

## DAILY PRAYER POINTS

**SUNDAY** – There is a reason the Lord has brought you to this new week. Pray that He will shine brightly through you so that everyone that comes across you this week may know His presence in you and be blessed by your words and actions.

**MONDAY** – Thank God for the strength and ability to serve Him each day through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. Pray that we'll all know God's blessing and strength in serving the Lord with joy and thankfulness.

**TUESDAY** – pray that you would remember to hold on to Christ's faithfulness when others let you down. (Heb.10:23)

**WEDNESDAY** – Ask God to help Session and the Committee of Management as we prayerfully plan for the future of St Andrew's during an uncertain time within the PCQ and Australia, as a whole.

**THURSDAY** – Pray for **Rhonda Mitchell & Julie Pamplng**

**FRIDAY** – **Continue to pray for those in need of God's healing and comforting hand:** Belinda Birch, Edith Collins, John Donnell, Kevin Petrofski Jr and Margaret Petrofski, and Dawn Robinson. **Pray also for blessings on those who can't get to church:** Audrey Armstrong, Del Finn, Carol Gillett, Joey Kelly, Gladys Marnock, Millie McCarthy, Heather McGaw, Marie McKee, Mavis Smith, and David Valintine.

**SATURDAY** – Give thanks that in all circumstances our Heavenly Father knows our needs and supplies them richly to us in His Son and His Spirit.

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# THE ANCHOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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DAILY PRAYER POINTS

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LUKEWARM CHURCH?

*BY ADRIEL SANCHEZ*

**A**MONG THE IDIOMS FAMILIAR IN CHRISTIANESE IS THE PHRASE, “THEY’RE ON FIRE FOR THE LORD.” In High School, an on-fire Christian was someone totally committed to following Jesus. There was a youth conference back in those days called Acquire the Fire, and its goal was to ignite young believers through exuberant worship and motivational messages. I remember leaving enflamed a time or two—the only trouble was that the fire never seemed to last. A few weeks after the

spiritual high, feelings would already begin to wane. Fortunately, you could always acquire the fire during next year’s conference—at least until the whole operation dissolved in 2015.

When Jesus spoke to the church in Laodicea, he accused them of being lukewarm. Perhaps it’s our Christianese that has added to the confusion concerning what exactly he meant. I always read the text as Jesus coming to the believers in Laodicea and saying, “You’re not on fire for me anymore!” You know, their devotional life was inconsistent and their worship lacked vigor. This tepid spirituality was offensive to Jesus, so he was going to spit them out. In this schema, being hot (on fire) for Jesus is good, lukewarm is bad, and cold is real bad.

But a closer reading of the text doesn’t allow for this kind of interpretation. Would that you were either cold or hot!” Jesus said (Rev. 3:15b). A chilled believer is just as pleasing to Jesus as a scorching saint. The problem is lukewarmness.

**LUKEWARM: WORTHLESS AND INHOSPITABLE**

Many recent commentators have appealed to a historical problem to illuminate this text: the Laodicean water supply. Situated just north of Laodicea were the hot springs of Hierapolis. Apparently, that area is still known for its thermal springs believed to have healing properties. Southeast

of Laodicea you had the cold waters of Colossae which flowed down from Mt. Cadmus, perfect for a refreshing drink. But by the time the hot Hierapolian and the cold Colossian waters reached Laodicea, they had lost their coveted temperatures. The salt was flavorless, if you will. The waters were unable to heal or refresh.

Here, to be lukewarm is to be worthless. Perhaps the Laodiceans had so compromised their faith by capitulating to the surrounding paganism that their witness had become



professing Christian strangers, we might be rejecting supernatural agents of the Lord.

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

A willingness to show hospitality insofar as we are able is an important part of obeying the Lord. It also helps us grow in the virtue of love. As we get to know Christian strangers better, we learn how to love them better and thus have more opportunities to show brotherly love. We should be going out of our way to be hospitable to fellow church members whom we do not yet know well and to show hospitality to travelling missionaries when they visit.




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**OFFERINGS AND MISSIONS**

Speaking of missionaries, at St Andrew’s, we acknowledge God's great generosity to us and accept His invitation to worship Him in every area of our lives, including the way we use our money. And so, we obey His Biblical commands to be generous and to be a blessing to others (Proverbs 3: 9). Because it is an act of worship, God is more interested in the shape of our heart than the amount we choose to give. We should seek to give Joyfully, Generously and Sacrificially.

**We support a number of missionaries and mission organisations** through our Mission Committee because we recognise that the Great Commission extends to the whole world. **As a church, we are committed to using a portion of our overall giving to support our mission partners.** So by giving to St Andrew’s general funds, a portion will be given to missions.

The easiest way to do this is through Direct Deposit. The details are below.

**Bank:** Bendigo Bank  
**Account Name:** St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church  
**BSB Number:**633000



**L**OVE IS THE CHIEF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE (1 Cor. 13:13), SO IT MAKES sense that the author of Hebrews begins his chapter of practical exhortation by commanding his audience to continue in brotherly love (13:1). Much of what follows in Hebrews 13 actually reflects this exhortation to show love to others. We see this in Hebrews 13:2 and its call for us to show hospitality to strangers.

Ancient peoples prized hospitality. Traveling was not always safe, and inns were dangerous places to stay when one was on a journey. Christians relied particularly on the hospitality of strangers. As members of a new religious movement, Christians often had to endure rejection and inhospitable conduct from the Jews and pagans around them (Acts 17:1–9; 19:21–41). During His earthly ministry, Jesus had no place to lay His head (Matt. 8:20)—He had no permanent home. He depended on the hospitality of others. So, a willingness to be hospitable to strangers was particularly important for the Christian community. Many Christians relied on the hospitality of “strangers” who were also professing believers in Jesus, men and women in the church whom they had never met before. It is a special display of Christian love to show hospitality to believers whom we do not know well.



The author of Hebrews adds further motivation for showing hospitality to strangers, explaining that in so doing, we may be entertaining angels without knowing it (Heb. 13:2). Most commentators believe the author is thinking of Genesis 18, which records Abraham’s visit with three men at the oaks of Mamre. These men turned out to be supernatural figures—angels—as Genesis 19 makes plain. Abraham went to great effort to be hospitable to these men, whose angelic nature was not evident to him, at least at first. In fact, later Jewish tradition came to view Abraham as the example of hospitality par excellence because of his warm welcome of the angels.

A simple command to show hospitality in the Word of God is sufficient to make us understand the importance of being hospitable. That the strangers to whom we show kindness might even be angels makes us all the more willing to be hospitable to others. When we reject strangers, particularly

ineffective. While the historical background lends itself to this understanding (and there’s internal evidence the Laodiceans were indeed getting cozy with the pagan culture) there’s another interpretation that I think warrants our attention: to be lukewarm is to be inhospitable to Jesus.

In the ancient world, hospitality was a big deal. The way you treated your guest could bring you great honor or shame. In the foreground of the passage is the picture of table fellowship with Jesus: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

Strange that Jesus is on the doorstep of this church, isn’t it? We expect him around the table, but something is awry. The Laodicean church was inhospitable to the church’s head. Instead of cold water on a hot day, they offered him lukewarm pride. And God resists the proud by spitting them out. Note verse 17, “For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” This isn’t a waned devotional life, it’s arrogant self-sufficiency that manifests itself in total spiritual blindness. The Laodiceans had started to think they simply didn’t need Jesus.

### “COME, BUY, AND EAT!”

Have you ever had a salesperson show up to your door and knock, and you pretended like you weren’t home? Sometimes we don’t answer the door because we have no interest in what’s for sale. Christ has something to sell us, but if we don’t think we need it, we’ll happily carry on around our Christless table. “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see” (Rev. 3:18). No doubt Jesus’s rebuke of the Laodiceans is a



**JESUS’S REBUKE  
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strong one, but it's issued in fatherly love (Rev. 3:19). The imagery of knocking at the door is probably taken from Song of Songs 5:2, where the lover is seeking intimacy with his beloved. Christ comes to this arrogant church as a concerned father and a jealous husband. He invites the lukewarm to buy what they need from him.

How do you buy gold, white garments, and eye salve from Jesus? You can't—at least not with cash or credit. The language here reminds us of Isaiah 55:1, "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." What we desperately need, Jesus freely gives.

The book of Revelation ends with an invitation, "Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Rev. 22:17b). The Laodiceans had lukewarm waters because Jesus wasn't at the table. He brings—and is himself—the main course of the feast, providing the ice-cold waters of salvation. Churches that proudly rely on their own wealth or wisdom may find that like the Laodiceans, they're eating alone. To them, Jesus comes knocking.



## WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

### TWO WEEKS ON... BIBLE READING PLAN

TWO WEEKS WITH WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

The Bible exalts women and their God-ordained position in the home, the church, and the world.

**WEEK 2** | ☐ Day 8, **1 Kings 17** - A poor widow and the prophet Elijah.

☐ Day 9, **1 Kings 21** - Jezebel, an emblem of wickedness. ☐ Day 10,

**Esther 2** - Esther is chosen as queen. ☐ Day 11, **Esther 4** - Esther's

courage at the risk of death. ☐ Day 12, **Luke 1** - Mary and Elizabeth

receive great news. ☐ Day 13, **Luke 2** - Mary gives birth to Jesus. ☐ Day

14, **John 11** - Mary and Martha and their brother's death.

## WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The Westminster catechisms begin with the language of glorifying and enjoying God. *These Standards exist to explain in doctrinal terms how Scripture directs us to glorify and enjoy God in all we think, do, and say.* - Burk Parsons

### QUESTION 88.

**What are the outward and ordinary means by which Christ imparts to us the benefits of redemption?**

A. The outward and ordinary means by which Christ imparts to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the *Word*, the *sacraments*, and *prayer*; all of these are made effectual to his chosen ones for salvation.

### QUESTION 89.

**How is the Word made effectual to salvation?**

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading of the Word, but especially the preaching of it, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, to salvation.

### QUESTION 90.

**How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?**

A. For the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must pay attention to it with diligence, preparation and prayer, we must receive it with faith and love, we must lay it up in our hearts, and we must practice it in our lives.

## HOSPITALITY TO ANGELS.

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

- Hebrews 13:2