

# Big Questions

for our world

14 · 21 · 28 January 2024



Wk 1

## TODAY'S 9:45AM SERVICE

- Welcome
- Songs
- Confession & Assurance
- Spotlight
- Bible Reading: John 16:19-33 (p. 1083)
- Sermon
- Prayers
- Announcements
- Song
- Conclusion

Most St Stephen's collection is received electronically.  
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00490436

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

## Sunday 14 January 2024

*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 could visit us today. We hope you find a warm welcome, engaging content and something to help you consider the message of Jesus. We would love to hear from you – would you take a moment to fill in the Connect Card (hard copy or QR Code accessible).



Are we getting softer? In answering this, each of us tends to operate on a spectrum between vulnerability and stoicism. Which end are you closer to?

The Bible has much to say on the topic of fear, pain and discomfort. It calls us to something alternate to vulnerability or stoicism. What is that? To answer that question we turn to the words and life of Jesus. Come with us on that journey today.

### 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 February. 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](#) which runs on the 10th of March from 12-3pm. Belonging is the gateway to our GaP Groups, serving and deeper connection with the community.

**Got a question?** Fill out a [connect card](#) to chat with a staff member.

# 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.

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."  
Exodus 34:6-7a

## 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

## Softer? Harder? More Courageous? | John 16:19-33

Preacher: Prashanth Colombage

1. Cuddling teddies

“... the defining feature of the current Western twenty-first-century version of personhood is its vulnerability... And if vulnerability is, indeed, the defining feature of the human condition, it follows that being fearful is the normal state.”

- Frank Furedi

2. Swallowing concrete

3. Finding courage

## Some content to discuss over a coffee:

1. What did you find interesting from the talk on Sunday? What did you disagree with or find unconvincing?



*“As such, the defining feature of the current Western twenty-first-century version of personhood is its vulnerability. Although society still upholds the ideals of self-determination and autonomy, the values associated with them are increasingly overridden by a message that stresses the quality of human weakness. And if vulnerability is, indeed, the defining feature of the human condition, it follows that being fearful is the normal state.”*

– Frank Furedi, *How Fear Works*

2. Do you resonate with this reading of our society? Where do you see it play out or where do you see the alternate?

3. It appears to be a negative reflection on society. Do you feel negative about the way we live and interact?

4. What's your go to for finding joy or hope or peace when things are feeling bleak? Why do you go there? Do you think that is available to all people?

*[Jesus said:] “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

John 16:33

5. Do you find this compelling? Why or why not? What do you remain unconvinced about or uncertain about?

## Some content to discuss over a coffee:

1. Do you like the idea of being courageous? What does that look like for you?

*Prash (the speaker) on Sunday said we can believe Christ has overcome the world. He claimed we see evidence of this in 3 things: the resurrection of Jesus, the spread of Christianity despite 2000 years of threat & the personal testimonies of peace experienced by Christian believers.*

2. What were you struck by in those claims?

3. What were you yet to be convinced of? What still needed to be established/proven for you?

*“There is a resurrection-shaped dent in the historical record, and it's quite a puzzle working out how it got there.”*

John Dickson

4. What do you think of the claim that Jesus rose from the dead?

5. What more do you need to do or think through to find resolution to the questions you have about Christianity?

# Notices

## Friday Kids Family BBQ

Next Sunday is our Friday Kid's BBQ. Last year we started Friday Kids and we have had a number of different families join over the year. This BBQ is a chance for families new and old to connect with each other in the holidays. It's the perfect opportunity for families to mingle, make new friends, and enjoy a laid-back afternoon. So whether you have been to Friday Kids or not join us for a relaxed afternoon at Bales Park (just up Sydney Street).



## Sunday Kids and Youth Holiday programs

During the school holidays (14th, 21st and 28th) we will be running a more relaxed kids holiday program at 9:45. The Gumnuts (toddlers and preschool) program will run as usual. Our primary school groups will combine and will be looking at how the Bible is put together. We will be looking at the first section of the Bible through three Bible Characters; Adam, Abraham and Moses. Our lessons will be full of fun games and activities but will also help kids to have a greater understanding of the big story arc of the Bible.

Our usual programs resume on the 4th of February.

They will be looking at the following:

Gumnuts (toddlers and preschool): Jesus is God's Son

Gum leaves (K-2): Matthew - Sermon on the Mount

Blue gums (3-6) Matthew - Sermon on the Mount

Junior High (7-9): Matthew 1-10

# Notices

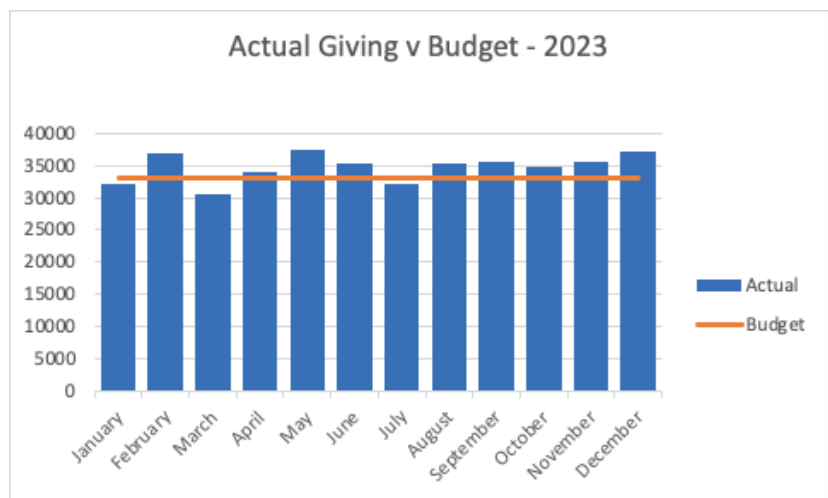
## Finances

Thank you to those who have generously supported the ministry of St Stephen's over the past year.

Did you know we managed to welcome over 50 people to our outreach courses? Did you know that our Friday Kids program culminated with 28 kids celebrating Christmas on our last Friday? Did you know that we had two new GaP Groups start last year?

All those and many other great moments of Gospel ministry were enabled by the generosity of our members. If you are a member of our church the start of the year is a good time to re-visit your regular giving and consider whether you can increase the giving to match the increased opportunities.

If you are visiting today – simply enjoy our hospitality!



## New People!

January and February are great months to welcome new people into our church community. Perhaps you are new or you are sitting next to someone who is new? Take time and connect with others.

For our regulars, seek out those who are new and help them feel at home at St Stephen's. We long to be a church made beautiful, diverse and large by the gracious work of Christ. Every time God brings a new person to our church it's his way of answering our prayers and hopes.

For those who are new, our next Newish Morning tea is scheduled for 25 February. In the meantime, we hope you get to know us through the hospitality of our regulars.



## What's Coming Up

17 January	Dessert & Prayer Night
19 January	HPS Family BBQ
21 January	Friday Kids Family BBQ
24-28 January	LIT Youth Camp
29 January	Crafternoon

For more on what's happening this summer at St Stephen's, visit [st-stephens.com.au/summer](http://st-stephens.com.au/summer)

## Our Staff - Contact Us!



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