

Sunday Service ~ August 16th

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

Good morning and welcome to our Sunday service! It's a blessing to gather as a community to seek the Lord, uplift one another, and be renewed by His grace and truth. As we worship, pray, and listen to His Word, would we see the great need that God sees. That drove God to send his only Son to be sent to a sinners cross. So that we might be justified.

Please join with me in prayer as we come to this gracious God.

Prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we confess that we have grown careless with the gospel. We have taken hold of grace and let it go slack in our hands, treated forgiveness as a truth we agreed to once rather than a debt we still feel the weight of. We have let the cross become familiar, and familiarity has dulled us.

And we see the evidence of this in how we treat the people around us. We are slow to forgive, quick to keep score, thin on patience and compassion for those who wrong us or simply annoy us. Lord, this is not a small failure sitting apart from the gospel, it is proof of how little we have actually grasped it. If we loved little, it is because we have let ourselves believe we were forgiven little. We have shrunk the cross down to a size that costs us nothing to carry, and so it produces nothing in us worth giving away.

Forgive us for making much of ourselves and little of what you have done. Forgive us for letting our hearts stay hard toward others while calling ourselves people who have been shown mercy. So we ask you now, not just to forgive us again, but to help us see. Show us the size of the debt you cancelled. Let it stop being a doctrine we hold and become a weight we feel, that we were headed for wrath and you stepped in and bore it yourself. Let that truth sit in us until it moves us. Because we believe that when we see it rightly, we cannot stay the same. A people who know how much they've been forgiven become a people who forgive freely. A people who have tasted mercy become soft toward the people mercy was never natural to give. Make us that people. Let our love for you spill over into love for whoever is in front of us, the difficult, the ungrateful, the ones we'd rather avoid.

And Lord, do not let this stop inside these walls. If we have truly seen what you have done for us, we will not be able to keep it to ourselves. Make us restless with it. Give us a holy urgency to open our mouths and tell others what has been done for them too, that they might know the same mercy that has undone us and put us back together.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, who forgave us far more than we deserved. Amen.

Song – In Christ Alone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rn9-UNer6MQ>

VERSE 1

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to
Thee;

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

VERSE 2

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,

Casting down their golden crowns around
the glassy sea,
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before
Thee,
Who wert and art, and evermore shalt be.

VERSE 3

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide
Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may
not see;

Only Thou art holy; there is none beside
Thee,
Perfect in power, love, and purity.

VERSE 4

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth
and sky and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Bible Reading – Romans 10:11-15 (NIV)

²⁰ It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. ²¹ Rather, as it is written:

"Those who were not told about him will see,
and those who have not heard will understand."^[a]

²² This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

Announcements

Focus for the month: Mission /Evangelism. How can I be involved in mission when there are so many missionaries, mission organisation and countries that have missionaries that I can't possibly be involved in them all? That's true, so focus in what you can do. Pick one missionary (maybe our link missionaries or one that you have had some contact with in the past), get their prayer letter, regularly pray for them and aim to write to them on a regular basis. Pick one country and try to pray for them regularly. And if you end up having more time add another missionary or another country. What a difference it would make if we all took this simple step!

Invitation Service. One thing we could do is to invite our friends to join us at Church on Sunday 30th August. We will be running 'Bring a Friend' services at all of our services. Who can you be praying to come along?

Discover. Another option is to invite your friend (and come yourself) to our DISCOVER course. Five Thursday nights from 27th August @ the Church starting from 7pm. For more details speak to Jannah.

Admin Assistant. After just over a couple of years, our admin assistant Sam Wilson will be stepping down from the position. Sam has been offered a full-time job teaching at Charlestown Public. Well done Sam. Sam has helped us in so many ways from the move to and from Charlestown public, to cyber security, Elvanto, facebook, webpage as well as a lot of the administrative tasks that would go unnoticed by many. If you would be interested in a 10 hour a week position as an admin assistant, please talk to Stephn who has a job description, pay and conditions all worked out. Applications will stay open for the next 3 weeks with a flexible start date.

Charlestown Work Day. Saturday 21st August from 8am to 3pm. Lots of work to do from tidying up the kitchen, to painting, to running repairs, to more major work. Something for every age and skill level. Come for an hour, come for as long as you can. Hopefully we can move closer to finishing off all the jobs that accumulated with our new redevelopment as well as some running repairs on our older buildings

Church Finances

Budget Offerings for July	\$40,833
Actual Offerings for July	\$38,852

Deficit for July	\$ 1,981
Deficit for Jan- July	\$23,086
Next preaching programme – Swansea/Charlestown AM. Light for the Lost	
23/8	Believers speak Colossians 4:2-6
30/8	Come home Luke 15

RECHARGE. Recharge Men's Conference | Saturday 12th September 7:30am-1:00pm Theme – Futureproof Men: Living now with the end in mind. Speaker – Steve McAlpine. Early bird \$40 and under-25 \$20. For details see Greg W or visit <https://www.hgm.org.au/recharge>

Pastoral Prayer

Pray for Niger (Population 29 million. Christians 75,000). The situation for Christians in Niger has significantly declined since the 2023 coup that destabilised an already fragile nation. The instability has emboldened Islamic extremists, who operate without much resistance. Pray that the military junta ruling Niger since 2023 will govern fairly and offer elections soon, and that stability will return. Pray for God to protect believers at risk of attack from Islamic extremists. Pray for those displaced by the insecurity of the region. Pray that converts to Christianity experience the Lord's provision after being severely pressured by family and community.

Pray for the complex issue of migration. Pray for wisdom, that governments and communities would respond to the complexities of migration with justice, compassion and wisdom, balancing the needs of migrants with the wellbeing of those already living in our nations. Pray for those who migrate, that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants displaced by war, poverty or persecution would find safety, dignity, welcome and opportunities to rebuild their lives. Pray for the church, that Christians would show the welcome of Christ to people from every nation, speaking truth with grace and becoming communities where the stranger is genuinely loved and cared for.

Pray for IMPACT's Taste and See outreach. Thank the Lord that we have such a wonderful gospel message to share with others. Pray that our young people will invite their friends to youth group over the next couple of weeks. Pray that those invited will get a taste of what Christians believe and find that they want to know more.

Bible Reading – Romans 10:11-15 (NIV)

As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."^[a]¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."^[b]

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Song – No Other Name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4unn2V0OTmY>

There is no other name
In heaven can be found
Through whom we are redeemed
Through whom your grace abounds
No other name can save
But Jesus Christ our Lord

There is no victory
But Jesus crucified
No other cure for sin
But that our Saviour died
No other hope we have
But that he rose again

My joy in sorrow's tears
My strength to cast out fears
No other name but Jesus, Jesus
My hope in darkest night
My broken soul's delight
No other name but Jesus, Jesus

No other throne endures
No other song remains
But 'Worthy is the Lamb
Who was for sinners slain'
When every knee shall bow
And tongue confess you are Lord,
You are Lord

Sermon – Those Who Have Not Heard (Audric)

Those Who Have Not Heard Romans 15:20-22, 10:11-15

Help me finish this song.

I see trees of green, red roses too, I see them bloom, for me and you, and I think to myself...

What a wonderful world.

Well done. That was Louis Armstrong's 1968 hit song "What a Wonderful World."

But when I hear it, you know what I think to myself? Is it?

Do you think the poor are singing that song? The hungry? The homeless? The ones living in a war torn country? Or communist regimes? Or the one trapped in a cycle of abuse? There's no wonderful world for them.

There's no hope for them.

It's futile suffering.

To me, it's just an irritatingly optimistic song. What hope is there. When so many people suffer in the world. Where people are senselessly murdered for the cause of war. For greed. Where children are raised in a world where they barely know a life beyond getting scarce amounts of food and water. What is the point. What is the point of the Gospel. Of preaching the good news of Jesus. When people will still suffer. The world will continue in its wicked spiral of corporate greed, exploitation. Selfish ambition.

And that would have been what Paul saw in his time too. A Roman empire... Where gladiators fought to the death during the day. Fighting for the entertainment of citizens. A civilisation where slaves made up a third of the population. Where crucifixions were a public deterrent to ensure civil rest. An emperor seeking worship based on his divine claim. Things were not better 2000 years ago. Paul saw a different flavour of the wickedness and evil of humanity. So if Paul had heard "What a Wonderful World," he would've scrunched his nose too.

But Paul didn't respond with despair. He responded with a mission.

Paul had every reason to give up on this world. Instead. He gave his life to it. To a cause. A mission. A solution. A solution that drove Paul to write this letter. A solution that drove Paul to

travel. Travel across the world. Bringing his solution to every people he came across. A solution so good. That it was called. The Gospel. The Good News.

Now. Many of us know the book of Romans as one of the most theologically rich books of the Bible. That tackles some of the most challenging topics of justification, substitution. Atonement. Propitiation. But first and foremost. Romans is a letter written by the very greatest missionary in the world. The man. The missionary. The legend. Paul himself writes Romans as a missionary. One who is bringing the Gospel throughout the Roman empire. And it's not to say how amazing Paul is. But the incredible work that God was doing through Paul. Paul was a vessel of grace.

And so Romans, whilst it is many things, is first and foremost a missionary letter. Paul is writing whilst he is on his missionary travels. What is Paul up to. Where is he going. What is his mission? Paul is writing a support letter. One that is for the encouragement of the Romans. No doubt. And we see this in Romans 1, verse 8.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times, and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

Doesn't this sound like the emails we get from our mission partners? As I was writing to the Appleby's to contact them about the video that they made that we saw today. We exchanged encouraging emails and here is what he said. "Looking forward to meeting you in person at some point. We were already planning to be back from about Christmas to April for a proper home assignment, and just found out that I get to be called Grumpy from February. His plan, not ours, but a very generous bonus gift!"

Isn't that beautiful. We get the privilege of partnering with the Appleby's. We get the privilege of seeing the fruit of their hard work, as they equip the local believers to teach and spread the Gospel further. But also, we get to share in the joy as the Appleby's celebrate the arrival of their new grandchild. And that is exactly what is happening between the Romans, and Paul. The Romans are invested in Paul's ministry. The Roman Christians care about God's glory. Being magnified throughout the world. And thus they are invested in Paul. And wish to meet with him. Hear with him. Fellowship with a faithful brother in Christ. And Paul is not lost in his own ego. That he is achieving this incredible church growth. He hasn't lost himself in the fervor of planting stadium after stadium of churches, just like some churches in America. But he has seen that only with the partnership of the church can the Gospel continue to spread. And that is one of the reasons why he writes the book of Romans. To draw in the local believers to catch wind of what God is doing around the world. To connect with them in prayer. In finance. In fellowship. Knowing that the whole body of Christ is needed to achieve this goal. For the salvation of those who have not known the Gospel. And that is what drives Paul. As he seeks to motivate the Roman church alike.

We see this motivation of Paul in Romans 15. In verse 20 it says,

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

The deepest suffering in that song isn't hunger or war. It's dying without ever knowing there was a way out. There is a world out there, perishing, without ever hearing the Gospel. This week in Bible study, someone asked: what happens to those who never hear? Is there extra grace for

those who never had a chance? It seems fair, doesn't it, for a loving God to give them a chance. But what if it's not fair that anyone gets saved at all? What if the cruellest thing we could do, for someone who's never heard, is preach it to them, and condemn a person who once stood innocent? And if they could be saved without the Gospel, why would God go to such lengths? Taking on flesh in the Son. Pouring out all his wrath on his own being. So that those far off could be brought near. Why would he do that?

Because it was the only way. The only way that a perishing world might know Jesus. Paul knows that. Or Paul wouldn't bother preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You see that's what drives him. That is his motive.

Verse 21 says there are people who do not see. There are people who do not understand yet. And those people are perishing. Doomed for a destruction. Doomed for an eternal death. While the message of hope is at the tip of his tongue. Ready to spare them from the coming wrath. There is a great need. This isn't the only need. But quite possibly the greatest need. The greatest need of a perishing world without Jesus. You see. There's a thing called a 10/40 window. The 10/40 window is a gap on the map between 10 degrees north latitude and 40 degrees north. In this gap, more than half of the world's population reside. But of that population, nearly 70 percent of them are considered unreached. That means there is no indigenous community of believers in that area. There are no sufficient numbers of Christians that are actively evangelising the area, due to a lack of resources and numbers. That means that there are billions of people in such a small area of the world that have no valid opportunity to respond to the Gospel. They have no opportunity. To be saved.

This is what drives Paul. To bring the Gospel. People who may otherwise never hear the Gospel. Who may never otherwise hear the life giving news of Jesus Christ. Of Christ who might restore them to relationship with a God that they have rejected for generations. Which is why the message of Christ needs to be preached. For Romans 10 says in verse 14,

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?

The Gospel needs to be spoken. This is how God's salvation is brought to the nations. Yes, God can save through other means. But his primary means is the proclamation of Jesus. How can they hear without someone preaching to them? How can they preach unless they are sent? There are people who have not heard, and some who never will, unless someone goes. That's what Romans 15 answers. Paul doesn't preach on his own. He preaches as one who is sent, backed by the prayers and support of the whole church in Rome. That's key to our mission too. Most of you here will never go, and there's nothing wrong with that. But we still have a responsibility, whether we go or not. John Piper puts it simply: we can send, we can go, or we can be disobedient. Those are the only three options. So for most of us, the option is to send. So who are we sending this year? On those flyers you'll see the mission partners taking the Gospel to the nations. Without looking, who are they, and where are they serving? Come on, shout it out. We've got 6 at the moment, not including Vanuatu and A Rocha. Appleby's, Indochina. Parsons, Japan. Josh Montzka, Digital Spaces. Webbs, Broome. Cath Read, Australia. Phoebe Baldwin, Quizworx. And our mission partners rely on the generosity of sending churches, to enable them to do their work. If they were busy doing jobs to sustain their ministries, how much less ministry would they be able to do? Which is why it is so important that we think about mission in these three principles. Give, pray, go. We need to give. Did you know that last year, our church gave a

combined 27,800 dollars to our mission partners? And so what you do need to know is that when you give to this church, you're giving not only to the local ministry that is happening in this building, but beyond it. Our church is taking seriously God's charge to bring the Gospel to the nations. To take seriously Christ's desire to seek the lost. But let's celebrate what money can do for God's mission. Even just a couple weeks ago, Phoebe Baldwin was short of her financial goals, and that was going to affect her ability to work with Quizworx. She was going to have to reduce her hours. Which would've hindered the work that she was doing. What work is she doing? She is going with a team from Quizworx, performing puppet shows that shine the light of Jesus through their shows. Engaging children from schools, and other community groups. With a message of hope. That Jesus has come. Jesus has finished it. And they need only to trust in him. And this is a growing need in Australia. Post covid, schools have been increasingly unwelcoming to SRE teachers. There is less and less Christian teaching to kids in this country. So what a bright and shining light it is, that Quizworx can put on a show that kids are genuinely drawn into. That they are actually engaged. To hear a message that is understandable to primary aged children. And from a weekend of sharing her needs, she raised the odd 14 thousand dollars she needed to continue her work for the rest of the year. And continue proclaiming Jesus to young children. This is the power of our giving. And how much more could our missionaries do, if we were committed to giving more. If the work that they were completing was not just their work, but our work too. To feel their burdens as ours. To feel their struggles as ours. Because we want to see the Gospel reach the nations. We want to see places unreached. People that have not heard of Jesus. To see and hear. To understand the wonderful freeing hope that Christ offers. Which is why we also need to pray.

As we pray for our friends, not just a "God help the Webbs, Appleby's, Parsons, Cath, Phoebe, Josh with their ministry," but actually specific prayers. That's why I've given you those flyers. So that you can pray specifically. Stick it up on your fridge. And pray. We pray for Sandra. Help her as she shares her testimony at the craft event. Give her the confidence to speak boldly, clearly. And powerfully, so that those who hear might be not only softened to the Gospel, but they might receive the Gospel. Or we give thanks for P, one of the students Cath is leading at NCS. Thank you for P's curiosity of the Bible. Thank you that Hanro is meeting with P, and protect him from any false teaching, and the Gospel might be clear in P's mind. And the beautiful thing is, as you pray for these things, God answers them. God answers them not only in these people, but in you. In the missionaries. In everyone. And it's drawing us all into his mission. We become united in what God is achieving through his mission. And so all of a sudden, when you see Cath, you want to ask her all about her trip to Lakemba. You want to hear about how P is going. You get another email from the Parsons, and you want to ask how the craft event went. This is why I've put the QR codes on the flyer. Because this is how we send. This is how we pray effectively. By knowing what is happening in their lives. So send them an email. Introduce yourselves to them. Ask them to add you to their mailing list. Tell them that you're committed to praying for them. And keep replying to them. As you pray for them. Tell them, "Hey we just prayed those prayer points at the end of your letter today." Or, "Hey! We prayed for you in church!" Even just those simple contacts from home mean so much to them. Because so many of them have given up so much friendship, so much family, so much familiarity. To do the ministry that they're doing. Encourage them with your prayers. And believe that your prayers are doing in them, more than any human effort could achieve.

And lastly, we go.

Most of you won't. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't. There's a quote by one of the greatest magicians alive. Part of the dual act Penn and Teller, Penn Jillette, an avid atheist, has been quoted to say this.

"I've always said that I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward. How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn't believe that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that."

There is a whole world out there. There are thousands of people that have died in the last 24 hours. 31 thousand people in this world die each day. How many do you think are going to heaven? How will they hear if they have not been told. Who will go to them? Rather than get comfortable with what you have here. Maybe. Maybe God is pushing you to go. To do what is uncomfortable. Not because it's easy. But because God loves the lost. And he wants you to love the lost too. It doesn't matter if you're an accountant. A graphic designer. A chef. God has a use for you on the mission. You'd be surprised what skills are needed on the field. Would you even dare to ask yourself. Ask God. Should I go? Not out of guilt. But because of the surpassing beauty of Jesus Christ. To know Christ is to know God himself. To know the riches of his love and mercy. His gentle heart for us. And to desire that they might know too.

You know. Feet are gross. Why would Romans 10 even bring feet into the picture. Feet get calluses. Bunions. They get muddy and dirty. You should see my cracked heels. Feet are not what I consider a beautiful part of somebody. And yet. Beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. In the Webb's March prayer update, they shared about a man named Harry, who lived 700 kilometres away from Broome. That's like here to the Gold Coast. And he travelled 700 kilometres by bus, to attend a 5 day training course on prayer, church, evangelism, baptism and growing in relationship with God. Why did he travel so far? As he said, the week allowed him to "share with one another what Christ is doing in our lives and where we live." How beautiful are Harry's feet. So don't ask if your feet are beautiful enough. Ask if they're moving. Give. Pray. Go. Whichever one God's calling you to this year, do it like Harry did. Do it like there's someone 700 kilometres away still waiting to hear.

Friends, it's not wonderful. Not yet. But one day it will be. When every tribe. Every tongue. Every nation. Has heard. Until then. We've got feet. So let's use them.

Song – Facing a Task Unfinished

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOpt_bulJxY

Facing a task unfinished
That drives us to our knees
A need that undiminished
Rebukes our slothful ease

We, who rejoice to know Thee
Renew before Thy throne

The solemn pledge we owe Thee
To go and make Thee known

Where other Lords beside Thee
Hold their unhindered sway
Where forces that defied Thee
Defy Thee still today

With none to heed their crying
For life and love and light
Unnumbered souls are dying
And pass into the night

We go to all the world
With kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

We bear the torch that flaming
Fell from the hands of those
Who gave their lives proclaiming
That Jesus died and rose

Ours is the same commission
The same glad message ours
Fired by the same ambition
To Thee we yield our powers

We go to all the world
With kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

O Father who sustained them
O Spirit who inspired
Saviour, whose love constrained them
To toil with zeal untired

From cowardice defend us
From lethargy awake!
Forth on Thine errands send us
To labour for Thy sake

We go to all the world
With kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

We go to all the world
His kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

Benediction

Go now.

Go as those who carry good news, whether your feet cross oceans or stay right here in Charlestown.

May the ambition that drove Paul to the frontier drive you to pray without growing tired, to give without growing stingy, and to send without growing indifferent.

And when you're weary of the work, and you will be, remember that your feet, however ordinary, however tired, are called beautiful by the God who sent you.

Go in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.