

Persecution or indifference, and in this case, which is worse?

Being a huge sports fan, I have of course been watching a lot of Olympics over the past week. It has not escaped me that there has been some controversy regarding this Olympics due to the opening ceremony, and a scene from that ceremony which seemed to bear more than a cursory resemblance to the Last Supper as depicted by Leonardo da Vinci.

Many Christians have taken offence at this tableau, and have seen in this, an intent to mock the Christian faith on the part of the creators. The creators of the tableau have said that was not their intent, as they were attempting to depict an ancient Greek *bacchanalia*, and that the resemblance was accidental, but an apology was duly issued by the organising committee for, 'unintentional offence'.

This leaves us with two possibilities - either that the creators are lying about their intent, and the scene was a deliberate parody of the Last Supper, or that the creators of the scene are so unfamiliar with or indifferent to Christian symbolism that this resemblance passed them by.

Of course many Christians find the first possibility concerning. I understand that concern, but when I look at the history of the Christian faith, something emerges which is relevant, that persecution has not destroyed the church, but has in fact made it stronger. Much of the New Testament is reflective of this reality, and the history of the church in many places across the world speaks of the church growing in the face of persecution. We should also be reminded that if this is persecution it is *merely* persecution by parody, so while I would be concerned about those who perhaps intentionally created a parody, and then deliberately lied about that, I am less concerned about a parody in itself. Christians are facing and have faced much worse in our history. If we are to get upset about persecution, perhaps there are more deserving causes in this world than an Olympic ceremony.

I also believe that we should give the benefit of the doubt that this wasn't the intent, that is, to take the creators word for it, unless we have good reason not to take their word for it. In this case, I do not think we have sufficient reason not to take their word for it. That seems to me to be the Christian thing to do, if we are to treat the creators with love, grace and charity, rather than suspicion and cynicism.

So, the second possibility remains, that this was accidental, and that no-one involved with the event was sufficiently cognizant of the resemblance of the tableau to the Last Supper for it to raise any alarm bells.

I actually think this is more concerning, and the reason why is that it reflects an indifference to Christianity, and that indifference I think is reflective of the decline of the church in the West. We may reflect that it is not persecution that has shrunk many churches in Australia, but indifference. The indifference of a culture which has become unfamiliar with Christianity, and I'm sorry to say, the indifference of Christians who do not care about the mission of God.

So, this reflection ends (or begins) as all good Christian reflections should do, by encouraging us not to look so much upon the perceived faults of others, but to look within our own hearts, and to recognise the ways in which we have grown indifferent to Jesus.

As we look within, let us ask for the transforming grace of Christ to remake our hearts, to burn with holy passion for Christ and his ways.

This Sunday 4th August we will be thinking of this, and asking God to re-awaken our spiritual hunger for Christ and a world renewed.

Grace and Peace, Rev Adam Tipple

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Intercessory Prayer Team

Email prayer@lifeworksuniting.org.au

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land - the Jarowair and Giabal people.

August 2024 Services

Sunday 4th August 9am (Holy Communion)

Worship Leader: Kerrie Andrews
Preacher: Rev Adam Tipple

Sunday 11th August 9am

Worship Leader: Mary Tibben
Preacher: Rev Adam Tipple

Sunday 18th August 9am

Worship Leader: Va Palfi
Preacher: Rev Adam Tipple

Sunday 25th August 9am

Worship Leader: Rev Lynne Hindman
Preacher: Rev Adam Tipple

Livestreams - please see [Facebook](#) for the latest link.

Giving Details

If you would like to give to Lifeworks, you can use the following methods:

Electronic direct deposit

Bank: Westpac Bank

Name: Lifeworks Uniting Church

BSB: 034 242

Account Number: 359 011

Write a cheque to
Lifeworks Uniting Church, and post in the
mail to: PO Box 18093, Clifford Gardens,
Qld, 4350

Cash can be left in the offering bag on
Sunday mornings.

We thank-you for your generosity!

Quick Links

www.lifeworksuniting.org.au

[YouTube](#)  [Facebook](#) 

Midweek online prayer link (Weds 7am) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81432040065...>
Password: B1x6cs

News and Announcements

Church Camp

We are excited that the dates of the church camp are getting closer. If you would like to attend, please ensure you fill in a registration form which are available in the church foyer, or you can ask for an email copy by emailing minister@lifeworksuniting.org.au. If you fill in a form it doesn't mean you have to come, it just means that is your likely intention and helps us to work out how much food we need, and dietary requirements etc.

Once we have received all the registrations we will send out some information via email regarding the camp (how to get there, what to bring, what the schedule will be etc.) There will be worship at the camp on Sunday morning and also a service at Lifeworks for those who are not attending the camp worship.

News and Announcements cont

Special Offering

Thanks all who contributed to the Lifeline winter shelter appeal in July. The August special offering will be for Uniting World, taken on Sunday 4th August.

Church Council Update

Church Council met on 23rd July. Some key decisions from that meeting:

- Annual Report to be Distributed by 22nd September.
- AGM (Annual General Meeting) to be held on Sunday 6th October.
- 'Storytelling Day' regarding Lifework's mission and direction to be held on Saturday 19th October. Details to be in the September Newsletter.
- OzHarvest lease renewed for 3 years.

In preparation for our AGM we will be having nominations for Church Council. Details of this will also be in the September newsletter. If serving on Church Council is something that interests you, please speak to Rev Adam any time to discuss this possibility.

If you have any questions about Church Council, feel free to drop us a line.

Men's Breakfast (Photo right)

The Men's Breakfast on 20th July was a great time of fellowship, sharing and singing. 21 men attended, and were encouraged by Dr Mark Bennett who was the guest speaker. The next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday 26th October, with guest speaker TBA.

mainly music Celebration Service

What a wonderful time of joy and celebration we had at the service on 28th July. It was great to have five of our mainly music families join us. A big thank-you to the mm team for all they do and for helping on the morning.



DATE CLAIMER - COACH TRIP FROM THE WILSONTON UNITING CHURCH

After such a great coach trip to Bell last year, we are organizing another all day trip on Wednesday 11th September, 8.15 am till approx. 4.30 pm.

We are taking the scenic route to Pittsworth – via Charlton industrial area, Wellcamp Flight Training School and the Airport Terminal, Southbrook Heights garden and museum (amazing – for the men as well as the ladies), and various Pittsworth attractions, including a talk and viewing the stain glass windows in the Anglican Church and a talk and the opportunity to buy from the Confectionery Factory and Shop.

With everyone's support, cost is expected to be \$25 p.p.

You will need to BYO morning tea (hot water provided) and your chair / wheelie walker. Lunch will be in Pittsworth, so BYO or buy at the local cafes or hotel.

Final details will be sent out later, including re payment. Bookings, or any queries, can be emailed or phoned to Barbara Leitch. 0428 717 713 or barbjl5@bigpond.com

Prayer Points

- Pray for the church camp planned for August, that planning will go smoothly, and that this will be a great opportunity to know God and to get to know one another.
- For Darrell Evans who is recovering well at home from heart surgery.
- Give thanks for the birth of Flynn Hogg and pray for Flynn, Ash and Sian.
- Give thanks for Rev Tom Bower who is recovering well from a stroke and re-joined our Games, Grub and God group last Sunday.
- Pray for Rev Jenny Potter as she settles into Longreach and give thanks for her ministry there.



An update From Rev Jenny Potter

Many Lifeworks members will know Jenny who worshipped with our congregation for three years, before accepting the call to minister in Longreach and surrounds. Here is an update from Jenny of her adventures so far:

Greetings from Central Western Queensland! Would you believe I've been here for 10 weeks now? Rusty and I are beginning to settle in. I still have a few boxes to empty and some things to find homes for, but the place is liveable even if I can't remember which cupboard I've put things in.

I've found a tenant for my house in Toowoomba and it seems to be going well.

I've been getting to know the people and places out this way, particularly Rev Donna Muston and her husband Rodney, based in Barcaldine. Together we have responsibility for the whole of the Central West, four preaching places including a weekly morning service in Longreach and three times a month in the afternoon at Barcaldine. We also occasionally take a Saturday service at the Anglican Church in Winton, and I will be doing that for the first time later in July.

Once a month we have a trip around to the Saturday 11 am service at Blackall, Sunday 9 am at Alpha and back for Sunday 1pm at Barcaldine. It's almost like going back in time as the Alpha church still has a bed in the vestry for visiting ministers. Rusty comes along as my guard dog in case there's anyone lurking about outside. I don't know what he'd do about anyone up to no good, but at least I'd know that they were there! He's getting more settled in the car now, until I come into a town and slow down, when he starts getting excited again. He likes coming to church and meeting people.

I've had a few calls up to the hospital so feeling quite at home there. It's only 15 beds, so it won't take as long to get to know the staff as in Toowoomba.

The other ministers around Longreach are also very welcoming. We meet monthly, alternating business and a coffee catch up. I love a place where the churches pray for and support each other. I've joined the Salvo's singles' games night to get to know people around town, a good mix of ages and I enjoy the mental stimulation.

Other than that it's getting used to the activities of the church and the towns and where connections can be made. Now that we have two ministers we're looking at how we can best arrange things between us, and where technology can assist us to reach across the geography more effectively.

It takes a while to get to know a new place, but it's slowly coming into focus. On my way back from Presbytery in Rockhampton I stopped at a cafe in Alpha for lunch and ran into a member of our congregation. I've found a hairdresser, a bakery, a dog groomer and a spectacular burger joint. I know that Saturday mornings are a good day to get chicken necks for dog food and UHT milk before stocks run out. The place starts to feel like home.

Blessings, Jenny

LIFEWORKS UNITING CHURCH CAMP

FRI 30TH AUGUST TO SUN 1ST SEPTEMBER
AT 39 BIRNAM RD, BIRNAM
(GORDON AND GABI'S PLACE)



How good and pleasant it is when God's people
live together in unity!
Psalm 133:1

GAMES, GRUB & GOD

SUNDAY 25TH AUGUST
4.00PM TO 6.15PM
AT LIFEWORKS UNITING CHURCH

BOARD GAMES
SKILL GAMES
CARD GAMES
ALL WELCOME

Lifeworks Uniting Church invites you to:

The Breaking of the Bread

Relax, hang out, have a yarn, talk life,
talk faith. All ages and stages.
Everyone welcome

Sunday 11th August
4 to 6 pm at Lifeworks

Then once every month on the second
Sunday, from 4 to 6 pm.

Includes Holy Communion, followed by
a potluck 'agape' dinner (bring a plate
to share if you can).



Sunday Morning Prayer

Before the
service, every
Sunday 8.30am
in the meeting
room

Lifeworks Uniting Church

LIFEWORKS UNITING CHURCH

August 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tues- day	Wednes- day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9.30am Service at Palm Lake (Cancelled due to lock- down)	2	3
4 8.30am Prayer in the meeting room 9am Worship Holy Commun- ion	5	6	7 7am Midweek online Prayer 9.30am mainly music	8 9.30am Keenagers Morning tea	9	10 9am Lifeworks Craft Group
11 8.30am Prayer in the meeting room 9am Worship 4pm The Breaking of the Bread	12	13	14 7am Midweek online Prayer 9.30am mainly music	15	16	17
18 8.30am Prayer in the meeting room 9am Worship	19	20	21 7am Midweek online Prayer 9.30am mainly music	22 9.30am Keenagers Morning tea	23	24
25 8.30am Prayer in the meeting room 9am Service 4pm Games, Grub and God	26	27 6.30pm Admin Meeting 7pm Church Council Meeting	28 7am Midweek online Prayer 9.30am mainly music	29	30 From 2pm Church Camp (Until 1st September)	31 Church Camp