

Dear Beloved,

This will be my last Sunday with you and I know that I will greatly miss you all.

The Reverend Martin Christensen has agreed to be the locum for the next period, please make him as welcome as you have made me.



Blessings

Wendy

Please join us in the Hall for morning tea and to farewell Wendy

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

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Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9.30 all Welcome

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Please volunteer for the church roster, well in advance.

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Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Martin Christense the new Locum

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 Nimmitabel

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The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains

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for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

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People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

27 8 2023 2.5

Hymn TIS 449 Stand up and bless the Lord

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

By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. Eph 2.8–9

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

Loving and righteous God, your boundless generosity exceeds all that we can desire or deserve, and you give to the last worker all you promised to the first: liberate us from all jealousy and greed, that we may be free to love and serve others, and in your service may find our true reward; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Exodus 16.2–15

² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.' ⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.' ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' ⁸ Moses also said, 'You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.' ⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, 'Say to the entire Israelite community, "Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling."' ¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked towards the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud. ¹¹ The Lord said to Moses, ¹² 'I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, "At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God."' ¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat.'

Psalms 105.1–6;37–45

¹ O give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name: tell among the peoples what things he has done.

² Sing to him, O sing praises: and be telling of all his marvellous works.

³ Exult in his holy name: and let those that seek the Lord be joyful in heart.

⁴ Seek the Lord and his strength: O seek his face continually.

⁵ Call to mind what wonders he has done: his marvellous acts, and the judgements of his mouth,

⁶ O seed of Abraham his servant: O children of Jacob his chosen one.

³⁷ He brought Israel out with silver and with gold: and not one among their tribes was seen to stumble.

³⁸ Egypt was glad at their going: for dread of Israel had fallen upon them.

³⁹ He spread out a cloud for a covering: and fire to lighten the night.

⁴⁰ The people asked, and he brought them quails: and satisfied them with the bread from heaven.

⁴¹ He opened a rock, so that the waters gushed: and ran in the parched land like a river.

⁴² For he had remembered his holy word: that he gave to Abraham his servant.

⁴³ So he led out his people with rejoicing: his chosen ones with shouts of joy;

⁴⁴ He gave them the land of the nations: and they took possession of the fruit for which other peoples had toiled, ⁴⁵ So that they might keep his statutes: and faithfully obey his laws. O praise the Lord.

Philippians 1: 21-30

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. ²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved – and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Matthew 20.1–16

¹ 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. ³ 'About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He told them, "You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." ⁵ So they went. 'He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶ About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" ⁷ "'Because no one has hired us," they answered. 'He said to them, "You also go and work in my vineyard.'" ⁸ 'When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first." ⁹ 'The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² "These who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day." ¹³ 'But he answered one of them, "I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?" ¹⁶ 'So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

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.

Prayers

Response Jesus, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3.16

Prayer of Approach [Let us pray.]

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

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us therefore draw near in full assurance of faith, and confess our sins to the God of grace.

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 513 Bread of heav'n, on you we feed

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

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.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty. Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you.

He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you.

He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood. On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said,

'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

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

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread. 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 with thanksgiving.

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen

Prayer 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.

Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.

Hymn TIS 143 Immortal, Invisible, God only wise

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**



Here we are, the day has come, my last day in the Parish, my last sermon. I have loved you deeply and I am grieving as I go but I know that this is the right time and that our God will walk with you all and bring the right person to walk with you through the next season of this parish. I also know that he will walk with me into the next chapter of my life.

There is a great temptation to try and condense all the things I long for you to know and live into one sermon but that might run a little over time and I doubt that you could remember it all so I am just going to preach on the set passage as usual and trust that God will bring the right teachings to you at the right time.



Our gospel passage is a parable that follows the incident with the rich young ruler, Jesus' comment about the difficulty for rich people to enter the Kingdom, then Peter's comment about the disciples having left everything to follow Jesus, and Jesus' reply promising them thrones in heaven, and then he says, *'But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first'*.

The parable begins in the world where day labourers are hired at sunup and are paid at the end of the day. A denarius was a normal day's pay for manual labour but was barely enough to maintain a family at subsistence level. Unlike the normal practice of those days, instead of sending his manager the wealthy landowner goes himself to the market to hire labourers and he goes repeatedly, even only an hour before the end of the day.



The first group of workers is hired on the basis of an oral contract for the normal amount; the later groups are promised *'whatever is right'*. Although the first group has a *'contract'* and the second can only trust in the master's sense of justice, in reality both groups depend on the trustworthiness of the landowner.

It is important to realize that Jesus didn't intend the story to serve as a comment on the social structure of his day. Jesus is accepting for the purpose of his story, the social and economic power of the landowner, in order to say something about God.

To understand what he is saying we need to look closely at the last group of workers, the ones who were hired when only one hour of the day was left. It is curious, we may suppose that they hadn't been hired before. Had they been in the marketplace earlier? The vineyard-owner questions them: why haven't you been working? Their answer is revealing: *'nobody has hired us; nobody has given us a job'*. Nobody in other words, wanted them. They were perhaps, the sort of people everybody tried not to hire. But the landowner hired them and paid them the same as the people who had been slaving away all day.



At the landowner's (Lord's!) order, those who were hired last are paid first. They receive a full day's pay. Those hired first now expect that fairness demands that they will receive more but they receive the agreed upon amount. The original hearers, and all who hear it are expected to share the dismay of those who have worked all day.

This parable can be understood allegorically: the Landowner is the final judge, God, or Jesus, who is indeed 'good' and the payment at the end of the day is at the last judgement and is eternal life with God. The 'first' refer to Christians who have worked long and faithfully and 'last' are the latecomers who have not. Each one of us will receive equal pay at the last, we will all receive eternal life with God, which is actually all we need.



There is a warning in this story for the first disciples, who suppose that Jesus in bringing in the kingdom of heaven will make them rich and famous as well, but there is also a warning for us, who think that because we are faithful disciples in our time that God will give us a life without the normal trials of life, we expect an easy life. Jesus warns us that is not what the kingdom is about. The disciples had been with Jesus from the beginning, we might have laboured in the vineyard all our lives, but others may well come in much later and end up receiving salvation just the same.

God's Grace, in short, is not the sort of thing you can bargain with or try to store up. It isn't the sort of thing that one person can have lots of and someone else only a little. God's grace is in fact a free gift, salvation, there is nothing we can do to earn it. Everything we do in return is our gift of gratitude to God.



The point of the story is that what people get from having served God and his kingdom is not a wage at all. It is not a reward for work done. God doesn't make contracts with us, as if we could bargain or negotiate a better deal. He makes a covenant with us, in which he promises us everything and asks of us everything in return. He keeps his promises, but he is not rewarding us for effort, he is doing what comes naturally to his overflowing generous nature.

In our human way we tend to think that life should be fair, that God should be fair but what we think of as fair is a long way from reality. I'm sure you have watched other people especially teenagers and children who think that any contribution of work they make is huge and everyone else should be grateful for what they have done whereas in reality they have done very little, and others have actually contributed so much more. Any mistake they made is easily justified and any mistake someone else makes is huge and needs to be confessed and compensated for in full.



The truth is we are all like that, we each think that anything we do for God is momentous, we think that what we put in the offering is generous, that anytime we do something for someone else we are being heroic. Mostly we try to be humble but just let it slip to close friends. In truth are mistakes are awful, way beyond our comprehension, anything we do for God or other people is like a toddler putting a band aid on a broken leg. But God knew we could never even understand our failings let alone atone for them, so Jesus volunteered to do it for us.

What he went through for us, was not just physical suffering, but mental, emotional, and spiritual suffering beyond anything we can imagine but he did it because he loves us so much. Anything we do in his name he holds dear not because we get it right but because we are trying to do it for him. Just like the toddler trying to make the broken leg better and we understand the beautiful heart behind the gesture, so God looks at us and blesses the intention.



God is out in the marketplace, looking for the people everybody else tries to ignore, welcoming them on the same terms, surprising them (and everyone else) with his generous grace. If we are walking with him, we need to be in the marketplace as well, showing his grace and love to everyone we meet.

Yes, our efforts are imperfect, but he is with us, and he turns our endeavours into great things through that same grace. Whatever we do God is with us, when we are struggling, he is with us, when we are trying to bless others, he is with us, when we worship him, he is with us. There is nothing worth doing in this life that we can do without him.



I pray that each one of you will know Jesus and his love, more and more deeply.

²⁰ Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13: 20-21)