

Newsletter

13th December 2020

Sunday's Reading John 1:6-9, 19-34

Ps. Andrew Everson will be bringing us the message

Some Prayers of the people

- Pray for members of our church family who are not well, undergoing tests or recovering from surgery.
- Pray for families & students as the school year finishes & they await results & prepare for Christmas and the holidays. Think of those for who this time may not be easy for many different reasons.
- Please continue to pray for John & Dorothy Kester.
- Pray for Peter Blacksell, for a quick and complete recovery from a procedure he had this week.

Notices

December Prayer update from Dave and Lil – bible translation at Ernabella

It was such a joy to read over so many of your emails of support and encouragement, and to know that you have been faithfully praying for us the last 18 months. It was actually very humbling. Many of you offered to help us in various ways, with keyboarding texts and offering us accommodation, wanting to come visit the translators here in Adelaide and even offering some exegetical help with Zechariah 11!

When we think back over 2020 we have seen the Lord answer many of your prayers: he has kept the translators safe from COVID; he has sent out his Word so that many more people now have access to it; he has equipped and encouraged the translators to persist in their work**; he has blessed our children with a great first year at school, and we are continually grateful to God for the home he has provided us here in Pennington and the close proximity to translators here. In a year of many uncertainties, he has opened the APY Lands borders for two really fruitful trips; He has ministered his Word to the translators, who continually share stories with us of all they are learning about God and themselves as they translate his Word. We praise God for all these answers to prayer, and many more besides.

Perhaps above and beyond all these blessings, we praise God for you - "you show that you are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor 3:3). We are truly grateful to our heavenly Father - the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort" - who has used each of you to support and carry forward this ministry through your prayers. Thank you :)

We pray that the Lord will fill you with joy and comfort this Christmas. In Emmanuel - *God with us* - we have a rock-solid and steadfast hope!

**** Specifically, the Lord has helped:**

- Margaret complete 22 more chapters of a first draft of Isaiah (she's now up to Isaiah 60)
- The translation team complete 2nd and 3rd drafts of the book of Judges
- Tjulyata complete another 7 chapters of 1 Kings
- Katrina finish the final 8 chapters of Numbers, so that this book now has a complete first draft
- Tjikatu complete 14 chapters of Proverbs
- Anne do 2 or 3 more chapters of 2 Samuel
- Inawinytji W to complete a number of first and second drafts of some Psalms
- Inawinytji St to finish a first draft of Zechariah
- Yanyi to do another 7 tricky chapters of Leviticus
- Amari, Mayana and Jennifer complete 7 chapters of a Consultant Check in 1 Samuel
- Jennifer, Tjulyata, Inawinytji, Nyunmiti, Margaret, Katrina and Makinti to complete approximately a fifth of the Prayer Book
- A number of helpers keyboard a lot translation work into Paratext, saving valuable time
- The front translators complete English translations of 1-2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, Job, Numbers, and a lot more of Psalms, so that we anticipate completing the entire front translation of the OT, Lord willing, by the end of 2021
- us develop the app Tjukurpa Palya so that people can now hear the Scriptures on their phones

We give God all the glory for this work that has been done in 2020.

Much love in Christ,

Dave, Lil, Henry and Margot

Reminder: the South Pacific Church group will be using the church from 11am on Sunday

Sunday School picnic: Unfortunately cancelled this year due to the difficulty of complying with COVID-19 restrictions on numbers allowed at a private residence.

Christmas Hampers

The hamper committee will be using Wesley Hall for the whole week of the 14th

We need donations of non-perishable food e.g. canned fruit or vegetables, Christmas puddings or tins of ham

Tithe a Tin Pray a packet Thank you for your support for this worthy cause. Along with the Naracoorte Community Care Network who provide supermarket vouchers we provide for people in difficulties who are very grateful for your help.

Christmas Luncheon Friday 25th Dec. at the Senior Citizens Rooms Sandstone Ave. 12-3pm

Lunch is open to anyone who would like company, those alone or “Darby & Joan” homeless or in need.

Due to Covid19 restrictions a maximum number 50 people

Bookings essential RSVP to Norma Davis (0427041916) by 23rd December. A \$5 deposit

Will secure your place.

Christmas School presentation thank you

The presentation of “Who wants to be a Xmas Star?” was well received in both schools on Monday and children responded well to the Christmas message. Thank you for all the support and to those who took part. Judy & Yvonne

Midweek Bible Reading Luke 1: 39-56

Mary visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!’ ⁴³ But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!’

Mary’s song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

‘My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me –
holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants for ever,
just as he promised our ancestors.'

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

Mary had been promised by the angel Gabriel that she would become pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit, that the child she would have would be holy, the Son of God, a ruler over God's people, and his name would be Jesus. She was also told that her relative Elizabeth had become pregnant in her old age. Mary naturally needed to think over all these things and so she hurries off to Elizabeth to discuss it all with the older woman.

When the two women meet a wonderful thing happens, an event that confirms God's intention in regard to the future. The Holy Spirit enters Elizabeth. And her baby, the future John the Baptist, leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb. We should understand that this is again God's work. The Holy Spirit is at work. And so, John, even before he is born, begins his future job of pointing to Jesus. The coming of Jesus is a wonderful thing. This is an announcement of great joy, and John's commission as the messenger sent to prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah is foreshadowed.

Elizabeth too shares and expresses this joy, and revels in the knowledge that God always does what he says he will do. Not only does God bless Elizabeth and Mary in this way, fulfilling God's angel messenger's promises to them, but Mary, recognising that God is always faithful, responds with a hymn of praise and thanks.

Firstly, she thanks God for what he has done for her. Her joy goes right down into her inner being – her soul and her spirit rejoices in God her saviour. God is her saviour. But he is also the saviour of his people, and so she celebrates God's achievements of mercy, deliverance, protection, and provision, noting that these things are what God promised to Abraham. God fulfills his promises, even promises made long ago. Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit points to history coming to a turning point.

Elizabeth and Mary both see themselves as blessed by God and so they respond with humility and delight.

God has given us himself. Take a moment to feel the full weight of this. If we really absorb this fact in our heart mind and soul and understand what God has done for us in giving us himself, then we can respond with joy and delight as well.

Andrew