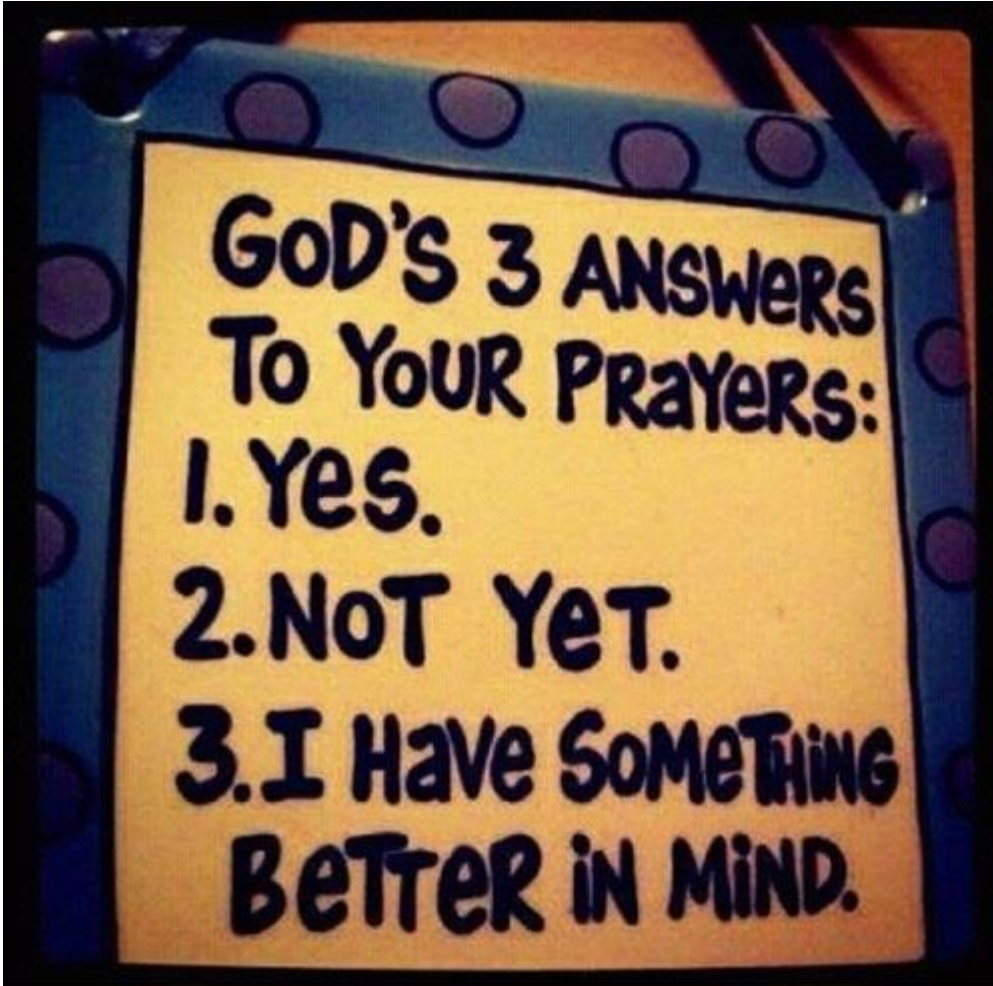


Dear Beloved,

Our reading this week is from John 14 where Jesus reassures his disciples that his death will not mean the end of their relationship but in fact will lead to a better relationship with him and his Father.

So often we think that when things go wrong God has left us or is punishing us but in fact God loves us and always wants the very best for us.



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Blessings

Wendy

Snowy Monaro Arts Council Inc. presents Pianist, Alexander Yau

Sunday 4 June 2:30pm Anglican Parish Hall,

Tickets at The Fabric Salon,

Adult \$30 Concession \$25 SMAC Member \$20 Under 18 Free Includes Afternoon Tea

--

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.

--

Concert on 11 June in the Hall 2.00 pm

--

Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

Give thanks as we are so grateful for his recovery since surgery and for his remaining vision

Pray for improvement to his vision

Pray for the expertise of endocrine specialists as they work with him on medications

Pray for his and my patience as we allow the time required to recover from this surgery.

We appreciate so much the prayers of so many people who have been praying for us at this time.

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 New 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.

7 May 2023 2.3

Hymn TIS 226 Thou art the way,

### Greeting

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

'I am the way, and the truth, and the life,' says the Lord. 'No one comes to the Father except through me.' John 14.6

### 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

Everliving God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

#### Acts 7.55-60

<sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' <sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep.

#### Psalm 31.1-5; 31.17-18

<sup>1</sup> To you, Lord, have I come for shelter: let me never be put to shame.

<sup>2</sup> O deliver me in your righteousness: incline your ear to me and be swift to save me.

<sup>3</sup> Be for me a rock of refuge, a fortress to defend me: for you are my high rock and my stronghold.

<sup>4</sup> Lead me and guide me for your name's sake: bring me out of the net that they have secretly laid for me, for you are my strength. <sup>5</sup> Into your hands I commit my spirit: you will redeem me, O Lord God of truth.

<sup>17</sup> All my days are in your hand: O deliver me from the power of my enemies and from my persecutors.

<sup>18</sup> Make your face to shine upon your servant: and save me for your mercy's sake.

#### 1 Peter 2.11-25

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. <sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. <sup>15</sup> For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. <sup>17</sup> Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor. <sup>18</sup> Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup> For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. <sup>20</sup> But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' <sup>23</sup> When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> 'He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.' <sup>25</sup> For 'you were like sheep going astray,' but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

## John 14.1–14

<sup>1</sup> 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.' <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' <sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.' <sup>8</sup> Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? <sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

### Sermon

#### Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### THE PRAYERS

Let us pray for the world and for the Church. God of all mercy, **hear our prayers.**

**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.**

Jesus said, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and who ever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6.35

#### 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.

#### Invitation to Confession

Christ our Passover Lamb has been offered for us, therefore we come to celebrate the festival.

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

#### Confession

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.

## The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. **We meet in his name and share his peace.**

## Hymn TIS 254 O changeless Christ, for ever new

## 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 3

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 glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. You anointed him as Messiah, the light of the nations, and revealed him as the hope of all who thirst for righteousness and peace. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to walk in the way of his love.

By his death on the cross and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying

**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 and gracious God, all creation rightly gives you praise.

All life, all holiness, comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom you sent to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

Hear us, merciful Lord; through Christ accept our sacrifice of praise; and, by the power of your Word and Holy Spirit, sanctify this bread and wine, that we who share in this holy sacrament may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

Who, when his hour had come, on the night before he went up to the cross to make full atonement for the sins of the whole world, offering once for all his one sacrifice of himself, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is 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, in obedience to his command, we commemorate and celebrate his saving passion and death, his mighty resurrection and ascension into heaven and we eagerly await his coming again in glory.

We thank you that by your grace alone you have accepted us in Christ; and here we offer you a spiritual sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight. Through Christ, receive this our duty and service, and grant that we who eat and drink these holy gifts may, by your Holy Spirit, be one body in Christ, and serve you in unity and peace. In your grace and mercy, bring us to the joy of your eternal kingdom with all the company of the redeemed. May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father eternal, in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power be 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 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**

Eternal God, giver of life,  
in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.

May we who celebrate this holy feast  
walk in his risen light and bring new life to all creation

**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.**

notices

Hymn TIS 590 What a friend we have in Jesus

### **Blessing**

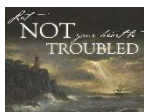
The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and 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**



Today's passage is probably the passage most often used at Funerals. I have lost track of the number of times I have preached on it. It is very appropriate for a funeral because it speaks of Jesus' promise to take our loved ones to be with him. It is a very comforting passage and that is what we focus on at a funeral but actually this passage has more to say to us.



Jesus says, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled'. That word translated 'troubled' is the same word that is used to describe Jesus' anguish as he faces the power of death and sin, it is not simply sadness at his coming death. In the same way he is not exhorting his disciples not to be sad, but he is urging them to stand firm in the face of his departure when the events may look to them as if evil and death are having their way. The disciple's faith in the relationship of God and Jesus will empower them to rejoice in the events of Jesus' hour, because through the eyes of faith they will recognise it as the culmination of God's work, as the defeat of evil.

When life happens to us, when the storms come, we are sometimes tempted to think that God is no longer in control, that evil has taken over but in reality, God is always there, God will be triumphant and when we look back, we will see how he used those times of trouble to turn all things for good. It looked, when Jesus died as though evil had won, that Jesus had been prevented from being the Messiah and prevented from bringing salvation to his chosen people and the world, but the Father's plan was so much more than just a Messiah who would save one generation. God saved humanity for ever.



Then Jesus turns from exhortation to promise. We need to recognise that in this promise: 'my Father's house has many rooms' Jesus is not just promising us a place in heaven when we die but a place in his kingdom here and now through a relationship with him. We come to Jesus as little children and wherever he is we are as well. When God indwells in us, we dwell in him. Throughout the gospel location is consistently used as a symbol of relationship. To know where Jesus is from is to know his relationship with God.

It is in this relationship, as much as in any heavenly dwelling that there are many rooms. The word translated 'rooms' is derived from the noun to 'dwell', our room is where we dwell, and this also reminds us that others dwell there as well. Just like a family home.

Jesus also uses this domestic imagery to say, 'my return to God will make it possible for you to join in the relationship that the Father and I share'. This promise is verbal confirmation of what Jesus enacted in the foot washing; the disciples, and us, are welcome in the Father's house. We are loved and accepted by Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit.



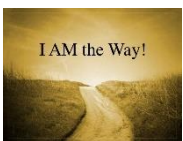
Jesus' return was the enactment of his announcement at Lazarus's tomb: 'I am the resurrection and the life'. Jesus' resurrection announces that nothing, not even death can separate Jesus and his own from God. Jesus' promise to take his own to himself is the promise of reunion and reconciliation with God and our occupancy of our place in God's home. Jesus draws on the imagery of heaven as God's home to describe the new reality that his death, resurrection and ascension make available to the believer.

Jesus says, 'you know the way' and Thomas asks the question in everyone's heart because none of them understand yet and Jesus replies 'I am the way'. The way is not a geographical term but is a description of the indicative work of Jesus. To 'know the way' is to know Jesus.



We remember, every time Jesus starts a statement with 'I am' that he is in fact saying the name of God and declaring that he and the Father are one. As with the other 'I am' sayings Jesus identified himself with a symbol. Within Jewish wisdom tradition 'way' denotes the lifestyle of the wise, and in the Psalms, 'way' is used to describe a life lived in accordance with the law or will of God. Way is not used simply as the route to somewhere else but as an expression of the faithful person's unity with God.

As with the sayings, 'I am the gate' and 'I am the good shepherd' that we read last week, Jesus reveals himself to be simultaneously the *access to* and the *embodiment of* life with God. 'Truth' and 'life' thus function to clarify how and why Jesus is the way. To recognise the Jesus is the truth is to affirm that Jesus makes the truth of God available to the world and Jesus is life because Jesus brings God's gift of life to the world.



This promise is made as a way of assuring the disciples that, although Jesus is going away, it will be for their benefit; He won't forget them, he won't abandon them. But it reaches out beyond the disciples and embraces all of us. When we can't see the way ahead, and we need to know not only that there is indeed a way into the unknown future but that we will be able to find it.

Sometimes life throws a curve ball at us, everything we had assumed about our future was wrong and life looks totally different. We have no idea what the future holds, where we are going. Its like driving down an unknown highway and the road ahead goes over a steep hill and there is no way to know whether there is a turn just beyond the crest or whether it goes straight ahead. I like to have the GPS on when I'm driving so that I can see what the road ahead is doing, but in life, we have Jesus and although we can't see the road, we can trust Jesus to steer for us.





Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father and Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip. Philip did not understand the nature of Jesus' self-revelation, that the incarnate is the ultimate revelation of God.

Philip is like so many people we know, who want proof before they believe but even Jesus can offer Philip anything more than he has already made available: His words and works.

Philip came to understand after the resurrection but in the meantime, he continued to follow Jesus to the garden and beyond. The people we know might not have a relationship with Jesus but through a relationship with us they may come to know and believe.



A stumbling block for many is the way they have been treated by Christians or the church at some time but when we are truly following Jesus and living his way, we may be able to bring healing to their lives. Look at the Jesus who wept at the tomb of his friend, the Jesus who washed his followers' feet, including Judas' feet knowing that he would betray him. When we can live like that, we are truly following Jesus.

Many Christians and churches have been arrogant in the way that they have presented the truth of this passage and the whole gospel but the whole setting of this passage shows that such arrogance is a denial of the very truth its claiming to present. The truth, the life through which we know and find the way, is Jesus himself: the Jesus who washed his disciples' feet and told them to copy his example, the Jesus who was on his way to give his life as the shepherd for the sheep. Was the arrogant? Was that self-serving?



There was a time when people came to church because it was the socially acceptable things to do. There was a time when people came to church looking for truth, for acceptance, for guidance. Those days are gone. It is only when we are authentic reflections of Jesus that we will draw people to him. I don't know whether our beloved buildings will continue to house the church in the next generation but if there is a people of God, it will be because we allowed God to dwell in us and serve this community through us.

We are called to follow Jesus in his love for those around him. So many of the people he helped during his time on earth did not follow him, he was the servant of all, whether they acknowledged him or not. It is only as we serve our community that some of them may find they want to follow Jesus too, but we like Jesus, need to be servants of all. Whether we plant seeds, water or harvest or see no result at all our job is to be their servant and it is God's job to bring them to himself.