



A Church for the Future

1 Thessalonians | 15 Oct - 3 Dec



Wk 5

TODAY'S 9:45AM SERVICE

- Welcome
- Songs
- Confession & Assurance
- Spotlight
- Bible Reading:
1 Thessalonians
4:13-18 (p. 1188)
- 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.

Sunday 12 November 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 Stephens! We're glad to have you join us today. Every week, we pray God will send us visitors and new people. If you are either – we are glad to welcome you. We would love to hear from you. Chat with a staff member or use the connect card (the QR code links to an electronic version).



Today is our annual parish gift day. Our regulars use this Sunday (and the coming week) as an opportunity to express generosity to each other and our surrounding community. If you are visiting – simply enjoy being our guest.

While we are the ones giving financial gifts, it's always important we remember that our church is a community of people who have received God's precious gift of his Son, Jesus. We are continually shaped by God's graciousness to us. His promises are priceless. Today it is the gift of resurrection hope we rejoice in.

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 26 November. It runs for ½ an hour straight after the service.

Been regularly coming? If you are a regular member of our church, we encourage you to attend our next [Belonging Course](#) on Sunday 19 November. Belonging is the gateway to our GaP Groups, serving and deeper connection with the community.

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

Heavenly Father,
you have loved us with an everlasting love,
but we have gone our own way,
and rejected your will for our lives.
We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.
For the sake of your Son who died for us,
forgive us, cleanse us, and change us.
By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you,
and to please you in every way;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Psalm 103:12

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

The Good News That Brings Hope | 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Preacher: Prashanth Colombage

1. Our current griefs

2. An alternate future

3. Bringing the future to bear

Avoiding Ignorance

Hearing hope

Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group Study

1. If this life is all there is, you have no confidence about what happens when you die. What impact would that have on your choices, actions and resilience?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Getting your head around the passage:

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

- A. What does Paul 'accuse' the rest of humanity of in v.13?
- B. What does Paul say Christians believe?
- C. What different images does Paul use to describe Jesus's return?
- D. What will happen to Christians who have already died before Jesus returns? What will happen to those still alive?
- E. What authority does Paul speak with?
- F. What are we to do with what he has told us?

2. How do most people deal with the finality of death? Is their response insufficient? If so, why do you think that?

3. How can we encourage each other with the resurrection truths the Bible promises?

4. Why does the truth of the resurrection drop off your radar at times? What other hopes seem to overshadow it?

"On the cross, he entered death more fully than anyone ever has or could... Far from "dipping his toe" into death, Jesus plunged into hell on Good Friday. He experienced the judgment of God more than anyone else ever could. Not even Satan himself will know the depths of hell the way Jesus did on that cross." (Glen Scrivener)

5. In 1 Thes. Jesus is described as 'dying' while Christians whose life ends are described as 'sleeping'. Why do you think Paul distinguished between the two? What did Jesus endure that you don't have to if you entrust yourself to him? (You may want to consider: Luke 23:34, Matt 27:46 & John 19:28)

6. If your future is what God has promised in v.17 what impact does that make on you:

- a. today/tonight;
- b. this coming week; and
- c. next year?

Prayer Time

1. Are you having a season of sweet delight that the Spirit gives you from the promises of God?
2. Are you finding certain promises extremely precious? Are you getting times of refreshment from reading or listening to the Bible? Discuss and pray either out of thanks or seeking God's intervention in your lives.



GaP Group Reflection

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

Break off into triplets or pairs, and share with each other:

- i. A friend or family member that you are hoping to invite to church for Christmas
- ii. How you are going to be regularly praying for them

Read the Bible with us!

1. Each of these is a Bible reading often used at funerals. What comfort does it bring us as we face the reality of death?
2. What is beautiful about Jesus's ministry to us? Has your spirit experienced this comfort?
3. Pray that God might stir joy in you from his promises.

Monday - [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

Tuesday - [John 11:25-26](#)

Wednesday - [Romans 8:38-39](#)

Thursday - [Revelation 21:1-7](#)

Friday - [John 5:19-29](#)

Notices

Gift Day

Gift Day | 12 Nov

Support the life, ministry, and outreach of St Stephen's Willoughby



2023 Target: \$35,000

TRANSFER REF:
GIFTDAY

Today is our annual gift day. It's a chance for regulars to make a one-off additional gift to the ministries that happen at our church. Our target is \$35k.

We long to be a church made beautiful, diverse and large by the gracious work of Christ. We seek to bring our resources to bear on this vision. Over the past year we have provided new spaces for our GaP Groups to meet (\$8k), greater focus on inviting our local community and neighbours to our courses and events (\$11k), investing in the next generation of believers (\$14k) and much, much more. It's been a year of encouragement as God has graciously brought joy to our church life, hope to the people who meet here, new faces in our midst and comfort to many who have grieved. If you have supported this ministry, thank you!

Gift Day is our opportunity to try and impact more people with the good news of Jesus. To give, visit st-stephens.com.au/give or simply mark "Gift Day" in your transfer reference.

Belonging Course

The Belonging course is the gateway into the deeper life of St Stephen's. The next course is coming up on **Sunday 19 November 12-3pm** and includes lunch, afternoon tea, a great time with others from the church, time with the staff and helpful info and discussion to bring you into the heart of our great church family. If you want to grow spiritually, encourage, and grow others, embrace the direction of our church, and feel more comfortable belonging to St Stephen's then this is worth setting aside the time.

If you haven't done the course yet, register by speaking to Jill Chilton or visiting our website at st-stephens.com.au/belonging

Life Course

The LIFE course looks into what life with Jesus is all about and is perfect place for anyone with questions about the Christian faith or exploring life's big questions. Last week, we looked at the resurrection of Jesus and how it is a fundamental piece of the Christian gospel. This coming week we will look at what it actually means to be a Christian. We meet upstairs at the Willoughby Hotel from 7-9pm. Each night there is time to meet others, ask your questions, hear a short presentation about Life and Jesus—all over food and drink.

Visit st-stephens.com.au/spring for more information and to RSVP.



Playtime

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. We regularly get 35-45 people coming along. It's a great opportunity to connect with local families and provides many opportunities to share the gospel and invite them along to church.



Please pray for everyone who comes along that they would be curious about the Christian faith and want to explore more. Pray for the team as they have conversations and invite people to Christmas services.

What's Coming Up

14 November	Life Course - Final Week
16 November	Encounter for Seniors - 10am-1pm
18 November	Weekly Prayer Meeting: Saturdays 8:30am in Chapel Hall
19 November	Belonging Course
26 November	Newish Morning Tea

For more on what's happening this spring at St Stephen's, visit st-stephens.com.au/spring

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