

Newsletter 28th November 2021

Sunday's readings: Ephesians 1:15-23

Ps. A Everson will be bringing us the Word this week

Prayers of the people

- Please continue to pray for those who are unwell and having treatment may it go well for them. Pray for those who are grieving, having employment and emotional difficulties. May God be with them and give them strength at this time and our Christian community support them.
- Give thanks for the work of our Pastoral Care Workers and the successful funder that was held.
- Pray for the introduction of the Freedom of Religion Bill to Federal Parliament. Please pray for the members as they consider and debate this important legislation.
- Pray for our JNC when they prepare to meet with applicants for position of minister of our church. May God guide them in their selection to present to our congregation.
- Pray for the Barnabas Fund, Compassion and Open Doors who are working throughout the world to help those who are persecuted and in need. May those who are doing God's work in difficult circumstances be kept safe.

Notices

Evening gathering – Sunday 7th October 5 pm

- Watching Episode 7 of "The Chosen"
-

End of Month Luncheon

Please join us in fellowship and a meal at "Billy Mac's" Sunday 28th November at 12 noon. Please indicated numbers for table bookings.

Pastoral Care

Thank you, dear church, for making "Munch" such a success. We have raised over \$1400 to help support the PCWs in the Naracoorte Stat Schools. Many people helped and there was plenty of food.

Thanks again Judy Kreek

Women's Fellowship

St. John's Lutheran Church invite ladies of Naracoorte to an

ADVENT AFTERNOON

2pm -4pm at the Lutheran Hall Magarey Cres. An afternoon of readings and singing in preparation for Christmas followed by afternoon tea.

AGM Congregational Meeting Feedback.

After a well-attended meeting, the following office bearers were elected:

Chairperson: Bill Cobbledick

Secretary; Carol Lawrie

Treasurer: John Ruck

The Elders elected were

Bronte Cobbledick- 2 years

Helen Turner- 2 years

Robina Williams- 1 year

JNC Committee

The JNC committee has been formed to select a new minister. The committee consists of:

Trevor Barnett

Stuart Martyn

Simone Owen

Paul Ewer

Maureen Zanker

Robina Williams

Presbytery Reps for our church are:

Trevor Williams Designated

Chris Parker Alternate

The incumbent minister of the time

Children

We are currently blessed with an extensive young people's ministry. Thanks, and praise! At times we have over 30 children present. A concern was raised regarding their safety. Children are climbing on the roof, going out fire doors, and the child gates are being often left open. We all need to be vigilant about ensuring the kids stay safely within the church grounds.

Roster: The roster for the next quarter will be drawn up soon. People are needed to help. Please see Andrew or Oriel and volunteer to serve so that our Sunday church service and morning tea runs smoothly. **Everyone** has a gift from God to help his church. Please See Pastor Andrew if you need advice as to what your gift may be!

CHRISTMAS HAMPER TIME

There is a box by Oriel's door for collection of Christmas Hamper items.

Suggestions = small Christmas puddings, Christmas biscuits, cans of fruit or vegetables, long life milk or custard, jellies.

Wesley Hall: Please note Wesley Hall will be booked between the 12th of December until the 17th of , December for Christmas hamper distribution.

Church Gardeners Required: Jill and Eugene have "retired" as of the 1st of November. We thank them for the many years of gardening they have given us. If one or several people would like to work together to keep our church well-presented that would be great.

Children's Christmas presentation Service

Come and join in Celebrating Jesus Birthday!

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!



When: December 5th

Time: 9.30am

Place: Naracoorte U.C.

Join The Party for Morning Tea following the Service

Name Tags and Updates: Please use the form at the back of the church if you would like a name tag or need to update your email or phone number to get the newsletter or be able to be contacted.

Tithe a tin Pray a Packet: the support that the congregation gives this worthy project is very much appreciated by those who are in need during these difficult times. There is a list of suggestions in the box and on the notice board in Blackwell Hall. Thank you very much

Church Service: Due to Covid 19 the guidelines for Sunday are as follows.

- Masks must be worn
- 1/2m² distancing applies (**152** persons in the church)
- Singing allowed with masks on.
- Morning Tea under covid 19 guidelines
- Sunday School is on!

Please share any news or concerns you may have so we may celebrate or support you in any way we can.

Mid-Week Bible Reading:

1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

New International Version

Paul's Longing to See the Thessalonians

¹⁷ But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

³ So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. ⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labours might have been in vain.

Timothy's Encouraging Report

⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

We can learn a lot about what is important to Paul from his prayers. The first thing we see is how concerned he is for the believers in Thessalonica. In the midst of 'trials', Paul is anxious for these young Christians. Paul didn't have long to establish this church perhaps only 3 or 4 weeks (see Acts 17:1-9) before Paul and Silas were forced by the hostility of the city officials and some in the Jewish community to flee to the next city – Berea.

Paul had warned the Thessalonians of the persecutions that would come once they declared their loyalty to Jesus (see verses 3 & 4 above). But he is worried that their faith may be weakened through the harassments that they were suffering.

So, it was with a pastor's heart that Paul sends Timothy to find out how things were going. But Timothy's report was just wonderful! The young church was keeping the faith, in spite of trouble. And so, Paul's first prayer is a prayer of thanks to God. "How can we thank God enough for you?", he asks. Paul's prayer is simultaneously a prayer of thanks and joy expressed to God that the Thessalonians are standing firm in the faith and an expression of love and encouragement to the church. Paul manages to do both. Thanking God for these wonderful people. When we give thanks for good things in our church fellowship is that how we normally do it? Thankfully encourage? How much more effective and how much more enjoyable would be our church if we would always give thanks to God for the faith of our people and tell each other what it was about each other that we were thanking God for!

Paul's concern remains to build up the Thessalonians in the knowledge of Jesus Christ – to put some theological and spiritual muscle on the people so that they will handle the pressure that Satan is applying. He would very much have wished to stay with them longer and enjoy their fellowship while strengthening their faith. And that's again what he prays for (verse 10 and 11). At this time, Paul can't be there in person, but he can pray, and he can send Timothy.

But Paul's joy at Timothy's report is not just that the young church is standing firm. Paul is overjoyed at hearing about both their faith and their love (6). This inspires Paul's third prayer. Christianity is all about relationship – our relationship of love with God, with each other (that is with Christians), and importantly with everyone else. So, Paul prays: "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else". This is not just relationship in an inward looking, other worldly fellowship of believers. The church is a spiritual reality, formed through the person of the Holy Spirit, but it is very much in the world and operates in the world.

Paul's final prayer addresses the end goal. Christianity believes in an end point that God has established and to which he is drawing all things. In this understanding God sets apart those who believe in him, who confess their sin and who put their trust in Jesus – sets them apart to be holy and blameless in his sight so that in the age to come we can stand in the very presence of God. So, Paul prays that God strengthens the hearts of the church in Thessalonica that they would be able to be set apart, made holy, or 'sanctified'. This is not something that they, or we, can do on our own.

God must work in us.

Andrew