

**St Philip's**  
*Come & See*

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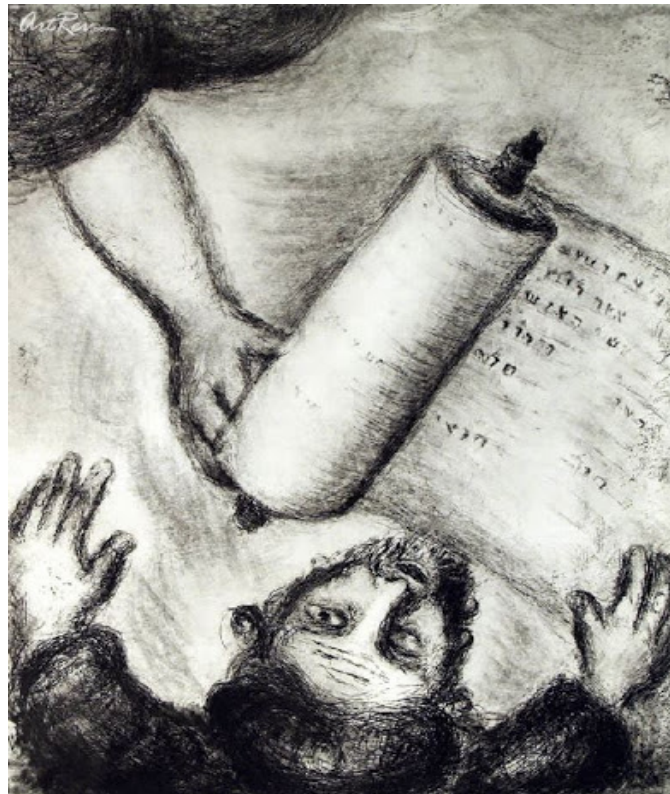
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**Sunday 4 July 2021**

# *Sixth Sunday after Pentecost*



Front Cover: Marc Chagall, *The Calling of Ezekiel* from Etchings for the Bible series, 1956, print, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

## *Welcome to St Philip's*

**Check-in:** it is a requirement that everyone checks in via the *CBR Check In* app and wears a mask whilst in the church and the Lamerton Centre. If you need assistance the Sidespeople/Welcomers can check you in, masks are available too. If you are unsure of current restrictions the ACT Chief Health Officer's latest update (29 June) can be found at:

[https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/COVID-19%20Advice%20for%20high%20risk%20settings\\_290621\\_v2\\_0.pdf](https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/COVID-19%20Advice%20for%20high%20risk%20settings_290621_v2_0.pdf)

There is a printed copy in the porch. We are asking all folk to be aware of the restrictions, to be careful and thorough with their hand hygiene, to be mindful of social distance and not to attend church if they feel unwell.

**Pew sheet & Order of Service:** the Pew sheet including a complete order of service with hymns is available on our website. The QR code in the pews will direct you to the current edition, please use your phone/tablet and follow along. Alternatively service cards and this printed abridged Pew sheet is available.

**Offertory:** at the offertory when our gifts are brought forward, there is an opportunity for you to make your contribution. A self-serve Eftpos machine is available in the foyer, you can use it before or after the service. St Philip's EFT details are also available if you would like to make a direct

transfer. Giving cards are in the foyer if you wish to place something in the offertory bag after giving electronically.

**Communion:** if you are baptised you are welcome to receive communion, which at present is in 'one kind.' If you would like to receive a blessing please cross your hands on your chest as you come forward.

**Breakfast or Morning Tea:** all our services are followed with hospitality on the Lamerton Centre deck, please join us - 'Come & See'

### *From the Rector*

Dear Friends.

As I write the situation across the country is still one of uncertainty regarding the COVID19 situation. As you would be aware the ACT Government has asked us to wear masks when indoors in areas where number of different folk gather, shops, public transport etc, this includes places of worship. The diocese has also asked us to review the question of congregational singing, so there will be no singing for this Sunday and next. The Parish council meet next week and will review our situation. Hopefully the current restrictions will ease soon and we can return to a sense of normality. The words of Ezekiel this morning remind me of the ACT Chief Health Officer's advice which comes into my inbox all too regularly: *it had writing on the front and on the back, and written on it were words of lamentation and mourning and woe!*

These are frustrating times for many. The temptation to become cynical about our leaders is ever present. I sat recently with a parishioner and we considered the question of hope. Our conversation struck a chord with me and I have been dwelling on it. I found this recently while reading St Augustine in his 'City of God':

*As 'we are saved by hope', so we are made happy by hope. Neither our salvation nor our beatitude is here present, but 'we wait for it' in the future, and we wait 'with patience', precisely because we are surrounded by evils which patience must endure until we come to where all good things are sources of inexpressible happiness and where there will be no longer anything to endure. Such is to be our salvation in the hereafter, such our final blessedness.*

I rather liked the idea of being saved by hope and hope being a source of happiness.

Blessings to you all, *Martin*

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### *Today's Liturgy*

#### **Entrance Antiphon**

**Of Jesus many said, 'What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands!'**

*Mark 6:2*

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

**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.**

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

**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.**

'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.**

**Lord have mercy.  
Christ have mercy.  
Lord have mercy.**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

O Lord our God,  
you are always more ready to bestow  
your good gifts upon us  
than we are ready to seek them;  
and more willing to give than we desire or deserve:  
in our every need,  
grant us the first and best of all your gifts,  
the Spirit who makes us your children.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **Today's Readings**

*A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel (2:1-10)*

He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. <sup>2</sup>And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. <sup>3</sup>He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. <sup>4</sup>The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' <sup>5</sup>Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them. <sup>6</sup>And you, O mortal, do not be afraid of them, and do not be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns surround you and you live among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words, and do not be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. <sup>7</sup>You shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear; for they are a rebellious house. <sup>8</sup>But you, mortal, hear what I say to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you. <sup>9</sup>I looked, and a hand was stretched out to me, and a written scroll was in it. <sup>10</sup>He spread it before me; it had writing on the front and on the back, and written on it were words of lamentation and mourning and woe.

*Psalm 123*

To you I lift up my eyes:  
you who are enthroned in the heavens.

**As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master:  
or as the eyes of a maid toward the hand of her mistress,**

So our eyes look to the Lord our God:  
until he show us his mercy.

**Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:  
for we have had our fill of derision.**

Our souls overflow with the mockery of those at ease:  
and with the contempt of the proud.

*A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (12:2-10)*

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. <sup>3</sup>And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— <sup>4</sup>was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. <sup>5</sup>On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup>But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, <sup>7</sup>even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given to me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. <sup>8</sup>Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, <sup>9</sup>but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup>Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Alleluia!

**Alleluia!**

O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.

*Ezekiel 2:1*

**Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

*The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (6:1-13)*

**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' <sup>5</sup>And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup>He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; <sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup>He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup>If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' <sup>12</sup>So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. <sup>13</sup>They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

For the Gospel of the Lord,

**praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **The Sermon**

### **The Nicene Creed**

Let us affirm the faith of the church

**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 of the People**

In our prayers we remember those in need, particularly: Ros, Ben, Gage, Hugh, Sarah, Myrle, Margot, David, Otto, Joan, Mandy, Bob and Noel, those unable to gather with us, those in hospital, residential or home care and those from whom we are isolated.

We commend to God the recently departed, those whose anniversaries fall at this time, all whose memories are dear to us, and those who have no one to remember them.

### **The Greeting of 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.**

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,  
which earth has given and human hands have made.  
It will become the bread of life.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,  
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.  
It will become our spiritual drink.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

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.**

### **Great 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.**

All thanks and praise to you, loving Father  
for sending your Son to be our Saviour.

He took upon himself our human nature,  
shared our joy and our tears,  
bore all our sickness,  
and carried all our sorrows.

He brought us through death,  
to the life of his glorious resurrection,  
giving for our frailty eternal strength,  
and restoring in us your perfect image.

Therefore with angels and archangels,

and with all the company of heaven,  
we praise you saying:  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth and full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he ✠ who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you  
for these gifts of your creation,  
this bread and wine,  
and we pray that by your word and Holy Spirit,  
we who eat and drink them  
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

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

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.

Great is the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,  
unite us in the body of your Son,  
and bring us with all your people  
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
with whom and in whom,  
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
we worship you, Father,  
in songs of never-ending praise:  
**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident 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.**

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.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

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.

### **Communion Antiphon**

**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.**

*2 Corinthians 12:9*

### **The Sending out of God's People**

Bountiful God,

At this table you graciously feed us  
with the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.

May we who have reached out our hands to receive  
this sacrament

be strengthened in your service;

we who have sung your praises

tell of your glory and truth in our lives;

we who have seen the greatest of your love

see you face to face in your kingdom

and come to worship you with all your saints for ever.

Most loving God, **you send us into the world you love. Give us grace to go thankfully and  
with courage in the power of your Spirit.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

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.**

Go in the peace of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

### *For Reflection*

#### **Fear not, sneer not: A healthy Christian response to COVID-19**

"I hear many whispering, 'Terror on every side!'" (Psalm 31:13). In times of crisis we often find it easier to identify with the psalmist. We, too, keep hearing of the "terror on every side," the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) now officially declared a pandemic. The millions of viruses scattered by coughs and sneezes are enemies "who pursue us," stealing into our homes and lungs and making those they infect "objects of dread" to our closest friends: "Those who see us on the street flee from us." But the psalmist would have us move past terror to say, "I trust in you, Lord ... My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies."

How do we effect that transition? Seeing SARS-CoV-2 as "the enemy" is how the Chinese people from the early stages of the Wuhan epidemic have united their efforts, and an ancient Chinese saying explains the key to victory against any enemy: "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles." To know our enemy, and to know ourselves as Christians: with the two together, we can respond intelligently and appropriately as Christians. Confronted with fear, uncertainty and open questions, we would do well to review the current state of coronavirus research and reflect on what makes a healthy Christian response to this threat.

Nations across the world are taking drastic action: mass quarantines; school closures; sweeping travel bans; sports season suspensions; Broadway shows not going on. Yet many may find these measures mystifying. Are they not disproportionate to the actual threat? Is this not fearmongering? For many, the comparison with the seasonal influenza is irresistible. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that the flu season to date has seen 350,000–620,000 hospitalisations and 20,000–52,000 deaths. By contrast, Italy — the hardest hit country in Europe — has had only 15,113 cases and 1,016 deaths at the time of this writing. China tallies 80,796 cases and 3,170 deaths.

Why then, is there such stark concern among level-headed, well-informed people? Bill Gates, writing in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, stresses that we face an “immediate crisis”: “COVID-19 has started behaving a lot like the once-in-a-century pathogen we’ve been worried about. I hope it’s not that bad, but we should assume it will be until we know otherwise.”

### **Knowing the enemy**

Understanding the virus and the science of epidemics goes a long way toward explaining the decisions that are being made by public health officials. There are three main concerns for medical and public health professionals: the uncertainty, the severity and the rapidity of the virus. First, the **uncertainty**: we do not yet fully know our enemy. On 31 December 2019, Wuhan, the largest metropolitan area in China’s Hubei province, reported an epidemic of cases with unexplained low respiratory infections (“pneumonia of unknown etiology”) that had started in the beginning of December. Sequencing results revealed an 82 percent identity with that of human SARS-CoV (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome CoronaVirus). The International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses therefore termed it SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes “COVID-19.”

Coronaviruses frequently infect humans, and many are harmless (they are common culprits of the common cold). However, this century has so far witnessed two other outbreaks caused by deadly forms of coronaviruses. In 2002–2003, SARS-CoV provoked a large-scale epidemic beginning in China and involving two dozen countries with approximately 8,000 cases and 800 deaths. In 2012, MERS-CoV originated in Saudi Arabia and had approximately 2,500 cases and 800 deaths. So coronaviruses as a group are well known, but the particularities of SARS-CoV-2 are not. It behaves in some ways similarly but other ways differently than these other known coronaviruses, as well as influenza. This makes it difficult to predict how various interventions will reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2. A notable worry is that recent data suggests it may spread days before people become symptomatic. Asymptomatic spread is difficult to control, since people may be contagious before they know to get tested and to self-isolate.

The second leading concern for medical professionals is the **severity** of infections, combined with the lack of “antiviral” treatments. About 80 percent of people who get COVID-19 will experience only mild symptoms. But 20 out of every 100 require hospitalisation with severe or critical disease, involving respiratory failure, septic shock and/or multiorgan dysfunction. The elderly and people with preconditions are at highest risk of death (in one study, the fatality rate was 8.0 percent in those 70 to 79 years and 14.8 percent in those aged 80 years and older), but even the young may unexpectedly die (on a population level, a 0.2 percent fatality rate translates into tens of thousands of deaths).

For influenza, physicians can administer antivirals that help reduce the severity of infection, and the flu vaccine not only reduces the risk of infection but also its severity if one does become infected. But for COVID-19, the only mainstays of treatments are “supportive,” such as oxygen or artificial respiration for those who are seriously ill and finding it difficult to breathe (some experimental regimens are being tested, but there are no established benefits yet). And there isn’t a vaccine. Most worrisome for health professionals, however, is the COVID-19 “tsunami” effect, the exponential rapidity of spread. This is a chief reason for the present drastic public health interventions. Without interventions, SARS-CoV-2 will keep spreading until about 70 percent of the population has been infected, at which point “herd immunity” begins protecting the other 30 percent. The more people have been infected and become immune, the harder it is for the virus to spread further because viruses need to find *susceptible* hosts to reproduce. Fortunately, there *are* interventions. If everyone adheres to public health advice (wash your hands, self-isolate if you’re sick, avoid unnecessary travel and so on), it is possible that less than 50 percent will get infected. Even so, we must prepare ourselves and our communities for the possibility that 70 percent of us will eventually become infected.

### **Flattening the curve**



Now here's the rub: If so many people get infected in a short period of time, there isn't a health system in the world that can handle the influx of seriously sick patients.

Both China and Italy have tragically illustrated this for us. Literally within a day, hospitals in affected areas of Italy were overrun. Soon there were not enough regular beds and not enough respirators for all the patients who did not have COVID-19 but needed intensive care. Such conditions force physicians to make unpalatable choices about who is to receive scarce resources. Lives that could otherwise have been saved may be lost simply because it is impossible to provide ordinary care. There are also healthcare worker shortages, such that physicians from unrelated specialties are being called to help, some of whom have never worked in that area since early in their training. Unfortunately, despite protective measures, physicians and nurses are themselves being infected, which exacerbates the shortages.

In Canada, many hospitals operate near 100 percent capacity — which is to say, nearly all of the beds are already in use. Fortunately, New York City, where there is a growing cluster of infections, announced last week that it had 1,200 spare beds prepared for COVID-19 cases. Yet even that may not be enough if over 1,000 people are getting sick each day, as is currently happening in Italy. China managed to erect two new prefabricated hospitals within days, with beds for over 2,600, but such feats are unlikely even to be attempted in Europe and the Americas.

This brings us to a key principle of managing disease outbreaks: the urgency of "flattening the epidemic curve." Instead of a sharp day-to-day increase in the number of cases, which would overwhelm local healthcare resources, one aims for a gradual increase in cases. Then, ideally, each patient receives optimal care.

The way to flatten the curve is to reduce the virus's reproductive number — the number of other people that an infected person infects. At a personal level, we can reduce this number by washing our hands and staying home when sick. At a societal level, we can reduce this number by "social distancing," which includes cancelling large events, avoiding non-essential travel and limiting social intermingling in general. Very simply, the fewer interactions there are between infected people and susceptible people, the fewer people will get sick. Social distancing has obvious trade-offs, and if and to what extent public health officials are justified in recommending it is not clear. Yet if they need to be initiated quickly, our hospitals still have capacity, instead of in two weeks when their intensive care units are overflowing.

A final important point: COVID-19 has an incubation period of about 5 days (though up to 14 days). That means that we are unavoidably a week behind in knowing how many people *currently* are infected, who will soon become sick and contagious. So there will always be a delay between the decision to take action and the situation actually improving. All this and more is involved in knowing our enemy and recognising the real risk of COVID-19: how it spreads, how fast it spreads, how to treat it, and how to prevent it.

### **Martin Luther's response — and ours**

How, then, are we to understand ourselves? A time-honoured way is looking to the past. Historically, Christians were no strangers to epidemics. Vivian Nutton, the esteemed historian of medicine, writes that from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries, "A town would experience an epidemic of plague approximately every decade, and a serious devastation once in every generation." Disease outbreaks were part of the rhythm of life. Those outbreaks caused by bubonic plague were particularly dreadful, boasting a fatality rate of 60–90 percent (for COVID-19, it is "only" 1–3 percent).

In response to these outbreaks, Christians wrote many "flight theologies," exploring what measures Christians could take in good conscience (whether, for example one may flee a diseased town). Today, the most famous of these flight theologies is Martin Luther's letter to his friend and fellow pastor Johann Hess, in response to Hess's question, "Whether it is proper for a Christian to run away from a deadly plague." Luther himself was no stranger to suffering. He endured the death of many of his family and friends, including some of his own children, and a plethora of personal ailments. Indeed, Hess had to write twice entreating Luther for his thoughts, because Luther was too ill to reply to the first letter.

In 1527, plague struck Wittenberg — the university town where Luther lived — prompting classes to be moved to an unaffected town. Yet Luther refused to leave. He chose instead to venture his life on caring for the sick and dying and transformed his home into a makeshift hospital. So when Luther gave advice, he knew the consequences and the fear attending them.

For Luther, our loving God hiddenly but surely works for our good even in the places we do not expect, including amid the evil of deadly epidemics. The fear of bodily illness and death should drive us to pray and to care for our souls, remembering that this world is not our lasting home. An epidemic is one of many evils that beset us, and we have to take that seriously; but the greater evil is the evil within (Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:4). Therefore, responding to an epidemic or any other crisis must involve turning from our sins — chief of which is the selfish love that gives thought first to self, and only secondly, if we can assure our own health and safety, to others.

Luther regarded the epidemic as a temptation that tests and proves our faith and love: “our faith in that we may see and experience how we should act toward God; our love in that we may recognise how we should act toward our neighbour.” Through faith in God and out of love for neighbour, Christians must think first how to contribute to the physical and spiritual care of those who are vulnerable, self-isolated, sick, or dying. Only then did Luther permit Christians to make private decisions about whether to flee. In an era without widespread institutionalised healthcare, Luther wrote that Christians are under a divine obligation to fill the gap: “We must give hospital care and be nurses for one another in any extremity or risk the loss of salvation and the grace of God.” With lives at risk, Luther encourages Christians to find solace in the promises of God. The devil tempts us to “horror and repugnance in the presence of a sick person.” But striking a “blow against the devil is God’s mighty promise by which he encourages those who minister to the needy. He says in Psalm 41, ‘Blessed is he who considers the poor. The Lord will deliver him in the day of trouble.’” Therefore, “whoever serves the sick for the sake of God’s gracious promise ... has the great assurance that he shall in turn be cared for. God himself shall be his attendant and his physician, too. What an attendant he is! What a physician!”

What does this mean for us and COVID-19? Our attitude toward COVID-19 should be marked by the Christian virtue of *measured concern* (“temperate prudence” in classical terms): *measured*, not panicking but heeding our Saviour’s encouraging warning, “Do not be anxious about your life ... Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul” (Matthew 6:25, 10:28); and *concern*, recognising the evil for what it is and not comforting ourselves with falsehoods. Instead of panicking and stockpiling so many masks that there aren’t enough for healthcare workers, or so much pasta and toilet paper that others can’t find any, we should be asking: *How can we as a church and I as an individual help those in need?*

Those who are researchers or health professionals should take courage in their divine calling to do good research, to seek truth and to care for the sick. Many of us in healthcare have taken oaths: “The health of our patients shall be our first consideration.” It is easy to take valiant oaths in times of tranquillity and bliss. Hardship does not nullify these oaths, but rather emphasises their sacred, inviolable nature. For Christians, there is a special duty to fulfil them, since we have been told, “let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’.”

For those of us who do not have special training to participate on the medical front lines, we are called to responsibly play our part in society: in our jobs that help keep our economy going; in our families as parents, children or siblings; in the way we communicate, listen and respond to news; in the way we care for our neighbours, cities and communities. Above all, we are called to pray for and do our best to support good journalism, research and medical care. For Christians, truth is distinctly important. Every Christian has the responsibility to find and rely on accurate sources of information, having nothing to do with either sensationalisers or scoffers.

A website like the Science Media Centre can help one interpret the headlines level-headedly, and every region has its public health bulletins with advice specific to the region. We listen to and respect our public health officials, with the expectation that their recommendations will inevitably be imperfect. Rather than criticising them, we ought to pray for them daily.

*Dr Mirjam Schilling is a virologist at the University of Oxford and a DPhil student in theology (Science and Religion) studying the theological aspects of viruses under Alister McGrath. Joel Gamble is an MD student at the University of Toronto and postgraduate student in theology (Science and Religion) at the University of Oxford researching the philosophy and historical theology of medicine. Nathan Gamble, MD MA, is a bioethicist and internal medicine resident at the University of Alberta, and he is studying Clinical Trials at the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.*

## News

**Bridging the Gap – Breaking the Cycle.** Each week St Philip's donates non-perishable food items to **St John's Care** in Reid. The baskets at the back of the church are ready to receive your donations! This week there is a need for UHT milk, powdered milk, olive oil, Weet-bix, large tinned tuna and pasta meals. Please ensure that what you donate is new, and check the use by dates on foodstuffs, thank you.

For the Francophiles among you, the Parish of Holy Cross Hackett is celebrating a **Eucharistie en langue Francaise**. A French Language Eucharist for Bastille Day on Wednesday 14 July at 6pm. All are welcome.

"On any given night, nearly 500 young people in Canberra are homeless. Some "couch-surf" with friends, others face a night on the streets or hidden away in the bushlands. No young person should feel like they have nowhere to go. **Raw Potential Canberra** actively provides outreach services to at-risk young people, of 12-25 years, in an effort to help those facing homelessness and violence.

They offer after hours support and a non-judgmental approach to helping those in need.

They work in partnership with other local services to go out into the community and engage with young people who cannot, or will not, access services, working with them over time to re-connect them to mainstream society. Your donation to St Philip's Local Mission project will help Raw

Potential to do this vital work." If you'd like to know more check out the website at:

<https://rawpotential.com.au/about-us/>

**News from Sarah Gowty** this past week. It's hard to believe this time last week we were halfway through our five-day trek on the Larapinta Trail. I am so grateful for the opportunity; the chance to walk this ancient land in communion with a group of likeminded, faithful people (thank you fellow walkers and guides); meeting the personal, physical and mental challenge of the multi day trek; and especially for the generosity of our family and friends who have donated \$9450 in support of the [ANGLICAN BOARD OF MISSION - AUSTRALIA](https://abm-larapinta-2021.raisely.com/sarah-and-tim-gowty) and its work with partners overseas and in Australia. It's not too late to make a tax deductible donation! <https://abm-larapinta-2021.raisely.com/sarah-and-tim-gowty>

## *This week @ St Philip's*

Today	<i>Sixth Sunday after Pentecost</i>
8am	<b>Eucharist</b>
10am	<b>Eucharist</b>
Tuesday 6 July	<i>John Fisher, Thomas More, martyrs (d.1535)</i>
2pm	<b>Eucharist</b> – Sir Leslie Morshead Manor
Thursday 8 July	<i>Feria</i>
10am	<b>Eucharist</b>
Saturday 10 July	<i>Feria</i>
10am-1pm	Pandora's -OPEN
11am	<b>Eucharist</b> – Kankinya
Sunday 11 July	<i>Seventh Sunday after Pentecost</i>
8am	<b>Eucharist</b>
10am	<b>Eucharist</b>

Readings: Amos 7:7-14, Psalm 85:8-13, Ephesians 1:1-14, Mark 6:14-29

## **Dates for your Diary**

14 July	7pm	Parish Council 7pm
20 July		'Winter Journey' begins
22 July	10am	Eucharist – Mary Magdalene
24 July	10am – 1pm	Pandora's 'Christmas in July'
15 August		Mary, Mother of Our Lord
23 October		St Philip's 'Spring Fling'

24 October

Anglicare Sunday

1-5 November

Clergy Retreat, Galong

December

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St Philip's Dedication (More info soon)

### *Rosters*

		<b>4-Jul-21</b>	<b>11-Jul-21</b>	<b>18-Jul-21</b>
	Sunday of Month	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>
	Liturgical Season	6th Sunday after Pentecost	7th Sunday after Pentecost	8th Sunday after Pentecost
	Flowers	Flower Team	Flower Team	Flower Team
<b>8am</b>	Celebrant	Rev'd Canon Scott	Rev'd Martin	Rev'd Martin
	Preacher (if different to Celebrant)			Rev'd Canon Scott
	Sidespeople	Margaret & Russell	Alison & Alistair	<i>volunteers</i>
	Liturgical Assistant	Lisa C	Ellie P	
	1st Bible reader - OT	Margaret M	Alistair D	Julianne S
	2nd Bible reader - NT	Russell M	Alison D	Rebecca P
<b>10am</b>	Celebrant	Rev'd Martin	Rev'd Martin	Rev'd Canon Scott
	Preacher (if different to Celebrant)	Rev'd Canon Scott		
	Sidespeople & Welcomer	Denise M, Nirmal F & Fred A	Helen & Hardy P & Laura W	Janene B, Jeannette McH & Richard G
	Liturgical Assistant	Crucifer: Zara Server: Leighton	Rebecca K	Rev'd Martin
	Musician(s) & Singers/Soloist	Colin F	Colin F	Colin F
	1st Bible reader - OT	Richard G	Laura W	Sarah B
	2nd Bible reader - NT	Vicki Luker	Ann M	Ashton R
	Morning Tea	Helen P	Janene B	Jan G
	<i>School holidays</i>	<i>School holidays</i>		