

JUNE-JULY 2023

GENESIS

Mercy for a messy family



St Stephen's
WILLOUGHBY

Wk 3

Sunday 18 June 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.

TODAY'S 9:45AM SERVICE

- Welcome
- Songs
- Spotlight
- Confession & Assurance
- Bible Reading:
Genesis 21:1-21
(p. 19), 22:1-19
(p. 20)
- Sermon
- Prayers
- Announcements
- Song
- Conclusion

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

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

Welcome to St Stephen's. We're glad you are with us today. There is no better place to be on a Sunday! We would love to hear from you. Would you take a moment to use the Connect Card enclosed in this booklet (also accessible via the QR code). You can let us know what you thought of the service, respond to notices in the booklet or provide us with prayer points.



Over this quarter of the year we are looking at the Old Testament book of Genesis. It was written 1000s of years ago. For some of us that makes it less worth reading. However, when we stop and consider how deeply it has impacted people and culture we are challenged to reconsider its relevance. Sometimes older things bring 'new' truths to a time – they are unclouded by the particular emphasis of a people group and transcend the messages of an era in history. Genesis brings us to the transcendent truths of God.

Next Steps

Are you new? We would love to meet you. Hear a brief intro on the life of our church at our next Newish Morning Tea on Sunday 25 June. It runs for ½ an hour straight after the service.

Been regularly coming? Being part of a GaP Group is a great way to discuss today's message with others and pray for God's wisdom in your life. Fill in a Connect Card for more information.

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.

A Prayer of Confession

Our Father in heaven,
You are big and we are small.
Thank you that you are the King over everything.
We are sorry for not loving or listening to you.
We are sorry that we choose our way instead of yours.
Please help us live as friends with you
through Jesus Christ.
Help us to listen and love you by your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

1 Peter 3:18a

The 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
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

Faith in God | Genesis 21:1-21 & 22:1-19

Preacher: Prashanth Colombage

1. Do we need God?
 - a. Powerful Consequences

 - b. Tragic Consequences

2. How do we respond to God?
 - a. Difficulty

 - b. The mistake

3. Why would we trust God?

Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group Study

1. What does it mean to have 'faith in God'? Why is this important?

Read Gen 22:1-19

Getting your head around the passage:

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

- A. What does God ask Abraham to do?
- B. How does Abraham respond? How long does the task take?
- C. What does Abraham say to the men and to Isaac?
- D. Why did God say he asked this of Abraham? What does God value about Abraham's actions?
- E. How does Abraham describe God?

2. Do you think God's challenge of Abraham was fair or unfair? What makes you answer that way?

3. What is so startling about Abraham's response? What does it model for us?

"Isaac is a gift who embodies God's promise of blessing, land, and nationhood. The test is one of obedience and trust... It asks whether Abraham's trust is really in God, and not simply in what God has promised." (Thomas Mann)

4. Do you find it hard to value God more than the good gifts he gives us? In what areas might you feel this most acutely?

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 & Romans 8:31-33

5. When Jesus went up the mountain he went down to a grave. How can the Gospel give us courage and confidence to entrust ourselves to God?

6. How can you take steps to make those things in question 3 less important than God?

Prayer

A. Spend some time asking God to help you make his gifts less important than him. Try and be specific about the things you struggle with.

B. Spend some time praying for Bush Church Aid. You can find more details here: www.bushchurchaid.com.au



GaP Group Reflection

Watch the video provided to your GaP Group leader and consider the following questions:

- i. Who has encouraged you to return to church or GaP Group in the past? What did they do to encourage when you felt disconnected or discouraged?
- ii. How can your group encourage those who have found it hard to make it to church and GaP Group recently? Spend some time praying for their circumstances.

Read the Bible with us!

1. What does this passage reveal about God?
2. What does it reveal about the people God encounters?
3. What hope can we find in this account? Spend some time asking God to help you trust him.

Monday - [Genesis 21:1-21](#)

Tuesday - [Genesis 22:1-19](#)

Wednesday - [Genesis 24:1-27](#)

Thursday - [Genesis 25:1-11](#)

Friday - [Hebrews 11:17-19](#)

Notices

Evangelism Training Nights

It was great to see many come along last Wednesday for Evangelism Training. Kit, from the Evangelical Union at Sydney University, came to help us in sharing Jesus in everyday conversations.



21 June: Sharing Jesus across cultures

Amelia Hohne
Anglicare

Wednesday 7-9pm

Dinner included: \$10

The topic this coming Wednesday is Sharing Jesus across cultures.

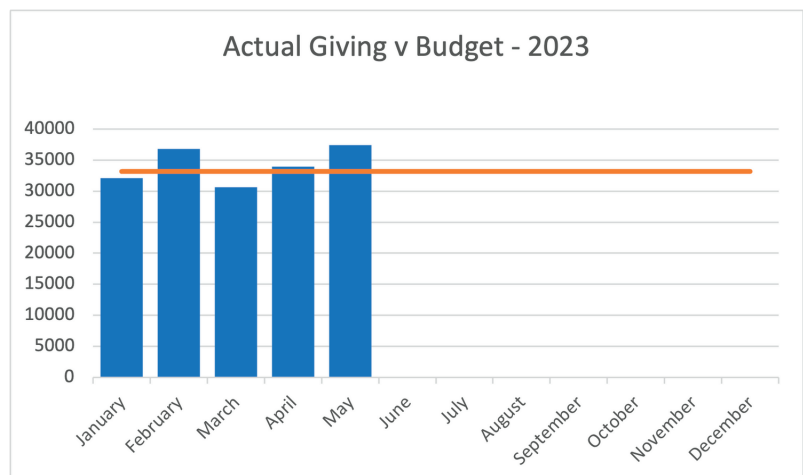
Willoughby, Chatswood and Artarmon are some of the most culturally diverse suburbs in Sydney. Chances are you are interacting everyday with people from different cultural backgrounds to your own. God loves all people and wants people from every cultural background and ethnicity to hear the gospel.

How can you share about Jesus and love those from a culture different to you? Come along this Wednesday night from 7-9pm to participate in a workshop run by Amelia Hohne from Anglicare's cross-cultural arm. Let us know you're coming at st-stephens.com.au/winter

Church Finances

How have you responded to the recent series on Wealth and Possessions? Have you reflected on your own generosity? Is there a way you can give, to others, more of the good things God has given you? Thank you to those who faithfully support the ministry of our church. Everything we do as a church to serve the community and make the gospel readily available is financially supported by the giving of our members.

If you are a regular at St Stephen's but you do not give to the ministry can we encourage you to visit our the website at st-stephens.com.au/give and join many of us supporting the eternally valuable work that happens here.



Newish Morning Tea


If you consider yourself new to St Stephen's then we want to welcome you. We run Newish Morning Teas every month to help people get their bearings, meet staff and other new people and take a step further into church life. Our next Newish is on Sunday 25 June after the 9:45am service.

Serving Opportunities

One of the hallmarks of a Christian is their love for serving. Jesus said he did not "come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Serving is part of our spiritual DNA. If you would like to join a service team please fill in the connect card and let us know. There are great opportunities to serve on the Welcoming team and Music team at present.

If you indicate interest one of the staff team will reach out and give you more details which you can use to make an informed decision. If you do not serve we would love to welcome you in to this great part of our church life.



-  MORNING TEAS, SUPPER, FOOD HOSPITALITY
-  MUSIC TEAMS
-  SUNDAY SERVICE TEAMS
-  COMMUNITY CARE MINISTRIES

GaP Groups

Throughout the week we run Gospel and Prayer Groups for our members. These are groups which meet to read and reflect on the Bible, pray together for God to work his purposes out in our lives and support each other as a response to God's grace to us. There are many groups through the week – some run in the day time, some run at night.

At St Stephen's we want the Gospel to shape us. We want to be people whose 1st cry to God is one shaped by his promises and character. GaP Groups are a great way for that to happen. They offer a great chance to be known more deeply, serve each other more meaningfully and grow spiritually. If you are not part of a group but would like to join one then please contact [Prash](#) who will meet with you to determine the best group to join.

What's Coming Up

19 June	Parish Council
21 June	Evangelism Training Night: Sharing Jesus across cultures with Amelia Hohne
24 June	Prayer Meeting: Saturdays 8:30am in Chapel Hall
25 June	Newish Morning Tea
3 July	Wardens' Meeting
26 July	Prayer Night

Our Staff - Contact Us!



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



Gordon Luk
Outreach & Sunday Services
E: gordon@st-stephens.com.au



Pippie Krebs
Kids & Youth Minister
E: pippie@st-stephens.com.au



Jill Chilton
Membership Minister
E: jill@st-stephens.com.au



Melody Hoey
Off-site Administrator
E: office@st-stephens.com.au