about our central hopes, desires and efforts as a church. There are many good things we could do. But what are the great things that God is calling us to be part of? As a recognition that this is a communal effort and responsibility, we wanted to mark the day by celebrating with a brunch after the service. Stick around and enjoy food (on us) and great company! When you go home – please pause and pray for God's work in our church.



Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group.

This week many of our GaP Groups will restart. GaP Groups are an opportunity to meet with a smaller group regularly and remind ourselves of the good news we find in God's word. They are groups that encourage and challenge us to shape our desires around God's plans. They are groups that allow us to share in prayer that aligns with God's purposes. They are groups that seek to care for one another because of the unique bond that following Jesus brings. Simply speaking, to be a part of a Gap group is a fabulous experience. If you would like more info, please fill in the Connect Card or chat with Prash.

Alpha Course

The Alpha course is used all around the world. It is an easy, friendly and helpful way to explore the Christian faith. Lunar New Year Dinner included a taster of Alpha. The Alpha course will continue on Wednesday, 15th February, 7-9pm. It is free, and dinner will be provided. No prior experience is required to attend, and there is no obligation to commit to the whole course. Just come along to check it out.



Register at st-stephens.com.au/summer

Lunar New Year Dinner?

Last Wednesday night was our Lunar New Year banquet. Around 60 people (including 15 non-St Stephen's guests) attended the event. Thank you, particularly to all who helped make the night happen! Missed out on the event and still want to attend? You can come to the Alpha Course. It is into too late. We will help you catch up and integrate into an Alpha group.



Kids and Youth Starting Up Soon



Playtime

At Playtime is a group for 0-5-year-olds and their carers. We aim to provide fantastic resources and a fun, friendly atmosphere where the carers and children can relax and form meaningful connections. At Playtime, we sing, dance, drink morning tea, do crafts, tell stories and have time for some free play.

When: From Tuesday 7th Feb, **Time:** 9:30-11:30 am

Friday Kids

Friday Kids is an after-school group for those in Kindy to year 4. The afternoon involves playing games, free play time, drinking afternoon tea, sharing bible stories and doing crafts. It's a way for kids to make friends, develop social skills, and invest in their spiritual health. A walking bus is available for children from Willoughby Public school.

When: From Friday 10th Feb, **Time:** 3:30-5:00pm, **Who:** K-Year 4

Half Past Six Youth Group

We play games, hang out, have fun, eat food, share our lives and learn about Jesus. HPS splits into Junior (5-8) and seniors (9-12) program that runs concurrently.

When: From Friday 10th Feb, **Time:** 6:30-8:30pm, **Who:** Years 5-12

For more information, please (or to register your child) visit st-stephens.com.au/kidsand youth.

What's Coming Up

Sunday 5th	Vision Sunday. Join us for a Celebratory brunch after the service
Monday 6th	Weekly Prayer Meeting - Zoom Link - from 8:45-9:45am Meeting ID: 837 9111 9200 Passcode: qKga12
Tuesday 7th	Playtime starts. 9:30 to 11:30am
Friday 10th	Friday Kids club starts. 3:30pm to 5:00pm Half Past Six Youth Group. Starts 6:30pm to 8:30pm
Saturday 11th	Prayer Meeting - Onsite (Creche Room) 8:30pm to 9pm
Wednesday 15th	Alpha Week 1 - Joins Us! It's free.
Monday 20th	Town Hall Meeting for redevelopment plan From 7:30 to 9pm in Chapel Hall

Our Staff - Contact Us!



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