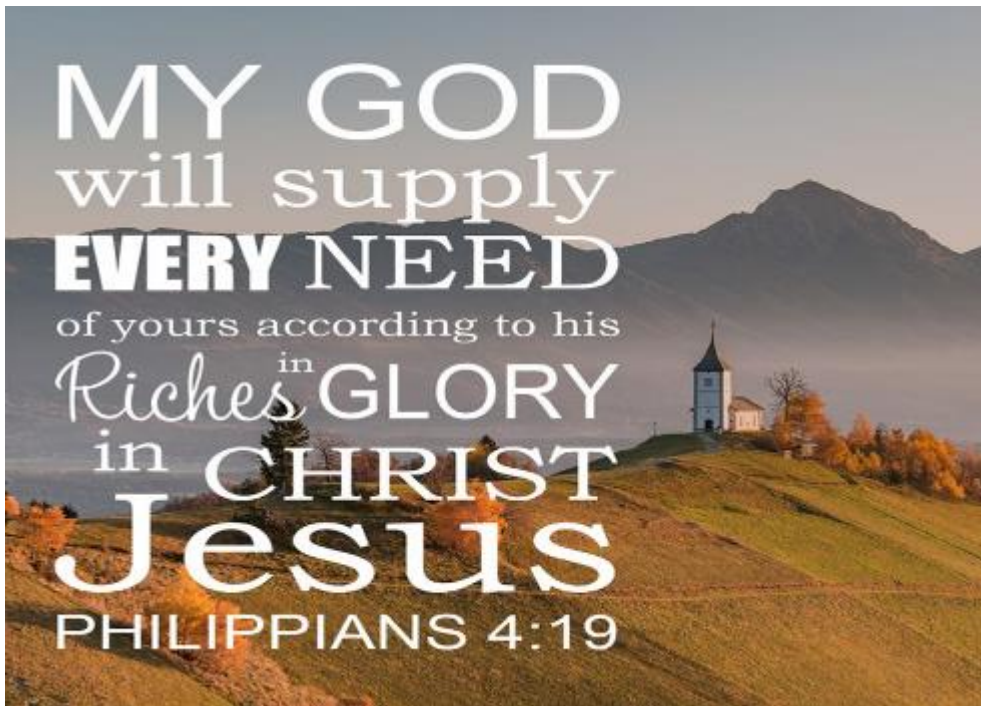


Dear beloved,

Today (Saturday) we had a great session with Steve Clark where he talked about our perception of an evangelist and our own experience of meeting our Lord and being welcomed into his body. He reminded us that actually living loving, caring, welcoming lives in our community is the most viable way to bring people to our church. The content is mostly irrelevant, many of us, in sharing our experiences could not remember the content but just were drawn to the warmth. This is the way we will make our churches viable, not by clever, expensive programs but by being genuine people who love God and our neighbour.. and he will provide everything we need.



Blessings

Wendy

Steve Clark will do his next session on Saturday 5th August
at 2.30 pm and then 2nd September

--

Brendan Lukin is being ordained in the Uniting Church to serve in the Army
service at 2pm on Today (followed by Afternoon Tea in the church Hall).

--

Sunday 9th July we will have morning tea to farewell Ruth and David Fletcher
as they are moving to Canberra

--

Community Day Saturday 23rd September
Anyone who is willing to help come to rectory Tuesdays 2.00 - 3.30

--

Wendy's last Sunday in the Parish 24th September

--

Morning Tea after the Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday
please volunteer for the roster.

--
Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9.30 all Welcome
--
Please volunteer for the roster, well in advance.
--
Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Edith and Colin Mayhew
--
Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors
--
Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.
--
Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

Mary Mitchell
--
Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Bredbo
--
The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains
--
for each other that we may be salt and light in this community
--
People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

2 July 2023 2.4

Hymn TIS

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also with you.

Sentence

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6.23

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, your Son has taught us that those who give a cup of water in his name will not lose their reward: open our hearts to the needs of your children, and in all things make us obedient to your will, so that in faith we may receive your gracious gift, eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Genesis 22.1–14

¹ Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. ² Then God said, 'Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac – and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain that I will show you.' ³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, 'Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.' ⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, 'Father?' 'Yes, my son?' Abraham replied. 'The fire and wood are here,' Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?' ⁸ Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together. ⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. ¹² 'Do not lay a hand on the boy,' he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.' ¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.'

Psalms 13

¹ How long, O Lord, will you so utterly forget me: how long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I suffer anguish in my soul, and be so grieved in my heart day and night: how long shall my enemy triumph over me? ³ Look upon me, O Lord my God, and answer me: lighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death; ⁴ Lest my enemy say 'I have prevailed': lest my foes exult at my overthrow.

⁵ Yet I put my trust in your unfailing love: O let my heart rejoice in your salvation.

⁶ And I will make my song to the Lord: because he deals so bountifully with me.

Romans 6.12–23

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. ¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

¹⁷ But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. ¹⁹ I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. ²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 10.40–42

⁴⁰ 'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Let us pray for all people and for the Church throughout the world.

Loving God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Whenever you stand praying forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven will forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11.25

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, with a sincere and a true heart.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn TIS

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving 4

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All thanks and praise, glory and honour, be yours at all times, in every place, holy and loving Father, true and living God. We praise you that through your eternal Word you brought the universe into being and made us in your own image. You have given us this earth to care for and delight in, and with its bounty you preserve our life. We thank you that you bound yourself to the human race with the promises of a gracious covenant and called us to serve you in love and peace. Above all, we give you thanks for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ: born as one of us, he lived our common life and offered his life to you in perfect obedience and trust. By his death he delivered us from sin, brought us new life, and reconciled us to you and to one another. Therefore with angels and archangels, with apostles, and prophets, with holy men and women of every age, we proclaim your great and glorious name: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that we who eat and drink them in obedience to our Saviour Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, may be partakers of his body and blood, and be made one with him and with each other in peace and love.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

As we eat and drink this holy sacrament, renew us by your Spirit that we may be united in the body of your Son and serve you as a royal priesthood in the joy of your eternal kingdom.

Receive our praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we worship you in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: **so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

After Communion

Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn TIS

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**



The Old Testament reading is a bit different isn't it! So different to anything in our culture. Jews never sacrificed children as part of their culture and religion but some religions at that time certainly did. But let's go back and refresh our minds about Abraham. God choose Abraham to be the father of a special nation who would worship the one true God and tell all the other peoples about him So, Abraham took his nephew Lot, all his servants (whole families) herds of various animals and left his homeland It must have been a bit like droving, just moving gradually through the countryside at a speed that the animals could cope with and making camp each night.



Sometimes they stayed longer, probably where the conditions suited, and sometimes moved on. Some years later, on one long stop Abraham, sent home for a wife, (lots of God incidences) and Lot eventually went his own way, but Sarah and Abraham had no children. God showed Abraham the promised land and repeated his promise to make Abraham the father of a great nation multiple times but still there were no children. Abraham continued to believe and trust God, and this was credited to him as righteousness.

At one stage Abraham decided to sleep with his wife's maid, Hagar (there was a custom of the maid substituting for her mistress) who had a baby and then when Abraham was about 100 and Sarah about 80 the Lord visited and said 'this year' Isaac was born, Hagar was banished but the Lord provided for her and her son and at last we can see how all the promises can come true.



And then we have today's story. People do extreme sports for the fun of it, all sorts of things are tested to make sure they will fulfil their function when things get tough, and testing is often part of God's teaching of his children. Abraham had had his patience tested almost beyond endurance, waiting for this child, but now that Isaac is old enough to go on trips the real test comes. God tested Abraham by means that were totally against human reason and the divine promise. How could the promise be fulfilled if Isaac died? It was a total shock. Yet it was Abraham's steadfast faith under great testing that made him such a man of faith.



Abraham stifles all questions and simply does as he is told. On that 3-day journey Abraham sustained himself by counting on the Lord's statement: '*through Isaac shall your descendants be named*'. Nothing on the journey was unusual, worshipping Yahweh was usually accompanied by a sacrifice so when Abraham told the servants that they would '*go, worship, and come back*' everything appeared normal. Abraham believes that God will fulfil his promise, so he expects it to be true.

Isaac asks the obvious question 'Where is the lamb?' and his father replies, 'God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering'. Since the Lord had commanded this sacrifice, it was reasonable to suppose that the Lord would see the need and meet it. We don't take much notice because we know the ending, but God had never done that before and this is Abraham totally trusting God. God will provide. Abraham named the place where this happened 'Jehovah-Jireh' which means 'the lord will provide' as a constant reminder to his descendants that God has provided and continues to provide everything we need.



We don't hear much about Isaac's reactions to these events, but he must have shared his father's faith to the extent of cooperating with him. There was a ritual to perform, once the stone altar was built, that involved arranging the wood in order and binding the limbs of the sacrificial lamb, he could have escaped but he did not do so. Instead, he submitted. And heard for himself the voice of the Lord intervening to ensure his release and fulfil the expectation his father had voiced and there was a ram stuck in the thicket.

His father as usual had been right, the Lord did provide; the ram was released from its predicament, Isaac was released from the altar and the ram was substituted for Isaac. For Abraham the test was over, He had proved that he trusted God and now he receives his son back from God, doubly precious. And God reiterated his blessing on Abraham's descendants. God did not want a human sacrifice; he wanted total trust and obedience.



The words of Abraham 'God will provide a lamb' are prophetic and John the Baptist had evidently mediated on them when he said, 'Behold the lamb of God' (John 1 29, 36). There are also the images of the Passover Lamb, and 'the lamb led to the slaughter' which come later when the image of a lamb become highly significant. Jesus is the lamb of God, when we should have been sacrificed because of our sin, Jesus became the Lamb that was substituted for us. God provided the substitute for Isaac and for us.



God always provides for us, not necessarily when we want it but certainly exactly when we need it. Paul said a couple of chapters after our reading today: 'He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him.' God will provide for us and this church. Like Abraham there have been many missionaries who have gone to unknown countries and been obliged to rely on the Lord. They acknowledged that they had to do God's work in God's way if they were to receive God's supplies: the way of faith was no easy option, any more than it had been for Abraham.

In the face of dilemmas and tests faithful people of every generation have found that the walk of faith demanded not passive submission but a conscious bending of the will to accept the sacrifice. But they saw God's provision, and the work goes on. How does God provide for his people? Sometimes he works sovereignly through events, or God incidences, sometimes, many times, he works in people's hearts to provide what is needed for other people.



We had a great session with Steve Clark yesterday afternoon where he talked about our stereotype of what an evangelist is like versus our own experience of people who brought us to faith or were instrumental in helping us grow in our faith. It turns out that not many of us found faith by being brow beaten but most of us found faith by feeling loved, cared for and welcomed.

Jesus said: Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. . .⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward. **So many 'welcomes';** in our gospel passage today. That is what God is inviting us to provide, a welcome to the people in our community: a place in our hearts, in our lives where we can be the lived love of God, even just a cup of water, if that is what they need.

God provides but he calls us to be listening to his voice so that we can direct us and use us to bless his people. Matthew's church recognised prophets and 'the righteous' as specific people within the church network, people who travelled around bringing God's word to isolated churches. They were people who relied on the Lord to provide so the settled disciples shared their homes and provisions with them.

'Little ones' does not refer literally to children but is Matthew's term for ordinary Christians, ordinary disciples, he means all of us need to give and receive as the Lord directs. Often the Lord provides through our brothers and sisters in Christ and often the Lord asks us to provide for our brothers and sisters. And every time we welcome each other to this place and into our homes we are welcoming our Lord Jesus and the Father.



What is the Lord asking you to provide for his people in this community, it might be money or provisions, or it might be encouragement and caring, it might be dropping some coats in the Salvos bins or it might be being a true friend to someone, it might be doing some chores for someone who is too busy or incapacitated or it might be inviting someone for a coffee or a meal. Through this means God will provide you with purpose and blessings and his community with love and care. He's clever like that, you can never out bless God. God provides everything we need and uses us to bless and provide for each other, our families, our church and our community.